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375/06

FIAT WORKS

MAY - JULY 1945

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THIS FOLDER	
CONTAINS PAPERS	
FROM	MAY 1945
TO	JULY 1945
CATALOGUE.	

SECURITY DIVISION
FILE
MINUTE SHEET

N. of Sheet	Date	File No. of ans'd SR	From to Subject
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1 19 July

SITUATION IN FIAT WORKS.

PAGES MISSING OR
PAGINATION INCORRECT -
FILMED AS FOUND

Date 22/6

INTERNAL

EXTERNAL

Fr.	To.	Fr.	To.
Vice President		ECONOMIC SECTION	
Brig. Anderson		Production Div.	
Col. Walton		Supply Div.	
Col. Densmore		Agriculture Sub-Comm.	
Lt. Col. Moore		Commerce	
Mr. Hughes		Finance	
Maj. Smith		Food	
Maj. Clark		Industry	503 9/9
Maj. Toby		Labor	
Capt. Atkins		F W & U	
Capt. Williams		Transportation	
Capt. Highland		Chief Commissioner	
Lt. DiLoreto		Executive Commissioner	
Lt. Morgan		Civil Affairs Section	
Lt. Lrensberg		Establishment Section	
Requisition Br.		Attention:	
Price Control Br.			
Message Center			

For appropriate Action	Note & Return
Remarks/Recommendations	Signature
Dispatch	Investigation & Report
Information	File
Circulation & Return	Note & Return

REMARKS:

[Handwritten signature]

May be interested to you when you have not attended please see to the safety of

C. H. [illegible] C. H. [illegible]
[illegible]

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HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
A.P.O. 394
PUBLIC SAFETY SUB COMMISSION
SECURITY DIVISION

Ref : SD/ 375.06

19 July 1945

Subject : Situation in Fiat Works

To : V.P., C.A. Section

1. The attached report has been forwarded on to me against a promise to return it.

2. I think it is a matter which should be brought to Executive Commissioner's notice as it vitally affects AME Economics.

JWC
JOHN V. CHAPMAN,
Colonel J.A.G.D.
Director Public Safety
Sub-Commission

Copy to file SD/140 II

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Secret

HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
LOMBARDY REGION
APO 394
Regional Security Officer

Ref. S/ 845

July 17th, 1945.

SUBJECT :- Situation in FIAT works, TORINO

TO:- AC HQ (Security Division)
(Attn. Maj. HARVEY)

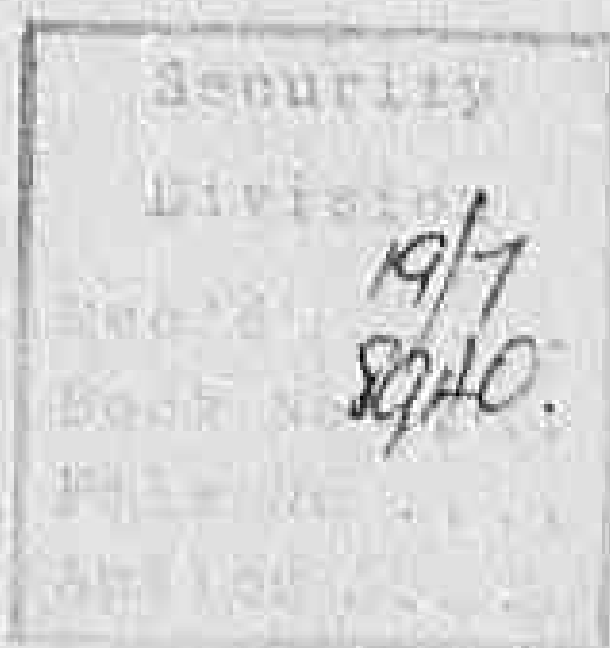
1. Having in mind your recent visit to PIEMONTE I believe the attached report from I.S.L.D. (c/o 59 Area HQ.) dated 9 July 1945 will be of interest to you.

2. Your attention is more especially drawn to paragraphs 3 to 7 on page 6.

3. You may wish to discuss this with Economic Sub-Commission and the Executive Commissioner in so far as AMG/AC is more directly concerned.

4. Please return this document at your convenience.

encl.



A. E. Heath
A. E. HEATH
Major I.C.
Regional Security and
Intelligence Officer

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-402

BY W. G. W. W. 7/28/82
NND 785016

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PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BRANCH
FIFTEENTH ARMY GROUP

14 June 1945

To: Economic Sub-Section
Allied Commission
Rome

From: Hubert Howard
Chief Intelligence Officer Central D Section
FWB Unit 16

I enclose herewith a report by Signor V. Valletta, Director of the Fiat Company, setting out the assistance which he and the Agnelli family gave to the Patriotic Movement in and around Turin from the 8 September 1943 until April 1945. ^{* claim to have given}

As I understand that Signor Valletta is down for epuration by a Factory Committee this material might be of interest both to your section and to that of Public Safety.

