

# All the King's Men? British Official Policy Towards the Italian Resistance

Niall MacGalloway\*

In the initial months following the fall of France, Britain placed great hopes in resistance groups aiding them in liberating the continent. By the time Britain finally re-entered Europe via Sicily, the situation of the war had changed drastically. This study seeks to examine official British policy towards the resistance that sprung up across Italy from 1943 onwards. In particular, it explores the idea that although Britain was, in theory, against collaborating with Communist groups, practical reasons forced them to do so. Moreover, the study examines to what extent Britain hoped to keep traditional elites and key figures in power, such as the King and Marshall Badoglio, in order to provide a bulwark against Communism, despite widespread Italian opposition. These actions will be, briefly, contrasted and compared with those in Greece and Yugoslavia where, in all three countries, Britain hoped to restore these nations to their pre-war status for fear that they would fall into communist hands.

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The abrupt departure of Britain from continental Europe following the defeat of France in 1940 left the British government with a dilemma. Traditionally maintaining too small an army to seriously think about re-conquering all of Europe alone, Britain began to place her hopes in the potential role that resistance groups could play in allowing her to gain a foothold on the continent.<sup>1</sup> By the time that

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\* Niall MacGalloway is a doctoral student at the University of St. Andrews.

<sup>1</sup> CAB 80/56, 'Subversive Activities in Relations to Strategy' in Appendices of D.T. Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945, A Survey of the Special Operations Executive with Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 219-23; D.T. Stafford, 'The Detonator Concept: British Strategy, SOE and European Re-

Allied forces had landed in Sicily, the entire scope of the war had changed. British forces were now backed by the economic and military power of both the Soviet Union and the United States and resistance groups now seemed relatively small and of lesser importance than they had been by comparison. Nonetheless, the fall of Mussolini in Italy and the subsequent armistice agreement by the successor Badoglio government, led to the occupation of much of the northern and central parts of the peninsula by German forces, which in turn prompted an anti-Fascist resistance to spring up across the country.<sup>2</sup> This study intends to focus on Britain's role in the Italian Resistance against German occupation, not only how Britain hoped to make use of it, but, particularly, how she hoped to maintain the position of the King and traditional Italian elites, many of whom were associated with the Fascist regime. These actions largely stemmed from a belief that the King could guarantee the loyalty of the Italian army and, more importantly, navy. Churchill, among others, felt that an Italian partisan-dominated government could not provide these.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many within the British government feared that the Italian resistance was overwhelmingly Communist, and that supporting a resistance-led regime would push Italy into the Soviet camp.<sup>4</sup> The situation and decisions made in Italy will also be compared to British opinion and actions in Yugoslavia and Greece, showing that the support Britain lent to Italian elites is not unique to Italy, but part of a wider European policy.

The German occupation of the Italian peninsula occurred simultaneously with the cessation of hostilities between Italy and the Allies, announced on 8 September 1943, in agreement with the Bado-

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sistance after the Fall of France', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 10 (1975), pp. 186-7.

<sup>2</sup> L. Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia, 1943-45* (Turin, 1993), pp. 26-32; 'Manifesto dei sei Partiti antifascisti', 25 July 1943, Milan, in *Atti e documenti della Democrazia Cristiana, 1943-1967, Volume Primo*, ed. by A. Damilano (Rome, 1968), pp. 11-3; M. de Blasio Wilhelm, *The Other Italy, Italian Resistance in World War II* (London: Norton, 1988), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Conditions and Politics in Western Occupied Europe* at <<http://www.tlmea.com.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/conditionsandpolitics/index.htm>> [accessed 18 November 2012] (hereafter *C&P*) FO 371/43942-0006, 'Reports on conditions in liberated Italy and in enemy-occupied Italy', 13/2/44, p. 8; F. Attal, 'La monarchie Italienne est-elle encore légitime en 1943-1944? La question institutionnelle dans le "Regno del Sud"', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporains*, 45 (1998), p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> Attal, 'La monarchie Italienne', p. 232.

