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LAZIO-UMBRIA REGION, BUILDINGS
OCT. 1944 - JAN. 1945

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HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT
LAZIO UMBRIA REGION
EDUCATION DIVISION
APO 394

FFG/mg

26 Jan 1945

TO : Education Subcommittee, AC. HQ.
SUBJECT : School in Via S.Giovanni in Laterano, Rome.
FILE : R4/ED/

Reference article in "Risorgimento" of 21 Jan 45.

1. This morning I paid a visit to the building referred to and found out the following facts:
2. The school is situated at No.21, Via S.Giovanni in Laterano, and was built 4 years ago for a convent of Sisters of Loreto. These sold out to an engineer who cannot be traced.
3. Some time ago, about 18 months, the building was divided, half remaining as a school and the other half as food rationing offices. This state of affairs lasted until 5 months ago, since which it remained empty. The state of the place is extremely dirty and neglected and casts reflection upon the city authorities who used it and abandoned it in so lamentable a state.
4. I propose to suggest to the civil authorities of Rome that the place be cleaned, minor repairs carried out, preparatory to its being reequipped and used as a school. It could accommodate about 500 children. There is no school equipment, but this could no doubt be borrowed from schools which are likely to remain requisitioned for a long time.
5. It is rumoured that an office of the municipality of Rome has designs on this accommodation. I shall, therefore, make the aforementioned suggestion quickly and shall be glad of your support, if necessary.

Francis F. Gregory Major
FRANCIS F. GREGORY
Major Lan. Fus.
Regional Education Officer

-encl.

1869

14 December 1944

78/40

R E P O R T
ON THE ACTION OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES OF ROME
IN THE MATTER OF SCHOOLS

Since the 20 Oct, when classified lists of all schools were sent to the competent authorities in Rome, a constant battle, none the less severe for being conducted courteously, has taken place with these authorities, particularly the Sindaco. I have had, in all, three interviews with him, two of them on this subject, and have always found him extremely courteous; but his manner and the way in which he used the uncertain and meagre information at his command gave the impression, backed up by later events, that he was not really interested in the matter.

Possibly a few dates will make this clear:

On the 2 Nov. I commenced an intensive series of visits of schools unavailable and found nothing had been done.

a) On the 9 Nov. another letter was sent to the Sindaco by me concerning the need for action by his authority in cleaning and disinfecting the schools of the city. This produced no answer.

b) I therefore on the 14 put the matter before the Regional Commissioner who instructed me to prepare a letter for his signature. I received a copy of his letter dated the 15 Nov.

c) In this letter the Sindaco was reminded of the gravity of the situation, particularly schools occupied by refugees, in need of cleaning and repairs, and those in use by Italian authorities and political parties. This letter was rather more conciliatory than I could have wished. The Sindaco was also informed that "a brief report would be appreciated."

d) A similar letter was sent to the Prefect.

e) On the 13 Nov. the Prefect replied that regarding those schools in use by political parties, he had told the Sindaco of Rome to deal with the matter as soon as possible. This is directly at variance with the Prefect's own words to me personally, that of all the lists of occupied schools, only that dealing with political parties fell within his sphere of responsibility. Had he not said this, I would not have wasted my time in requesting an interview.

f) On the 1st Dec. the Sindaco sent the first reply, 5 weeks or so after the matter had come up, in which apart from the general unreliability and in fact incorrectness, of the figures he quoted, he reported nothing more satisfactory than vague schemes for removing the refugees elsewhere.

I next spoke of these difficulties to, and asked the support of the Vicariato, the Communist Party press who were using 7 schools, and the Union of Italian Women, with a view to bringing pressure to bear from as many quarters as possible. The Communist paper "Unità" advised the party groups to vacate their schools within 8 days. This has largely been done, while the Union of Italian Women sent a letter to the Sindaco urging action and forwarding a plan of their own. Comments in the press are becoming more bitter, and it is clear that these attacks will increase rather than diminish in the future.

Pressure of other business prevented further action in this particular field for some days. After receiving your request for a report, I, with my Secretary, visited the Sindaco to get the latest information, if any, on the situation. Possibly in view of the pressure from this and other quarters something did appear to have been started, at least as regards refugees, but nothing was very certain, so much so that I asked him if he thought it best to await an expected report on other accommodation for the refugees from the City Engineers Department before writing this report; he agreed, as I expected. He informed me that a sub-office under Dr. Salvi was directly responsible to him for the schools.