Hubert Howard
Hubert Howard
Chief Intelligence Officer

BRIG.
P/A
S/O
Sec'y 22/6

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Security
Division
Rec'd ... 194
Book No 8702
File No 378.06
Action

S E C R E T:

To the Honourable Regional Consultative Giunta of Turin.

The undersigned, having been informed of the order of eparation in regard to his person, desires to claim the annulment of the order, on the basis of the facts appearing in the attached memorial, all the witnesses of which and the relative documents are available.

I ask you to kindly forward the attached copies to each of the Representatives of the Parties forming the Honourable Giunta.

Respectfully yours,

V. VALLETTA.

Turin, 12th May, 1945.

Attached: 1 original and 5 copies for distribution to the representatives of the Parties.

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SECRET:I N D E XPART I.

Secret activity of the Director General of the Fiat (Prof. Valletta) and of the Agnelli family in aid of the Patriotic Movement from 8th September, 1943 until April, 1945:

- I - Assistance given to members of the Armed Forces, officials, etc., who remained faithful to the National cause and to the Committees and Patriotic formations which were gradually organised from 8th September onwards.....Page 1.
- II - Direction of the work of impeding and sabotaging production - especially of war material - by direct and indirect means.....Page 4.
- III - Direction of the work of concealing and accumulating hidden stocks of spare parts, complete motor vehicles, fuel - tyres - food stocks - barrack-stores and other scarce raw material.....Page 6

PART II.

Further activity of the Director General of the Fiat (Prof. Valetta) during the period 8th September, 1943 to April, 1945, in opposition to the Germans and Republicans and in defence of the Fiat Company, the city of Turin, and the Region of Piedmont.

- A - Activity of the Director-General in protection of Fiat employees and all other citizens against Republican and German tyranny during the occupation.....Page 9

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- B - Activities of the Director General in the prevention of the removal of machinery and factories to Germany.....Page 11.
- C - Economic, Financial and Alimentary Assistance developed by the Director-General in favour of Fiat employees and their families during the occupation.....Page 13.
- D - Assistance given to the City and the Region by the Director-General, seeing that the Republican authorities in charge of the various services were incapable of any efficient organisation. Preparation of the solution of the more important problems likely to arise during the emergency (the period of German resistance and withdrawal and of the arrival of Patriot and Allied Forces).....Page 15
- E - Forceful attitude of the Director-General of the Fiat shown by him on every occasion towards the German and Republican authorities in defence of his own personal position and opinions, of his dependents and representatives, and of the whole city always at grave personal risk.....Page 20
- Conclusion.....Page 22

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PART I

I

Assistance given to members of the Armed Forces, officials, etc., who remained faithful to the National cause, and to the Committees and Patriotic formations which were gradually organised from 8th September onwards:

- (a) After 8th September, 1943, members of the Armed Forces, officials, etc., were taken into employment by the Fiat either directly or indirectly, if only to furnish them with essential documents.
- (b) Immediate support was given to the movement in Rome headed by Marchese Visconti Venosta and Colonel Montezemolo which ended in the arrest of Ing. Schmidt, the Fiat envoy, and the beginning of an inquisitorial régime for Prof. Valletta and the Agnelli family.
- (c) Motor vehicles - sundry materials - fuel - barrack stores - sanitary material - were consigned to or taken up by the Patriot bands to the value of about 500 million lire.
- (d) Assistance in money was given by the Agnelli family, by Prof. Valletta, by Rag. Vola and others. The sums paid to military and civilian committees, and directly or indirectly to Partisan formations, or spent in bribes to liberate individuals arrested, and to stifle investigations amount to over 100 million.
- (e) Contacts were maintained with the Committees, the Parties, Patriot formations and Allied Military and civilian elements to exchange news, information, plans, ideas. These contacts were made especially by Prof. Valletta, Conte Camerana and others. 1409
- (f) Personal agreements were reached with individuals and lay and religious societies to free persons arrested, enrolled for labour, impressed or denounced, etc. These agreements were made by Prof. Valletta personally as well as by persons acting under his instructions.

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(g) Assistance was given by providing material, setting up of Radio stations, preparing airfields, etc., by means of highly-trusted Fiat technicians and organisations. There were Radio transmitting stations inside the Stabilimenti Fiat at Sangone and elsewhere.

(h) The following is a list of contacts maintained by the Director-General and his envoys after 8th September, 1943:

Contacts with the Autocentro Militare in Turin:

for Fiat:	Ing. Bono	for Autocentro:	Magg. Creonti
	Ing. Bonetti		Col. Brignone
			Col. Leoncini
			Magg. Emanuelli

Contacts with the Italian Airforce in Turin:

for Fiat:	Prof. Valetta	for It. Airforce:	Col. Nuvoli
	Ing. Poma		Col. Giachino
			and others

Contacts with Patriot Military formations in Rome:

for Fiat:	Ing. Schmidt	for Formations:	Marchese Visconti-
	Sig. Insom		Venosta
	Conte Perotti		Col. Montezemolo
			and others

