

## The OSS in the Italian Resistance: A Post Cold War Interpretation

by Claudia Nasini

The Italian Resistance requires a more complex account than that traditionally portrayed by official historiography, which mostly claims that Italian Partisan Patriots constituted the core of Resistance to Nazi rule<sup>1</sup>. New evidence, from both the US and Italian intelligence archives, shows that numerous American agents, hundreds of Italian government soldiers and countless fully-fledged American spies of Italian nationality participated in the Liberation of Italy.

This article explores the missing part of the story of the Resistance in the VI Partisan Ligurian Zone in the Northwest of Italy. It describes the manifold cooperation between Italian and American agents in support of local Partisans. It also shows how several factors hindered traditional historiography, not only ideological bias – albeit very important – but also the protagonists' preference for secrecy<sup>2</sup>. Last but not least, the prolonged lack of documentation played an

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<sup>1</sup> This interpretation not only appears in the renown work - rather outdated but still considered a point of reference in this field – by R. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza italiana (8 settembre 1943-maggio 1945)*, Torino, Einaudi, 1964, p. 528 and *passim*. This idea has also recently been maintained in the work by D. Ellwood, “Gli alleati e la Resistenza”, in E. Collotti, R. Sandri, F. Sessi (ed. by), *Dizionario della Resistenza. Storia e geografia della Liberazione*, vol. I, Torino, Einaudi, 2001, in particular pp. 246-248. This interpretation reemerges in equally renown reconstructions, particularly one we will return to dwell upon, that of one of the main Italian expert of Partisan Resistance, G. Bocca, in his *Storia dell'Italia partigiana. Settembre 1943-maggio 1945*, Milano, Mondadori, 1995, pp. 164-168. Originally published in the mid-60's, the work has been republished several times until the mid-90's. Finally, it is worth noting that even today Badoglio's Government, the Italian Monarchy and the refunded post-1943 Italian Army (the three backbones of the so-called "Kingdom of the South") are highly neglected topics in Italian historiography on Italian Resistance; see on this topic E. Aga Rossi, *Una nazione allo sbando*, Bologna, Il Mulino, new corrected edition, 2003, pp.12; 17.

<sup>2</sup> On the many historiographical "gaps" in Italian literature see E. Aga Rossi's review “Alleati e Resistenza in Italia” in Id., *L'Italia nella sconfitta*, Esi, Naples, 1985, particularly pp. 192; 197.

important part. The *raison d'État* of the Italian and US governments kept both OSS and SIM (Italian Military Intelligence) archives "classified" until a few years ago. Evidently, there were some "top secret" affairs to keep quiet, such as the OSS's habit, for instance, of enrolling Italians as fully-fledged U.S. military personnel<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, the Italian government's compliance with – or more exactly, submission to – this American practice was not something to be proud of, from the Italian side.

The article will show how, in practice, many SIM agents and Italian soldiers ended up operating inside the Resistance thanks to the missions ran by the OSS. These Italian nationals took orders straight from the Americans in the context of Allied strategies. The US services recruited these men in prison and detention camps<sup>4</sup> and turned them into secret service agents under direct orders from Washington. They were subject to US laws of war<sup>5</sup>. It is clear that their nature as agents for both SIM and OSS was unknown to their fellow Partisans. In practice, former Italian soldiers operated in the context of certain OSS missions; as well as, in the most embarrassing cases, former SIM agents deserted their own services, choosing to join the US forces. These men earned the resentment of Italian commanding officers who threatened after the war to consider them true and proper deserters. However, the contribution of these very agents proved indispensable to strengthening the Patriots' war against the Nazi-fascists though they were half way between spies and fighters, defenders of the fatherland and mercenaries working for foreigners.

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<sup>3</sup> To begin by late spring of 1944, the Americans began to recruit into OSS former Italian Government military personnel. To the latter was asked to sign contracts that turned them into U.S. soldiers in all respects. This practice, adopted by that time until the end of the Italian Campaign was in stark contrast with military laws, which does not provide for military personnel to move from its national army to that of another country.

<sup>4</sup> Starting from October 1943 the Allies set up some camps in the South of Italy for the re-ordering, recovery and subsequent re-employment of Italian military personnel who had disbanded following the armistice. At the same time, the Allies also used numerous former Italian prisoners who had been purposely freed and subjected to Allied command. Even today there is no comprehensive study on Italian co-belligerency, a reconstruction of the Italian Army after the 8<sup>th</sup> of September is in the volume by S. Loi, *I rapporti fra Italiani e Alleati nella Cobelligeranza*, S.M.E. Ufficio Storico, Roma, 1986, pp. 74-75. Loi's work, however, does not mention the former Italian military personnel and prisoners employed by the Allies.

<sup>5</sup> See further on in the article the quoted final report by the OSS Major Andre Pacatte in NARA, RG 210, Entry 210, box, 80, folder 6, doc. 2599/9. *Report of Major Andre Pacatte first written in the field later expanded and corrected*, in particular p. 46. Major Pacatte, from the landing in Sicily until April 1945 was with an OSS *Secret Intelligence* detachment working alongside the 5<sup>th</sup> American Armata and was one of the major players in planning the envoy of Italian agents in occupied Italy.

Finally this article, by introducing and analyzing the role of SIM in the context of the collaboration with the American OSS counterpart, allows for a reading of the Resistance which for the first time takes into account the presence of another important protagonist, that is, the Italian authorities of the Southern part of Italy, liberated by the Anglo-Americans, upon which SIM depended. Besides the Italian Partisans (led by some of the future leaders of the Italian political parties) and Anglo-American intelligence services, there was a third element which has until now completely neglected by historiography. This further protagonist was, until June 1944, the so-called "Kingdom of the South"; namely, the military Government of General Pietro Badoglio centered in the Southern Italian seaport of Brindisi. After June 1944 Badoglio's Government was replaced by the "Rome's Government" which came to include the re-born Italian anti-Fascist parties and was transferred to Rome. Until the Liberation the "Rome's Government" was led by one of the less investigated Prime minister of Italian history, that is, the statesman Ivanoe Bonomi.

The total omission – conscious or not – of this third protagonist essentially has two explanations. On the one hand, we repeat, there was the question of "secrecy" and a total absence until very recently of almost any documentation relative to the Italian and US intelligence services at the time of the war. On the other hand, the historiographical "gap" can be explained by what Italian historian Leopoldo Nuti defined as an "unresolved issue" in Italian historiography on the Cold War which, nevertheless, had recognized the importance of the international scene on Italian history. That is, the substantial difficulty such literature has in discerning the specific "causal connections" which make internal Italian politics a direct consequence of what happens on an international level. As Nuti has observed, the evolution of the international context can help clarify the Italian history only if historians bring to light the concrete bonds which connect the two dimensions<sup>6</sup>. Besides, Nuti indicates a second aspect, just as important as the first, from an interpretative point of view. This is the need for historians to establish the room for maneuver of the political "agency" which was in any case exercised by the minor power as it interacted with the greater powers<sup>7</sup>. The influence of the post-revisionism of Gier Lundestad is evident here. According to Nuti, in fact, when Lundestad "stresses the invitational aspects of much of [American] expansion [in Europe

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<sup>6</sup> L. Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra. Importanza e limiti della presenza americana in Italia*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1999, "Introduzione", p. VIII.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

during the Cold War]”<sup>8</sup> he is making a very useful statement in understanding the Italian case<sup>9</sup>.

This text, in the footsteps of other important works<sup>10</sup> aims – if not to resolve Nuti's issue regarding the relationship between Italian Resistance and the United States – to attempt to at least ask the right questions so as to correctly address future research. Was the collaboration among secret services, before and during the Badoglio and Bonomi Governments, totally imposed by the Americans and if not, to what extent was it the product of a dialectic between Washington and Brindisi (and then Rome)? In other words, to what extent were the Italian political forces and/or the leaders of the re-born parties in the South forced to passively accept the US influence in the decision to set up "joint" secret services in support of the Partisans of the North? Or, rather, did those same forces, (or at least a part of them) decide to exercise an active role of their own when they put SIM into play? Certainly from the evidence one can deduce that these questions are all but inappropriate.

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By way of a preface, it is important to keep in mind the significance of the Resistance in Italy. In national representation, the Italian Partisan formations (aligned to the reborn Italian political parties), fighting against the Nazi-fascists, restored dignity to Italy after the Fascist experience. Did the new-born Italian Republic need redemption from its totalitarian past? Italian historiography manufactured this experience of atonement: the so-called "myth of Italian Resistance". In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s both Marxist and *Crociana* (inspired by the inheritance of liberal historian Benedetto Croce) historiography absorbed

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<sup>8</sup> G. Lundestad, *The American Empire and other Studies of US Foreign Relations in a Comparative Perspective*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 55-56. See also Id., *Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Union. 1945-1952*, in «Journal of Peace Research», 23, (September 1986): 263-77; Id., *Empire by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998; Id., *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: from "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. L. Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra*, op. cit., p. XVI.

<sup>10</sup> It is not possible here to address a complex debate such as the one on the political agency of the minor powers as compared to the stronger American ally during the Cold War. See on the topic, among many others, J.L. Gaddis, *New Conceptual Approaches to the Study of American Foreign Relations: Interdisciplinary Perspective*, in «Diplomatic History», 14 (Summer 1990), p. 442 and fl. Among the Italian scholars who have substantially contributed to the issue of the dialectic between hegemonic/minor powers, see in particular L. Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra...*, op. cit.; C. Spagnolo, *La stabilizzazione incompiuta: il Piano Marshall in Italia*, Roma, Carocci, 2001; M. del Pero, *L'alleato scomodo. Gli USA e la DC negli anni del centrismo (1948-1955)*, Roma, Carocci, 2001.

this account of Italian Resistance. After all, both schools claimed for their own political faction the leadership of the Italian Partisans<sup>11</sup>. The more valiant the Italian Resistance, the better for the Communists, Catholics, Liberals or whoever claimed the guidance of the movement. In this representation, there was no space for American and British support; let alone for the refunded Italian Army and its intelligence arm (SIM), both remnants of the Fascist regime. On the contrary, either *Crociani* and Marxist historians claimed that the Anglo-Americans had somehow prevented a stronger development of the Italian Resistance. Italian Prime Minister Pietro Badoglio and the Army (markedly royalist) had also been associated in the plot. The fear of Communism preponderance within the Resistance had led to this project of "containment". Consequently, Anglo-American military aid - belatedly delivered - had been scarce, ineffective and targeted to specific supposedly conservative Partisan formations (that is, anti-Communists aligned with Badoglio)<sup>12</sup>.

Regarding the role of the Bonomi Government in the Resistance (though this is an hardly covered topic by Italian historiography) the general judgment - not to say prejudgment - of that Government policy is by no means benevolent<sup>13</sup>. In sum, according to traditional readings both the Anglo-American and Italian authorities assigned to intelligence the goal of weaving a sort of "sanitary cordon" around the Italian Partisans. Thus, both the OSS and SIM's role within the Resistance has been considered coercive rather than supportive<sup>14</sup>. In this context, whilst the interpretation of the role of SIM in the Resistance remains substantially unvaried, even those authors who in the mid-80s began to acknowledge the contribution provided to Partisans by the Anglo-Americans were not able to fully appreciate its extent<sup>15</sup>. The aid was substantially quantitatively under-estimated as was therefore its capacity in significantly influencing the Italian Resistance.

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<sup>11</sup> On the issue of politically oriented historiography see M. Kelly's review of Italian Resistance scholarship, *The Italian Resistance in Historical Transition: Class War, Patriotic War or Civil War?* in «Eras Journal», <http://arts.monash.edu.au/publications/eras/edition-4/kelly.php>. On the political uses of the past in Italian historiography, is also worth noting R.J.B. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism*, London, Arnold, 1998.

<sup>12</sup> For some Italian scholars, among many others, who have claimed this "containment" strategy see note one above.

