

PART I

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SICILY

1943-1944

The Sicilian Campaign was the first of the major operations of the Allied forces in Italy. It was a long and hard fought battle, which was fought on the island of Sicily, from July 9, 1943, to August 17, 1943. The campaign was a success, and it led to the fall of the Fascist regime in Italy. The Allied forces, consisting of the United States Army, the British Army, and the Canadian Army, landed on the island of Sicily on July 9, 1943. They fought a series of battles, including the Battle of the Mignano Line, the Battle of the Volturno, and the Battle of the Rapido. The Allied forces eventually captured the island of Sicily, and they moved on to the mainland of Italy. The Sicilian Campaign was a major turning point in the war in Italy, and it led to the fall of the Fascist regime in Italy. The Allied forces were able to capture the island of Sicily, and they moved on to the mainland of Italy. The Sicilian Campaign was a major turning point in the war in Italy, and it led to the fall of the Fascist regime in Italy.

PART I

Sunday, 5th September 1943

Arrived at Catania at 12 noon, having called first off Valetta in Malta. We have had a view of Mount Etna since early morning, passing Syracuse on our left on the way. Lieutenant Drage and I tramped the town to get transport and maps to take us to Palermo, the headquarters of the Allied Military Government, 130 miles away on the other side of the island. Lord Gerald Wellesley, who is senior Civil Affairs Officer here, was unable to help us, but Area Headquarters assisted us, and now by 8 p.m. all is settled and we leave to-morrow morning at 7 a.m.

Catania is in a terrible state—much of it is a shambles—but the cathedral is unscathed. There is a strong feeling against the Americans here because while the British bombarded the port, and accurately, the Americans, according to the Catanians, flying in any way, carried out a series of what the inhabitants believed (and what indeed would appear to have been in fact, whatever the intention) sheer terror raiding.

The people sit at the doors of their houses, often wretched, and the rubble lies across the pavements, sometimes into the road itself, and walls sag. Owing to the heat of a Mediterranean summer the dust from the ruins is everywhere, and awful.

Drunkenness throughout the place among British, Empire, and American troops. Americans with negroes here, which I consider a bad policy. I saw a negro soldier drinking the aperitif Cinzano out of the bottle as though it were lemonade. No wonder there is drunkenness! Armies in countries with cheap and strong liquors should not be allowed, for use in the field, anything like their home pay. That is the only cure for these debauches which lose us the good will of the inhabitants—where we have their good will, as we have here at the moment.

A little boy accosted me—would I fetch the police for his 'Mamma' who was in danger. I could see none but asked him to walk with me as I was trying to find the military police barracks myself. The lad was frightened, and as I was slow in finding it, and as it was getting dusk, he ran away before I could do any-

thing about it. But I gathered that a drunken negro soldier and a drunken American soldier were in his mother's house. Whether she was a taverner, or a prostitute, I know not, and it was too delicate a question involving Allied troops for me to interfere directly myself.

I felt bitter to-night after the incident of the frightened little boy with his wide-open eyes, especially after seeing some of our troops—mainly South Africans this time—lying stretched out in the gutters, and I feel it is no excuse to say they have been fighting and we should not begrudge them this relaxation from the hell they have been suffering. To win a battle and then lose our good name is to undo, in the long run, the good of the victory. It is also no excuse to put the blame entirely on those who sell the liquor—although they bear a measure of responsibility. Discipline and discipline alone is the key to good behaviour, and when will democracies learn this? Added to that, our educational system must teach good citizenship and Britain's role and tradition, so that men may have the spiritual forces with which to exert self-discipline.

It is a curious thing that the average Englishman looks upon the regular army as lewd and licentious. But when I was with the 21st Field Brigade, R.A., in 1931, there was only one real toper in the whole brigade. Again at Woolwich, with the 3rd Field Regiment, I rarely saw drunkenness. But here, when we have the citizen in khaki it is he, rather than the regular who is the sot—because deep down he lacks training in the home, school, and workshop and has not the imposed discipline which the peacetime army would tend to give him.

Despite its wounds and the sad conditions of its inhabitants, although lying in the same climatic zone as Algiers, Catania is cleaner and does not smell anything like it. It is Europe at last.

All night flashes to the north and west of great guns and bombs, across the straits north of Reggio, where we are advancing into Italy.

Monday, 6th September 1943

Crossed Sicily to-day in a borrowed truck without half the things necessary for the safe running of a vehicle. Five of us and about 2 cwt. of baggage each, in a 15 cwt. truck. Saw all the

region of Etna and across the mountains of Sicily. We went right through the battlefields fought over only last month. Tanks and trucks, German and British, lying about everywhere, ruined guns and masses of ammunition, and furthermore, recently dug graves where soldiers, mainly Germans, had buried their comrades before retiring, and had put their helmets on the simple wooden crosses which bore their names.

The bridges were all destroyed—which in a country of mountains, was a great trouble, and so we had to travel across rivers on improvised tracks and improvised bridges built by our sappers as they advanced.

All evidence of hard fighting was seen in the south-eastern half of our journey—this was the sector of the British 8th Army, composed of British and Canadians, under General Montgomery. In the north-western part there were very rarely seen signs of combat but there were ample indications of very thorough demolitions on the part of the Germans.

Everywhere, judging by small handbills stuck on walls in Catania and elsewhere along the route, there was evidence of a strong Sicilian Secessionist movement. The inhabitants appeared most friendly—more so than the French in Algeria—but nevertheless, ready to cadge and beg, and to advance the prices several-fold of wine and fruit which we bought.

Our route took us north-west of Adrano, skirting Mount Etna, which lay on our right hand, and then we turned westwards to Regalbuto, but because of mines and demolitions we had to go by way of Centuripe, which lies on the top of a steep mountain, where we found the piazza (if such we could call it) thronged with men—all unemployed, but very friendly and cheerful. The poverty must be extreme. They crowded round our truck and made us feel like animals being stared at by a Bank Holiday crowd.

From Centuripe we slid and crashed our way down the mountain sides until we reached Catenanuova, whence we turned north again and up over the same range we had crossed to reach Regalbuto. Instead of a distance of ten miles, we travelled over twenty-three miles of terrible roads to get around this one block on the way.

