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VISIT TO SICILY
FEB. 1945

DATE	PAGE
Ed 2. <u>V.P.</u> My sick report for 7 mos information As N/A in Glowed.	①
9 Feb COS. For info. The report of D. L. G. Sub. Opposite is a very interesting commentary on Sicilian affairs. I propose to inform Al. Spicer, if you see no objection, that he may properly take up the matter he refers to with the Ministry of the Interior; but in view of the early release of FAN 487 this will be L. G.'s 'swan song' in advising on matters of local govt in Italian Govt territory unless so requested by the Italian Govt. 8/1/16 SPR	②
D. COS. C.A.S. I agree to COS. Specie discussion with 9.6. (I should like copy of his 2nd paragraph.)	③ 01

1. NY likely report for 7000
information

As N/m'm
Glover.

(2)

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of local govt in Italian Govt. limiting unless requested
by the Italian Govt.

9/11/6
Glover

(3)

D COS CHS.

I agree to COS's previous comments on 9.6
(I should like copy of his report for approval.
for separate file) - 17/12/62
Copy made for 13/2.

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14/2/63. v.s. L.G. see minute 2 v.s. above
OK. R. G. 10/10/63
K. G. 10/10/63

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HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB COMMISSION.

Ext. 620

2nd February, 1945.

Subject: Visit to Sicily.

I left Rome on Monday 22 January and after a most uncomfortable journey arrived in Palermo on Wednesday 24th where Brigadier Carr, the Regional Commissioner was kind enough to meet me at the aerodrome with his car.

I had frequent interviews with Brigadier Carr during my stay in Palermo and I can only report with deference to a senior officer that Brigadier Carr appeared to me to be keeping an extremely even keel with regard to the position in Sicily, and was not being put off his balance and calm and mature judgment by recent events. His strong viewpoint was that respect for the law was extremely low if not nearly non-existent from highest to lowest.

In all my interviews, of which I shall give a list later with specific detail, I did not notice or perceive any alarm on the part of the Local Government officials whom I interviewed. It is, of course, not possible for me to appreciate the full facts after a sojourn of ten days, but I can only report that the use of the word "rebellion" in connection with the position of Sicily as a whole seems to me an overstatement of the position as I saw it. Rebellion in its full sense I have experienced at length but the conditions were very dissimilar to those of Sicily.

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Brigadier Carr gave me his full consent to interview 200
the various officials in connection with Local Government and placed all transportation facilities at my disposal.

My first interview was with Avv. Battiatì, the Prefect of Palermo, whom I had never met, and who, as Prefect of the capital province of Sicily, I was anxious to know.

Prefect Battiatì struck me as being a good man: enthusiastic and with a very thorough knowledge of his duties as a Prefect. He
/had

had entirely the right ideas in regard to the creation of Giunta and indicated to me that in his opinion the administrative key officials must be kept up to full complement or else with the problems at present confronting them, no Prefect, however efficient, could administrate as he would wish to. My interview with him gave me a clear indication that the records as maintained in Rome and indeed in my own office, were incorrect. We are, of course, not kept informed as we used to be of transfers and positioning of these key officials but so long as we do retain this advisory position, I think we must know whether or not the very senior offices, at least down to the rank of Vice Prefect, are or are not filled; for without the full complement I repeat, it is my considered judgment that Local Government cannot function effectively.

Battiatì referred to the question of elections and gave it to me as his opinion that the people of Italy had not recovered sufficiently as yet from the shock and turmoil of war to find a political level which, through elections, would reflect the true political atmosphere of the country. I reported this to Brigadier Carr who seemed a little worried that I had discussed the elections at all with the Prefect, and referred to some instruction or order that he said had been received in this regard, but which I personally have not been able to trace in the files of the L.C. Sub Commission.

Prefect Battiatì informed me that he was thoroughly satisfied with the staff allotted to him, and had a high opinion of his Palermo Sindaco, Avv. Gullo; moreover that the Palermo Giunta were functioning in his opinion satisfactorily, with political bickering on the decrease. He also stated that the ⁴⁴Deputazione Provinciale was functioning well and he had great confidence in them.

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My next interview was with the Secretary General, Avv.

Longo, who represented the High Commissioner in H.F. Aldisio's absence in Rome. At great length and in great detail, in which I received all help from Avv. Longo and his staff, we went through the whole set up of Prefectural officials in Sicily. There was hardly one appointment that had been accurately recorded here in Rome and there had been many transfers of Vice Prefects with no

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notification and the position was the same vice versa, for example from Rome The Ministry of the Interior had appointed a new Prefect, viz. Avv. Biancorosso, and Avv. Gulotta, the present Prefect of Trapani had been placed alla disposizione. This was some weeks ago and Avv. Biancorosso officially reported to me in my office for interview, but this was the first information of the appointment that the High Commissioner's Office had received, and in fact the relieved Prefect, Gulotta, was still functioning as Prefect in Trapani. The Secretary General, Longo, remarked to me that all this appeared very strange to him. I heartily concurred. As you see below H.E. Aldisio was worried in this regard as well.