<sup>13</sup> See, among others, G. Bocca's opinion, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana...*, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> In particular see also E. Aga Rossi, "Alleati e Resistenza...", *op. cit.*; and M. De Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna e la resistenza partigiana in Italia (1943-1945)*, Naples, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1988, *passim*.

The truth would appear somehow different from what, again Leopoldo Nuti, has derogatory labeled as the "*vulgata*" on Italian Resistance traditionally accredited by national historiography<sup>16</sup>.

As this article will illustrate, at least in the VI Partisan Ligurian Zone (an area covering parts of the Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy and Emilia regions of Italy) the word "intelligence" cannot be used as a synonym for "containment" or "anti-Communism"<sup>17</sup>. New documentation on intelligence regarding the VI Zone reveals that historians should carefully reconsider relations between the local Partisans, the American OSS and Badoglio's SIM. The still in progress opening of the archives of the OSS at the National Archives and Records Administration (N.A.R.A.), in Washington DC, has made available an impressive quantity of unpublished information on the activities of the American intelligence in Italy, through the years 1943-45<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Nuti labelled in this way the bulk of Italian historiography on the Cold War. See L. Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra...*, *op. cit.*, p. XI.

<sup>17</sup> Only very recently have the first studies appeared in Italy which, in evaluating the support the Anglo-Americans gave to the Resistance, keep proper account of the decisive role played by SIM in supporting the Italian Partisan movement. See C. Nasini, "Guerra clandestina ed identità nazionale. Il contributo dei servizi informazioni alleati e italiano alla Resistenza (1943-1945)", in AA.VV., *Studi Storico-Militari 2007*, Roma, SME Ufficio Sorico, 2009, pp. 509-543; and Id., "La missione americana Walla-Walla nella VI Zona Operativa Ligure Partigiana", in AA.VV., *Studi Storico-Militari 2005*, Roma, SME Ufficio Storico, 2007, pp. 615-633. Concerning the role of SOE and OSS missions in support of the Resistance also see the recent work by Tommaso Piffer which however does not grasp the full extent, and even plays down, the importance of the role played in that context by SIM or in any case by agents of Italian nationality, T. Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza italiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> In the Eighties the CIA started transferring to NARA the very first folders of the circa 6000 cubic feet of documentation which it held since the end of the war. Also very important it has been the declassification following the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 2000 which has allowed for the opening of documents until that momento withheld by the CIA. Following this Act, a further 4000 pages of previously classified documentation have been made available at NARA. Equally fundamental was the declassification on August 2008 of a further 35,000 OSS personal files (circa 750,000 pages) which describe in detail the activities of a myriad of OSS operatives both in the home offices of Washington DC, New York and San Francisco and in the dozens of OSS outposts all over the world, in particular in Europe, North Africa and Asia. For Italy, these rounds of declassifications, as well as the meticulous filing job done by the Americans, offer for the first time the opportunity to isolate "homogeneous units" of documents about the Italian Resistance inside a foreign archive. In other words, the archive of the OSS today allows historians to locate the actual Allied decision-making centers and their policy towards the Partisan formations. On the difficulties until very recently in isolating documentation about the Resistance in foreign archives see G. Perona, *Ricerche archivistiche...*, *op. cit.*, p. 90. More complex is the situation concerning the imposing archive of the Italian SIM, which after being temporarily opened to research a few years ago is currently being re-ordered in the Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (AUSSME) in Rome.

A great quantity of this material regards specifically the activities of OSS in support of the Italian Resistance and also, in the same context, OSS connection with the Italian counterpart *alias* SIM.

It is worth here mentioning also the further (similarly neglected) important protagonist of this "clandestine network", that is, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE)<sup>19</sup>. At least in the VI Zone, after the Armistice of September 1943, not only American but also British agents, cooperated with Italian SIM in implementing combined operations intended to support local Patriots<sup>20</sup>. Digging further into SOE's activity in Italy is another important task awaiting scholars. First of all, because OSS documents suggest that SOE's determination to support the Italian Partisans was as strong as that of the Americans. Secondly, because a deeper analysis of SOE military aid might help to refute the largely acknowledged interpretation according to which the British had an essentially "anti-anti-Fascist" attitude during their 1943-1944 presence in Italy.

Even important scholarly works, such as those of British historian F.W. Deakin and Italian scholar Massimo De Leonardis, have helped convey a misleading idea about relations between SIM and British SOE. Once more, in fact, the true size of this collaboration has not been fully appreciated. Furthermore, De Leonardis infers that prevalently the British –mostly at the very beginning of the Italy Campaign - used Italian SIM agents (mainly conservative if not openly outright monarchists). SOE, in fact, was forced to employ these Italians by the economics of war, that is, in order to spare the use of British personnel. According to the Italian historian, a different attitude was adopted by the Americans. Being probably more "democratic" they totally

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<sup>19</sup> It goes beyond the scope of this present work to examine the activity of the SOE in the context of the Italian Resistance. As recently pointed out by the official SOE historian, M.R.D. Foot (SOE, London 2010), as of this date there is no comprehensive scholarly work in Great Britain or in English language on the role of the British Services during the Italy Campaign. Therefore, only what newly emerges on the matter from the OSS documentation will be reported. On the matter also see the memoirs of the British Major Andrew Croft (*A Talent for Adventure*, Hanley Swan, London, 1991), commander of the British SOE in Corsica. In Italian language see instead on the matter M. De Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna*, *op. cit.*; the chapter on the SOE of the quoted work by T. Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza italiana*, *op. cit.*. Important is also the testimony of OSS Captain Albert Materazzi, interviewed extensively in Washington by the Author during summers of 2004 and 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Needless to mention that during WWII throughout the whole Europe OSS and SOE Headquarters accorded to Partisan warfare behind the enemy line a high strategic value. See in particular G.C. Chalou, (ed. by) *The Secrets War. The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, N.A.R.A., Washington DC, 1992.

shunned the use of SIM agents<sup>21</sup>. The truth, again, is more complex. In fact, after a slow start the OSS soon gained ground over the British counterpart and by the end of the Italy Campaign it could boast (also due its greater resources) a much more consistent role than that of the British, especially in terms of supplies and agents sent<sup>22</sup>. In this context, what is more significant is that it was mainly OSS which employed SIM agents, and not the British. The Americans used the Italian services without reservations, and not only at the beginning of the Resistance. Though still not investigated much, the clandestine network thus set up by the intelligence services reached an unimaginable dimension, both in terms of the extent and complexity of the network as well as of people involved. Although at the current state of research, it is impossible to establish the exact number of men who took part in establishing such a network in the entire Italy, yet, it is possible to estimate a number for the VI Zone. On the basis of OSS and SIM documents as well as of existing (although scarce) literature, it is accurate to say that around 130 agents operated in the local Resistance working for both Italian and Anglo-American services<sup>23</sup>. It is also important to keep in mind when considering this number that the VI Zone was only one area of the Allied

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<sup>21</sup> In the same line of thought also C. Delzell, *I nemici di Mussolini*, *op. cit.*, p. 300; E. Aga Rossi, "Alleati e Resistenza...", *op. cit.*, note 19, p. 203. More recently D. Ellwood has expressed a partly different view cfr. D. Ellwood, *Gli alleati e la Resistenza*, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>22</sup> See C.F. Delzell, *The American OSS and the Italian Armed Resistance*, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>23</sup> As far as scholarship is concerned, it is here important to mention the volume by Colonel Antonio Lanfaloni, one of the chief of SIM during the Italy Campaign, upon whom we will return later in this article. According to Lanfaloni's account, in the Ligurian area alone, between October 1943 and April 1945, the Italian SIM provided the SOE with 18 agents and 8 sabotage instructors in what were called "reconnaissance and operational" missions. To these agents must be added the men who took part in the combined OSS/SIM missions which will be dealt with in more detail in this text. These are the agents belonging respectively to the *Operational Groups* (O.G.s) and *Secret Intelligence* (S.I.) sections of the American OSS which, during the same period, were delivered in Liguria through amphibious landings and airdrops. These included, for instance, the 15 Italo-American agents of the O.G. "Walla-Walla" mission in Liguria; the following 16 agents of the O.G. "Peedee" mission and the further 13 agents of the last *operational* mission to reach Liguria, the "Roanoke". Finally, it must be considered, still only taking the Liguria area into account, the personnel employed in the five S.I. missions which were simultaneously activated in the region to take part in building the underground network itself. These were the "Lobo", "Piroscafo" and "Maria Giovanna" missions each composed of an agent and a radio-telegrapher; and the so-called "cell" missions, which will be again specifically addressed later in this article. Each cell mission (*alias* "Locust" and "Meridien") counting effective agents, informers, sympathizers and guides (in any way paid by or answering to OSS) amounted to a personnel of at least 30 individuals. Overall, therefore, as previously mentioned, during the Italy Campaign over 130 men operated in the sole VI Zone of Italy. See A.Lanfaloni, *L'azione dello Stato Maggiore Generale per lo sviluppo del movimento di Liberazione*, S.M.E. Ufficio Storico, Rome, 1975, pp. 76-87; 96-99.



subdivision of occupied Italy. There were several other "Zones" where there must have similarly been operating other agents.

Regarding the specific focus of this article, that is, the "combined" Italian and US missions, it is important to stress that their efforts along with arms and munitions, provided the Partisans with radio operators and sabotage instructors who proved no less essential in order to conduct effective warfare against the Nazi-fascists. Furthermore, these teams supplied clothes, food, medicine and financial support which also proved paramount for the guerrillas. It is also worth noting that this aid was provided without discriminations between the different political factions, Communists included.

#### *OSS Organization and Action Plans in Italy: the False Swiss Lead*

Recently the historian David Ellwood noticed how in Italy, in spite of the importance of OSS as a "mediator" between the Resistance and the High Allied Command, this intelligence has been little covered by the historiography<sup>24</sup>. No studies have been conducted on OSS's relations with the Allied political and military authorities. Similarly, little is recorded about contacts between OSS and the Italian Government, while even less is known about OSS's procedures in Italy; in the first place, very little is known, for instance, about the process through which OSS recruited personnel to send on missions behind enemy lines; secondly, the information sources of the organization remain obscure; finally, the exact way by which OSS contacted Partisan formations is unrecorded<sup>25</sup>. The new OSS documentation shows that, especially in the initial phase of the Italian Campaign, OSS mainly used personnel belonging to Italian SIM<sup>26</sup>. These documents are also a useful source to comprehend, on the one hand, the strategy pushing the two intelligence services to an early and effective collaboration and, on the other, the specific procedures of the combined operation.

One reason for historiography's lasting omission on the importance of SIM is the tendency for studies to focus on Switzerland. Nearly all historiography assumes that Switzerland was where the most important contacts between Anglo-American intelligences and the Italian Resistance took shape<sup>27</sup>. More to

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<sup>24</sup> D. Ellwood, *Gli alleati e la Resistenza italiana*, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> Some hints about SIM personnel employed by OSS, are in C.F. Delzell, *I nemici di Mussolini*, op. cit., pp. 304-305 and Id., *The American OSS and the Italian Armed Resistance*, op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>27</sup> Even the most recent scholarship still overestimate the importance of Switzerland when analyzing relations between the allied intelligence service and the Italian Resistance, see, for instance, even the 2010, in many respects accurate volume, by T. Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza italiana*, op. cit., in particular pp. 65-71.

the point, most of these authors have often pointed out that not much came from these initial contacts, with no significant help for the nascent Italian Resistance movement<sup>28</sup>. However, this circumstance does not correspond to the reality depicted in OSS documents.