At Regalbuto the town was horribly devastated—I should

think by shell fire mainly. Such devastation (in a small town) I have never seen before, and the wretched inhabitants were trying to make some of the shell-torn, roofless hovels habitable. Latins need little furniture so long as they have a roof over them.

From Regalbuto we journeyed to Agira, Leonforte, Enna, S. Caterina, Villarmosa, and so by painful stages up over rugged heights and down into fruitful valleys to Palermo.

There is a profusion of grapes and lemons everywhere. We took some grapes from a closed-up villino and passing peasants gave us green figs for cigarettes. These peasants, men and women, were mainly mounted on mules, upon which they travel long journeys. Sometimes they were in the beautiful Sicilian carts—which are carved and painted with allegorical, historical, and religious scenes—for on these carts you may see the story of the Creation, knights jousting, and the tale of Gil Blas among thieves.

We reached Palermo in the dark, Lieutenant Drage at the wheel and driving manfully, and after going from one American headquarters to another (Palermo being the headquarters of the American 7th Army and so an American-administered province), at last we were accommodated at the Hotel Excelsior which is mainly an American mess.

A glow from Stromboli lit the sky as we approached Palermo in the dark.

Tuesday, 7th September 1943

Reported to the headquarters of the Allied Military Government and had an interview with Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Spofford, U.S. Army, who is chief of staff, and I have taken over as the Educational Adviser to the Military Government in Sicily and Italy.

Spent the whole day collecting files and information on the work and what has been done so far—my arrival having been one month later than it ought to have been. An American (Captain) Mason Hammond, assisted by an Italian American clerk 'Nick' Devino, whom he shares with (Captain) Charlie Poore, another American, who is Public Relations Officer, has carried out some improvised measures until my arrival. This he has done in addition to his own work of Adviser of Fine Arts and Monuments.

The General (Lord Rennell) is away, so I have not yet seen him.

The weather is terribly hot, but not so hot as at Algiers, and I am trying to find a room in which to set up my office in our headquarters, No. 8 Via Bari, which lies between the Via Maqueda and the Via Roma.

Everywhere there is heat, dust, and smells, as all the normal cleansing processes of the city have been disrupted by the destruction. Over the mountains yesterday it was refreshingly cool—and, indeed, towards evening, cold on some occasions.

The carabinieri are not only smartly dressed, but they are smartly disciplined also, and salute all officers. The curious thing is that although the Italians are our enemies, they appear to be a good deal friendlier than our French Allies across the water (not that they were unfriendly).

Wednesday, 8th September 1943

Spent all day getting an office—i.e. a room. Furniture is difficult to get but I have a deal table and one rickety chair, some file covers, and some writing paper. There is not a clerk or an orderly available—and certainly not a typewriter. Yet in this one room—without glass in its windows—must I begin planning how to tackle this problem of the educational machinery of a country and then, having planned, go and carry out the plans. How ironic to think that in Rome the Ministry had twenty-seven or twenty-eight divisions, with all their *capi* and secretariats. I wonder if our people at home have any conception of the impossible tasks they set their officers—and they will no doubt complain loudly against us if everything is not done as well and as efficiently as it would be by those twenty-seven heads of divisions in the Ministry in Rome.

Naturally there is no telephone.

Then there is the problem of an interpreter. I spent all yesterday badgering Lieutenant Panelli, the American officer in charge in the Interpreters' Pool, for an interpreter as I know little Italian. To-day he has produced one—Signora Guissepina Varisco from a near-by town of Baucina. She has two babies, boys, two and three years of age, and arrived with her husband who is an avvocato. Apparently Avvocato Varisco called to plead

the case of a prisoner bringing his wife as his interpreter. By error they were sent by the guards to Lieutenant Panelli, who told Signora Varisco that she must report to him before leaving. On doing so she was told she was 'hired'. She protested that she did not want to be 'hired' but was told that whether she liked it or not she was employed, as he could not afford to let people who could talk some English get away from him once he had found them. (An efficient and likeable fellow is Lieutenant Panelli.)

This incident explains the reluctant and rather tremulous call I received at my room shortly afterwards from Signora Varisco and her husband, both of whom told me that they had no wish that the signora should work for the government, and furthermore that they lived at Baucina which was a train ride away and five miles thence by mule. Thinking there must be some mistake I took them back to see Panelli, but he insisted that the signora was engaged—and that ended that.

But now I am faced with more problems. Signora Varisco speaks with a strong American accent and I cannot understand half she says—although Panelli says she is much better than the majority—furthermore, I must get another table and a chair, and that is like extracting butter from a dog's throat. Through the kindness of Mason Hammond, I am having some help from his 'Nick' who is one of the kindest of American orderlies.

Here in this city one finds priests—or rather a sort of itinerant friars—with their begging boxes which they thrust under one's nose everywhere. They are certain of getting much money from the Allied troops. What is most striking is the fact that the people do not look undernourished; no worse indeed than our own people at home, despite the blockade and the privations of war Italy is supposed to have suffered. I am told, however, that there is real poverty and actual starvation behind this façade of well-being.

To-night Italy has capitulated. The Italian waiters in the mess (being an Anglo-American and not an English mess it has no army orderlies) danced for joy and went nearly mad. Children, despite the curfew, marched the streets beating tins and drums and shouting with glee. Dr. Thompson and I were surrounded by them in the Via Libertà. This must mean the move, in the near future, of AMGOT headquarters to Italy.

After travelling across the island and seeing the people here in Palermo, one is struck by the degree of light colouring, particularly in eyes, on this island. The proportion of blue and grey eyes in Catania seemed to reach as high a proportion as about one in every six or seven persons. There were about as many hazels. The Sicilian, although decidedly Mediterranean, is nevertheless less so than one would expect. As in the case of North Africa, the Nordic element and probably the Atlantic, is strong.

For quarters I have been found accommodation by the Staff Captain of Administration, a man named Sherwood. He seems to be equally fluent in French and Italian judging by the conversations I heard carried on in his office when I saw him about quarters, and he has offered me the use of his flat in Via Nicolo Garzili, 52.

