

REF ID: A65375

little value Italian police cipher.

NY-4

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pursuant to E.O. 13526

FIRST DETAILED INTERROGATION OF  
DOSI Giuseppe

Function : Employed till Armistice as "Commissario"  
in Italian Police

Interrogated : CSDIC(Main), CMF, 21 Nov 44

Subject of Report : Ministry of Interior Cipher Office:  
Police Cryptography.

1. PREAMBLE

Source has been employed in the Italian Police since before the Fascist era, and is well informed on the types of communications and cipher work in the Ministry of the Interior and the various divisions of the Police such as the Pubblica Sicurezza and OVRA. He is, however, apt to overbroaden on his statements, and appears anxious wherever possible to show himself as an expert.

Reliability : Fair

2. CIPHER OFFICE OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Note : According to Source working methods of this office have not changed since the pre-Fascist era.

(a) Outgoing and incoming telegrams

All telegrams to and from the Ministry of the Interior are dealt with by the Cipher Office ("Ufficio Cifra"), which decipheres and distributes incoming, and enciphers and despatches outgoing telegrams. The office also makes copies of all telegrams and distributes them to departments and sections concerned. This applies even to messages from private persons to Ministry officials. One extra copy of each telegram is made, on a special form, and kept in the Cipher Office files.

All messages are sent from the Ministry's telegraph office. Gradings are "Urgent" (Urgente), "Absolute priority" (Precedenza Assoluta), and "Priority over all Priorities" (Precedenza sopra tutte le precedenza).

Important telegrams were sometimes prefixed with the phrase "Decifri da se" (to be deciphered by addressee), to ensure that the message was deciphered by the head of the office to which it was addressed.

(b) Types of codes in use

Source knew of the following:

i) Five-figure codes, with encipher and decipher book. Each five-figure group stands for a clear phrase, word, letter or figure.

ii) One-book five-figure codes, on same lines as above.

iii) "Paginated" five-figure codes, each page being indicated by a three digit group, and inside the page ninety-nine (99) two-digit code-groups proper standing for clear phrases, words or letters. The page-indicator three-digit groups can be in ascending or descending numerical order, or chosen at random and hatted, and they are marked on the pages in ink (or pencil) and altered periodically by order of the Ministry Cipher Office.

iv) Recipher systems have been introduced during the last few years. Subtractor (or addition groups)-tables have been introduced, of the "sealed-tables" type ("a pagine chiuse"). Circulars notify the use of and keys to these recipher systems. (Note : the FANO type is an example).

(c) Distribution of Ministry of Interior codes

All Embassies and Legations and the most important consulates are in possession of at least one Ministry of Interior code.

Police Prefectures were also in possession of one of these codes, as were Inspectors General of the OVRA ("Ispettori generali capi-zona"). These last communicated direct with the Ministry of Interior Cipher Office, to avoid sending messages through Prefectures, etc. Their telegrams were preceded by the number 500 in addition to the number of the message, which indicated that they contained matter of interest to the political police. (Note: the political police (Polizia Politica) has never had its own codes or ciphers).

Main CC.RR HQs and all CC.RR commands under an officer are also issued with Ministry of Interior codes.

Lastly, Prefects, Inspectors General of the Ministry, and cipher offices ("Uffici or Gabinetti Cifra") of other ministries are also given at least one Ministry of Interior code. Prefects have a code of greater security value than other types, and Inspectors General are each issued with a code (or cipher) whose enciphering key is used only by himself and the Ministry of Interior Cipher Office.

3. POLICE AND MINISTRY OF INTERIOR CRYPTOGRAPHY

Cryptographic work for the Political Police (and Pubblica Sicurezza) was done by the Inspector General of the Pubblica Sicurezza, Umberto ELLERO, who appears to have been an expert on Police Photography, Graphology and Cryptography. He continued to do work for the Ministry of the Interior, assisted by his son, even after his retirement. According to Source both have died.

Crypto work appears to have been limited to messages written in code or cipher by "communists", and sometimes by "foreigners" (Note: probably foreign agents). Source states that ciphers used to be captured when illegal hide-outs were raided, or when incriminated persons were arrested, thus leading to confiscation of all material belonging to them.

Source states that at the moment NO cryptographer is employed by the Ministry of the Interior.

C.S.D.I.C. (Main),  
C.M.F.,  
27 Nov 44.

*H.T. Shergold Major*  
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