glio government.<sup>5</sup> The conclusion of the armistice with Badoglio and the legal government of the King would shape British relations with the Resistance. , The Resistance consistently tried to distance themselves as much as possible from Badoglio and the King, due to their previous associations with Fascism.<sup>6</sup> This viewpoint was at least partly upheld by Britain due to their continued dependence upon the Mediterranean as a channel to vital imperial interests.<sup>7</sup> Clashes of interest between Britain and the United States would determine British relations with the Resistance as well as the entire movement. The United States had no imperial interests in the Mediterranean, and, in many cases, thoroughly resented fighting to uphold what many in Washington perceived as British attempts to prop up their empire. In addition, American commanders perceived the entire Italian campaign as, at best, a side show and, at worst, a drain of funds on the Normandy landings. Many hoped that the campaign in Italy would be a lightening one, fought against weaker Italian divisions and concluded before Germany could seriously react. Churchill in particular hoped that the Italians could be made to govern themselves as much as possible, thereby relieving Allied funds and manpower.<sup>8</sup> As it became apparent that the Italian campaign would not be over quickly, and that supplies earmarked for Italy would be needed for both the Normandy landings and support landings in the south of France, the Allies increasingly relied upon traditional elites to govern Italy, many of whom had dubious Fascist pasts.<sup>9</sup> In many cases Britain was so afraid of Communists, or perceived Communists, for it is worth stressing that not all Resistance members were Communists, that she was prepared to support pre-1922 leaders or even ex-Fascists or Fas-

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<sup>5</sup> *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI), Series X, Volume 1* (Rome, 1992), pp. 18-26; A. Ciarrapico, 'I quesiti irrisolti dell'otto settembre', *Nuova storia contemporanea*, 14, (2010), p. 26; N. Lewis, *Naples '44, An Intelligence Officer in the Italian Labyrinth* (London: Eland, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>D. Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), p. 40. For Badoglio's association with Fascism see, G. Salvemini, 'Pietro Badoglio's Role in the Second World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 21 (1949); for the King's association see, R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy, Life Under the Dictatorship* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 179-183.

<sup>7</sup> Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945*, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> C&P FO 371/37264-0033, 'Situation in Italy', 15/8/43, p. 14; C&P FO 371/37265-0049, 'Situation in Italy, 25/8/43, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> S. Weiss, *Allies in Conflict, Anglo-American Strategic Negotiations, 1938-44* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 143-4; *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, OM, 1938-1945*, ed. by A. Cadogan and D. Dilks (London: Cassell, 1971), pp. 570-1, 644.

cist associates.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Britain's apparent indifference to working with former Fascists must be placed in context. Fascism had been in power in Italy since 1922, and many officials had spent much, or in numerous cases the entirety, of their careers under Fascism. The Allies would face similar problems in governing a defeated Germany after the war. Finding competent officials and administrators, not only in high government, but in basic local administration, who did not have at least some dealings with Fascism was extremely difficult. Therefore, it is far more likely that the Allied policy of working with former Fascists can be seen as at least partially rooted in this, rather than formed through a deliberate anti-Resistance policy.

Perhaps the most obvious example of this is King Vittorio Emanuele III. His appointment of Mussolini as Prime Minister, and his failure, or unwillingness, to curb some of the Fascist regime's more extreme measures, meant that the *Comitati di Liberazione Nazionale* (Committees of National Liberation – CLNs) who represented the Resistance at a local level, were not initially prepared to take part in any government with the King at its head.<sup>11</sup> The Allies, especially Britain, were determined in the early days of the campaign to keep the King in power.<sup>12</sup> Though some of this support can be attributed to Badoglio's early messages to Churchill stating that the Italian people were rallied around the King, most simply came from Churchill's traditional position as a monarchist.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Churchill would champion the policy of working with other monarchs across Europe, even when pro-Communist resistance groups would arguably deliver greater results. Nonetheless, to view Churchill's support of the King as purely due to his personal pro-monarchy sentiments is only part of the explanation: the creation of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (Italian Social Republic – RSI) in the North demanded that a strong counter-

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<sup>10</sup> R. De Felice. 'La Resistenza e il Regno del Sud', *Nuova storia contemporanea*, 3 (1999), p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> C&P FO 371/43876-0002, 'Political Situation in Northern Italy', 30/12/43, p. 3; C&P FO 371/43876-0008, 'Text of message sent to the Bari Congress by the Committee of National Liberation for Central and Northern Italy discussing future democracy', 6/3/44, p. 8; *L'Italia Libera*, No. 8, 4 October 1943 (Rome Edition), in *L'Italia Libera, Organo del Partito d'Azione, 1943-1945*, ed. by F. Tosi Ferratini and G. Grassi (Milan, 1975), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cabinet Papers, Series One, PREM 3 (hereafter PREM 3) PREM 3/242/4, 'Broadcasts from General Eisenhower's headquarters', July-September 1943.