It would appear to have belonged to an Italian colonel who died this year. There are all the books, letters, including his love letters, uniform, and even identity card lying around. The family must have left in a panic. It is heart-rending to see a man's home in this condition with all his books lying about—he was evidently scholarly. But when one thinks of our position, just after I returned from France, when we expected to be invaded, and it seemed certain that our own home would be occupied by the Germans as it would have been, lying so near the south coast, one must steel oneself and not let the heart run away with the head. This is a price which Italy has to pay for fascism and Mussolini's impertinence when he struck at us and London in 1940—thinking we were finished. Yet I wish it had not to be thus.

Monday, 13th September 1943

Now my work has begun to be organized. I have an office, some files, an interpreter, and I have made plans which I hope will produce an efficient administration of the Italian educational system. These I have sent to Lord Rennell and as soon as he agrees with them I am in a position to go forward.

This climate is affecting me and that is not helped by the terrible food we are eating, which is badly cooked by our Italian staff who seem to be under most inefficient control. Having had British rations and now American in the field, there is little

doubt in my opinion that the British are better. They are plainer and simpler and perhaps more monotonous—but there is much less of a 'made-up' nature and besides, more can be done with them. In addition, the fact that we have our own officers' mess, batmen, and cooks, means we are not at the mercy of temporary native cooks and waiters as we are here in an American mess.

About the worst food I think we get is some terrible hashed meat which is served on the same plate with vegetables (nearly all tinned) and bread. An interesting sidelight on the difference in national customs, is to witness the American officers putting jam on their bread, which, because it has been put on the same plate with the meat, is already soaking up the gravy: and all meat, vegetables, and bread and jam are eaten together, flanked with hot coffee. The knife is not used in the course of loading the fork as with us, but only for cutting the meat, after which it is put down and the fork is transferred to the right hand.

The combination of a different type of food, and this climate and the flies, are reducing the resistance of many British officers, although the bad mess service, climate, and flies equally affect many of the Americans.

The messiness of semi-field conditions does not help either—the one spoon serves for soup, and then the waiter carefully puts it aside for use with the sweet—and finally one has it for one's coffee, but not before it has been used for ladling out the sugar—as no-one thinks of providing a separate spoon for that purpose. On the march these things are excusable, but not here.

From what Signora Varisco tells me the poorer part of the population are suffering very real want, although it does not show in the appearance of the people one sees walking in the Via Libertà or the Via Maqueda, since many of the more substantial sort have their own land, or relatives with land, or are able to patronize the black market. For instance, in the case of small children there is no milk, no patent baby foods, and no olive oil—this last being the staple diet of all classes and ages. Besides this, sugar is short (but that is no worse than in England) and what is more important, there is a great lack of bread which, along with pasta or macaroni, is the staple diet of the people. This particular shortage, along with that of the olive oil, is an artificial one, and due to hoarding on the part of the Sicilian farmers

who are trying to force up the prices, despite the serious effect it will have on their own people—and we seem, so far, to have been unable to cope with the situation. Meat is only to be seen about once a week, and no fish can be got at all.

Met last night, Petrie's friend, Lieutenant-Colonel C. R. S. Harris, formerly, Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and once a Fellow of All Souls. We spent the evening together; the American Lieutenant-Colonel Menapace, joining us towards the end of the evening. Our topics were wine, politics, and anthropology.

I am more and more struck by the large proportion of light eyes among the Sicilians in Palermo—it is a subject I must investigate at an early date. Norman, Greek, and Kabyle blood no doubt account for much of it. On the other hand there are types so dark that they have negroid affinities.

Signora Varisco has bought six pairs of silk stockings for Nina. They only cost her a hundred lire each, although I think I should have had to spend double that had I gone to the shop myself, as so many British are buying stockings for their wives because they are unobtainable in England and have been for a year or two. All our silk goes for parachutes and similar warlike articles.

Bad news to-day. Mussolini has been rescued by the Germans. The stupidity of leaving him in such weak hands!

To balance that, however, we have now information that most of the Italian Navy has reached Malta, and some of it, Gibraltar. Their newest battleship *Roma* was sunk by the Germans on the way, in their attempt to prevent this defection of their former allies. With this fleet in our hands we have now overwhelming supremacy at sea.

Palermo seems to be full of widows. These are no doubt due to war casualties, and the bombing of the town. Palermo is like Catania in that everywhere one hears the cry (whether it is true or not I do not know, as I have not attempted to check the facts) that the British bombed the port and military installations and provided the people were not near them, they had no need to go to shelters when they saw the R.A.F. rings. But the Americans are said to have just struck at the town—churches, colleges, university and homes—with a resulting casualty list of 3,000 for one afternoon's attack.

Here indeed we have a picture of violent contrasts. Fine palaces and churches, and off the main streets, squalor to a degree—and everywhere a multitude of beggars, priests, and mendicant monks. To go into the cathedral means imposition at all hands from the squalid ragged beggars at the doors and others inside who expect a few lire here and there at every turn. Major Thompson and I visited the cathedral, and in these petty doles it cost a hundred lire each—and we could have spent much more.

Yesterday, being Sunday, there seemed to be an extra flock of beggars all in their special Sunday 'worst'. Many of these, in the filthiest condition, lay palsied (so it seemed) on the steps of the churches, with filthy bandages on their limbs, and each one had a hand outstretched to the worshippers for money, whilst with the other he rang a bell to attract notice.

There is little doubt many were impostors trading on the Christian charity of the Mass-going crowd. But how like a picture from the New Testament, and from the Middle Ages too, this scene of 1943.

I am not well, my head swims and I have a feeling of sickness. It is the result of the climate and our living conditions in this bomb-damaged town.

I have had excitable petitioners in to see me all day, and all they could talk about and ask for was money. One pair talked at once and repeated at least six times over that they must have money. They think we are made of it. Anyway, although an investigation does not always justify giving them all of what they ask, they get some of it, and so the rebuilding of schools and colleges goes forward. I do not think the Germans would do this for their enemies. Anyway, it is probably all to the good, as our prestige will remain high after the war, because of the help Military Government is bringing them now.