In other words, whilst until today the literature has concentrated on the importance of the relationships entertained in (and *via*) Switzerland between the Milan Partisan *entourage*, OSS and SOE base in Switzerland (Berne and Lugano) and the Mediterranean Allied Command (AFHQ), OSS archive material shows a different picture. It reveals how from 1943 OSS "Italian section" developed a vast network of relations with eminent Partisans leaders (even at top levels) within occupied Italy. These links proceeded in parallel with those established in Switzerland, but - and more importantly - the Italian S.I. connections proved more fruitful for the Partisans in terms of military aids than the Swiss OSS channels. It is also important to note here that OSS took advantage of Italian authorities' offer to help in setting up such a network in Northern Italy. OSS documentation allows for the first time for the identification of the Italian key figures of this "secret" network: besides Badoglio, it included numerous ministers of the Italian Government such as the Navy Minister (Raffaele De Courten) and the War and Finance Under-secretaries (Taddeo Orlando and Guido Jung). As stated in an OSS document written in November 1943 from Italy and addressed to Whitney Shepardson, head of the OSS/Secret Intelligence branch in Washington:

It is not often that contacts of this nature exist within the Cabinet of another government. It is suggested that your Intelligence organization give serious and immediate thought to utilizing these leads. We will give you every cooperation in this matter.<sup>29</sup>

Since October 1943, and especially after the Italian declaration of war against the Germany, therefore, numbers of officers of the Italian Navy and Army, as well as of their respective intelligence services, were secretly extricated from occupied Italy by OSS. Once transferred to Southern Italy, Africa and Corsica, these officers were ordered to cooperate, with every

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<sup>28</sup> Among the authors complaining for lack of Anglo-American support see, for instance, D. Ellwood, *Gli alleati e la Resistenza*, *op. cit.*, p. 247; see also G. Bocca, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana...*, *op. cit.*, p. 107 and *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. NARA, R.G. 226, Entry 210, box 119, folder 5, doc. 4692/3. OSS. *OSS contacts in new Italian Cabinet. 20 novembre 1943*. See also on these connections between Italian and US intelligence organizations the aforementioned long memorandum of OSS major Andre Pacatte in NARA, RG 210, Entry 210, box, 80, folder 6, doc. 2599/9. *Report of Major Andre Pacatte first written in the field later expanded and corrected*, in particular p 50. See also L. Marchesi, E. Sogno, C. Milan, *Per la libert . Il contributo militare italiano al servizio informazioni alleato (8 settembre 1943-25 aprile 1945)*, Mursia, Milano, 1995, pp. 10-24.

resources and information in their possession, with the Italian SIM. The latter, in fact, had been promptly reorganized by the Anglo-American, under Colonel Pompeo Agrifoglio in Brindisi<sup>30</sup> so as to start fuelling the Partisans in the North<sup>31</sup>.

In more detail, important ties with the Italian Resistance were established through the missions and activities of OSS Secret Intelligence (SI) section in Italy, led by Captain Biagio Massimo Corvo. The other branches of the American intelligence in Italy also played a very important role in establishing ties with the Italian Resistance. These were namely the *Operational Group* headed by Colonel Russell B. Livermore and the *Special Operation* unit, at length commanded by a Captain of French origin, André Bourgoïn<sup>32</sup>. These three organisms, starting from that October of 1943, worked with the systematic support of SIM<sup>33</sup>. The main objectives were to militarily support the Resistance and connect its war effort with decisions from the Allied Mediterranean Command (AFHQ). These were "combined" initiatives which started in centres the OSS began to set up all over the Italian peninsula and in its islands as of July 1943. The first activated were in Palermo, La Maddalena, Brindisi, Bari, Caserta and Naples (also Bastia in Corsica), and then came those in Siena and Florence<sup>34</sup>. Through collaboration between the OSS and SIM, thus, numerous

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<sup>30</sup> On the reorganization of SIM under Anglo-American guidance in Brindisi as early as in October 1943, cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo I-3, busta 43, fascicolo 4, *Costituzione del C.S. alla data del 1° gennaio 1944*; A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo I-3, busta 43, fascicolo 4, *Costituzione del C.S. alla data del 26 febbraio 1944*; A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo I-3, busta 43, fascicolo 4, *Quadro di battaglia dell'Esercito Italiano*, foglio n. 12936 in data 9 maggio 1944 dell'Ufficio Operazioni – Comando Supremo; A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo M-7, busta 408, fascicolo 4, *Costituzione dello Stato Maggiore Generale*, foglio n. 816/90/AV, in data 30 ottobre 1944 dello Stato Maggiore Generale. There has not yet been a comprehensive study on the history of SIM after the armistice, especially concerning its relations with the counterparts of Anglo-American intelligence services. Much that is known about the organization can be found in the volume by G. Pasqualini, *Carte segrete dell'Intelligence italiana 1919-1949*, Roma, RUD, 2006; also see S. Loi, *I rapporti fra Italiani e Alleati nella Cobelligeranza*, S.M.E. Ufficio Storico, Roma, 1986, in particular pp. 74-75 and *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Major Andre Pacatte's memorandum in NARA, RG 210, Entry 210, box, 80, folder 6, doc. 2599/9. *Report of Major Andre Pacatte first written in the field later expanded and corrected*, pp. 3-51.

<sup>32</sup> See on this issue Kermit Roosevelt (ed. by), *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the O.S.S.*, New York, 1976; an account of Kermit's volume for Italy is in C.F. Delzell, "The American OSS and the Italian Armed Resistance", in R. Amedeo (ed. by), *Le missioni Alleate e le formazioni dei partigiani autonomi nella Resistenza piemontese*, Minutes of the International Conference held in Turin on 21-22 October 1978, L'Arciere, Cuneo, 1980, pp. 353-375.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 211, box 47, folder 7. *OSS- X2 Branch. 15 April 1944*. In this documents OSS/X2 section (counter-espionage) suggested OSS Headquarter in Washington DC to fully integrate SIM into OSS intelligence network in Italy.

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. K. Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

channels were opened connecting occupied Italy with its already liberated part and with the Swiss centres.

Regarding Switzerland, as historian F.W. Deakin wrote, the "Swiss base" of Anglo-American intelligence services was specifically a "listening post". Switzerland represented the "main operational office for gathering information and creating lines of couriers"<sup>35</sup>. In Anglo-American plans Switzerland was therefore not the main site for the constitution of contacts and especially of the logistic network with which to fuel the system of Allied supplies to the Resistance.

As Max Corvo further recalls in his illuminating autobiography (which takes into account the first OSS documents declassified in 1990), the Swiss office ran by Allen Dulles always enjoyed a certain operational autonomy<sup>36</sup>. Many of the initiatives taken by Dulles concerning the Italian Resistance were often decided without the approval of the AFHQ, from which Dulles nominally took his orders. His aim was especially to obtain military - and probably also political - information on Italy from the Partisan leaders. Certainly, at the end of 1943, one of the main tools Dulles had for negotiations with Partisan leaders was the promise of obtaining AFHQ support for airdrops for Patriots in the mountains. These drops were however often not carried out, for various reasons, the main one being the difficulties, until the late spring of 1944, of communication between the Swiss and Brindisi bases where the structures for these airdrops were located<sup>37</sup>.

As Corvo often recalled, later during the Italian Campaign, Washington realized the importance of improving control over Swiss OSS activity. Starting from mid 1944 Dulles's base was better coordinated with Italian OSS base in

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<sup>35</sup> F. Deakin, "Lo Special Operation Executive e la lotta partigiana", in F. Ferratini Tosi, G. Grassi, M. Legnani (ed. by), *L'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale e nella Resistenza*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1988, p. 99.

<sup>36</sup>Cfr. M. Corvo, *La Campagna d'Italia*, *op. cit.*, p. 259. According to Corvo there were two reasons for the autonomy enjoyed by Dulles compared to other OSS directors. In the first place, the placing of the office in neutral territory favoured the development of his independence in decision-making at least until a certain point during the War. In second place, his autonomy was due to the network of personal relationships Dulles had with influent members of the establishment as future head of the CIA and brother of Eisenhower's State Secretary, John Foster Dulles.

<sup>37</sup> Ivi, pp. 259-260. The OSS documentation confirms Corvo's opinion on communication problems between the OSS bases in Italy and those in Switzerland. One document suggests how this problem was never completely solved during the whole Italian Campaign. Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, box 252, folder (9)wn10628, *Report of Italian SI Desk, 31 March 1945*, p. 3.

Brindisi, as had not been the case until that moment<sup>38</sup>. Corvo summarizes and concludes:

Towards the end of 1943, the clandestine movements of Milan contacted both Dulles and the Bern SOE. The arrival of OSS missions from the South and the possibility of direct connections with our base in liberated Italy reduced the importance of the Swiss offices in Lugano and Bern with regards to clandestine activity.<sup>39</sup>

Returning to the contribution provided by Badoglio's services, what led to the employment by OSS of soldiers provided by SIM were reasons of military opportunity. In the first place, the undisputed training that the intelligence personnel had over mere civilians as well as those who were simply former Italian soldiers<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, the fact that until 1943 (or even in the first half of 1944) Anglo-American military commands were resolved not to risk the lives of a great number of their soldiers in dangerous enemy territory. This practice lasted until the Americans saw definite strategic advantages<sup>41</sup>. It was, therefore, necessary to verify the worthiness of the Partisan nuclei, as well as the capacity and reliability of their leaders. To ascertain these conditions was the task of SIM personnel, more motivated than Anglo-American soldiers in the awareness of serving an important cause for their country. Only when the Partisan efficiency and determination to fight became apparent did the Anglo-American officers come into the field.

Italian SIM gave OSS (and SOE especially at first) not only its operative capacities and all the logistic structures and means it had, but above all its numerous volunteers<sup>42</sup>. Most were former members of the disbanded Italian armed forces. Most of these men had gone through the Front to reach their

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<sup>38</sup> In late spring 1944, a connection office between OSS/Switzerland and OSS/SI in Italy was opened at AFHQ in Caserta and entrusted to the leadership of US Captain Homer Hall. The lack of connection between the two bases had led to unpleasant consequences such as noteworthy confusion in the traffic of information coming from Switzerland and Brindisi, being often both simply labelled in Washington as "Italian Resistance". This even led to double airdrops or in worse cases, none at all. Among the various initiatives taken by Captain Hall were sending an Italian OSS/SI mission to Switzerland, the Cassini team, so that it may act as mediator between Dulles and Corvo. Cfr. M. Corvo, *La Campagna d'Italia, op. cit.*, pp. 259-260. Concerning this issue we also recall the future Italian President Parri's remark, reported in the work by Secchia and Frassati, whilst complaining of the lack in supply to the Lombard Alps, Parri pointed out how in the Valleys of Lanzo, Pellice and Raia there had been simultaneous requests from three or four different sources, in P. Secchia and F. Frassati, *La Resistenza e gli Alleati*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1962, p. 87.

<sup>39</sup> M. Corvo, *La Campagna d'Italia, op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>40</sup> See memorandum drafted by OSS captain Bourgoin, NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, box 72, folder 2, doc. 002540/14, *Report of captain Andre Bourgoin*.

<sup>41</sup> See M. De Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna e la resistenza partigiana, op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>42</sup> See note 23 above.

commands in southern Italy. After a quick training, these Italian soldiers were provided with radios and infiltrated into occupied Italy. They were to make contact with the first set of Partisan groups. As Deakin observed on the initial activity of the British services in support of the Resistance:

Directed from Brindisi, and later from Naples, these activities were delegated [by British High Command] to SOE and SIS. Within limits also made available to the British was the vast network SIM had. Its experienced technical organization had agents and radio points in enemy territory. In the following months Italian nuclei recruited through the SIM were sent by sea or air to connect with the existing networks.<sup>43</sup>

In other words, after an initial phase in which SIM sent single agents mainly to gather information in the North, it was later employed in the selection of chosen personnel to help the Anglo-American services mount missions of larger impact. It was especially this network of contacts and activities which gave the Italian Resistance immediate and consistent advantages in terms of military supply and support, more than had been decided through the secret offices of Dulles and Mc Caffery (the latter being chief of SOE) in Switzerland. In consideration of what has been said, not surprisingly the airdrops organised by the Lugano meetings of November 1943 between Ferruccio Parri, Leo Valiani, Dulles and Mc Caffery were rather scarce. Much more copious was the quantity of military aid given to the Partisans which the latter, not without the help of the SIM, were able to establish with OSS bases of Brindisi, in the rest of southern Italy and especially that of Bastia.