<sup>13</sup> PREM 3/242/5, 'Messages to and from Marshal Badoglio', September 1943. This particular message was received on 14/9/43.

weight exist in the South. Moreover, Harold Macmillan, Churchill's adviser in the Mediterranean, urged the Prime Minister to build up the legitimacy of the King. This strengthening could only be achieved, suggested Macmillan, by the introduction of the six anti-Fascist parties of the central CLN to the royal government, thereby combining royal authority with partisan legitimacy.<sup>14</sup> The initial refusal of the anti-Fascist parties to work with Badoglio and the King, a situation which would only change in 1944, meant that the Allies went on supporting the royal government to the detriment of the Resistance, which found itself left out in the political cold.

Churchill's backing of the King owed a great deal to his belief that only the King could guarantee the loyalty of the Italian army and navy, which he felt could not be achieved under a Resistance-led government.<sup>15</sup> Churchill and the Allies hoped that the Italian navy would fall under their control. Though Churchill's own experience in the navy probably played some minor role in this desire, the pre-war reputation of Italy as having the only fleet capable of unsettling Britain's Mediterranean naval dominance probably made it seem essential. A similar desire was to avoid the destruction of the Italian fleet altogether, as happened with the French navy at Mers-el-Kebir.<sup>16</sup> This image of an all-influential King was perhaps unfair given that many Italian soldiers, upon deserting the army following the fall of Mussolini, joined the Resistance.<sup>17</sup> This can be seen in many of the key incidents in the history of the Resistance, for example during the so-called 'Four Days of Naples', in which Neapolitans staged a general rising within the city, expelling German troops stationed there.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, British officials in Italy would uphold Church-

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<sup>14</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States 1943, Volume II: Europe* (hereafter FRUS), pp. 371-3; M. De Leonardis, 'La Gran Bretagna e la monarchia italiana (1943-1946)', *Storia contemporanea*, 12 (1981), p. 70; Ellwood, *Italy 1943-45*, pp. 52-3.

<sup>15</sup> Ellwood, *Italy 1943-45*, p. 1; C&P FO 371/43942-0006, 'Reports on conditions in liberated Italy and in enemy-occupied Italy', 13/2/44, p. 8. Churchill's historical associations with the Royal Navy made him extremely keen to gain the support of the Italian fleet.

<sup>16</sup> B.R. Sullivan, 'A Fleet in Being: The Rise and Fall of Italian Sea Power, 1861-1943', *The International History Review*, 10 (1988), pp. 116, 121; M. de Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna e la resistenza partigiana in Italia, (1943-1945)* (Naples, 1988), pp. 83-5.

<sup>17</sup> A. Bartolini and A. Terrone, *I Militari nella guerra partigiani in Italia, 1943-1945* (Rome, 1998), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

ill's opinion that without the King's influence over the armed forces, enlisted men would simply return to their homes.

The retention of the King would become a key point of difference with the partisans. All six of the anti-Fascist parties initially demanded his removal, while the Allies, blinkered by an overestimation of the King's importance, were prepared to defend his position against the Resistance. This defence of the King was perhaps best exemplified by the British attempts to curb the influence of the Bari Congress, where representatives of the anti-Fascist parties met in February 1944. This meeting, unsurprisingly, would call for the abdication of the King, but the Allies forbade officers to attend the Congress, and banned any speeches made there from being broadcast.<sup>19</sup> These efforts to weaken the influence of the Congress, and by extension, the Resistance, were largely based upon the twin considerations of a fear of Communist influence within the partisans, and a desire to maintain law and order within the country, a responsibility which the Allies felt the Resistance were not ready to undertake.<sup>20</sup> This policy of weakening partisan influence, while simultaneously strengthening that of the King and traditional elites would be, for the time, the British policy towards the Resistance.

