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COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
MILAN DETACHMENT ZONE 3
APO 512 c/o GSI(b) 2 DISTRICT CMF

25 April 1946

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: Armed Revolt in S. Vittore Prison, Milano

RE : Investigation

About 1500 hours on 21 April 1946 a new and grave uprising occurred at S. Vittore Prison, Milan led by criminal detainees.

1. The common criminals, favored with arms and munitions, had the initial edge on the guards of the prison and practically overran the whole prison. Bloody conflicts occurred with the police forces arriving to reinforce the guards. In various sections the rebels set fire to the jail in order to necessitate the firemen to pump water in those sectors creating further obstacles and thus evading capture or being shot. However, many were wounded on both sides. The rebels captured and held as hostages the Commissario Dr. Battaglia, 2nd Lt. Colombo of the Auxiliary Police and 27 other guards and policemen.

2. In a short period the revolt spread also among the ex-partisan and political prisoners. On the night of the 22nd a brief calm was noted, but the following morning the uprising continued with greater violence. The women and the Allied prisoners were removed just before the rebels reached that section of the prison. The rebels yelled through the bars that they would kill the hostages if the competent authorities refused to accept their requests. A Carabinieri Captain and the well-known bandit BARBIERI acting as intermediaries discussed the situation. The prisoners desired the intervention of Cardinal Schuster to guarantee any eventual agreement.

The requests were:

- (a) The immediate release of the political detainees.
- (b) To transfer from the prison the director Sig. TONINI.
- (c) To prohibit the press from publishing the incident.

3. Under these conditions the hostages would be released and the mutiny would have ceased. The Cardinal observed that the case was exclusively the concern of the Ministry of Interior and thusly declined the request.

The Milanese authorities contacted the Minister of the Interior ROMITA who responded that he would do everything

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possible with the maximum energy to quell the uprising. Meanwhile, TONINI, the director of the prison, was removed.

4. The Prefect and other city authorities arranged the closing off of all traffic on the streets adjacent to the prison, reinforced the police and surrounded the prison from the outside. Sporadic firing continued with the purpose of preventing any of the detainees from scaling the inner wall. During the mutiny the rebels organized a representative commission including two political detainees, two criminal prisoners and two ex-partisans. One of these representatives was the noted bandit BARBIERI who presented himself to the police in the role of arbitrator. The above mentioned commission demanded several times that the authorities comply with their requests, but they were turned down every time.

5. About 1600 hours on 24 April 1946 after 76 hours of revolting, the rebels hoisted the white flag and began surrendering. To quell the revolt the following were necessary:

- (a) 300 'Arditi' soldiers from the "Legnano" Division
- (b) 500 Carabinieri
- (c) Auxiliary Agents
- (d) Cavalry and 'Bersaglieri' Units
- (e) The "Celere" Battalion
- (f) 10 Light-Armored Vehicles
- (g) 5 Tanks
- (h) 40 Motocyclists
- (i) 3 Mortars .81mm
- (j) 4 Artillery Pieces .75mm
- (k) About 50 machine-gun pieces of various calibre

6. Investigation revealed that the detainees had few arms. Up to the present time only the following have been located:

- (a) 3 rifles-repeating
- (b) 4 muskets
- (c) About 15 pistols
- (d) Some hand-grenades and some other hand made explosives
- (e) About 100 gas masks

7. It is difficult to establish if the arms in the possession of the rebels were received from outside sources, it is more probable, however that the arms themselves were found in the cellars of the prison which were abandoned by the Germans.

This Agent in the company of Special Agent Laurendi investigated the premises immediately after the surrender and determined the damage to be heavy. The central tower was partially destroyed, all cell doors were torn off, the gates torn up, one corner of the prison burned, the storehouse of

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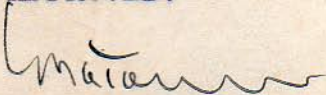
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food stuff looted, etc. However, the files in the registers office were not damaged. It is estimated that it will take several months before the prison is restored and can resume its normal operations

A rumor that the clandestine "Partito Democratico Fascista" was responsible for the revolt is at present being investigated.

NICHOLAS A NATSIOS
Special Agent, CIC

APPROVED:


M.A. TONINI
Major, M.I.
Supervising Agent

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