Contacts with Party representatives in Rome:

for Fiat:	Conte Camerana	for Parties:	Sig. Malvezzi
	Prof. Valletta		

Contacts with Committee of Liberation in Turin:

for Fiat:	Prof. Valetta	for C.L.N.	Rag. Passoni
	(Direct contact)		Dr. Rognetta
			and others

Gen. Conte Camerana
(Direct contact)

Contacts with the Central Committee in Milan:

for Fiat:	Conte Camerana	for C.L.N.	Gen. Cardona
	(Direct contact)		Dr. Merzagora
			and others

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Contacts with Party representatives in Turin:

for Fiat: Prof. Valletta	for Parties: Avv. Galimberti
Rag. Vola	(dead)
and others	Avv. Trink
	Prof. Penati
	Dr. Coamo
	Sig. Capriolio
	(dead)
	Sig. Quarello
	Prof. Uzzaglio
	and others

Contacts with Military Bands and Formations:

for Fiat: Prof. Valletta	for Bands: Gen. Perotti (dead)
(direct contact)	Albertelli (Mauri
	bands & Franchi
	organisations).
Ing. Ragazzi	Gen. Olivieri
and others	Magg. Creonti
	Dr. Peccei

Contacts with various outside Bands, near and far:

For Fiat: Prof. Valletta	Moscatelli (for Vercelli &
(direct contact)	Novara zones)
Ing. Bono	Cap. Rosa (Val di Susa)
Ing. Bonadè &	Cap. Piero (Val di Lanza)
dependents.	Others in Val Pinerolesse
Ing. Geranzani	Mauri (Val di Cuneo)
" Monti	Mountaineers (Cotta, Pontal, etc)
" Nardi	Prof. Uzzaglio (zone of Coazze)
" Taccone	Ranato (Torre Pellice)
" Graneri	and others
" Ragazzi	
" Bertolone	
" Derossi	
" Fogagnolo	
Dr. Torazzi	
Sig. Rosa	
" Gozzelino	

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Contacts with Allied Missions:

for Fiat: Prof. Valletta
(direct contact)

British Mission. Major Temple
(dead)
Magg. Creonti

Ing. Bono
" Ragazzi
" Savonuzzi

American Mission.
Franktown (Segre-Pianazza)
Youngstown (G.C. Ratti)
Leccio (Ing. De Leva)

Contacts with S.A.P. and Comandi Piazza

for Fiat: Prof. Valletta
(direct contact)

Ing. Manfredi
Signora Contarini and others

Ing. Bono

Contacts with Italian and Allied Missions in Rome:
(from June 1944 onwards)

for Fiat: Avv. Agnelli Giovanni
(direct)

Italian Authorities

Conte Camerana (through
Switzerland)

British Missions

American Missions

Prof. Valletta (" ")
Ing. Foglia (In Rome)

II

Direction of the work of impeding and sabotaging production, especially of war material - by direct and indirect means.

This was carried out as follows by:-

- Uncertainties and delays in drawing up the production programmes. 1406
- Numerous and continuous changes of sites of plants.
- Disappearance and losses of, and damage to, essential parts and material.
- Creation and building of new plant requiring much time and work to build.

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- Requests for machinery, tools, and parts which were not really essential and were very difficult to supply.

The result attained was as follows:-

PROGRAMMEAeroplane production.Results attained.1st period2nd period

Sept. 1943-June 1944 10 months. July, 1944-April, 1945

90 + 90 = 180 monthly

30-40 monthly

Nil

Aeroplane Motors:

150-300 monthly

90 "

"

This result was obtained in the second period by shifting the works from Torino to the Lake Garda area.

Tanks & Tractors:

-

About 1/4 of possible production.

Nil

It was decided to change to the production of German types with the result that the production of Italian types dropped to 1/4, while the new German types never came into production at all.

Motor Vehicles:

1,500 monthly.

less than 750

less than 350

The above results were obtained by:-

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(1) Maintaining the full force of all Fiat factory and office workers on the payrolls on 8th September, 1943, preventing any deportation to Germany on the pretext of a programme of increased production in the future, and moreover, obtaining permission to take on more than 3,000 new workers, particularly during the winters of 43/44 and 44/45. This

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enabled dispersed and exhausted partisans to recuperate on full pay in the Fiat factories during the worst periods of the year.

(2) Giving the workers full and continuous pay, even adding exceptional economic and alimentary allowances, and this in spite of the fact that owing to the reduced production in the first period, and the practically complete stoppage of production in the second, returns had become absolutely insufficient.

(3) The funds required to meet these extraordinary expenses were found by cashing existing credits due by the Italian Government up to 8th September, 1943 (more than two milliard lire), compensation for air-raid damage and loans from banks.

III

Direction of the work of concealing and accumulating hidden stocks of spare parts, complete motor vehicles, fuel, tyres, food-stocks, barrack-stores and other scarce raw material.

These stocks were concealed as follows:-

(1) In the interior of factories and workshops by burying or walling-up.