The Allied desire to retain Badoglio as Prime Minister also angered the Resistance, who saw him as unrepresentative and associated too deeply with Mussolini's regime, as he notably led the Italian armies in unprovoked attacks on Ethiopia and Greece.<sup>21</sup> This is perhaps unsurprising. Not only did the Resistance and the Italian people find Badoglio unpalatable, but swathes of the British public found him an unacceptable choice too.<sup>22</sup> Though questions were raised, in

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<sup>19</sup> C&P FO 371/43942-0006, 13/2/44, p. 8; C&P FO 371/43814-0044, 'Political Situation: Bari Congress of Democratic Parties', 12/2/44, pp. 7-8; B. Croce, *Croce, the King and the Allies, Extracts from a Diary by Benedetto Croce, July 1943-June 1944* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), pp. 72-3.

<sup>20</sup> NAW RG 331/10700/122/113, 'Partisan Activity in IV Corps', in R. Absalom, *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana, (1944-1945)*, (Florence, 1988), p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> C&P FO 371/37294-0029, 'Paraphrase of message from Bonomi on behalf of the six parties in Rome', 8/11/43, p. 3; Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy*, p. 367; A. Ciarrapico, 'Il mito della "guerra parallela"', *Nuova storia contemporanea*, 13 (2009), p. 133, on Ethiopia and Greece, respectively; P. Badoglio, *Italy in the Second World War, Memories and Documents* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 25-31.

<sup>22</sup> Mass-Observation Online at

<<http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk.ezproxy.webfeat.lib.ed.ac.uk/index.aspx>> [accessed 18 November 2012] (hereafter MO) File Report 2022, 'Notes on Public Opinion in 1943', pp. 6, 10; MO File Report 1882, 'Fortnightly Bulle-

both Italy and in Britain, as to why the British government chose to support Badoglio, who alienated so many, especially as he was supported for similar reasons as the King. He was, after all, the legal representative of the Italian government and had been the representative with whom Britain had concluded the armistice. Moreover, he had been appointed by the King, and questioning the King's choice for Prime Minister would undoubtedly be perceived as questioning the validity of the King himself. In fact, Churchill was so adamant that Badoglio be upheld as the British contact in Italy, that he continued to do so even when reports came back from British missions doubting his ability to lead.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the lengths that British officials were prepared to go in supporting Badoglio can be perceived from the fact that the concerns raised by the Soviet Union, worried that the Anglo-American acceptance of Badoglio in Italy might find a parallel in a potential Göring-led Germany, were ignored.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, partly from a sense of obligation as the legal government, and partly because he was capable of maintaining order in Italian society, the Allies continued to back Badoglio. Most importantly, as Macmillan acknowledged, Allied support for both Badoglio and the King was not paramount in Italian policy, but rather that the Anglo-Americans were prepared to work with anyone who they felt could simultaneously organise Italy, and fight the Germans.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, this would always be the primary Allied consideration. Such a policy was parallel to the one in Yugoslavia and Greece where Allied political preferences had to be subordinated to whom they felt would actually produce results. In the initial stages of the Italian campaign, the royal government was favoured, at the expense of the nascent Italian Resistance.<sup>26</sup>

If this attempt to control the Italian political situation at the expense of the Resistance is evident in the very highest echelons of government, it was just as commonplace in lower levels and in local

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tin', August 1943, p. 22; C&P FO 371/37307-0010, 'Administration of Italy after defeat: H.M. Government's policy', 29/7/43, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> PREM 3/242/3, 'General Mason-Macfarlane's mission to Badoglio government', September-October, 1943.

<sup>24</sup> PREM 3/242/4.

<sup>25</sup> De Leonardis, *La Gran Bretagna e la resistenza partigiana in Italia*, pp. 73-4.

<sup>26</sup> WO 294/1972, quoted in E. Aga-Rossi, 'La politica Angloamericana verso la Resistenza Italiana', in *L'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale e nella Resistenza*, ed. by Ferratini Tosi, G. Grassi and M. Legnani (Milan, 1988), p. 149; E. Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 157.

government. One of the prime aims of the Resistance, like resistance movements in France, was to carry out an *epurazione*, or purging, of the country. The *Partito Comunista Italiano* (Italian Communist Party – PCI), in particular demanded the removal of all former Fascist Party officials from government.<sup>27</sup> At the Bari Congress, many anti-Fascists complained that Badoglio's purging of former Fascists was dismally slow and did not go far enough.<sup>28</sup> The Allies, on the other hand, had no real desire to purge Fascism in Italy beyond the removal of key figures. Instead, Allied involvement in Italy was limited to defeating the German armies, and not to make key social changes in Italy, particularly changes that may destabilise areas of the country.<sup>29</sup> Traditionally, Italian scholars have accused the Allies of blocking all pro-Resistance choices for political office purely due to a fear of the movement, but this is a clearly biased viewpoint. Rather, as Dunnage notes, the Allied Military Government (AMG) was forced to rely upon older political units, such as the Carabinieri, to keep law and order and so was forced to make choices that would be appropriate to these traditionally conservative organisations.<sup>30</sup> In many cases, when the Allies did attempt to appoint those from the anti-Fascist parties they would find those appointed had previous involvement with Fascism, but who had simply joined one of the anti-Fascist parties following the armistice.<sup>31</sup>