He said that had he known of the state of affairs six months ago much more could have been done. This may be true, but he has had ample time to do more than has been done as the paragraph below dealing with the visit to the general Inspector of Schools shows.

I think the case of the Galvani school is illustrative. Here a plan had been agreed upon between the school authorities, R.A.A.C., the military occupiers, including the Royal Engineers (who had agreed to carry out certain essential structural alterations-) and myself, for the completion of each removal of certain municipal personnel from two rooms. The Sindaco was asked to do this, but according to the latest information, has failed to order the removal of these people.

As before, I had the impression that my visit was as unwelcome as the facts I produced, and that only his courtesy, and possibly my position, prevented him terminating it earlier. I attempted to stress the fact that both from the point of duty and from natural inclination, I honestly wished and still do wish, to do all I can do to assist in solving this bad situation in Rome. This expression was received graciously and coolly. I was in fact a nuisance, at least in this matter. I think this was shown by the fact that my assistants always found it difficult to transact any business on my behalf at the Prefettura and Campidoglio, having had on one occasion to wait a considerable time. In fact, the education bodies in Rome, whether this division or the civil education authorities, feel equally that we are meeting opposition, the main power of which is the sheer force of inertia. To my knowledge, both Provveditore and Ispettore, have worked hard under discouraging circumstances with very poor results.

Immediately after, we visited Dr. Salvi, who appeared to be fighting for breath and sanity in a mounting sea of difficulties, but I felt he was doing his best. I blamed him for not having sought more help from this office. He promised to do so in the future, even to the extent of asking me to request the Allies to furnish troops and transport to remove refugees from schools. On my asking the reason why the Carabinieri could not do this, he replied with embarrassment, that little faith could be placed in the Carabinieri in a

matter like this. Hence the request for the allied troops. I told him flatly I did not intend to ask such a thing, but suggested that Italian troops could do it. I do not personally think the opposition would be so determined as he seemed to imagine. About political parties he said they obviously had no right there, but thought they would ignore orders to clear out. Then after stressing the need for close liaison between his office and mine we left him. He did add that it was hoped to do a lot during the Christmas vacation of 15 days.

A further point is that in no case of refugees or occupied schools have I found that any official has been sent by the civil authorities to inspect either their sanitary conditions or to safeguard against damage to the structure.

I visited the Chief Inspector of Schools (Elementari) on 14 Dec. and learned that he had submitted to the Sindaco, through the Provveditore, in August, plans for the regrouping of refugees and for the repair of schools. Nothing whatever happened. According to him, no schools have in fact been disinfected or repaired, though some have been opened without either having been done.

A further instance of the lack of initiative in Rome, this time regarding the Prefect, is the situation concerning requisitioning of cars for civilians. Since you made the arrangement by which we requisitioned a car for the Provveditore the transport problem, due to various causes, has deteriorated so much that it has not been possible to observe this arrangement temporarily. Whether it should have ever been made is not a matter worth discussing now, but cars for both Provveditore and Ispettore have to be requisitioned by the Prefect since we have no longer that right. Nothing, however, has been done to provide these essential officials with cars, but the policy is preferred of using us to do so where possible in order to avoid repercussions, social and otherwise, on him. I personally object to pulling anyone's chestnuts out of the fire, especially when such a chronic lack of initiative and cooperation exists, as shown by the foregoing report.

Francis F. Gregory 1865
FRANCIS F. GREGORY

Major Gen. Fus.

Regional Education Officer

A V A I L A B L E		U N A V A I L A B L E						
Avail- able 1	Allies 2	Italian Forces 3	Italian Cont.Auth. 4	Sfollati 5	Polit. Parties 6	Repairs 7	Remarks	
20 Oct 64	18	8	20	43	12	59	(20 serious)	
1 Dec 64	10	1	20	43	12 ⁺	59		
change 15	8	7	Nil	Nil	Nil	---		
20 Oct 52	16	5	1	13	5	33	1 destroyed	
1 Dic 65	6	3	1	13	4	33	varying degrees of damage	
change 13	10	2	Nil	Nil	1	---		

Elementary

Secondary

* Comunisti have been urged by own paper "Unità" (6 Dec.) to vacate within a week.

No political party has been even approached by Sindaco concerning evacuation.

These figures, except column 2, are not guaranteed correct.

Francis F. Gregory

FRANCIS F. GREGORY
Major Gen. Fus.
Education Officer

1864

