

S E C R E T

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
ITALIAN FRONTIER CONTROL DETACHMENT
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
APO 512 U.S. ARMY

17 May 1945
Turin Section

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE:

SUBJECT: Minor Riot and Demonstration in Aosta

RE: French Propaganda in the Frontier Region

On this date this Agent in the company of Special Agent Ralph Musengo, CIC, made a tour of inspection of the Aosta Sub-Section. These Agents arrived in Aosta at about 1500 hours in time to witness a parade forming near the Piazza Carlo Alberto. Upon investigating, these Agents were able to identify the procession, which was headed for the Piazza Alberto, as being constituted of French sympathizers of the town.

About 400 people carrying placards with various pro-French slogans, French flags, and chanting "Plebiscito" made their way to the Piazza towards a speakersstand which was being erected for the occasion. At this point several Italian partisans who were standing at the opposite side of the Piazza which was crowded by several hundred people carrying Italian flags and the banners of the Aosta valley, ran across the square towards the demonstrators shouting, "down with France", "death to the traitors" and "long live Italy" and clashed with the demonstrators. One succeeded in seizing a French flag which he threw to the ground and trampled on it. Immediately fists began to fly and several French sympathizers were knocked down. At this point American Sherman tanks manned by soldiers of the 81st Cav. Ren. Sq; intervened and began to disperse the crowd which had by this time numbered well over two thousand people. Within ten minutes order had been restored and the situation was well in hand.

Both sides gathered in small groups in the vicinity of the square and carried on heated but uneventful discussions.

Speaking with several people in sympathy with the Italian nationalists these Agents were informed that French officers had planned and encouraged the demonstration. While the procession was forming these Agents noticed a French officer who from a nearby balcony waved and saluted the demonstrators as they passed by.

A section of French troops which tried to intervene during the time that American tanks were dispersing the crowd was turned back by an unidentified American officer. The French troops left

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the area without further trouble.

AGENT'S NOTES :

1. On the road to Aosta, these Agents questioned several people on the activities of the French. From several it was learned that at the town of San Vincenzo, on 14 May 1945, a French officer spoke to the population of the town and asked them to swear allegiance to France. This unidentified officer stated that the Aosta Valley belonged to the French and played on the sympathies of the people by telling them that the population was all of French decent as their names were all good French names.

2. This type of propaganda is noticeable in all the sectors of the frontier region.

3. The French in the Aosta region are not in strength and are very poorly armed.

No incidents of clashes between French and American soldiers have been reported as yet.

NICHOLAS A. NATSIOS
SAIC, Turin Section

RALPH MUSENGO
SPECIAL AGENT, CIC

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