For many involved in governing Italy, there was a profound difference of opinion about what was actually meant by de-Fascistisation. The Kingdom of the South, the liberated portion of Italy governed by the royal government, felt it was merely a case of 'bringing in the right men', without any real changes in institutions.

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<sup>27</sup> C&P FO 371/43942, 'Psychological Warfare Branch reports on conditions in liberated Italy', 24/1/44, p. 5; A. Kaspi, *La libération de la France, juin 1944 - janvier 1946* (Paris, 1995), pp. 189-224; J-P Azéma and O. Wieviorka, *Vichy, 1940-1944*, (Paris, 1997), p. 325-7.

<sup>28</sup> R. Palmer Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p.41.

<sup>29</sup> PREM 3/243/3, 'General (II): Count Grandi', September 1943-November 1944, shows that despite Grandi's involvement in the overthrow of Mussolini, neither Britain nor Badoglio would have him in government. He was simply too involved with Fascism.

<sup>30</sup> J. Dunnage, 'Policing and Politics in the Southern Italian Community, 1943-1948', in *After the War: Violence, Justice, Continuity and Renewal in Italian Society: Papers Given at the Contemporary History Conference, 'After the War was Over', University of Sussex, July 1996*, ed. by J. Dunnage (Market Harborough: Troubador, 1999), p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

The Resistance, however, felt that key institutions, such as the Carabinieri, or the monarchy itself, had to be drastically altered.<sup>32</sup> These differences of opinion meant that it was difficult for Britain and the Resistance to agree upon results. In addition, Britain hoped to carry out as little governing of the country as possible, with all political decisions being made subordinate to military considerations.<sup>33</sup> In many cases, the result of this was that officials with a Fascist past were left in positions of influence, much to the dismay of the Resistance who saw Britain's reluctance to carry out an overhaul of the system of government as anti-Resistance measures.

Even after the liberation of Rome in June 1944 and the slow advance of the Allied armies up the Italian peninsula, the Allies and the Resistance continued to regard one another with mutual suspicion in regard to the newly liberated, Resistance-governed territories. One of the problems faced by the Allies was exemplified when they entered the city of Florence, which already had an almost fully functioning government organised and carried out under the supervision of the Tuscan CLN (CTLN).<sup>34</sup> According to agreements with AMG and the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale per Altra Italia* (Committee of National Liberation for Upper Italy – CLNAI), the central Resistance command for German-occupied Italy would be handed over to AMG upon the arrival of Allied forces.<sup>35</sup> This meant that the CLN, and by extension, the CTLN, had no official position and could not legally appoint administrators.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, in Florence the Allies found a fully functioning government, which had been appointed by the CTLN and had the support of the general public in Florence. The problems which arose when governing Florence were largely a result of the Allied decision to replace many of the

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<sup>32</sup> N. Gallerano, 'A Neglected Chapter in Italy's Transition from Fascism to the Republic: The Kingdom of the South (1943-1944)', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 1 (1995-6), pp. 394-5.

<sup>33</sup> Aga-Rossi, 'La politica Angloamericana verso la Resistenza Italiana', p. 146; G. Severini, 'I problemi dell'epurazione a Perugia' in R. Ranieri, *Gli Alleati in Umbria (1944-'45)*, *Atti del convegno "Giornata degli Alleati" Perugia, 12 gennaio 1999*, *The Allies in Umbria (1944-'45)*, *Proceedings of the meeting 'Giornata degli Alleati'*, Perugia, January 12, 1999, (Perugia, 2000), pp. 113-6.

<sup>34</sup> NAW RG 331/10700/115/26, 'Patriots in Florence', in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, pp. 346-7; C&P FO 371/43946-0013, 'Reports on conditions in liberated Italy and in enemy occupied Italy', 2/9/44, pp. 7, 12; de Blasio Wilhelm, *The Other Italy*, pp. 215-6, 222.

