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PETRAGNANI, LATE PREFECT OF LECCE
(SEPT. 1943); MAY 1944

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 REAR HEADQUARTERS
 ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
 Public Safety Sub-Commission

11 May 1944.

ACC/

SUBJECT: Italian Fire Service - Defascistization.

TO : D.C.P.S.

1. I have been informed today that the Italian Govt. proposes to get rid of the Director General of Anti-Fire & C.D. Services, S. E. UMBERTO PETRAGNANI who they appointed a few weeks ago, on the grounds that he was a Fascist.
2. S. E. PETRAGNANI, in the time he has held the post has worked very hard in the interests of the service and has produced some very good legislation for the Minister's approval. He has accepted without any question all the proposals and reforms we have suggested and it is evident that he has the service at heart without political consideration. Most of his proposed legislation has in fact been a complete reversal of the Fascist methods.
3. The person they propose to put in his place in one PREFETTO PASQUCCI who was prefect of Caltanissetta and who was interned by us for a period of 10 months according to my information. The reason for his internment is not known but such a person is hardly likely to be co-operative.
4. If this principle is carried out throughout the service we shall have no one left with any knowledge of the work and the Service must suffer accordingly - or else - we shall have to do the work ourselves. The position in a nutshell is that there must be an efficient service and some criticism or no service and no criticism!
5. There should be a line drawn between the Government and the Technical Service. Whilst active ex-fascists are obviously not to be allowed in the Govt., it is difficult to see why "mild" and reformed ex-fascists who are technically the only people who can do the work, should not remain so long as they do their job and keep clear of politics.
- The Fire Service should be and can be entirely non-political. All the Fire Service officers were fascists in name - they had to be - but those who have served us well since the occupation and who remained at their posts instead of escaping should surely not be classed as fascists and ~~got~~ rid of. They took the first opportunity of breaking away from Fascism and placed their duty before their politics.

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6. I understand that there is a danger that Ing. BIGI will be treated in the same way since he was a Fascist. Bigi is the only really capable and fully co-operative officer in the Service and I feel we should take some steps to protect him and keep him ~~and keep him~~ available for Rome. There is no other officer capable of being placed as Commandante of Rome.

7. I propose that we apply at once for Bigi to be attached to this HQ as Advisor and Liaison officer until such time as we can send him to Rome.

8. It is hoped that we may be able to ask the Italian Govt. to reconsider their decision about S.E. Petragani in view of the character of his work and the non-political nature of the post.

It is understood that the Directors General of the Army, Navy and Air Force, who were more Fascist and certainly more Anti-Allied than any others, are not being removed.

Major's head. I view the tendency with grave apprehension for the efficiency of a Service which we have put on its feet with the aid of the very people it is now proposed to get rid of.

16. Removal of Petragani is a matter for the Italian Govt. *G.H.I. Major, Fire & Civil Defense.*

It should not be able to say he has been retained by *G.H.I. Major, Fire & Civil Defense.*

It is not of its own free will. *We must see how far we can go.*

It is understood. *We must see how far we can go.*

REPORT ON PETRAGNANI

New personal file 12/10/51
TR. *1A*

PETRAGNANI was the Prefect of Lecce until the fall of Fascism and he was replaced by ROCCO NINO in Sept 1943.

He has the party distinctions of "Sciarpa Littorio" and "March on Rome", he was noted for his zeal in persecuting those of anti-fascist sympathies e.g. as member and President of the Commission which tried all political cases he always for condemnation and full punishment, even using his casting vote as President to that end.

When Fascism collapsed he was heard to say that rather than remove his Fascist button-hole he would go home and retire from public life. In fact he stayed away from the Prefettura for several days through fear during the initial wave of anti-Fascist enthusiasm. He later approached a member of the Judiciary to enquire how he should go about the task of becoming a lawyer as he wished to retire from public life. As his home is in LECCE he went there but found that his house etc. was completely destroyed by the Germans and so returned to Lecce.

He did not resign from the position of Prefect but was relieved of that post by the first BRADUCCI Government and held at their disposition. Shortly afterwards he was nominated by RENATO VITO, the Minister of the Interior, to the position of chief of Police in Salerno.

Although in Salerno he continued to take an interest in the affairs of Lecce and it is thought that certain members of the Questura, who owe their rapid promotion to PETRAGNANI, have acted as informants.

Whilst awaiting the Government's disposition he worked behind the scenes in Lecce, politically and commercially.

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Sgt H. B. JACKSON.

Sgt.

F.B.I. Lecce.

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