Tuesday, 14th September 1943

The food does not improve in the mess. This morning the tea for breakfast had been made in coffee pots; and besides tea we had two American Frankfurter sausages ('hot dogs') and pancakes—no bread. I must try to find a café where I can get a reasonable meal and so start the day in comfort. It is not only the

British officers who dislike this kind of messing, but the Americans as well. I was told the sickness rate among military government officers is very high—and I have little doubt that this barbarous and inefficient mess has not a little to do with it.

The weather is getting a little cooler, but still hot by English standards. I run with perspiration which trickles down behind my ears and down my nose on to everything I write.

The flies are very troublesome but the Sicilians do not fuss much about them. How unwashed many of the people look here. Women's ankles are often encrusted in dirt early in the day. In part it is no doubt due to the lack of soap, which the civilian finds extremely difficult to get, the added dust and dirt through the bombed ruins, and in some measure to the demoralization which war produces in a people. But, in any case, we cannot expect the same love of soap and water as in England.

I buy my paper here with one or two cigarettes each morning—and it is taken as a matter of course by the newsman.

Saw General McSherry and discussed with him our plans for Italian education. The task is enormous and I doubt if the people at home realize what it means. We have no schools, colleges, or universities open. Many of them are destroyed by bombardment. Teachers, rectors of colleges, and professors have in all too many cases fled from their posts, either from private reasons or for fear of punishment because of their fascist activities in the past. Even if we had them all here we are still faced with the task of sorting out the vicious and convinced fascists from the rest and dismissing them, and then finding substitutes. In fact, in educational reconstruction this is the greatest and most urgent task. Then we have to take the text-books and withdraw all of them, so far as the elementary schools, at any rate, are concerned. It is simply astounding how fascism has permeated everything. Children of six years of age are started on a diet of fascism. Chemistry and physics begin on the basis of such subjects as the 'bomb' and 'aeroplane'. Grammar is full of fascism in the sentences set for analysis. Arithmetic is perhaps even worse. Sums are set involving an intimate knowledge of age groups of fascist party organizations, such as the 'Sons of the She-Wolf', the 'Ballila', etc., and others involve adding together the area of the three 'Italian' islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and *Corsica*. The geography books

enlarge upon the German Reich and other Axis countries and cut the allied nations to brief references. It is clear that we must rewrite all these and print them, before the schools can function, but where we are to find the people to do it, the paper, the ink, the cord for binding, and the electricity to run the presses—if there are any which can be used for printing these books—I do not know as yet. When all this is done, how are we to handle the distribution in a country in which key officials are missing and where transport is so difficult? The roads of Sicily at the best were never good. Indeed the Sicilians are very critical of the treatment the Roman Government has given them in matters of roads, schools, and general development. Such roads as there are, are torn up by war, and the bridges are destroyed, and once the rains come it will be impossible to use the existing diversions which at the moment are running across the dried-up river beds.

Added to these great difficulties we have the shortage of personnel—I have not as yet even got a clerk, nor a typewriter, and no officers of course. One windowless room, two deal tables, three rickety chairs and an interpreter is all we have. I write my essential letters in long-hand, and 'Nick' Devino tries to get time to type them, in between the work he has to do for Mason Hammond and Charlie Poore. Then I file the copies, establishing my own filing system as I go, and Signora Varisco turns everything necessary into Italian, and so we go on from day to day.

Yet despite all these many difficulties we have made some progress. All the accumulated work which had lain unattended before my arrival has now had action taken upon it; besides this, the plans are finished for an educational machine which will allow as much responsibility as possible to the local provincial educational committees, which I have set up, and which will offset the undue power of the centralized government. It is this centralization which has contributed in no small measure to dictatorship.

One of the picturesque sides to our life here are the carabinieri at the doors of 8 Via Bari where Lord Rennell has established our headquarters. They wear swords, white gloves, and bandoliers, and 'Napoleon' cocked hats with the red, white, and green tri-colour, whilst the uniform is blue with red facings.

I am hoping to get a staff captain soon.

Wednesday, 15th September 1943

Signora Varisco has been coming daily from Baucina to the office. This has meant some miles on a mule each way and then a terrible train journey by the only train in the day, for nineteen miles. The overcrowding is so terrible that people are taken ill, and, in one case, she tells me, a person died on the journey. Sicily in the aftermath of the war! Anyway, Signora Varisco will have no more of these difficulties as she is moving to-day.

One of our southern United States colonels was 'God-dam'-ing loudly in mess to-night. The policy of Roosevelt, and the alleged influence of Mrs. Roosevelt, appears to arouse intense dislike, particularly in sections of the regular American Army. Colonel X said that education was no use for any 'God-damned' nigger—because they were all the same at bottom—put a sheet over your head on a dark night, and make noises, and any of them would take to their heels!

Thursday, 16th September 1943

To-day, accompanied by Nick Devino as an interpreter, I visited an orphanage school on the top of a mountain near Monreale. The Director and his assistant were priests—it was afternoon, so we had to wake them up. Everything here is common to all, and so when I sat in conference with both of them, asking questions about their school and educational matters generally, the senior pupils and the other masters did not hesitate to crowd round, the latter joining in frequently. Occasionally when a boy's head got too near, it was pushed out of the way—and after the lad had retreated a foot, he would at once creep in again.

The school itself seems to be well run, and is in an old palace which was formerly a Benedictine Monastery. On leaving, masters and boys trooped down the fine old staircase and stood on the steps to see us off—while lo and behold! although on the top of a mountain, two carabinieri and quite a small crowd had collected as from nowhere. All of them joined with Il Direttore in waving us good-bye. It is a friendly country.

The Director made his own wine, which we sampled and found very palatable.

The road from Palermo to this school winds dangerously up the mountain sides, but despite the hairbreadth escapes we had

at the hands of our driver, it has been worth the journey, as the views are very fine—especially away to the north over to Palermo, to the bay, and the sea beyond.

Messing conditions are so bad that I have decided to set up my own little mess in 52 Nicolo Garzili.

