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DISTURBANCE, CENTRAL PRISON, CATANZARO CITY
JULY 1944

HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
Public Safety Sub-Commission
APO 394

Tel 489082 - Ext.502

23rd July, 1944

ACC/1422X/PS

SUBJECT : Prisons.

TO : RPSO VII (Thro' R.C.)

1. I thank you for your RVII/PS/408 and 422 dated 15 July, 1944 giving particulars of the disturbance at Catanzaro Prison on 12th July, 1944.

2. It has been noted that the outbreak was caused by Italian Military Prisoners demonstrating against the reduction of their rations from the military scale to the civil scale.


PAUL G. KIRK
Colonel, Ing.
Chief, Public Safety
Sub-Commission

FJW/lb

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CONFIDENTIAL *P. Safety 5989*
HEADQUARTERS REGION VII
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION *(1A)*

File Ref: RV11/PS/408 and
RV11/PS/422

Date: 15th July 1944 *Sec 2A*

SUBJECT: DISTURBANCE AT CENTRAL PRISON, CITY OF CATANZARO.

TO: THE CHIEF, PUBLIC SAFETY SUB-COMMISSION,
REAR HEADQUARTERS, A. C. C.

1. This report is submitted in order to bring to your notice a serious disturbance which occurred in the male portion of the Central Prison, Catanzaro City, on the evening of 12th July 1944 and during which affray a convicted prisoner was mortally wounded.
2. In order to facilitate appreciation of the facts, I will give firstly a brief description of the scene of the incident - the affected part of the Prison comprises a medium sized, two storey detached building of rectangular construction completely surrounding an open air compound. Internally, on a level with the second storey and overlooking this compound is a balcony. The upper floor on the southern and western sides is taken up by the administration offices of the Prison. Built into the northern and eastern wings of the building are a number of cells each constructed to accommodate from 6 to 20 persons and the only means of entrance to and exit from these cells is by way of the balcony.
3. The ground floor of the building is taken up completely by similar type cells which open out directly on to the compound. The only way to obtain access to this compound and so to the cells is by entering the administrative offices, passing along the balcony on the western wing and descending to the ground floor level by means of a staircase at the northern extremity.
4. To each cell there are two doors; the inner one is on the bar principle and constructed of stout timber of good quality whilst the outer one can be described as a heavy steel grill - both doors are secured by substantial double action locks.
5. It appears that at about 8.45pm on 12th July 1944,

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following the sounding of the (lence signal, the prisoners occupying the entire block and numbering about 200 started whistling, shouting and screaming. They refused to stop this commotion when ordered to do so by the prison warders; instead, the noise increased and the prisoners in five cells on the ground floor eastern side placed wooden planks (ordinarily used for sleeping purposes) between the bars of the inner wooden doors and used them to batter against the outer steel doors.

6. At this stage the prison authorities feared the incident would get out of hand and spread to other parts of the prison, so they called upon the Questura and the Fire Brigade for assistance. In the meantime, the warders armed themselves with rifles and from the balcony on the western side fired shots into the air. This had no effect and as the noise was increasing they fired in the direction of the doors of the cells containing the most unruly elements - it was during this particular firing that the accident occurred; GIGLIO Antonio, age 23 years, a farm labourer, serving a sentence of 3 years imprisonment for larceny, was shot through the head whilst wielding one of the wooden battering-rams; he died during the early hours of 13th July.
7. Upon the arrival of the Fire Brigade hoses were put into operation effectively and by 11.p.m order had been restored.
8. On the morning of 13th July, I visited the prison and was present whilst an investigation was made into the affair by the Procuratore Generale and a representative of the Procura del Re.
9. Regarding the cause of the outbreak: It has been established that 22 Italian military detainees occupying a large cell on the second storey, started the commotion as a protest against the 'reduction' in their food ration - this 'reduction' was in order and represented the change-over from military to civilian rations which takes effect after a military prisoner has been detained over 30 days.
10. The civilians, hearing the noise created by the soldiers, realised this was a good opportunity to try and intimidate the authorities into increasing their food ration, so they joined in and gave vent to their feelings.

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11. In company with the prison director I compared the ration scale in force with the scale authorized by existing ACC directives and found that they agreed with the exception that the prisoners were getting an extra 20 grs of dried vegetables with an additional issue of fresh vegetables purchased locally. The director informed me that the prisoners, many of whom refused to eat the soup, were demanding a ration of pasta and he asked that consideration be given to this demand. Pasta is not included in the ACC ration scale so I told the official that the demand could not be met and pasta would not be issued until circumstances permitted ACC to authorize issue to all prisons.
12. After this discussion I examined the cells which contained the unruly prisoners. They were satisfactory but it was observed that the wooden and steel doors had been damaged during the previous nights demonstration and were unsafe. In order to expedite repair I contacted the Public Works and Utilities Officer of this H.Q. and he caused the repairs to be put in hand forthwith.
13. At the time of this visit the director stated that in order to guard against the possibility of further demonstrations he intended to effect the transfer immediately of a number of the unruly elements to a suitable prison in the Province of Reggio and he asked the assistance of ACC in supplying the necessary transport. This assistance was given by our Transportation Division and by the early afternoon of the same day 40 prisoners under CC.RR escort had been transferred safely by motor trucks to a prison at Locri, Reggio Calabria.
14. I have visited the prison at Catanzaro since and it can be said that the situation is now normal. However, a strict watch will be maintained and should any further untoward incident occur the necessary action will be taken and the facts brought to your notice.

G. Richardson
G. Richardson, Major,
Regional Public Safety Officer,
for Regional Commissioner.

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GAZZANO, Italo Luigi per Giovanni

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