#### *One Eloquent Case Study: the VI Zone of Occupied Italy*

By April 1945 in the VI Partisan Ligurian Zone, American OSS support enabled local Partisans to inflict considerable damage on Nazi-fascist units. It also helped the Patriots, on the one hand, to protect local infrastructures from German scorched-earth tactics during their retreat and, on the other, to liberate the city of Genoa a good three days before the US Army's arrival. All these achievements, however, came about the effective intermediation of Italian SIM agents.

The VI Operational Ligurian Zone was born in the summer of 1944 when the local Partisan commanders named this large portion of territory. It included the area between the eastern part of the Italian region of Liguria, the western part of the Emilia-Romagna, and the southern parts of Lombardy and Piedmont. This area was of high strategic interest for the Allied Headquarters

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<sup>43</sup> W.F. Deakin, *Lo Special Operation Executive e la lotta partigiana*, op. cit., p. 108.

since the beginning of the Italian Campaign<sup>44</sup>. Although the Germans considered the Ligurian and Piedmont Apennine mountains running across central Italy as part of their defense barrier - later to be named "the Gothic line"<sup>45</sup> - the proximity of a large part of Liguria to the sea fostered the Allies' plan of penetrating the region through amphibious landings.

As evidence of the strategic importance of the area, early in the Italian Campaign the Germans deployed some of their best divisions in this region and also began to conduct ferocious terror retaliation against civilians<sup>46</sup>. In this context, as early as in October 1943 after the Italian Monarchy's declaration of war, Italian and Anglo-American emissaries started to arrive in the region in order to support local Partisans in their warfare. From the end of 1943, various teams, originally formed by Italian SIM representatives, were thus delivered in the Zone through airdrops and amphibious landings. The initial teams were to encounter significant difficulties; the several German *rastrellamenti* (raking operations) often caused severe casualties among the Italian agents<sup>47</sup>.

The first Italians arrived from Southern Italy in the VI Zone – even before it was officially constituted by the Partisans – at the end of October 1943. Unlike the following Anglo-American teams, the first SIM units were very small. They usually contained no more than a couple of representatives, among whom was a professional radio telegraphist. The limited size of these first units was due to their essentially informative tasks. These missions were sent to occupied Italy primarily to make a reconnaissance for the Allied Headquarters; they gathered information on the Germans and made a preliminary analysis of the Partisans. The estimates of the latter helped the Allies to understand the capacity of the local Resistance. This enabled AFHQ to evaluate the significance of military support that the Patriots – if adequately equipped – might provide to the advance of mainline troops. SIM reports, thus, were one of the most important sources in the Allies' perception of the Partisans, and therefore played a major part in the following AFHQ decision of sending further military aid and agents to the Zone.

Two of the first SIM missions – codenamed VALENTINE and OTTO - reached the area of Genoa (via Corsica) by end of November 1943. The story of these two teams, strictly interconnected, well highlights the significance of the

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<sup>44</sup> See among the others G. Rosignoli, *The Allied Forces in Italy. 1943-1945*, Parma, Ermanno Albertelli Editore, 1989, p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> As early as in November 1943, the Germans started to build heavy fortifications along the Italian Apennines, *ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> On the German military strategy in the VI Zone see in particular P.P. Rivello, *Quale giustizia per le vittime dei crimini nazisti? L'eccidio della Benedicta e la strage del Turchino tra storia e diritto*, Giappichelli Editore, Torino, 2002, pp. 95-97.

<sup>47</sup> G. Rosignoli, *The Allied Forces in Italy*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

SIM's emissaries for local Resistance. It also clearly shows how Italian historiography has often neglected important pieces of the entire puzzle.

According to traditional accounts, the Allies' decision to send the OTTO mission to Liguria had been fostered by the local Partisans. By November 1943, connections between the Ligurian Patriots and the Allies had supposedly been developed through some Allied ex-POWs. These soldiers had succeeded in reaching the Allied Headquarters in Corsica with the Partisans' help. Their reports, on a valiant anti-German Resistance in Liguria, had encouraged the Allies to send the OTTO mission into the region. According to traditional historiography, at the forefront of these first contacts was one of the most celebrated leaders of the Resistance, the Genoese neurologist Ottorino Balduzzi<sup>48</sup>. His organization, the *Organizzazione Partigiana Otto* (the Partisan Otto-Organization) has been celebrated as one of the most successful Resistance network against the Germans.

As stated by this reading, in November 1943, Balduzzi helped an Allied ex-POW, the British officer Thomas Gore, to reach Corsica through a audacious trip by boat. Gore informed the Allies of Balduzzi's assistance and of the Patriots' resolution to establish contacts with the Allies. As a consequence of Gore's encouragement, the Allies had decided to send agents to Genoa. Since then – and thanks to the Partisan enterprise – contacts with the Anglo-Americans took on both consistency and continuity. On this account, the episode of Gore's rescue is considered the exclusive achievement of Balduzzi.

As recent documents reveal, the truth was somehow different. According to some SIM files – as well as to the memoirs of British officer Andrew Croft – the radiotelegraphist Paolo Risso and the engineer Emanuele Straserra arranged Gore's rescue. Both Risso and Straserra were, actually, SIM emissaries<sup>49</sup>. These two agents managed the contacts and communication with the Allies, which enabled Gore's rescue. Balduzzi, from his side, only provided Gore a boat and some Partisans who accompanied the British officer in the crossing. Both Risso and Straserra were in Liguria as members of the SIM's mission VALENTINE.

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<sup>48</sup> On Gore's episode in Italian literature see, among the many others, P.E. Taviani, *La resistenza in Liguria e gli Alleati*, in *Missioni alleate e partigiani autonomi*, op. cit., p. 267; C. Brizzolari, *Un archivio della resistenza in Liguria*, Genova, Cassa di Risparmio di Genova ed Imperia, 1985, pp. 95-98; 174-177; Danilo Veneruso, *Gli alleati e la resistenza in Liguria*, in *La Resistenza in Liguria...*, op. cit., pp. 30-34; F. Fucci, *I servizi d'informazione della Resistenza*, in A. Mola (ed. by), *La Cobelligeranza italiana nella lotta di Liberazione dell'Europa*, Roma, Ministero della Difesa, 1986, pp. 83 and fl. See also an author traditionally more unbiased as E. Sogno, *La Franchi. Storia di un'organizzazione partigiana*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1996, p. 230 and fl.

<sup>49</sup>Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E. fondo S.I.M., div. 11, busta 11, doc. 12885. It is a OSS list including the names of Italian agents operating in the Liguria area.



The latter was probably the first Italian team sent from Corsica with the specific purpose of rescuing Anglo-American POWs<sup>50</sup>.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1943, the Italian navy officer Davide Cardinale, one of the Balduzzi's Patriots who accompanied Gore in Corsica, returned to Liguria by boat. Cardinale had spent twenty days in an Allied training camp in Algeria. Along with some weapons, he brought back with him to Liguria SIM radiotelegraphist Silvio De Fiore<sup>51</sup>. From then on, De Fiore's mission – indeed codenamed OTTO – helped the Ligurian Partisans to establish regular communications with the Allied Headquarters both in Africa and in Brindisi. As a consequence of De Fiore's underground activity, from the beginning of 1944 other missions started to land in Liguria.

Another important team was the CAP mission<sup>52</sup>. This mission reached Genoa via the nearby Emilia-Romagna in January 1944. The team, formed by two Italian soldiers (who in October 1945 had volunteered into SIM), had left the airport of Blida, Algeria, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1943. After two months of reconnaissance activity among the Emilia and Tuscany Patriots, they were ordered to move in the area of Genoa. Once in the area, the mission established contacts with the local Partisans and started to prepare for the landing of subsequent missions on the local coast. The commander of the mission, Vittorio Cottini, and his radiotelegraphist Bruno Pagani, gathered for the Allies information on several topics; topographic details of Liguria, including spots easily accessible and not heavily fortified by the Germans; information on the enemy garrisons; possible hiding-places for agents and radiotelegraphic equipment. Their reports also included information on possible spies, guides and supporters who might cooperate with the Partisans; finally, they also included dossiers on individuals who might help in various ways from the reproduction of documents to purchase of motor vehicles and fuel.

The CAP was still in the area when three subsequent missions arrived in the Zone on the 1 February of 1944. According to the navy officer Vittorio Cottini, head of the CAP:

our mission helped other Anglo-American representatives to land safely on the Genoa coast and to reach the Partisans' formations in the inner part of the Ligurian region. Once there these

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<sup>50</sup> Cfr. A. Croft, *A talent for Adventure*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo S.I.M., div. 11, busta 111, doc 103252., S.M.G.-Ufficio I, *Attività agente-radiotelegrafista Silvio De Fiore, 30 dicembre 1945*. Some hints about De Fiore are also in E. Sogno, *La Franchi*, *op. cit.*, p. 230 and fl.

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E. fondo S.I.M., div. 11, busta 111, doc 103188-103189. This is a copy of the report issued by Anton Vittorio Cottini, commander of CAP mission, in January 1945.

men helped the Partisans' formations to establish the first dropping points and to receive the first aid provided by the Allies.<sup>53</sup>

In short, the goal of the ensuing missions like the LLL, RDI and STELLA, which landed near the village of Voltri, Genoa, between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 17<sup>th</sup> of March 1944 was to reinforce the existing clandestine network. These new missions also helped the Partisans to expand their guerrilla operations to contiguous regions. Some teams, therefore, after arriving on the Ligurian coast moved to operate among the Partisans of Piedmont<sup>54</sup>.

This was the case, for instance, of the LLL mission. Soon after its arrival in Liguria, on February 1<sup>st</sup> 1944, the LLL (formed by lieutenant Italo Cavallino, codenamed "Siro"; second lieutenant Secondo Balestri "Annibale" and radiotelegraphist Secondo Balestri "Biagio") split into two teams with different goals<sup>55</sup>. Whilst the first "cell" composed by "Annibale" remained in Genoa to help communications with the Allies, the second team, constituted by agents "Siro" and "Biagio", moved to operate northwest. Once in Piedmont, the two agents organized the first dropping points in the Casotto, Ellera and Peso valleys. The two agents also set up the early "training camps" for maximizing Partisan warfare.

The LLL was able to continue its activity among the Patriots after March 1944 when the Germans conducted one of their more severe *rastrellamenti* in occupied Italy. After this German mopping up - which disbanded Baluzzi's *Organizzazione Otto* - the LLL was paramount in maintaining connections between remnant of local Resistance and the Allies. After March '44, the LLL continued its activity, in fact, for several months. Unlike the two agents "Biagio" and "Sirio", who were captured by the Germans, the radiotelegraphist "Annibale" was able to survive. After joining another SIM agent (Ernesto Silvestrini codenamed "Amilcare") who had also escaped the Germans' *reastrellamento*, "Annibale" constituted a new team called "Annibale-Amilcare"<sup>56</sup>. This mission, from various spot of the VI Zone continued to transmit valuable information to the Allies until April 1945<sup>57</sup>. In that date,

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<sup>53</sup> A.U.S.S.M.E. fondo S.I.M., div. 11, busta 111, doc 103189.

<sup>54</sup> In particular, the RDI and STELLA moved to operate among the Turin Partisans of the III Operational Partisan Zone. See E. Sogno, *La Franchi. Storia di un'organizzazione Partigiana*, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>55</sup> A.U.S.S.M.E. fondo S.I.M., div. 11, busta 111, doc 103189.

<sup>56</sup> On the Annibale-Amilcare mission see in particular E. Sogno, *La Franchi*, op. cit., p. 200.

<sup>57</sup> Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo S.I.M., 11 div., busta 119, doc. 105521. Ufficio I - S.M.G. *Situazione Appennino ligure di Levante, settembre 1943-aprile 1945*. It is report on the Italian Western Apennine during the winter 1944-1945. The document states that the "Amilcare-Annibale" mission, in December 1944, was still actively forwarding information on the VI Operational Ligurian Zone.

however, the two agents - ultimately captured by the Germans - were executed in Genoa<sup>58</sup>.