(2) By decentralising them in hospitals or religious institutes, e.g. Hospital of S. Luigi, The Maltese Cross Institute, the Institute of the Salesian brothers, Institute of S. Joseph, Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Rebandengo Institute, etc.

(3) By decentralising them in villas, farms, etc., bought or prepared for that purpose in the hills round Turin, in the Cuneo Zone, Valle di Lanzo, di Susa, etc., the Brughiera Vercellese and Novarese. 1404

Unfortunately many denunciations - above all by Italians - allowed the Germans to discover and recover a large part of the material concealed.

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Naturally, these discoveries several times placed Prof. Valletta and other Directors and officials of the Fiat, who had encouraged these proceedings, in grave personal danger and consequently there were arrests and detentions which were only annulled through the efficacious intervention of certain individuals.

In spite of the Germans, much material remained hidden and has been saved, particularly about 250 small and medium lorries (1,500 and 1,100 types) at the Lingotto works and much ferrous and valuable material.

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PART II

Foreward:

It must be noted, first of all, that during the Fascist Régime, and particularly during the last Republican phase, Fascist authorities have always shown themselves to be inefficient and incompetent, and particularly hostile to the Fiat, because that group never supported Fascism and did not spare their criticism of Fascist methods and systems, so much so that the Fiat group was accused of inscribing itself in the Fascist party only in 1932 and that, under threat of the expulsion of the Company's officials by Fascist elements within the Fiat.

In the Republican phase from 8th September, 1943 onwards, not a single man of the Fiat was inscribed in the party and moreover, very many, including the Director-General, refused to take the compulsory oath to the Republic, in their status as Complementary or Reserve officers.

The consequence of Fascist incompetence was that even before 25th July, 1943, and particularly after 8th September, 1943, the General Directorate of the Fiat was impelled to act on its own initiative in defence and support of the City and the Region to make up for the shortcomings of the local Government authorities.

This explains the prompt and efficacious intervention of the General Directorate of the Fiat in many city and regional problems which are not of its normal competence. This intervention should, nevertheless, form a claim to gratitude for the courage shown by the Directorate in confronting Fascist authority of the first period as well as Republican and German authority of the second phase in defence of the city and region of Piedmont. 1202

In proof of the above, the very numerous documents extant are available.

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- A. Activity of the Director-General in protection of Fiat employees and all other citizens against Republican and German tyranny during the occupation.

1. With regard to the 75,000 workers and employees of the Fiat, in spite of the numerous efforts made by the Germans from 8th September onwards to take men for work in Germany, the Directorate of Fiat succeeded in not allowing one single man to leave out of their own personnel on the rolls of their factories. Only a group of 12 volunteers went to Germany as a result of pressure applied on the Fiat by the Daimler-Benz Company. This result must be considered miraculous in view of the fact that production had been so low in the first period and had been reduced to almost zero in the second.

It must, however, be attributed to the crafty series of tricks, pretexts, delays, new programmes, etc., always presented on every occasion by the Fiat General Directorate with consequences that were always risky and sometimes painful.

The necessary documents in proof of the above are available.

2. With regard to ex-employees of the Fiat, who had been called up for military service and were under arms on 8th September, and had been sent as prisoners-of-war to concentration camps in Germany as well as actual employees of the Fiat and their relatives who had been seized in their houses and sent to Germany during the occupation, the General Directorate at once intervened and established special offices to assist and liberate them, not only at the Fiat in Turin, but also at the Fiat Company in Berlin. The latter had been in existence for more than 25 years and, therefore, had had ample opportunities to form acquaintanceships and make useful contacts.

This intervention was extended by the General Directorate to other Italians, not Fiat employees, but citizens of Turin or of Piedmont as were reported. In this way it was possible -

- (a) to provide continuous assistance in the way of parcels, money and other gifts for internees in German concentration camps with the pretext that they were ex-employees of the Fiat.

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(b) to liberate many of the prisoners, getting them employed, first of all by German firms, and then obtaining their return to Italy by fictitious exchanges of employment with the Fiat.

(c) to encourage and facilitate escapes when no other means of return could be found.

3. With regard to Fiat employees, arrested, impressed or tyrannised by German or Republican police in their homes or evacuation centres, the General Directorate constantly, promptly and courageously on every occasion, either exposing themselves personally or utilising individuals and special organisations, and using every means open or secret, persisted in the work of liberation.

- Altogether, from September 43 to April 45, 2,971 Fiat employees arrested or impressed were liberated.

- Many citizens who had been deported to concentration camps, or forced labour in Germany (among them, in particular, the deportees of the Val di Susa in June 1944) were recovered, repatriated or aided to escape under the pretext that they were employees of the Fiat.

- Many Fiat employees arrested by Republican Police or political forces were freed.

- About 3,000 patriots from Partisan bands were assumed and given work, or inscribed in the payrolls in moments of their worst distress.

Hundreds of letters of thanks and thousands of attestations are available as evidence.

Side by side with this direct assistance, the General Directorate developed further assistance-work in regard to the relatives of arrested, impressed or dead persons. This took the form of parcels of food and clothing, gifts of money, maintenance of their children in boarding-schools at the Fiat's expense, putting relatives on the payroll.