We have here a rogue of an 'interpreter', who speaks no English and only little French, and commences everything he has to say by 'Dunque', whom (Captain) Davis dug up from somewhere. He has been promised the sack by Davis and now he is trying to attach himself to me—pleading he will starve if he loses his job. I do not want him and I have told him so, but he keeps coming back, and now that he knows I want a cook he has become a plague, and I fear before many days are out I shall have to plant my boot firmly behind him.

Meanwhile 'Dunque' has just sidled into the office again, dragging with him one of the fattest and dirtiest unshaven men I have ever seen—'Dunque—a cook!'

It took not long to find out that the man was not much of a cook and that the wages he wanted were outrageous, and by dealing harshly with him I got the truth out of him. 'Dunque' was to get him the job and they were to share the wages. I have dealt with 'Dunque' and he has gone away feeling he has been ill-used: I must tell Davis about this as he must be got rid of. He is a menace about the place.

Shortly after this we had another cook scene—but of quite a different nature. An ex-schoolmistress got past the orderlies by some means or another, and then poured out the usual (and no doubt genuine) tale of woe to which we have to listen a hundred times a day. Her husband was a prisoner of war, her children were starving, and she wanted work. I explained that it might be some time before we could get the schools started, but meanwhile I would send her name to the Provveditore agli Studi. She then said she was desperate for work now as she was only allowed by the army 450 lire a month—£1 5s. at present rates of exchange! So I said to Signora Varisco, having Dunque's fat friend in mind, 'Tell her I can give her a temporary job as a cook—if she can cook.'

She was horrified, there was a storm of indignation and tears, and she clearly showed that she understood me to mean 'cook'

not cook. I made it plain to her that we really wanted a cook but I saw it was quite clear she would not believe me, despite Signora Varisco's assurances. In future I shall leave the engaging of staff, except for fat men with a week's stubble on their chins, to Signora Varisco. Anyway, I sent her to Lieutenant Vlcek, assistant to Major Witte, the Welfare Officer, who may be able to do something for her—but whether he can I know not, as he is like all of us, making bricks without straw.

Much time is being spent at the moment on first locating and then going through the machinery of requisitioning a typewriter and a car—without both of which my work is being badly held up.

Friday, 17th September 1943

To get the schools reopened, new texts printed, and teachers examined for their political history are tasks which, with an adequate staff, ought to take a year, and by hook or by crook I must get it done by Christmas if I can. But they are not the only difficulties with which we are faced. Many of the schools and colleges are occupied by the troops and bombed-out refugees. These have both to be got out—and the first is no easy task. Was ever a country so disorganized? No schools, no teachers, no books, and the cost of living up by 245 per cent, and the black market rampant, the whole system of life corrupted.

Yesterday we tried and imprisoned for six months, and fined 50,000 lire (the highest penalty which could be imposed) the owner of the Olympia in Palermo—one of the richest men in Sicily. Despite the military order fixing the prices of wine, and the fact that his bar was frequented by Allied officers, he had brazenly charged 75 lire for a glass of Marsala (a whole bottle only being worth 12 lire before the war), and 1,000 lire for a bottle of Italian cognac. In this way shopkeepers are increasing their prices. The farmers are hoarding their wheat and selling at high prices through the black market. It is illegal—but when a carabinieri is paid for a day, half the price of a loaf on the black market, one cannot expect the police to control the rising prices.

The position of the professional classes, as a result, is pitiable. Their money is of little value as their salaries are fixed. Many are being forced to sell jewellery for bread. Daily I have people

at the hands of our driver, it has been worth the journey, as the views are very fine—especially away to the north over to Palermo, to the bay, and the sea beyond.

Messing conditions are so bad that I have decided to set up my own little mess in 52 Nicolo Garzili.

We have here a rogue of an 'interpreter', who speaks no English and only little French, and commences everything he has to say by 'Dunque', whom (Captain) Davis dug up from somewhere. He has been promised the sack by Davis and now he is trying to attach himself to me—pleading he will starve if he loses his job. I do not want him and I have told him so, but he keeps coming back, and now that he knows I want a cook he has become a plague, and I fear before many days are out I shall have to plant my boot firmly behind him.

Meanwhile 'Dunque' has just sidled into the office again, dragging with him one of the fattest and dirtiest unshaven men I have ever seen—'Dunque—a cook!'

It took not long to find out that the man was not much of a cook and that the wages he wanted were outrageous, and by dealing harshly with him I got the truth out of him. 'Dunque' was to get him the job and they were to share the wages. I have dealt with 'Dunque' and he has gone away feeling he has been ill-used: I must tell Davis about this as he must be got rid of. He is a menace about the place.

Shortly after this we had another cook scene—but of quite a different nature. An ex-schoolmistress got past the orderlies by some means or another, and then poured out the usual (and no doubt genuine) tale of woe to which we have to listen a hundred times a day. Her husband was a prisoner of war, her children were starving, and she wanted work. I explained that it might be some time before we could get the schools started, but meanwhile I would send her name to the Provveditore agli Studi. She then said she was desperate for work now as she was only allowed by the army 450 lire a month—£1 5s. at present rates of exchange! So I said to Signora Varisco, having Dunque's fat friend in mind, 'Tell her I can give her a temporary job as a cook—if she can cook.'

She was horrified, there was a storm of indignation and tears, and she clearly showed that she understood me to mean 'cook'

not cook. I made it plain to her that we really wanted a cook but I saw it was quite clear she would not believe me, despite Signora Varisco's assurances. In future I shall leave the engaging of staff, except for fat men with a week's stubble on their chins, to Signora Varisco. Anyway, I sent her to Lieutenant Vlcek, assistant to Major Witte, the Welfare Officer, who may be able to do something for her—but whether he can I know not, as he is like all of us, making bricks without straw.

Much time is being spent at the moment on first locating and then going through the machinery of requisitioning a typewriter and a car—without both of which my work is being badly held up.

Friday, 17th September 1943

To get the schools reopened, new texts printed, and teachers examined for their political history are tasks which, with an adequate staff, ought to take a year, and by hook or by crook I must get it done by Christmas if I can. But they are not the only difficulties with which we are faced. Many of the schools and colleges are occupied by the troops and bombed-out refugees. These have both to be got out—and the first is no easy task. Was ever a country so disorganized? No schools, no teachers, no books, and the cost of living up by 245 per cent, and the black market rampant, the whole system of life corrupted.