*The Growth of American Connections among the Partisans*

At the end of spring 1944, two missions with partly innovative characteristics, "Locust" and "Meridien" were sent into Zone VI. These missions were organized by the Secret Intelligence section of OSS and again made up of former Italian military personnel. The latter were mainly recruited among prisoners of war and troops gathered in the so-called "riordinamento" (detention and reorganizing) camps in the South of Italy. Recruiting also took place within SIM (there was also a small number of Partisans among them). However, the significant aspect of the new type of missions was that in this case the agents were directly hired by OSS with proper contracts. They were well paid and subject to American war rules. Another interesting fact was that the missions, in many cases were made up by several dozen agents.

Infiltration began as usual in small nuclei. In this case, though, the single "cells", as each reached its destination, instead of operating individually, would join a single underground organization, making it more extensive and penetrative<sup>59</sup>. This would fulfil the Allies' aim to empower their own information system and would ensure that the Partisan formations obtained the greatest possible number of radios and sabotage instructors<sup>60</sup>.

Finally – but of no lesser importance – the new missions were to prepare the ground for the first commandos entirely composed of Anglo-American soldiers. According to an "outgoing" message from OSS Major Thomas Stoneborough, who directed this type of operation in June 1944 from Bastia:

"Locust" mission must be told to prepare the ground for the arrival of men and materials [...] It is urgent that "Locust" informs us which is the most reliable and combative Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Zone because we intend to parachute 15 US soldiers and an officer to help the partisans.<sup>61</sup>

Regarding the provenance of these agents, illuminating details appear from OSS documents. As anticipated, the missions were no longer made up of Italian agents "lent" by the Italian intelligence service to the Allies. They were rather composed of Italian former military personnel enrolled in the US Armed Forces or SIM agents who had decided to switch over to work exclusively for

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<sup>58</sup> See E. Sogno, *La Franchi, op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. NARA, R.G. 226, Entry 190 B, box 3, folder 21. *Agent Questionnaire*. 11 May 1945.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>61</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 165, box 35, folder 330. 2677 *Headquarters Co. – Incoming and outgoing message forms*.

the American intelligence service<sup>62</sup>. Furthermore, OSS demanded these Italians formal and circumstanced commitments such as undersigning proper "contract" of enrolment<sup>63</sup>.

The agents were in fact asked to sign documents which, as some copies kept in the US archives show, demanded exclusive allegiance to the US and the consequent observation of their war rules and to consider themselves to all effects US military personnel<sup>64</sup>. In other words they were truly and properly enrolled in the US army and in OSS in particular.

In exchange for this, according to a written agreement, the USA was committed to pay the enrolled Italians 150 US dollars a month besides providing board and lodging. It was also stipulated that in the case of death or permanent crippling of the "employee", a sum of 5000 US dollars would be payable, convertible in Italian Liras.

In other words, certain SIM agents whom proved particularly capable in the course of a first employment beyond enemy lines were encouraged to abandon any previous ties with the Italian High Command and shift to working exclusively for the Americans.

An example, is the case of the key man in at least the first phases of "Locust" mission, the radiotelegraph operator of Italian Navy provenance, Mario Robello. The latter, in a previous operation, had been lent to the Allies in agreement with the Italian Navy<sup>65</sup>. An OSS report tells how Robello in March 1944 took part in the "Lobo" mission, parachuted into Tuscany by the US services following a request made to their Italian counterpart, SIM. According to the document, OSS had "contacted the Italian Admiral commanding the Navy in Naples in order to get from the latter radio operators [including Robello] from the Italian navy who were willing to go on a mission 'for the account of our operations'"<sup>66</sup>.

Afterwards, the abovementioned Robello was then engaged in "Locust" mission working, in this second case, directly under American contract: his name in fact appears in an OSS list which reports the names of Italian agents collaborating with American OSS behind the lines<sup>67</sup>. In the same mission,

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<sup>62</sup> See A. Pacatte, *Report of Major Andre Pacatte first written in the field later expanded and corrected*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, box 142, folder 2. *December 1944*. These are copies of such "contract" traced in the OSS archives.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, box 72, folder 2, doc. 002540/14, *Report of captain Andre Bourgoin*.

<sup>66</sup> *Ivi*, p. 33.

<sup>67</sup> NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, box 72, folder 2. *Names of the agents who worked in German occupied Italy. 8 February 1945*.

besides the aforementioned Paolo Risso and Emanuele Straserra, who belonged to a team now called "Montreal", operated also SIM agents coming from Brindisi, Gaetano De Stefanis and Manfredo Bertini, belonging to the "Balilla 2" nucleus<sup>68</sup>. Certainly both De Stefanis and Bertini acted under contract with OSS. This can be deduced, not only by their presence in the aforementioned list, but also in the following and controversial collaboration "certificates" that OSS Headquarters provided them after the war (we will return to dwell upon these certificates later in this article). In practice Robello switched, between the first and second mission, just like De Stefanis and Bertini, from the status of Italian military personnel (and agent), to that of American agent. The "Locust", operated first in the Piacenza area and then, from summer 1944, with the Garibaldi "Chichero" 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of Zone VI, preparing the "Walla-Walla" mission, this time entirely American<sup>69</sup>.

As regards "Meridien" mission, almost contemporary to "Locust", it also employed a SIM radio-telegrapher, Alfonso Cardella. The latter, had reached Liguria as early as October 1943. In that circumstance, Cardella had been employed by SIM to operate as radio-telegrapher in British MI-19 mission, that is, as a SOE collaborator<sup>70</sup>. After that time, "Meridien" was boosted with several radio operators and teams of agents such as the ones led by the anti-Fascist Erasmo Maré, leader of "Apple" mission, and the professional soldier Gustavo Profumo, head of "Betty" team<sup>71</sup>. Maré came from the O.R.I. (Organizzazione della Resistenza Italiana), an anti-Fascist movement which from its birth was also an important source of personnel for OSS missions. The ORI was to prove a good channel for contacts with CLN Partisan leadership in the North<sup>72</sup>. The American documents show how, besides the network set up by OSS using Italian agents (of whom hundreds with true and proper contracts), hundreds of other Italians participated as collaborators and sympathisers. Among these, certainly most ORI members.

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<sup>68</sup> Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo SIM, div. 10, busta 199, doc. 146644. *Oggetto: Tenente ftr. (a) cpl. De Stefanis Gaetano. 8 giugno 1945.* According to the document from the Italian Military Archive, De Stefanis was enrolled as a SIM agent on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1943.

<sup>69</sup> On Robello, De Stefanis and Bertini see also L. Guccione, *Missione "Rosa"- "Balilla". Resistenza e Alleati*, Vangelista, Milano, 1987 in particular pp. 129 e fll.

<sup>70</sup> Cardella is listed in a OSS/X2 document regarding the first Italian contact in the occupied Italy. Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 211, box 47, folder 4. X2 Branch, *Headquarter detachment, 2677 Regiment OSS (Prov), Apo 512, US Army, 3 July 1945.*

<sup>71</sup> On the Meridien mission see also G.B. Lazagna, *Intervista a "Minetto". Comandante della Brigata Arzani*, Edizioni Colibrì, Torino, 2001 in particular pp. 15-27.

<sup>72</sup> On the O.R.I is here worth mentioning the volume by M. Corvo, *The O.S.S. in Italy. 1942-1945. A Personal Memoir*, op. cit., p. 142. See also the most authoritative account on O.R.I. in the Resistance by its leader R. Craveri, *La campagna d'Italia ed i servizi segreti. La storia dell'O.R.I. (1943-1945)*, Milano, La Pietra, 1980.

The history of missions such as “Locust” and “Meridien” proves undoubtedly more complex and embarrassing, not only for the “epic of the Resistance”, but in the end for the Allies themselves. Desertions on the Italian side, as well as the monetary solicitation carried out by OSS, are not the clearest passages in the anti-Fascist military cooperation conducted in Italy.

It was probably security concerns which led the Americans, as of spring 1944, to employ only Italian personnel directly responding to their orders and no longer SIM personnel. Probably there prevailed the fear that continuing to share men and decisions with the Italian counterpart, it would not have been possible to keep the OSS plans secret<sup>73</sup>. As for the Liberation of Rome, in fact, projects far more important than sending a few sparse teams of undercover agents were deemed “top secret”. The fate of dozens and dozens of men was in play, all working undercover in occupied Italy and who represented a solid bond with the Resistance as well as the instrument to exercise a certain control over it. Furthermore, it must not be underestimated that, nearing the end of the war, it became necessary to think about what would happen afterwards. In this regard, it was obvious that SIM agents, as long as they remained such, even though operating under Allied orders, kept reporting to the Italian Supreme Command. The latter, as a consequence, was capable of giving its agents orders that could sometimes differ from the Anglo-American directives. This is exactly what the Americans were trying to avoid by opting for direct enrolment in the US army.

What is certain is that both Americans and Italians have preferred to skip over these experiences, if not totally ignoring them. In the case of the US, bearing in mind that the “Kingdom of the South” had become “co-belligerent” with the Allies, it could not have been a perfectly proper practice to recruit agents among Italian ex prisoners of war and among soldiers in detention centres (not to say from active SIM agents), requiring that the latter abandoned the Italian army to become true and proper “American soldiers”, as stated in the abovementioned contracts.

All the ambiguity, and in a certain sense bad faith which surrounded such events is exemplified in an overall report made after the war by OSS Major Andre Pacatte. The latter, as hinted, together with Captain Bourgoïn, was one of those responsible for recruiting Italian agents to send behind the lines. Pacatte wrote:

To recruit native radio operators, it was necessary to secure proper authorization from SIM, through the Allied Control Commission, through Maj. Ricca [an OSS commanding officer]

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<sup>73</sup> On the problem of secrecy concerning the identities of OSS agents see NARA, RG 210, Entry 210, box, 80, folder 6, pp. 46; 50. The abovementioned *Report of Major Andre Pacatte*.

(when he was available –his Headquarters being in Brindisi and ours in Caserta). If this authorization had not been received, these operators would have been considered deserters by the Italian Army or Navy. This created a security problem, because the Italian Secret Service would naturally know who our agents were, so that we had to incur the ire of Maj. Ricca, the Italian Army, by having the recruited operators desert first, then trained, then sent on their missions, and while they were in enemy country we would transmit their files and have their military situation regularized.<sup>74</sup>

This admission by Major Pacatte explains why neither Italy nor its army who was aware of the events never claimed any paternity over this contribution to the Resistance.

In practice, Italian High Command, which might hardly have behaved differently, kept considering as deserters all the Italians who agreed to switch to the American side. It was only American intercession, after the war, which prevented military justice from running its course. More precisely, the US Government made sure to award its ex Italian agents with collaboration “certificates” which justified their actions, absolving them from the punishments for desertion<sup>75</sup>. It is not however difficult to understand the resentment felt within the Italian army towards these agents, very few of whom were taken back into the Italian secret services.

Probably it was this the form of collaboration between the Italian and American intelligence services “in sending agents behind the lines” to which the aforementioned SIM Major Antonio Lanfaloni hints, yet very briefly, in his volume. The author, by his own admission, in fact, limits himself to describe the collaboration given to British SOE, without reporting anything about the one with American OSS. There is, however, an explanatory note offered by the author, slightly tucked away: “This work only describes the work carried out by SIM with the parallel British organisation (N.° 1 Special Force): there is no mention of the work of the corresponding American organization (O.S.S.) with which this Office has cooperate especially for missions in occupied territory”<sup>76</sup>.

In truth, collaboration with the American counterpart was extensive and important, seeing that, since early 1944, OSS admitted the indispensable role of Italian SIM in military collaboration with Italy. In a document dated April 15 1944 and addressed to Washington, OSS even hypothesized integrating SIM in the US intelligence system instead of merely subordinating it, as laid out in the

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<sup>74</sup> Ivi, p. 46.