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Imprisoned persons, even when they were not employees of the Fiat were also assisted. In this humane work, the General Directorate made use, not only of its own offices, but also of Religious Societies, the Salesians, Brothers of the Christian Schools, nuns, etc., and charitable organisations like the Conferenze of S. Vincenzo and others.

B. Activity shown by the General Directorate in preventing the removal of machinery and factories to Germany.

It must be noted first of all, that already prior to September, 1943, the Fiat had set up three groups of factory buildings in the Vercellese and Novarese Baraggia, called Reserve factories, designed to decentralise the industry if airraids on the chief factories in Turin should render such a move necessary.

These Reserve factories were complete on 8th September, 1943 as far as the buildings, but lacked connection with the electric power system and all the machinery.

It was on these Reserve factories that the General Directorate founded their programme of shifting machinery which was lying idle or had become utilisable elsewhere owing to airraid damage in the Turin factories, and these removals were carried out, with the result that all production was practically stopped.

Moreover, the sites of these Reserve factories were reported to the Allies through the Italian missions, (Magg. Creonti and others), and the numerous sorties effected by the Allied Airforce over the zone resulted in fresh production programmes and plans for further decentralisation, thereby hindering the removal of machinery and tools to Germany.

These continuous removals enabled the General Directorate to keep in Italy the machine tools employed in aeroplane construction, although not a single aeroplane was being produced.

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The same procedure of removals served to keep in Italy the machine tools of aircraft-engine production although production had dropped in the first 10-month period.

Moreover, the carpet-bombing of June, 1944 on the Mirafiori works, where aircraft-engines were built, led to a change in the plan of evacuation to the Reserve factory in the Vercellese was already in progress, in favour of an absurd scheme to transfer the plant to tunnels along the road of the Gardesana (skirting L. Garda) which the Germans calculated could be done in 30 days.

This scheme enabled us to refrain from transferring machinery to Germany as the best German technicians desired, and a plan to blow up the end of the tunnel near Riva di Trento, was entrusted to Colonel Nuvoli, with the object of blocking the machinery at the moment the Germans withdrew.

By the very slow transfer to the Gardesana and the numerous hindrances created opportune moments, the 10-months from July, 1944 to April 1945 were practically wasted and no aircraft engines were produced.

It was more difficult to save the machinery of the Fiat Marine engines transferred from Pisa and Florence. This machinery could be adapted for the production of aeroplanes and engines and had been saved transfer to Germany by concentrating it in the Reserve factory at Bellinzago, (Novarese) where it lay for 10 months practically idle. German technical experts made determined and repeated efforts to have this machinery transferred to Germany, (nearly 600 machine tools were involved).

The General Directorate and the local Directorate, at great risk to both, succeeded in preventing the transfer and in keeping production practically at zero.

The Germans also made various attempts to transfer the Mirafiori motor vehicle works to Germany, particularly during the second 10 months period after the bombing in June, 1944. By promptly presenting plans of increased future production, by transferring the works to Reserve factories, and by ventilating the danger of agitation among

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SECRET

the workers, the Directorate were able to keep this machinery in Italy while producing almost nothing.

Lastly, the persistent activity of the General Directorate, in agreement with the Directors of Villar Perosa must be noted, in their efforts to stop the transfer of ball-bearings machinery to Germany while, at the same time, production was reduced to a minimum and even suspended for long periods.

After the carpet-bombing of the RIV factories at Turin and Villar Perosa, various plans were put forward to transfer the industry and to create new plant, which greatly retarded any possibility of renewed production.

To prevent transfer to Germany, two plans of evacuation underground were put into operation.

One was to the Bard zone (Val d'Aosta) which was impossible owing to the distance and to the Partisans; the other was to the Turin hills (Cimena) and only about 1/5th of the possible work was completed.

From all these efforts to prevent the transfer of machinery and tools to Germany, which succeeded perfectly, it became clear to the Germans that the General Directors and sub-Directors of the Fiat were engaged in sabotaging the German war effort. Consequently, threats of detention and arrest were made and some were carried out, but the General Directorate and their collaborators remained faithful to the imperative duty of preventing the transfer of the industry which would have entailed:-

- (1) Removal from Italy of machinery which would have been of great assistance to German war production,
- (2) the deportation of Italian workers to Germany. 1397

C. Economic, Financial and Alimentary assistance provided by the General Directorate for Fiat employees and their families during the German occupation.

First of all, it must be observed that for the Fiat Group, the above-mentioned assistance entailed the duty of providing for a total of 75,000 to 80,000 families.

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The General Directorate provided for this mass of people without ~~misusing~~ any employees, even assuming additional personnel, particularly partisans during the winter months in spite of the fact that production, suddenly reduced after 8th September, 1943 for 10 months and then brought practically to nothing in the following 10 months, could not produce the necessary financial returns to cope with the situation.