Yesterday we tried and imprisoned for six months, and fined 50,000 lire (the highest penalty which could be imposed) the owner of the Olympia in Palermo—one of the richest men in Sicily. Despite the military order fixing the prices of wine, and the fact that his bar was frequented by Allied officers, he had brazenly charged 75 lire for a glass of Marsala (a whole bottle only being worth 12 lire before the war), and 1,000 lire for a bottle of Italian cognac. In this way shopkeepers are increasing their prices. The farmers are hoarding their wheat and selling at high prices through the black market. It is illegal—but when a carabinieri is paid for a day, half the price of a loaf on the black market, one cannot expect the police to control the rising prices.

The position of the professional classes, as a result, is pitiable. Their money is of little value as their salaries are fixed. Many are being forced to sell jewellery for bread. Daily I have people

coming to my office for jobs—school-mistresses and the like. I can do little or nothing for them—and indeed, it is not my duty to do it—that lies with the provincial Italian officials. The other divisions have the same problems—lines of men and women of the same class pleading for work. But if we are to build a democracy or some sort of reasonable constitutional government in Italy, it is upon these very people, as a foundation, that we must start—yet they are being ruined meanwhile as a result of this unprecedented and quite unnecessary rise in prices due to the greed of certain individuals in the community.

There are no doubt several reasons for this state of affairs. One lies in the Sicilian himself. This is a breed by nature lawless: self-discipline and strongly self-imposed order and regularity in life and business do not exist. As a result there is a state of affairs to which in our callowness we are finding it difficult to adjust ourselves, although the Lord knows, any racial study of Sicilian character (whether here or in Chicago) would have made us ready to meet such conditions. But it is popular to-day to avoid any anthropological considerations—everything is relegated to economic or environmental causes. But because of these well-known traits in Sicilian character abuses exist in all directions. The impact of fascism with its organized corruption in high places, on the natural adventurousness and marked individualism of the Sicilian, has not helped to direct his natural lawlessness into a more sensible way of life.

Another cause of the chaos, so far as inflation is concerned, lies with ourselves. From my experience in France in 1939-40 with the B.E.F., and later from observing Americans in several parts of England last year, I am convinced that no soldier should have more money to spend in any theatre than the native soldier—with such necessary adjustments to give allowances for what is issued in kind. (For instance, wine was a free issue with the French troops.) Otherwise, we have, where highly paid soldiers enter a country of cheap living, riotous drunkenness and the prices rise sharply. Soldiers and sailors with so much money in their hands make sharks of shopmen even if they were not that before. So the prices rise until Sicilian shopkeepers put them so high that they starve the Sicilians who cannot pay. I am certain that if we only had the sense to reduce the money paid in the

field to a small sum and credit the soldier at home with the balance, we would have a disciplined force, sober and respected, and we would build up a capital reserve for each man to restart him in civil life again.

Let us hope that we get all this sorted out rapidly as otherwise Italian intellectuals will cry out for the benefits of fascist order and discipline as against the 'democratic' chaos we have brought them. It seems to me that if democracy repudiates (as it must) dictated discipline, the members of a democratic society must learn, and that quickly, self-discipline; and, at the moment, there are far too many indications of an 'a-disciplined' attitude among us.

Not only are we troubled by all the problems of inflation but in the case of law and order we have the same chaotic conditions. Fascism succeeded in stamping out the Mafia, even if in doing so it established a legalized thuggish 'mafiosi' in power in its stead. Now that we have destroyed the fascists we have the Mafia back in power, and yet, because it is not strong enough as yet to run organized crime, it is suffering the rivalry of the 'deliquenti' or unorganized ruffian bands. As a result the people are worse off than they would be under a real Mafia régime.

And this is the mess AMGOT is called upon to clean up!

To add to our difficulties we have such tales as I was told in the mess to-day by some of our American staff. They say that at Messina our 8th Army which has borne itself so magnificently in the fighting and saved us Egypt, has behaved disgracefully, looting and raping. (Canadians, Scots, and Irish as well as English are involved in this charge.) I hope that there is nothing in this and that it has only arisen from idle gossip and American prejudice.

To-day I was visited by the *Rector Magnificus* of the University of Messina. It was a strange meeting. Two officers—myself in khaki drill shorts and shirt, and he in the uniform of blue and gold of a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Italian Naval Medical Corps. A thin man, with narrow Nordo-Mediterranean face, delicate hands, and quiet courtesy and dignity. From the moment he entered my room this Professor Gaetano Martino showed by every action and gesture that he is an officer and a gentleman: or so it seems to me. I like the look of him. He came all the way from Messina over roads which normally a 'jeep' only will

travel with safety, to represent the affairs of his university before the Military Government. He wanted my sanction to pay out of the Trust funds of his university—which is fortunately a rich one, and has been wise enough to keep its funds in a Sicilian and not a Roman bank—the salaries of all the professors and staff. He also wanted authority for the transfer of Professor Carmona from Palermo University to Messina—this having been arranged before our invasion but not confirmed (although agreed to) by the Ministry of Education in Rome.

To-day I wrote a strong memorandum to the General (Lord Rennell) outlining a vigorous policy in education for Italy. The situation is far worse than I anticipated or than Lord Rennell and General McSherry can be aware of, and not due to reasons over which they have had any control. The position is bad, the task great, and it must be mastered if we are to leave an impress upon Italian education as a contribution to the well-being of the country. But even harder work and more hands and brains are needed.

Saturday, 18th September 1943

One of our American drivers has been grumbling to me about the seclusion of the girls here. He feels bitter about it. He says that they cannot take a girl out without father, mother, sisters, and brothers, and even cousins and aunts and whoever else is there when they make the suggestion. Apparently even an American's pocket cannot run to that expense! He little realizes that he will find the whole Latin world like this.

Two days ago I requisitioned a car, and Signora Varisco got me a good driver, Colontoni, and to-day I have requisitioned a second car. Now I am more mobile, but it will be some time before the second one is in order, as it has to have some repairs.

I have been trying for some time to get Sherwood transferred to us, and I hope it will not be long before it is effected.