<sup>75</sup> Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo SIM, div. 11, fald. 15, mat. 1824. Si tratta dell’attestato rilasciato dagli americani al tenente Gaetano De Stefanis dopo che da “former” agente del SIM divenne membro della missione dell’OSS “Locust”.

<sup>76</sup> A. Lanfaloni, *L’azione dello Stato Maggiore Generale per lo sviluppo del movimento di Liberazione*, S.M.E. Ufficio Storico, Roma, 1975, p. 66.

armistice agreements. As the author, belonging to X2 section of OSS (counterespionage) wrote:

Bearing in mind basic factors, such as the fact that cooperation with Italian authorities would remain partial if only one way, and that SIM could not function adequately if its members were to be kept unawares of important information [...] one must reach the highest level of cooperation with the SIM and consider it as much as possible a part of our information service though in respect of the essential security measures.<sup>77</sup>

Then, though, as hinted at in the Pacatte report, "secrecy concerns" and military motives pushed the Americans to entrust themselves only to directly recruited agents. This marginalized the Italian intelligence services, allowing the Americans to proceed on their own in occupied Italy. The price to pay was the resentment generated in the Italian armed forces who considered this choice an affront best not spoken about. This may explain the reticence of Lanfaloni in mentioning the secret Italo-American collaboration.

Furthermore, it is also possible to infer that OSS wished to make use of its Italian agents even in the post-war period, whether or not they were readmitted into the Italian armed and intelligence forces. The Italian Army, for their part, committed itself to readmit as few as possible of those "deserters"<sup>78</sup>. A new shady area emerges, all in all, which demands further in-depth investigation.

From the Partisan point of view, finally, the missions entrusted by OSS to Italians were scorned. At most, they were considered close to the most conservative political sectors and an instrument of the Italian Monarchy, such was the extent of the prejudice against these men. If supplies failed to arrive it was often presumed that the Italian agents were directly responsible. It was in fact feared that these rather mysterious Italians, whose identity was uncertain, aimed to weaken or in any case condition the Resistance in some way. On the other hand the agents, who had no political preparation, could hardly understand the highly ideologically characterized world of the Resistance leaders<sup>79</sup>. In any case, it is evident that the theme of collaboration/exclusion of

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<sup>77</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 226, Entry 211, box 47, folder 7. *OSS-X2 Branch. 15 April 1944.*

<sup>78</sup> Cfr. NARA, RG 210, Entry 210, box, 80, folder 6, doc. 2599/9. *Report of Major Andre Pacatte first written in the field later expanded and corrected.* According to Pacatte "There is no doubt that services from SIM could never be 100% for us, (a certain percentage would always be for the benefit of Italy), but, they need money and most of their organization is composed of professionals whose life work is secret services. The opportunity exists NOW, but in a few months, as Italy will come into its own, this opportunity will no longer exist. It is needless to emphasize that for a post war organization, such opportunity should be seized by OSS".

<sup>79</sup> On the specific issue of the Italian agents' psychology and political orientation see in particular E. Sogno, *Per la Libertà, op. cit.*, p. 65 and Id., *La Franchi, op. cit.*, pp. 185-186. See also the very evocative reading of A. Ungari, *In nome del Re. I monarchici italiani dal 1943-1945*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2004.



Italian agents also requires serious further investigation by Resistance historians.

What is certain is that the contribution of these Italians has been totally ignored in many so-called local reconstructions and this lacuna needs to be filled as soon as possible.

*The Phase of American Commandos: Same Area Different Personnel*

OSS documents allow to recreate the history of subsequent missions, in which American military personnel was prevalent, while the Italians were mainly confined to a support function. In short, the large American *commando* operations of "Wild Bill" Donovan. In sum, starting from summer 1944, and using instructions provided by previous team, namely "Locust" and "Meridien", as well as their dropping zone, OSS began to deliver in the VI Zone three additional teams<sup>80</sup>.

The first nucleus, called "Walla-Walla", started operating on August 11<sup>th</sup> 1944; "Peedee" and "Roanoke" followed respectively in April and March 1945. Both missions would remain in the VI Zone until the end of the war. By April 1945, such missions granted to the VI Zone Ligurian Partisans about one thousand tonnes of supplies, including weapons, equipment, medicines and essential goods; not to mention, the financial backing, which for the single "Walla-Walla" mission amounted to more than 15,000 dollars<sup>81</sup>.

The O.G.s contributed a great deal to the strengthening of the VI Zone. Not only during the final offensive of spring 1945, but also during the previous winter, when they supported the Partisans in contesting the German mopping up operations.

The decision to send the "operational missions" in summer 1944 coincided with two important military events. In the first place, the Allied landing in Provence, on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1944, two months after the one in Normandy; secondly, in September, the restarting of Allied advance towards the Po river (in reality, German resistance arrested the Allies on the Gothic line along the direction Massa Carrara/Rimini).

At that point the VI Zone became for the Allies strategically even more important. According to Italian scholar, Guido Rosignoli, in the Western part of

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<sup>80</sup> The Operational Groups (O.G.s), were groups with very high clearance levels, commanded by OSS officials. Cfr. on the subject M. Warner (ed. by), *The Office of Strategic Services. America's First Intelligence Agency*, pubblicata dalla CIA nel maggio 2000. On the American O.G.s in Italy see specifically, A. Materazzi, *Americani dell'OSS e partigiani*, Milano, Quaderni della FIAP, Bastogi, 1993, p. 14 and fll.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, O.S.S.-2671th Spe. Recon. Batt. Accounting for Funds on Walla-Walla Mission. 31 December 1944.

Italy: “any breakthrough of this side of [the Gothic line] could be dangerous to the assailant army as it could be attacked on its flank. [Moreover] only a massive army could venture into the Po valley and the Allies did not possess enough strength for this task”<sup>82</sup>. The Anglo-Americans, in other words, felt the need for greater use of Partisan activity in the VI Zone in order to feel more safe in that area. At the same time, the Italian Patriots had to compensate as much as possible the Anglo-American lack of infantry. In order to land in Normandy and Provence, in fact, the Allied Armies in Italy (now called the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Group) had been deprived of more than seven Divisions<sup>83</sup>. Also justifying a more effective guerrilla role in the Zone was the need to prevent the Germans from sending military supplies to their positions on the Apennine using the many roads and other lines of communication available<sup>84</sup>. In the end, “Walla-Walla” succeeded in its specific goal of preventing the Germans the main roads of the VI Zone, breaking off German communication along the Gothic line. Only the arresting of the Allied offensive and, as a consequence, the German guerilla mopping-up operation in December 1944 prevented the mission from consolidating its achievements.

On this subject, an example of the spirit of collaboration inspired by the “Walla-Walla” mission is documented by two letters, found in OSS archives. In both these letters (together with the names of other political leaders of the VI Zone) there is the signature of the Garibaldi “Cichero” Division Communist leader Anton Ukmar (battle name “Miro”)<sup>85</sup>. In both correspondences, on which we will return, the authoritative and feared leader Miro, also commander in chief of Zone VI, thanked US General Mark Clark for the invaluable support given to his Partisans by OSS personnel. Miro in one of his letter to Clark did not omit mentioning the powerful bazookas the American agents had been able to deliver to his men<sup>86</sup>. In sum, the documents confirm that the Americans succeeded in their effort to come to a military cooperation with the Partisans

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>83</sup> Cfr. G. Conti, “L’esercito italiano sulla linea Gotica fra alleati e partigiani”, in G. Rochat, E. Santarelli, P. Sorcinelli (ed. by), *Linea Gotica 1944. Eserciti, popolazione, partigiani*, minutes of International Conference by the AMPI in Pesaro-Urbino and by the Istituto pesarese per la storia del movimento di Liberazione. Pesaro, 27- 29 September 1984, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1986, p. 143 and fill.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*. See G. Rochat, E. Santarelli, P. Sorcinelli (ed. by), *Linea Gotica 1944... , op. cit.*.

<sup>85</sup> According to Italian SIM archival documentation, Anton Ukmar was a fervent Communist, very close not only to the Genoa PCI (which had in fact entrusted him of the command of the VI Zone) but also to Moscow. See also in E. Collotti, R. Sandri, F. Sessi (ed. by), *Dizionario della Resistenza. Luoghi, formazioni, protagonisti*, vol. II, Torino, Einaudi, 2001, pp. 507; 565-566; 657-658.

<sup>86</sup> N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, “Lettera del C.L.N. - C.V.L. Via zona operativa ligure partigiana al Comando della 5<sup>a</sup> Armata americana”. 9 marzo 1945.

and to their unification under the missions' control. Whether convinced or forced for the sake of increasing their military capability, the Partisan leaders agreed to the American request of military unification under Allied control.

Towards the end of the "Walla-Walla" mission, Allied aid became frequent and consistent. For instance, it is worth noting the air-drop of November 16<sup>th</sup> 1944, when 30 British *Wellington* aircrafts delivered to the Zone 195 *containers* and 13 packs for a total weight of 5926 lbs. of materials. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, the "Cichero" Partisan division also received 13 Italian Brixia mortars. Later in the month, on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 6 *Dakota* aircrafts dropped 232 supply packages of over 25.210 lbs. in weight. On the same day, another *Dakota* delivered another 12 packages, totalling 3.000 lbs. of materials<sup>87</sup>. As many local reconstructions recall, the effect of the October and November aids allowed the Zone VI Partisans some noteworthy successes<sup>88</sup>.

Then, though, came the sinister days of the great Germanic *Aachen* operation, the last great Nazi-fascist mopping up operation<sup>89</sup>. As an effect of the *Aachen* offensive, American supplies dropped. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, "Walla-Walla", having lost the indispensable contacts to continue its activity, decided to leave the Zone VI<sup>90</sup>.

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Immediately after the departure of the "Walla-Walla", another "operational" mission was set up, "Peedee" team. The aim of this mission was to save the Partisan brigades surrounded in the *Aachen* manoeuvre. Consequently, 16 Italo-American agents were sent on January 18<sup>th</sup> 1945 onto Mount Antola (in the province of Genoa) under the command of US captain "Van", *alias* Leslie Vannoncini. As with the "Walla-Walla" mission, the reception of "Peedee" was arranged by the OSS/S.I. teams "Locust", "Meridien" which, in mid January of 1945, were still operating in the VI Zone.

OSS Headquarters gave "Peedee" the task of training Partisans for a further important military tactic, decided during the so-called "Rome Agreements" of December 1944 between the Allied command and CLNAI

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<sup>87</sup> N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, O.S.S.-2671th *Spe. Recon. Batt., Bi-weekly Report. Walla-Walla mission. 1-15 November 1944.* OSS Major Samuel C. King's report to colonel Livermore.

<sup>88</sup> See on this topic, G.B. Lazagna, *Rocchetta, Val Curone e Val Borbera nella guerra*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>89</sup> See on the *Aachen*, P.P. Rivello, *Quale giustizia per le vittime dei crimini nazisti?*, *op. cit.*, p. 135-136.

<sup>90</sup> Cfr. N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, O.S.S.- 2671th *Special. Recon. Batt., Report. for period 15-31 December 1944.* Colonel Livermore to Washington.

chiefs<sup>91</sup>. According to these agreements the formations were to use special tactics to counter the very probable scorched-earth tactic performed by the Germans in retreat.

In Zone VI it was necessary that the Partisan, on the one hand, continued in the sabotage of enemy communication lines and, on the other, ensured access to the port of Genoa and main highways<sup>92</sup>. These roads were in particular Route 1, (La Spezia-Genova), Route 35 (Genoa-Alessandria) and Route 45 (Genoa-Piacenza). Furthermore, according to the Anglo-American post-hostility plan Genoa had to be used to channel food and other primary resources to the population to avoid public unrest<sup>93</sup>. It was also necessary for the Partisans to safeguard the industrial units as well as the infrastructures around Genoa (especially electric power plants). The objectives assigned to "Peedee" represented "the conclusion of the hard work laid down by OSS in the previous 9 months"<sup>94</sup>. By the way, it would have been against Anglo-American interests to abandon the Partisans after all the work done by the missions and foreseeing the imminent final offensive.