Credits due by the Italian Government up to 8th September, 1943 (more than 2 milliards), every other form of liquid reserve capital (war damages, etc), and Bank loans, were the means by which the deficit was met.

Immediately after 8th September, 1943, the General Directorate, insisting that the rations available were insufficient (1/3rd of some goods and 1/2 of others out of the essential minimum), and that the workers were obliged to purchase food and clothing over and above their rations at terribly high prices, promptly began a continuous and courageous campaign against German and Republican authorities to obtain:-

- (1) Increased pay or allowances,
- (2) Increased rations or allowances.

In regard to increased pay or allowances and improved rations, the Directors of the Fiat had constantly to act as a goad on the German and Republican authorities, and often in opposition to them.

Numerous money loans and advances were made with the tacit understanding that they were not to be repaid. This trick was made to circumvent the regulations of the Republican authorities.

Continuous and extraordinary distributions were made of foodstuffs, wine, coal, wood, clothing, dry goods, shoes, linen, bicycles, tyres, etc. 396

Soup and other comforts were served daily within the factories - 50 to 80,000 soups were served daily.

In the last months, December to April, 1945, there were free distributions of sugar, cheese, oil, salt, condiments and sanitary material.

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SECRET

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And here must be noted the difficulty of finding and collecting, paying, transporting, storing and distributing the above goods, which at the rate of 1,000 lire for each of 80,000 employees, cost 80 million lire, and at 1 kilogramme for each of 80,000 workers amounted to 80 tons.

Besides the above, in the interests of the more needy workers and of the old, the children and the sick, the Directors of the Fiat provided special offices in every workshop, co-ordinated by a special Central Committee.

These offices helped with gifts of money, food, furniture, clothing, linen and sanitary material.

They found billets for old people, sick and children. They helped to find transport for individuals and their goods. They busied themselves in tracing and recovering lost persons, &c.

D. Help given to the City and the Region of Piedmont by the Directors of the Fiat in view of the incompetence of the Republican authorities, and Plans for the emergency.

Everybody is aware of the extent of the Fiat's intervention during the enormous disorganisation which occurred after the first airraids on the city and the work done in the salvage, transport and evacuation of people and property.

There is ample documentary evidence of the altruistic spirit displayed by the Directors and employees of the Fiat and the lack of understanding and even the hatred shown to them by the local Fascist authorities.

During the period following 8th September, the truly enormous disorganisation in the centre and the outskirts of the Fascist Republic forced the Directors to intervene with energy, a line of action which was borne ungraciously and even insultingly by the Fascists but which helped to preserve the city and perhaps the neighbouring provinces from catastrophe. 1395

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This assistance may be noted under the following heads:-

- (1) Help in provisioning and feeding the City.
- (2) Help in financial and charitable work.
- (3) Help in preparing for the emergency.
- (4) Secret support and assistance to Patriotic formations and the Allied troops in the final emergency.

Every service and suitable office of the Fiat was put at the disposal of the City's provisioning organisations, particularly after the air-raids of June-July, 1944 and subsequently which absolutely upset all the organisation of food supplies by the authorities.

(1) Help in provisioning and feeding the City.

The Directors presented plans to the authorities and actually put a great part of them into practice without any help from the latter. It is interesting to note the plan proposed in September, 1944.

The Plan:

The need for guaranteeing that the City and the Region has the indispensable minimum of motor transport required for provisioning the city entails the prevention of the requisitioning, authorised or unauthorised, of such transport on the part of the innumerable military, police or technical etc. authorities, Italian as well as German.

The transport of both raw materials as well as provisions should be ensured by the combination of every means; railways, tramways, motors and horse-drawn vehicles, under one single authority, seeing that there is hardly any fuel available. 1394

Grain and flour for baking bread should be stored in the centres of production of the Piedmontese provinces, (particularly in Cuneo) and a reserve should be built up by bringing in supplies in excess of the daily minimum requirement of 1,500 quintals.

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Grain and flour should be distributed to industrial firms in the chief production centres of Piedmont, so that they can effect distribution in conformity with the Prefectural five-month concessions, (or preferably reduced even to one or two months' reserves).

Firewood (for cooking and heating). It would be advisable to support those firms who, on their own initiative, are utilising the woods in the vicinity of Turin, seeing that it is almost impossible to collect and transport stocks from the distant timbered zones.

In the case of firms who distribute to their workers, it is necessary to deal with the wine problem and issue quotas in time to those firms who have shown how to provide an economical distribution.

The Fiat organisations for soup distribution should be supported by timely supplies, sufficient even to form reserves for eventual emergencies.

The provision of emergency water supplies and alternative systems, even to industrial firms in the City, has been studied in a suitable way in collaboration with the technical communal authorities.

The provision and co-ordination of transport - experiments and expedients (only very indirectly assisted by Prof. Albertario) - the study and application of emergency methods and the organisation of railway, motor, horse and even hand-drawn transport were put into operation almost always with the Fiat Directors' own plans, men and means, and it was under their urging that the feeding of the city was made easier even in the midst of the mistakes and confusion of the local Fascist authorities.