I am still feeling very weak in the stomach, and so I am very glad to be able to start our mess from Monday, as to-day I have engaged a cook, who appears to be a motherly sort of woman, grey hair, neat, and about sixty years of age. She says she is the daughter of a doctor, with an old widowed mother to keep. I only hope that she will perform as well as she promises.

Of course the conditions under which we live out here, where the sun's heat is intense, where the water is only turned on for about an hour each morning, where the sewerage system is disorganized by war, and there is no water to flush it with, all combined with disorderly and untidy messing, tend to produce the dysentery from which Raffa and I, and others, are suffering.

Sunday, 19th September 1943

Sunday—but that means no slackening in this headquarters. I spent the day with the Rector of the Convitto Nazionale of Palermo (a high school with boarding and day boys) and looking over the bomb damage at the Accademia di Belle Arte. The Convitto has been partly damaged by bombing, but it is repairable and can still be used in part, but I must find new quarters for the Academy.

I was interested to hear that the Rector of the Convitto belonged to one of the Albanian communities of Sicily. There are others in Calabria. They wear a distinctive folk costume and speak Albanian at home—but, so far as I can see, the state has repressed them as the teaching of Albanian has not been allowed. They belong to the Greek rite of the Roman Church, but they were formerly Orthodox. These colonies were established several hundred years ago, and the chief one near Palermo is at Piano dei Greci.

Signora Varisco's ideas of England are quaint. In talking to this Rector of the Convitto Nazionale the subject of religious education came up—and she was firmly convinced we did not worship God in England! In translating some remark she puzzled me by making a reference to 'kissing God'—from which I gathered she referred to some custom connected with religious ceremonial. Among the peasantry here, there is quite a literal mode of expression if not of belief.

The weather is somewhat cooler now—back to a warm English summer's day.

Yesterday the first letters arrived from England—one of them was an interesting one from Sergeant Dodd. What an age they have taken to get here.

Monday, 20th September 1943

Nick Devino, Captain Mason Hammond's clerk, has done

much work for me—often to the not unnatural chagrin of his own two officers, who are as hard pressed as can be.

We are having much work with Major Aldo Raffa, an Italo-American officer, who is charged with a special Political Intelligence Section, and is working directly under Lieutenant-Colonel Spofford, the Chief of Staff. His job is to investigate the antecedents of all public officials and I can see that I shall be keeping him very busy as Education has probably more than anyone else. Raffa has designed a most effective-looking document called a *Scheda Personale* which every official must fill in and which ought to get us the information we desire. It is unlikely that many will deliberately lie on this questionnaire, as I have never seen a document so covered with threats before. It seems to me that Raffa, who, I am told, is a Professor of Georgetown University, is really doing a first-class job. Like all of us he is hopelessly understaffed, but for the moment he is better off than I am, assisted by Lieutenant Barone and Lieutenant da Lucca (two more Italo-Americans and both Sicilians, having been to school in Palermo) and Orsolina, the civilian typist. I wonder if the people at home really know what a task they have set us—this constant lack of staff, vehicles, typewriters, and clerks.

As Raffa lives in the same house but in a flat below, he has gone home often with us, and we have had long talks together; I never met a man so eaten up with zeal against fascism. I thought that I was ruthless until I met him.

To-day we opened our mess—seven of us, four British—Sherwood (when he gets back from Algiers), (Captain) Maxse, (Captain) Toby Moore, and myself—and three Americans, (Major) Raffa, (Captain) Vecchiola, and (Lieutenant) Barone. Maxse is in the Fine Arts and Monuments Division with Mason Hammond, and Vecchiola and Toby Moore are judges in the Military Court. Toby knows Toby O'Brien.

Tuesday, 21st September 1943

We are desperately short of news and information here—as we see no papers or journals—we cannot even read the criticisms of our work by those who know nothing about it!

Still going through the fascist text-books.

Over-population seems to be one of the root causes of the poverty of this island.

A boy of about eleven years of age, son of the *portiera* down below, has attached himself to our kitchen without any invitation to do so. The number of hangers-on who spring up from nowhere and pester for scraps of food, is typical of conditions out here. Giacomo, by name, spends his time fanning the charcoal burner on which the cook expects to cook our meals.

Commendatore Fuxsa here to see me from Baucina—he apparently organized the pulling down of fascist notices in the town during the invasion. Sent him to Raffa as he ought to be able to give him useful information.

Wednesday, 22nd September 1943

The position is becoming desperate for some of the Sicilian professional classes. One of our American Naval Officers tells me that he is buying jewellery at ridiculously low prices because middle-class folk are obliged to sell to live. That is what happens when rations are inadequate and the value of your money goes down rapidly. Unfortunately, it is just these very people who are most needed to reconstruct Italian life again.

Friday, 24th September 1943

Lord Rennell (who is now back) has approved my proposals for restoring the Italian educational system and now they have to be put into effect. We must have more officers—and they have been promised. It is now agreed that all the text-books are to be revised (as they are almost all fascist propaganda) and replaced by new ones. I have asked that Benedetto Croce, who has fallen into our hands (he having been under house arrest at Salerno) should be flown to Palermo so that he can lead a revision committee of Italian educationalists. The General is sending off a cable to Algiers asking for him.

Meanwhile I have set in motion machinery for the examination of the history of every teacher, professor, and educational official, so that active fascists can be removed from office, where they have not fled as soon as possible.

I have also arranged for the dismissal of Professor Leotta from the rectorship of the University of Palermo. Leotta was a

Medical Colonel of the Fascist Militia, and I find that he made several violently anti-British speeches during the war. I have sent for him several times, and unlike most other people, he is haughty and arrogant in his bearing, as far as he dares be.

Before taking this step it has been necessary to obtain an order that all university and professorial appointments as well as those of the provincial directors of study (*Provveditori agli Studi*) shall be made by me and not rest with the military governors of the provinces. This has been necessary as the powers of the headquarters and of the provinces in educational matters had not been defined before the problem arose with my arrival. I have made it clear that all these major appointments which formerly rested with the Ministry at Rome ought not to be decentralized down to provincial levels if chaos is to be avoided, and Lord Rennell and the Chief of Staff, Colonel Spofford, agree completely.