Commander "Van" and his men at first made sure to predispose new dropping-points for the reception of supplies. This carefully planned operation enabled the Allied air force to make a further 115 airdrops. These supplied the Resistance with 1100 Sten and M3 machine guns; 2000 automatic and semiautomatic rifles (M1 and Mauser model); 35 mortars; 73 bazooka rocket-launchers and 25 "Piat" bomb launchers<sup>95</sup>. In other words, thanks to Allied supplies, each Partisan detachment had at least 1 bazooka and 1 mortar besides the rest of the equipment necessary for consistent firepower.

To further confirm the collaboration which had been established, it would be useful at this point to comment the aforementioned letters found in OSS archives. These were the ones the Garibaldi Brigade commander Anton Ukmar, *alias* "Miro", sent to American General Clark, commander of US troops in Italy.

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<sup>91</sup> On the "Rome Agreements" see in particular M. De Leonardis, "Gli accordi del dicembre 1944 tra Alleati e C.L.N.A.I. visti attraverso i documenti del Foreign Office", in R. Amedeo (ed. by), *Le missioni Alleate...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 341-343.

<sup>92</sup> N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, O.S.S. - 2671<sup>th</sup> Special. Recon. Batt., *Bi-weekly report. Peedee mission. 16-30 April 1945*. Lieutenant Colonel Fred Bielaski's report to OSS Headquarters - 2671 Special Reconnaissance Battalion Separate (Provisional) - in Caserta.

<sup>93</sup> Bielaski's report to Livermore. N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124. O.S.S.-2671<sup>th</sup> Spe. Recon. Batt.-col. Bielaski, *Bi-weekly Report. Peedee mission. 1-15 May 1945*.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. NARA, RG, 226, Entry 143, box 9, OSS- 2671<sup>th</sup> Special Recon. Batt., *Semi-Monthly Report. 16-30 April 1945* (Lt. Col. Fred Bielaski).

<sup>95</sup> See "Resoconto sugli armamenti partigiani della VI zona nella primavera 1945", in N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124. O.S.S. - 2671<sup>th</sup> Special. Recon. Batt. *Report on Sixth Zone. May 1945*.

The first letter, dated March 9<sup>th</sup> 1945, is signed by “Miro”, commander of the VI Zone, as well as by his second in command, Umberto Lazagna (battle name “Canevari”), a Catholic Party adherent. The two Partisans addressed Clark with the following words:

This is not the first time, Sir, which we have expressed to you our deepest thanks for the work done by the Peedee mission. The behavior of the mission and of his commander has encountered the best sympathy and admiration by our formations. These men, besides working night and day to enable us to receive the drops of the weapons, after enduring much risk and fatigue during the Germans’ mop up operations, volunteered to participate in the open combat which occurred in the 6<sup>th</sup> Zone, showing their courage and ability especially with the “bazookas”. In this way the formations, after the recent battles in which the Partisans fought very well, now well armed and supplied, are ready for the final offense: no obstacles will stop the impetus of our brave “Garibaldini” and your men will be at our side, welcomed guests and precious comrades.<sup>96</sup>

The letter gives the impression of a sincere gratitude towards the Americans. Furthermore, as the second letter of May 3<sup>rd</sup> read

Officers and men of the Mission have encountered the best sympathy by our Formations and the population of towns and villages occupied by us [...] We shall not forget them or will not forget all the good that has been done and all the help which has been given by the great American nation, under the guide of its great president F. D. Roosevelt, to the cause of democracy, liberty and justice.<sup>97</sup>

These letters are to be seen in the international context of the time. It is important to note that at that point of the conflict both Togliatti and Stalin, though for partly different reasons, were in favour of a collaboration with the USA<sup>98</sup>. As regards Stalin, after Teheran and Yalta his attitude has become openly inclined towards an appeasement with the Americans in Italy. Italy’s post-war international position were intended to be under the US guidance and influence. It implied the cooperation of Italian Communists Partisans with all the other several political forces which constituted the Italian Resistance. First

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<sup>96</sup> NARA, R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 8.

<sup>97</sup> Cfr. N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, “Lettera del C.L.N. - C.V.L. Via zona operativa ligure partigiana al Comando della 5<sup>a</sup> Armata americana”, 3 May 1945.

<sup>98</sup> This is not the proper context to address the question of the autonomy/subordination rapport between Soviet Union foreign policy at this stage of WWII and its relations with that of the Italian Communist Party under Togliatti. This topic has engendered a lively historiographical *querrelle* in Italy, currently still underway. To this regard see the contrasting positions of A. Agosti, *Togliatti, op. cit.*, in particular p. 280 and *passim*; and E. Aga Rossi, V. Zaslavski, *Togliatti e Stalin. Il PCI e la politica estera staliniana negli archive di Mosca*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2007, *passim*.

and foremost a collaboration was to be found with the Catholics, who particularly enjoyed the favour of the Allies<sup>99</sup>.

*Conclusions: the "Secret Resistance" - the Italian Missing Dimension*

In concluding this investigation of the VI Zone it is possible to assert that so far the role of the underground intelligence support to the Italian Partisan movement has been underestimated by historians. Traditional readings on the intelligence dimension of the Italian Resistance have been heavily affected by the more general interpretation on the nature of the relations between Resistance and Allies. This also has biased the consequent evaluation of the importance in that context of the authorities of the "Kingdom of the South" and then of the "Rome Government". The bulk of these readings have largely been based on an allegedly opposition between the Italian Resistance and the Anglo-Americans (including the Italian Government of the South subjugated to the Allies by its official co-belligerency condition). Such studies have generally maintained three claims: firstly, that the role played by such "covert" operations was essentially negligible and thus irrelevant; secondly, that such operations, when they took place, aimed mainly to discriminate against the Communist Partisan formations in order to weaken their military power; thirdly, these "secret" missions have been thought to exercise merely a "conservative" effect on the Partisan movement to thwart the potential Communist preponderance in post-war Italian politics<sup>100</sup>.

These inaccurate conclusions - on the whole emblematic of the prejudice surrounding the army and the intelligence services, both Italian and Anglo-American - are also maintained in Giorgio Bocca's *Storia dell'Italia partigiana*; though he is one of the foremost experts on the Resistance in the Liguria area. According to Bocca, the Allies and the "Kingdom of the South" both maintained a rather ambiguous "wait and see" attitude towards the Partisan movement in Italy. According to Bocca, the aim of the Italian Army's high command, which directed SIM, was to persuade the Allies to contain an indiscriminate growth of the Resistance movement. This aim was shared by the Anglo-Americans<sup>101</sup>. In

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<sup>99</sup> At that time of the conflict, Stalin's strategy of "popular fronts", that is, of wide anti-Fascist coalitions under Communist leadership, had been suggested almost everywhere by the Soviet leader to Communist heads outside the USSR. It was a project which firmly rested on the assumption of an alliance of the Communists with all the other party forces. Cfr. E. Aga Rossi, V. Zaslavski, *Togliatti e Stalin*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>100</sup> See R. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza*, *op. cit.*, p. 528 e *passim*; more recently D. Ellwood, *Gli alleati e la Resistenza*, *op. cit.*, in particular p. 248; G. Bocca, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-168.

<sup>101</sup> G. Bocca, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

this interpretation, SIM personnel was considered a hindrance to the Partisan movement, if not an outright "smoke-screen" dividing Allies and Resistance<sup>102</sup>. In yet more detail, Bocca's claim aims not only to discredit Italian military high command, but the patriotic integrity of the individual SIM agents operating in the field. The latter are seen to have repeatedly betrayed their cause, double-crossing it in favour of the Fascist Republic of Salò if not deserting it outright and crossing over to the Fascist side when they felt overridden by OSS and SOE counterparts. As Bocca observes: "When the Allies organized direct contacts with the Resistance, SIM officers parachuted into occupied territories mostly went back to their homes when not crossing outright over to the Fascist republic"<sup>103</sup>.

Insofar as regards the alleged uselessness of the Italian missions, sometimes along with the assumption of the unreliability of SIM agents, a similar conviction has often been expressed by the small number of authors who have investigated the role of the secret services in the Resistance<sup>104</sup>. The archive documentation recently made available instead underlines the importance of the Italian agents. According to OSS records, as amply documented at least for the VI Ligurian Zone, Italian SIM personnel played a key part in providing military support for the Resistance. This role had in any case been planned and laid out in the often underestimated "Quebec Memorandum", imposed on Italy at the signing of the Armistice. This Memorandum set as a condition for the rehabilitation of the defeated country its military participation in the campaign against Nazi-fascism in Italy<sup>105</sup>. As a consequence, as OSS records reveal, as of September 1943, the Southern Italy military authority, along with the reconstitution of the disbanded army, re-established its intelligence services (that is, SIM) order to support the first Partisan formations. This was in line with the Allied vision which entrusted to the Partisan movements in occupied countries the specific role of operating behind the lines in consort with the secret services of their Governments often exiled - or operating in the liberated areas of their countries, as in Italy - SIM therefore carried out the tasks expected of it, within the scope of its somewhat limited authority. It actively participated in the initial phase of setting up this clandestine network so indispensable for delivering military support to the

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>103</sup> Ivi, p. 116.

<sup>104</sup> See in particular F. Fucci, "I servizi d'informazione della Resistenza", in A. Mola (ed. by), *La cobelligeranza italiana nella lotta di Liberazione dell'Europa*, Ministero della Difesa, Roma, 1986, p. 86.

<sup>105</sup> On the Memorandum of Quebec cfr. A. Lanfaloni, *L'azione dello Stato Maggiore Generale...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

Resistance. The story of missions such as OTTO and VALENTINE prove this unequivocally. This conclusion can be drawn both from SIM documents and the Allied reports.

It is also true that in certain specific instances some of the historiographic accusations against SIM agents could be legitimate: for instance the ease with which some of them, as happened in the OTTO and LLL missions, ended up playing into the hands of enemy counterespionage. It is however important to note that the agents of the first missions were almost always forced to operate in inhabited centers to make contact with local C.L.N. Partisan leaders, thus acting in close proximity to the enemy. In other words, the risks taken by SIM protagonists of those missions were far greater than those incurred by the clandestine Partisan activity in the mountains. Finally it is also worth mentioning that certain prejudices against Italian SIM personnel were borne out of the cultural difference which distinguished them from the strongly politicized Partisan elements. SIM men, very often professional soldiers and thus exclusively motivated by their patriotic impulse to liberate their country, were mistrusted by the rest of the Resistance Patriots and kept at a distance<sup>106</sup>.

A similar bias about OSS and SOE efficiency is extant in Italian historiography to this day. Italian author Flavio Fucci has deemed the British and US intelligence services “untrained”, “simple-minded” and “irresponsible”<sup>107</sup>. In summation, whether by supposed suggestion from SIM, or through their own choice, the Allies would restrain from providing military support and supplies to the Partisans. This discriminating attitude was firstly aimed at containing the Communists; in second place at controlling the growth of the Partisan movement because the latter was feared to be a factor of potential progressive renewal in Italy. Once again, the documents refute this presumed inefficiency, at least in the case of OSS. It should suffice to cite the heavily armed Partisan offensive of spring 1945 to illustrate the aid provided by these missions. It is important to recall, furthermore, that the awareness of Allied support brought through SIM and OSS missions was an indisputable factor in providing moral encouragement to the Resistance. This also attracted more and more Patriots to participate in such behind the lines activities. This morale booster may well have been more important than the military aid itself.

In reference to the question of anti-Communist discrimination, the reality portrayed by OSS archive material completely refutes the version hitherto accredited by Italian historiography. This not only concerns the work of Marxist authors - such as Roberto Battaglia, Pietro Secchia, Filippo Frassati and Giorgio

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<sup>106</sup> On this issue cfr. L. Marchesi, E. Sogno, C. Milan, *Per la libertà*, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>107</sup> F. Fucci, *Spie per la libertà. I servizi segreti della Resistenza*, Milano, Ugo Mursia Editore, 1983, pp. 72; 386.