(2) Help for Hospitals and charity.

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Already during the critical period in Rome, (before and during its liberation), the General Directors of the Fiat had given strong support to the charitable and Hospital work undertaken by the Vatican and the Order of the Knights of Malta in Rome.

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Even more extensive assistance was provided by the Fiat in Turin -

(a) by assisting the first-aid hospital and distributing centres for the sick, the old people, children and needy, belonging to the Order of the Knights of Malta.

(b) by assisting other hospitals in the city,

(c) by assisting the organisations of the Archbishop of Turin - Cardinal Fossati and his helpers; e.g. the Archbishop's charity, soup for the poor, help for refugees, help for the imprisoned, etc., etc.

Through these charitable organisations, it was also possible to give secret aid to sick and wounded patriots and their families.

(3) Help in organising for the State of Emergency.

The following programme of studies for the plans for the emergency may give some idea of the preliminary work performed by the Fiat Directors with the view of assisting citizens in the final moments of uprising and German withdrawal.

I. Essential Services (Emergency measures).

Water, fuel for heating and cooking, private and collective kitchens, emergency lighting, Public health, First Aid Posts, hospitals.

II. Feeding of the City (Emergency measures).

Grain and bakeries, rice, maize, fats, wine, preserves, tomato conserves, sugar, problems of collection and distribution.

III. Feeding and care of children and Old people. (emergency measures).

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IV. Soup and Kitchens for workers and population.
Fiat alone prepared for 150,000 rations daily.

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- V. Barrack-stores and hospital fittings and furniture.
(emergency measures).
- VI. Clothing, underclothing and linen.(emergency measures)
- VII. Improvised railway transport of food(emergency measures).
- VIII. Improvised system of motor and horse transport of food;(emergency measures).
- IX. Coal and Fuel.
- X. Firewood for heating and cooking.
- XI. Production of motor transport, trailers, trucks, &c.
- XII. earmarking industrial plants essential to the emergency programme.

(4) Preparation of assistance to patriotic formations and Allied troops in the emergency period:

As regards organisation, this was arranged with the Allies in meetings with the representatives of various missions. (Major Temple and Mags. Creonti with Ing. Ragazzi and others), and with the patriot formations by contacts between Ing. Zanone and Modesti and others.

This included, above all, the possibilities of the Fiat in secretly providing -

Means of transport. (Motorcars, lorries, etc) and Fuel.

Barrack stores and first-aid for the troops arriving. 1391

Food - Kitchens - and soup for the troops arriving.

Everything was collected in hoards, chiefly in the Fiat Lingotto works, in the cellars in Via Roma and in various secret points.

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E. Forceful attitude taken up by the General Directors of the Fiat towards German and Republican authorities on every occasion in defence of their own position, their own opinions, their own dependents and representatives and the whole city, always at grave personal danger:

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The German occupation of Turin occurred on 10th September, 1943, and of the Fiat on the 11th with immediate requisitioning and thefts of cars, material and foodstocks to the value of about 300 millions.

The personal attitude of the Director General, (V. Valletta), then as continually afterwards, was one of stiff reserve. It was always maintained that the industry and the Directors considered themselves forcibly occupied.

The energetic efforts to defend workers and citizens against the Town Commandant, Major Sanding, from the very start are a testimony to the above as well as the clear-cut and patriotic front put up by the Director General against the threats of shooting on the part of the Commandant. The only authority who remained courageously at his post and joined with the Fiat in the defence of the workers and the citizens was the then Podestà, Avv. Villabruna.

Being forced to set up an office in the Fiat to deal with relations with the occupying forces, the Director General did not hesitate to name it "Office for the Occupation," and maintained that name for many months until in 1944 he was obliged, under threats, to change the name to "German Office."

When Prof. Valletta and other Fiat functionaries fell into grave suspicion with the German S.S. on the occasion of the enquiry into the support given in Rome to Col. Montezemolo's patriotic movement, and when further enquiries ended in the arrest of Ing. Schiati, the Fiat Director in Rome, who was only saved by the intervention of courageous Roman personalities and the payment of several millions, the Professor, as well as the Agnelli family, was reported on inquisitorially



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and from then on was persecuted with continual threats of arrest. In fact, on the night 30th Nov/1st Dec. 1943, Prof. Valletta was summoned with other Fiat Directors to the Principe di Piemonte Hotel and underwent a most grilling enquiry which was conducted by the German General Zimmermann, various other German officers as well as by Fascist authorities and police.

He and the other Directors were accused of fomenting strikes in the works, sabotaging production, etc. After this night-sitting in the hotel, at 2 a.m., General Zimmermann interrogated the workers' night shift at the Fiat Mirafiori works in the hope of collecting incriminating evidence against Prof. Valletta.

These accusations against the General Director and the other Directors of the Fiat were repeated with increasing frequency in the months following and with ever-growing peremptoriness especially after workers' strikes, money loans or allowances given to workers, assumption of partisan personnel, discovery of bilingual passes, etc.