I only hope that a struggle between Via Bari (AMGOT headquarters) and the Prefettura (the headquarters of Palermo Province) can be avoided, as (Lieutenant-Colonel Charles) Poletti (Chief Civil Affairs Officer) has been making all these kinds of appointments and he has, probably not knowing his record, used Leotta as his chief adviser on educational matters and has already appointed this ex-Colonel of the Fascist Militia as the chairman of a committee to produce revised text-books for the schools! A certain amount of face may, therefore, be lost if I handle this dismissal of Leotta badly. But if I am to carry out the mission entrusted to me of de-fascistizing Italian education, Leotta must go. Furthermore, what happens here in Palermo firstly and throughout Sicily generally, is of more importance than anywhere else of comparable importance in Italy. What we do here sets the plans and pattern for all Italy—if we do it right all will be well, if we do it wrong we may never get it right elsewhere—and the whole educational system of Italy is going to suffer.

Poletti is a man of great energy and one sees his name everywhere here, on the hoardings and in the papers, connected with the affairs of Palermo province. I believe he is a democratic politician who was formerly Lieutenant-Governor of New York, and he seems to have quite a 'party machine' around him.

I have heard it said by American officers that he is 'a power at

the White House' and he appears to be treated with becoming respect as a consequence. The Sicilians are not so respectful. Because his name appears so often in the *Sicilia Liberata* I hear it is called by them the 'Daily Poletti'.

I wonder what we would think in England of six murders a month in a country? And yet that is not unusual here at the present time. Lieutenant-Colonel McCaffrey, the American Senior Civil Affairs Officer of Agrigento province, writes: 'The general state of crime is back to normal except with regard to murder. During August there were six known murders in the province. . . . The motives in two murders are believed to be robbery and sex; in the others they are apparently vengeance.' The Mafia, now that their fascist enemies are overthrown, are certainly trying to re-establish themselves in all the confusion caused by our invasion.

Some officers seem to me to consort too much with wealthy people of questionable antecedents. Curiously enough this type of officer is often of plebeian origins or of loudly pronounced 'democratic' leanings!

Saturday, 25th September 1943

To dinner with Lord Rennell—having heard of me from Sir Percy Loraine, he insisted upon my making drink for all the party. I did not do as well as I had hoped—but I told Lord Rennell that it was his fault as there were not sufficient ingredients of the right sort! Present were Colonel Spofford, his American Chief of Staff, (Major) Douglas Pirie, who is his P.A., and who was with me at Edinburgh University. We were both on the committee of the University Unionist Association, and it was quite a surprise to walk into Lord Rennell's office and find him there after not seeing him all these years.

Lord Rennell appears to be as keen upon mead as I am. He tried to make it recently, but it did not come out rightly. I think he was using one of those *Metheglin* recipes, some of which are very poor. He says we shall make it here!

Sunday, 26th September 1943

I have just had a cup of tea—the first for many weeks.

With the much better messing, the cleanliness of our mess,

and the eggs which we are beginning to get through the kindness of the Variscos and by Colontoni's efforts, we are all improving in health. My dysentery is much better. The heat is our only trouble now. Of course we live ridiculously here—we work at the rate and have the same hours as in England—and indeed we must, as there is so much to do. But the natives think we are crazy.

Monday, 27th September 1943

After supper called at the Variscos' place in the Via Roma about some ethnological books, as I want the avvocato to get me some at the bookseller's to-morrow, and I sent Colontoni home—saying I would walk back. On the way home I staggered and nearly fell—and with the greatest difficulty reached home—stumbling over bomb damage on the pavements as I reeled along. How my head swims.

Wednesday, 29th September 1943

I have been ill since Monday with sandfly fever—at first I was afraid it was malaria. I think Monday night was the worst I have passed in my life—I have never had such a headache—not even when I fractured the base of my skull.

Not knowing what was wrong, I dragged myself down to the car on Tuesday morning, and Colontoni took me to the office—but I soon became so ill that I went to see Colonel Cheyne (Head of the Public Health Division) and one of his American colonels looked at me and sent me home immediately.

To-day I have got out of bed, but I am weak and the thought of food nauseates me. Anyway, I have managed to eat two bananas and drink a glass of wine and feel somewhat better. When one gets ill from the climate here one begins to realize how little we English appreciate our own—which is the best in the world, avoiding, as it does, all extremes. A country where flies do not crawl over everything, where rain falls and cleans the streets, where dust does not choke one all day, where the sun does not make work a struggle, and where filth does not choke the kennels, and finally where sandfly fever, malaria, dysentery, and typhus are unknown.

The old cook is ill too, with stomach trouble.

Fullerton, an Irish orderly who acts as a sort of janitor—there being no batmen provided here where we could most do with them—is ill too.

Thursday, 30th September 1943

I have been surprised to see in the shops fascist literature still on sale—and particularly is this the case in the literature of a more serious character used by students and thinkers. I have made representations to the Chief of Staff about it, as some steps should be taken by the local Civil Affairs Officers to see that all such literature is impounded: but the booksellers will not help them as this literature forms a large part of their stock in trade. I think that some scale of compensation should be worked out—and we can do with the paper which the pulping of these books would provide, for the printing of the school text-books.

Friday, 1st October 1943

I feel much better. The fever has now left me—and I am only suffering from an appalling weakness.

Signora Varisco and her husband have been here daily about business matters and so, despite the fever, I have been able to keep the office going by remote control.

I hear that G.I.s (American private soldiers) are paying simply ridiculous prices for things in the shops. Women's silk knickers and petticoats seem to be a line the shops still have some store of, and these are being sold for 1,500 lire (£3 15s. present rate of exchange) whereas before the invasion they were 300 lire (15s.).

Meanwhile it is more than hard on the native population because shopkeepers are not interested in selling to them at all when they can get such prices.

Saturday, 2nd October 1943

To-day I got out of bed and into the office. Although weak I am glad I got to the office to-day as work is getting very much in arrears—there is not time to be ill out here.

The weather has at last broken—and we are having much rain. It is like a wet October at home, but not quite so cold. I feel better as a consequence.