Amendola - but also the judgment often expressed by a supposedly more unbiased author, the often quoted, Bocca<sup>108</sup>.

In all truth, the Communist and Action Party Partisan formations, that is, the leftist ones, were treated on a totally equal basis as the autonomous military ones (*alias* those aligned with Badoglio). Any priority in delivering the aids was established according to the efficiency and combativeness of the Partisan formations; on the opportunity to employ the latter in areas of interest for the Allied commands; on the proximity of the Partisans to the dropping points; and finally, but not less important, according to the availability of aircraft for the Italian Resistance front<sup>109</sup>. Several episodes portrayed in this article corroborated this assumptions. First and foremost the number of bazookas delivered to the Communist Partisans through "Peedee" mission. Furthermore, even British lieutenant colonel Basil Davidson, commander of SOE/Glover mission, claimed that after the war some "myths" had arisen regarding the Allied containment of Communist formations in Liguria<sup>110</sup>. It is therefore important to note that not even the British identified the Communists as antidemocratic forces to be disempowered systematically. In conclusion, in March 1945, Davidson serenely wrote to his superiors that: "The Ligurian C.L.N. was an organization truly representative of all the main political factions within the resistance and that, though the Communist organization was undoubtedly the most effective, there was no indication that it intended carrying out an anti-democratic acts"<sup>111</sup>. Davidson's considerations well illustrate the general climate and good disposition of the Allies in providing Partisans with modern and heavy weapons, notwithstanding anti-scorch-earth tactic equipment through to the end of the war. This attitude remained unchanged even after the Greek Communist insurrection, which undoubtedly cast a grey shadow of doubt over the Italian Communist Partisans, *alias* the "Garibaldi brigades", but not to the extent of isolating or marginalizing them.

Finally, as regards the anti-Communism of the agents of the Italian monarchy, it should suffice to recall that "Walla-Walla" and "Peedee" missions

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<sup>108</sup>Cfr. R. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza italiana...*, *op. cit.*, p. 528 e *passim*; P. Secchia e F. Frassati, *La Resistenza e gli alleati*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1962, p. 10; G. Amendola, *Intervista sull'antifascismo*, a cura di Piero Melograni, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1994 (1<sup>a</sup> ediz. 1976), pp. 174-175.

<sup>109</sup> See on this the same conclusion of E. Sogno, *La Franchi*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>110</sup> Along with the "Peedee" mission, the "Glover", commanded by Davidson as well as by colonel Mac Mullen, lived for four months among the VI Zone Partisans. The two missions cooperated in supporting the Italian Resistance. Cfr. N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124. O.S.S. -2671<sup>th</sup> Spe. Recon. Batt.- col. Bielaski, *Bi-weekly Report. Peedee mission. 1-15 April 1945*.

<sup>111</sup> See B. Davidson's paper at the "La Resistenza in Liguria e gli Alleati" Conference (Genoa, March 29-31, 1985) quoted in M. Calegari, *Americani dell'O.S.S. e partigiani*, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

carried out their activity also thanks to the initial contacts established in the context of the "Garibaldi-Cichero" Division by emissaries of Badoglio. Hundreds of names make up the list of SIM agents employed by the Allies to help the Italian Resistance<sup>112</sup>,

In conclusion, the initial difficulties in relations between Allies and Resistance are to be explained differently than by the assumption of discrimination. The main reason for this, besides logistic difficulties, is to be attributed to the numerous fronts to be supported by the Anglo-Americans. The latter, often were thus unable to supply all such guerrillas simultaneously<sup>113</sup>.

In reference to the last charge ascribed to the Allies, that is, of having aimed the missions, not so much for purposes of military effectiveness, as to support conservative elements - thus in a position to ensure even in the post-war years a continuity of the pre-Fascist political system - this claim is refuted by OSS documents once again. The archival material does not suggest OSS had a blatant conservative motivation. In reality, what is rather apparent is that for the Americans the missions were operating as an example of progressive behavior and ideals. This was the task especially entrusted to the Italo-Americans of the O.G. missions who came to live for months among the fighters of the new Italy.

For instance, what troubled most the "Peedee" commander, Cpt. Vannoncini, according to his final report on the mission, was that those young Partisans, so brave and full of anti-Fascist ideals, could be in the future driven by various circumstances to abandon their democratic ideals, embracing new totalitarian faiths. Therefore, the task for the post-war period was, on the one hand, to keep the Patriots engaged in some big enterprise and, secondly, to teach them "how democracy works". This idea was not exactly going back to the antiquated institutions of the pre-Fascists liberal Italy, so much *ancien régime* in many respects; but rather to spread in the Italian Patriots' minds and souls, to be synthetic, values and models of American democracy<sup>114</sup>. For this reason, OSS headquarters decided to send behind the lines American military personnel of US citizenship but of recent Italian origins (like Vannoncini himself); the so called "second generation" Americans were, in other words, entrusted to spread the "American way of life" among the Partisans bands.

All the abovementioned elements, in any case, may help to explain a further important theme of this research. That is, why the total oblivion in

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<sup>112</sup>Cfr. A.U.S.S.M.E., fondo SIM, div. 10, busta 199, doc. 146644 e ss.

<sup>113</sup> See on this issue M. De Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna e la Resistenza partigiana*, op. cit., passim. More recently also T. Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza Italiana*, op. cit., passim.

<sup>114</sup> N.A.R.A., R.G. 226, Entry 143, box 9, folder 124, *Report on Sixth Zone*, p. 1.

historiography of Italian military personnel<sup>115</sup>. This expunction must be noted here since its explanation (or a part of it) might be useful to provide a more balanced judgment on the Resistance movement as a whole. By and large, the role played by Italian soldiers has been completely neglected by historiography, including the one closest to the Italian armed forces. The reason for this "gap", which should now be filled, resides in large part in the prevailing role played by OSS respect to SIM in the last phase of the Italian Campaign. This fact has come to obscure completely the indispensable contribution made by the Italian agents in the autumn-winter 1943. It was objectively difficult, in fact, even for Italian Army, to remember those "loyal Patriot" (namely, the ones who had not eventually deserted) who had continued to serve into SIM as Italian soldiers but had ended up a bit ingloriously rejected by OSS. More to the point, that "gap" is also very likely due to the reticence of Italian post-war Government, and even more of the Italian Army, about that intricate and embarrassing problem of Italian military personnel deserting from their national armed forces in favour of the ranks of American OSS. To remember those former Italian soldiers, become first agents of Washington and later saved from an imputation for desertion by American intercession in their favour (the abovementioned "certificates") must have been a serious mortification for Italian military leadership. According to the latter, the behaviour of those military personnel had been in open contradiction with the duty of loyalty to the Italian nation and its armed forces. In other words, the Italian Army was reluctant - understandably - to admit a contribution to the Resistance which had undergone a strong American influence.

This explain, in short, the little awareness in Italy – also in historiography – regarding those Italians who fought into the Italian Resistance but in connection with the Badoglio Army. It also clarifies why, even today, in Italy there is such a little knowledge of the close connection developed during the period 1943-1945 between the Italian Army and OSS. No doubt, the "secret" component are a still "the missing dimension" of Italian Resistance: a "grey multitude" still ignored by traditional readings and yet important. It should thus be carefully evaluated in all its implications and nuances.

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<sup>115</sup> On this issue Aga Rossi noted: "The Resistance of the military for many years has been left to memoirs of those who survived and their associations, and almost ignored by historiography, because they were events that concerned armed forces that had previously fought a 'fascist war' [...] the pre-eminent initiative of soldiers and officers in the constitution of the first partisan bands and their active presence in the Resistance [...], in other words, the 'badogliani' militaries and the 'Badoglio-oriented' formations [...] have been expunged by our National history". E. Aga Rossi, *Una nazione allo sbando*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12; 17.

Regarding this last theme, a final remark is here important, which brings us back to the "empire by invitation" theory voiced in the introduction. According again to Geir Lundestad: "on many occasions various outsiders [*alias* western European countries] tried to influence Washington in the direction of greater interest and more assistance"<sup>116</sup>.

What else did in the eighteen months of the Resistance the Badoglio Government, and then the Bonomi one, if not exactly what Lundestad affirms? Cannot it be said, that, in a certain sense, this Italian choice was equivalent to a specific "invitation" for the USA, starting from this very same "secret" collaboration, to solidly bind themselves to the Italian neo-ally? In substance, though, keeping in mind the limited Italian capacity for maneuver - the restricted Italian Government's "agency" during the Resistance - can it not be supposed that as of 1943 some Italian personalities, or political forces, took advantage of the United States' need for a military boost to the Resistance (granted through the SIM) in support of the Allied forces, thus reaping advantages for themselves<sup>117</sup>? Regarding the advantage for Italians of such a dialectic, both internally and internationally, this benefit was probably not immediate but none the less for that. It certainly helped Italy earn its "return ticket" in the consensus of the United Nations, as Badoglio defined it; this "secret" partnership was most certainly used also by some political forces and personalities to gain credit from the United States to be spent in the internal political arena in the post-war (not free, probably, by enduring underground contacts).

Summarizing briefly: it can be asserted that, although in the 1943-1945 dialectic between Washington and Rome, there were conspicuous frictions (for instance, the recruitment of Italian soldiers as OSS personnel). However, there was also fundamental agreement on the basic issues. First and foremost, cooperation in defeat of Nazi-fascism and then the cooperation in the reconstruction of the country and perhaps not only this; which is not equivalent to assume that both OSS and SIM, as early as in the 1943-45, were geared out to "contain" Communist menace in Italy. More probably they were purely setting up a partnership aimed to confront future problems, yet the latter were not completely clear during the war years.

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<sup>116</sup> G. Lundestad, *The American Empire and other Studies...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>117</sup> In particular James Miller has underlined how in the internal debate and that of public opinion in the USA, until June 1944, the Italy Campaign was a paramount issue, presumably being at that time the only European war front. The importance of the Italian front, especially at the beginning of the Italian Campaign, thus allowed Italy to play its few political cards in coordinating its military participation with the Americans. Cfr. J.E. Miller, *The United States and Italy, 1940-1950. The Politics and Diplomacy of Stabilization*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina University Press, 1984, in particular "Introduction".

The question that remains is what was the role of Togliatti's Italian Communist party in this context? Regarding wartime, we have already partly answered to this question when addressing "Peedee" mission. The main choices had already been made at Teheran and Yalta (where Togliatti had attended as Stalin's advisor) and, thus, mainly outside the Italian soil. Yet, it is also worth noting that the "secret Resistance" had probably important consequences also for the Italian Communism after 1945.

In the early post-war period, despite the tensions of the Cold War and the prejudices credited by historiography, some capacity for dialogue and solidarity would always survive among the Parties inheritors of that shared experience. A certain degree of admiration for American democracy would persist in Italy. This proves that, after all, the Italian Partisans' eulogy of the United States commitment "to democracy and justice" (as in the letter addressed by Communist commander Miro to General Clark) was not simply a "lip service" typical of the often condemned Communist duplicity.

Very likely, this history of "secret" men, of weapons supplied and fighting addressed together, would continue to exert some influence in the fabric of the country, even after the radicalization of the Cold War. Either those who had joined the Communist "Garibaldi" Brigades; or their Italian interlocutors of the clandestine missions (switched or not into OSS of capitalist Americans); or, even, the "badogliani" remained faithful to the Italian Royal Army would contribute to keep alive the memory of something important that had been done together for the democracy. And the same might be said of those Italo-Americans encountered on the battle field and so well received by the Italian Partisans and people. The "secret Resistance", in spite of many prejudices, has probably played a role even after the conflict in the early post-war years, contributing to the reconstruction of the country, cultivating a spirit of solidarity that never completely vanished. If, then, certain of those "secret" figures have continued to play a covert role - for "democratic" purposes, but not always irreproachable - this is also part of that story. Establishing this will, however, require more documents.