<sup>35</sup> NAW RG 331/10700/122/71, 'Treatment of Comitati di Liberazione', in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, p. 137.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138

CTLN appointed officials, distributing offices as evenly as possible in an attempt to show no official preference among the anti-Fascist parties. In addition, as had been the case in the Kingdom of the South under Badoglio, the Allies found it extremely difficult to govern without the assistance of minor-level Fascists, or those who had been associated with Fascism.<sup>37</sup> The result of this, however, was that relations between the Allies and the CTLN in Florence soured in the immediate aftermath of the liberation, forcing Allied administrators to reverse their decision and to announce that they would work closely with the CTLN in governing the city.<sup>38</sup> Such developments were, of course, not limited to Florence. In many northern cities, such as Turin or Genoa, strong centres of urban resistance, the Allies would enter the city to find that the local CLN had established governing bodies during the two years of German occupation. These were not necessarily politically akin to Allied aspirations, but in many cases the Allies were pragmatic enough to realise that the partisans were of too high value to alienate, and compromised.<sup>39</sup>

Such compromise certainly marked the slow change in Allied policy that would determine British attitudes towards the Resistance. As the war in Italy dragged on, CLNs up and down the peninsula were becoming increasingly organised, and the political flavour of the resistance movement as a whole meant that social change was inextricably linked to the partisan struggle. As a result, Allied pragmatism would gradually take over official policy and it became more acceptable to work with the Resistance.

Nonetheless, as the Resistance grew in influence, Allied politicians became progressively more worried regarding post-war planning. As Allied backing gradually shifted towards the Resistance, particularly after the liberation of Rome and the incorporation of the anti-Fascist parties into the Resistance, officials became concerned about how best to curb the more extreme elements within the movement.<sup>40</sup> The huge advances made by the Red Army in the East made it clear that Moscow's influence in the post-war world would be substantial, particularly upon the Communist parties of Europe. In many

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<sup>37</sup> C. Macintosh, *From Cloak to Dagger, An SOE Agent in Italy, 1943-1945* (London: Kimber, 1982), pp. 64-5.

<sup>38</sup> de Blasio Wilhelm, *The Other Italy*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>39</sup> C&P FO 371/43946-0013, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> C&P FO 371/43793-0016, 'Political Situation: Signor Bonomi takes office', 6/6/44, p. 4; C&P FO 371/43793-0019, 'Political Situation: Signor Bonomi takes office', 7/6/44, p. 4.

cases, these parties led resistance movements and bore more than a passing allegiance to the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup> In Italy, Allied leaders were particularly concerned due to the often overwhelming presence of the PCI in Resistance groups. Around fifty per cent of partisans were part of the Garibaldi brigades, with this figure rising to as high as ninety per cent in some areas.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (Italian Socialist Party – PSI) and the *Partito d’Azione* (Action Party – Pd’A) both had their own political following and a left-wing manifesto.<sup>43</sup> The presence of armed bands caused concern among Allied leaders, particularly with regards to the post-war period. Having recently put down a Communist coup in Athens, Britain was keen to prevent Italy from falling into Communist hands.<sup>44</sup> Similar fears existed in Washington, as the United States was keen to build up Italy into a regional power with defence capabilities whom they could rely upon as an ally of the West.<sup>45</sup>

For the Allies, the Resistance seemed to present a problem: fear of what parties such as the PCI and the Pd’A would do with their weapons once the war ended and the Allies departed. This prompted both Britain and the United States to seriously look at how to disarm them.<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that the PCI leader, Palmiro Togliatti, was under no illusions as to the difficulty in establishing a Communist regime while the Allies occupied the country.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>41</sup> D. Travis, ‘Communism and Resistance in Italy, 1943-1948’, in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939-1948*, ed. by T. Judt (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 98; M. Wheeler, ‘Pariahs to Partisans to Power: The Communist Party of Yugoslavia’, in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe*, ed. by Judt, pp. 148-9.

<sup>42</sup> Travis, ‘Communism and Resistance in Italy’, in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe*, ed. by Judt, p. 95; C&P FO 371/43946-0013, p. 7; Ellwood, *Italy, 1943-1945*, pp. 207-9; D. Travis, ‘Communism in Modena: The Provincial Origins of the Partito Comunista Italiano (1943-1945)’, *The Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), p. 890.