In regard to the German authorities of Milan and Como during the 20 months' occupation, the Director General's attitude was no less firm and clear-cut.

Among other things, the Fiat was accused of hiding motorcars, fuel, material, foodstocks and machinetools and of secret negotiations with Partisan forces and the Committee. The General Directorate has always put up an obstinate defence in favour of their workers and their machinery, averting violent action against the workers in the factories and facing accusations and risks of arrest, which were only avoided by sheer miracle.

This courageous and patriotic attitude was recognised even by the Head of the R.u.M. in Como, General Leyers, in whose presence and that of the Minister Schiebert, Prof. Valletta declared that the Partisans were worthy of admiration because they had sworn an oath which they were determined to keep and, therefore, they deserved assistance.

The personal battle between the S.S. German police Gestapo, etc., against Prof. Valletta continued with increasing intensity until Col. Rauff issued an order for his arrest which

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was not carried out by pure chance, and then persons in contact with Rauff and the Rev. Don Bichler and others intervened providentially.

The instructions left by the Director General to the personnel of the staff of the Directors on the morning of Monday, 26th June, 1944, while awaiting his imminent arrest, are a testimony to his calm courage.

Further interrogations, enquiries and inquiries followed. The most dangerous was that conducted by General Schlemann who had been informed that Prof. Valletta had been in contact with Major Temple and others of the British and American missions.

Even in the last days, a Major specially instructed by General Schlemann summoned Prof. Valletta and other Directors to German H.Q. and detained them on the premises in Corso Cavour under the accusation that considerable stocks of "gasoline" and petrol had been secreted.

To the catalogue of dangers incurred must be added the secret wireless sets in some factories, among them the transmitter in the Fiat Reggione.

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As well as the German peril, the General Directorate had to meet the danger arising from Republican authorities and the numerous agents provocateurs from the various police organizations.

As the dislike of the Director General for the Fascists was clear from the beginning, the work of protecting and assisting Fiat employees could not be undertaken openly and directly but by means of professional men and individuals who offered their services, with the object of being rewarded sooner or later.

Threats and attempts to expropriate by agents of the Party were numerous and for the most part were averted by intermediaries or personalities who intervened.

When the Director General authorized certain financial concessions to the workers without the previous consent of Marchionni, the Head of the Confederations, the latter demanded



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his arrest, which was only averted by the insistence of the local Prefect. The efforts of the General Directorate to give moral and material support to the victims of the Régime created and maintained an atmosphere of suspicion and menace around the persons of Prof. Valletta and the Directors of the Fiat.

The barometric chart of this atmosphere can be followed in the series of criticisms, complaints and threats by the Fascists from the creation of the Republic onwards, which culminated in a speech of Zerbino, the Minister for the Interior, delivered on 20th March, 1945, to the Fiat Directors who had been specially summoned to Palazzo Cisterna after the complete failure of the election for the Socialisation of Industry.

The more significant portions of his speech were as follows:-

"Then we (the Fascists) have had to recognise that there is another hostile force working on the Fiat, and that is the Committee of National Liberation; and we have had to recognise that the result we have obtained - x - is no less than the result obtained by others - viz. y -. The two results are not equal. X is no less than y. There is no equation. Therefore, we said 'stop.' We must obtain a greater result, a positive result, at any cost, engaging the hostile force all along the line with all our resources. The present situation is impossible, can be tolerated no longer and must change." -

"Very well, Socialisation must succeed also in the Fiat. We have decided to achieve it by any means."

"The Duce has sent me to Turin because the question (socialisation) is now one of Public Order." 1387

"Consider well, because if we are compelled, you Directors will find yourselves personally and physically thrust out of the works, and once out, each of you can be called upon to answer for crimes like these, intelligence with the enemy, sabotage of the war effort and, I think there is no need to say any more."

"Fiat production has fallen to such a point that even the Germans find that it is not worth the cost. Even taking into account all the unfavourable circumstances, such as lack of raw materials and coal, crisis in communications



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and transport, etc, production is below the limit of toleration. Everybody is asking how can the Fiat, which is producing practically nothing, pay hundreds of thousands of lire every month in salaries and wages. There are reserves, it is true, but reserves can be counted, they have a limit. Must we think that sacks of pounds sterling drop from the skies? Valletta smiles incredulously, but there are some who may think so"

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It has never been the habit of the Fiat and, therefore, of its men to boast of these deeds, holding as they do, that such action was a duty and that particularly during this last period of the occupation, any danger and any effort was a little thin in comparison with the act of many who have sacrificed their lives for their country.

But no one can be called upon to sacrifice their honour, when one is conscious of having worked secretly and openly in the purest spirit of patriotism with faith and courage, and faced all the dangers which had to be met.

It is, therefore, only for this reason and to put the Commission in possession of all the facts, which could not be revealed before and are unknown to the Commission, that the undersigned has thought fit to set out what he has done, with full confidence in the judgment of those to whom this memorial is addressed.

signed - V. VALLETTA.

Turin, 12th day, 1945.

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