<sup>43</sup> FO 371/43946-0013, p. 6; C&P FO 371/43947-0001, ‘Reports on conditions in liberated Italy in enemy-occupied Italy’, 16/10/44, p. 17; M. Canali, ‘Leo Valiani e Max Salvadori, I servizi segreti inglesi e la Resistenza’, *Nuova storia contemporanea*, 14 (2010), p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler’s Greece, The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 368-72.

<sup>45</sup> Ellwood, *Italy, 1943-1945*, pp. 201-3, 207-9.

<sup>46</sup> NAW RG 331/10000/125/17, ‘Handing in of Arms Patriots’, in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, p. 367.

<sup>47</sup> C&P FO 371/49797-0002, ‘Agreements between the Committee of National Liberation of Northern Italy (CLNAI) and the Italian government: United Kingdom policy towards CLNAI: situation in Northern Italy: Special Force weekly reviews’,

Britain feared the possible actions of PCI members, as well as the potential for a PCI-led coup once the Allies left. These fears were not totally unfounded. The perceived slow pace of the *epurazione* had led some bands of partisans to carry out vigilante actions and to kill former Fascists whom they felt had not been punished. Mussolini was, of course, the most famous example of such a killing.<sup>48</sup> Such actions not only threatened Britain's hopes of stability, but also had the potential of upsetting the balance of political opinion in local communities. In addition, while the Italian Resistance never reached the full-blown levels of conflict that characterised relations between Tito and Mihailovic in Yugoslavia, conflict between partisan bands over political issues was not uncommon.<sup>49</sup> The issue of the removal of arms became a serious concern in the relationship between Britain and the Resistance. Orders to surrender all types of arms were often ignored, perhaps because many in Italy owned a weapon before joining the Resistance.<sup>50</sup> Reports of this kind often placed blame squarely at the feet of the PCI, who, many believed, were hiding armaments in order to use them after the departure of the Allies.<sup>51</sup> These fears were shared not only by the Allied, but also by the Italian middle-classes, who dreaded a potential PCI uprising after the war.<sup>52</sup>

These measures to remove arms may have stemmed from a genuine Allied fear, as well as the governing policy that having armed vigilante groups was certain to upset the local population, but they did lead to a number of angry and disappointed partisans. For many, after helping liberate territory, being asked to hand over one's arms was tantamount to being described as a mere brigand or hooli-

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25/1/45, p. 5; J.B. Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party, From Togliatti to Berlinguer* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1986), p. 185.

<sup>48</sup> L. Alessandrini, 'The Option of Violence: Partisan Activity in the Bologna Area, 1945-1948', in *After the War*, ed. by Dunnage, pp. 63-5; P. Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), p. 7; D. Ward, 'Fifty Years On: Resistance Then, Resistance Now', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 4 (1999), p. 61.

<sup>49</sup> M. Dondi, 'Division and Conflict in the Partisan Resistance', *Modern Italy*, 12 (2007), p. 232; One report stated, 'It seemed very evident that the Communists in the "Potente Division" are antagonistic towards any Patriots who are not of their political faith', NAW RG 331/10700/115/26, 'Patriots in Florence', in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, p. 363; Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe*, p. 159.

<sup>50</sup> NAW RG 331/10700/115/26, pp. 361-2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>52</sup> R. Domenico, 'The Many Meanings of Anti-Fascism', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 4 (1999), p. 56.

gan, and partisans across Italy were understandably upset.<sup>53</sup> This was also the case as the Allies, while attempting to persuade the Resistance to surrender their arms, continually failed to feed and clothe them sufficiently in the immediate aftermath of the liberation of a city, even after fighting under Allied instructions.<sup>54</sup> This combination of feeling betrayed and believing that the Allies were somehow less than capable of providing for them led many partisans to profoundly mistrust the Allies or to place more trust in the CLNs. As the Allies advanced further north into the territory provisionally administered by the CLNAI, resentment grew at having to hand over their arms as many had been hiding in the mountains for over a year.

This fear of the potential post-war power of the PCI led the Allies to seek a more binding agreement with the CLNAI and the Central CLN. This effectively replaced the Badoglio government after the liberation of Rome, and would eventually lead to the so-called 'Rome Protocols'.<sup>55</sup> Not only did this agreement result in the recognition of Allied authority up to and after Italian liberation, but it bound the CLNAI to promise the post-war demobilisation and disarming of all partisans.<sup>56</sup> The Rome Protocols did much more than merely promise to disarm the partisans, it 'subjugated', as one contemporary put it, the Resistance to the Allies.<sup>57</sup> Even more modern scholars have seen the Rome Protocols as a political defeat for the Resistance, and an indication that the movement was not fighting for itself, but fighting for the Allies.<sup>58</sup> This is not to say that the CLNAI received nothing in return. In fact, by signing the Protocols, the Resistance received 160 million lire a month, but crucially failed to gain

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<sup>53</sup> NAW RG 331/10700/133/39, 'The Partisan Problem', in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, p. 120; the French government, too, had problems disarming their partisans, see M. Salvadori, *The Labour and the Wounds: A Personal Chronicle of One Man's Fight For Freedom*, trans. G. S. Paleotti (London: Pall Mall Press, 1958), p. 199.

<sup>54</sup> NAW RG 331/10000/125/100, 'Patriots', in *Gli Alleati e la ricostruzione in Toscana*, ed. by Absalom, p. 143.

<sup>55</sup> Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Clause 4 of the Rome Protocols, quoted in T. Behan, *The Italian Resistance, Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies* (New York: Pluto Press, 2009), p. 215; F. Parri and F. Venturi, 'The Italian Resistance and the Allies', in *European Resistance Movements, 1939-1945, Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the History of the Resistance Movements Held at Milan 26-29 March 1961* (London: Macmillan, 1964), p. xxxvii.

<sup>57</sup> S. Pertini, quoted in T. Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, pp. 215-6.

<sup>58</sup> P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy, Society and Politics, 1943-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 57.

formal Allied recognition as the government in the North, though they did gain full recognition as the sole Italian Resistance movement.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the disarming of the partisans, one of the most crucial aims of British policy in Italy, grew into an all-encompassing agreement that would leave the CLNAI politically weakened.

The official relationship between Britain and the Italian Resistance was one largely marked by differences in aims and priorities. The Allies landed in Italy with the intention of knocking the country out of the war and quickly racing to the German border. In simple terms, the Italian campaign was a means to an end, and merely one theatre of the war. To partisans in Italy, the last two years of the war was an attempt to change the country, to purge Fascism and to create a new and more democratic state. Indeed, it is unsurprising that the Resistance would become the 'founding myth' of the Italian Republic in post-war Europe.<sup>60</sup> British policy was to defeat Germany with the minimum of fuss in Italy. Hence Britain turned to traditional Italian elites to maintain order, as well as the hope that the King would be able to control the Italian armed forces. As time went on, and the prospect of a Europe divided into Western and Soviet spheres of influence became more and more likely, Allied policy was to make sure that Italy remained in the Western camp. As a result, the retention of the more conservative elements of Italian society became Britain's way of maintaining stability in Italy.

As the war went on, official British policy was slowly adapted until, thanks to overwhelming public disapproval of Badoglio and the King, they were prepared to work with the Resistance. To this end, Britain set about trying to curb the influence of the Resistance and to push the less extreme elements to the forefront. The Rome Protocols bound the Resistance solidly to Allied aims within the country, while choices in local government in liberated territories were at least partially decided by AMG. At the same time, Allied officials began disarming partisans in an attempt to prevent a repeat of events in Athens. Britain's attitude was arguably marked by self-interest, including a desire to keep Italy on side, and with little regard for the senti-

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<sup>59</sup> Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy, Society and Politics*, p. 57; T. Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, p. 215; G. Quazza, 'The Politics of the Italian Resistance', in *The Rebirth of Italy, 1943-50*, ed. by S.J. Woolf (London: Longman, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> J.E. Miller, 'Who Chopped Down That Cherry Tree? The Italian Resistance in History and Politics, 1945-1998', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 4 (1999), pp. 37-8.

ments of Italian patriots. Britain also had no real desire to change the existing power structure in Italy in the same way they were prepared to do with Germany. This was the key difference with the Resistance and the source of much of the tension between the two. Italians hoped for an overhaul of the country and a true *epurazione*, while Britain hoped for as little involvement in running the country as possible. It was this, and not, as some partisans claimed, an anti-Resistance policy per se, that determined Britain's official policy towards the Italian Resistance.