I will not set out here in detail the enormous number of discrepancies that were found after examination of the Secretary General's own records, but they were many. It was ascertained for example that there were no less than four Vice Prefect appointments entirely vacant in the Sicilian Provinces, and indeed one Province, Syracuse, possessed neither VFV nor VPI. A great number, in fact the large majority, of the other Vice Prefects are "in funzione". After the recent political upsets I was not surprised to learn that a great number of the G.Cs have had to be dissolved and have indeed been replaced by Commissari Prefettizi. But there is no doubt that the entirely correct ideas exist in both the Secretary General's mind and that of H.E. Aldisio. They are only really waiting for the political situation to find a more even keel if possible with every intent of proceeding with the appointment of suitable Sindaci and G.C. I do not think that it will be of value in this report to comment on the other weaknesses of the Local Government set up, and I propose discreetly to take these up with the Chief of Cabinet

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My next interview was with Avv. Gullo, the Sindaco of Palermo, who initiated the interview by stating the fact that he was a socialist, but a moderate one, and it was his chief endeavour to give up politics in his position as Sindaco and to try to persuade the members of his G.C. to do likewise. He said to me

"We have

"We have more than enough of this political quarrelling and such quarrelling can only have a deleterious effect on efficient administration. He stated that he was getting his Giunta into better heart and shape in this regard. I was able to see the GC in session. Gullo's other point was this "You may have efficient officials and efficient citizens, but if the stomachs of the people are not full you cannot expect efficiency and will have ready listeners to every voice of discontent and grievance". He further stated that the irregular distribution of pasta in Palermo had caused a great deal of ill feeling amongst the population. He explained that the distribution of flour had been efficiently executed, but that that of pasta had certainly not been tackled with the same efficiency or regularity. He then reminded me that the staple food of the Sicilians was pasta and that was why it was so important that the distribution of pasta should be regular.

I next interviewed Avv. Luigi Stella of Messina, where I found that he had his key official posts all filled and by VPs of the correct grade. In 92 Communes he had 65 Sindaci and Giunte, his GPA is functioning as well as his DP and he expressed himself to me as being fully satisfied with the operation of these two bodies.

His great difficulty however was the formation of a GC for Messina itself, and that for 4½ months he had operated only with a CP, one Avv. Vasili Guisepe, and that he was assisted by four prominent citizens who, however, had no executive power. I asked him if he was at heart satisfied with this, and he promptly replied "No", but that he had made two attempts to form a Giunta with a selected Sindaco, but the results had been a failure owing to persistent politically inspired disagreement and dissensions. He was now

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priority:

- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| (1) | Democrat Labour |
| (2) | Christian Democrat |
| (3) | Communist |
| (4) | Socialist |

He also stated that he had met the question of the CP by

/issuing

issuing an order under his own signature as Prefect that the CP's office was extended thereby. He also brought up a point which I discussed with him, and which I think is of interest, in that he relied very largely on the reports of the Carabinieri in regard to the suitability of nominated candidates for appointment as Sindaco or to the Giunta. I have heard on many occasions since I have been Director of the LGSC this practice severely criticised, and I think such criticism is justifiable. One certainly cannot regard in these days reports of the Carabinieri as being reliable in regard to appointments of a semi political nature. I personally as a Prefect should be very loath to accept them, although I might use them for my own information, but should readily discard them if I had good information or opinions to the contrary. Prefect Luigi Stella appeared to agree with me in this regard, but as I have stated above, it is a relic of the "bad days". As I was interviewing Prefect Stella an urgent telephone call came through stating the Commune of Barcellona had now been without food for two days owing to a transportation breakdown. I was impressed by the way the Prefect handled the matter, in that in my presence he sent for the Director of Transport and gave him immediate orders that he was to supply from every source available sufficient vehicles that afternoon to send the necessary foodstuffs to Barcellona, and he gave it in a manner which was certainly direct and that of a man.

My last interview was with H.E. Aldisio, on his return from Rome; and I may say here, that he very kindly invited me to dine with him that night, which I did. Aldisio seemed to me pleased on the whole with his stay in Rome and with what he had achieved, but I did not discuss this with him at all. I gave him an account of my

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administration. He said that many of the young Councillors should be promoted now and given these higher positions of responsibility in which their vitality and energy might be brought into play. He appealed to me at my next interview with the Minister of the Interior to bring this as forcibly as I could to his notice. He quite rightly stated that the office of VPI must of necessity be held by a young and virile man who can travel round his Communes, ascertain the position, and bring in to his Prefect a report gathered "on the ground". It may be owing to the fact that Signore Aldisio and I knew each other so well in Salerno that we are agreed on all these points, and with the Vice President's approval I propose to bring this to the notice of the Minister of the Interior when I next interview him. In this regard Signore Aldisio stated that I had his full authority to make use of his name in putting forward this view if I so desired. H.E. Aldisio very kindly provided me with transport by S.79, with the result that I left the Palermo Airfield at 10.40 the next morning and arrived in Rome in one hour and nineteen minutes.

In conclusion I would state that having heard and having read of all the disturbances that have taken place in Sicily, it struck me as a much more tranquil place than I could possibly have imagined, although of course, I did not visit Ragusa and the centres in which I know that the more serious of the disturbances took place. The Separatist Movement was discussed in social contacts which I had and apart from a few leading hotheads it is my considered opinion that there is a tendency to overstate the position in Sicily, but I will again guard myself by saying that my experience on this occasion on the island was only ephemeral. I further gathered, again from social contacts, that the Separatist Movement, apart from any

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I returned to Rome on Thursday February 1st.

Ag. A. Spicer
Colonel.

R.G.B. SPICER,
Colonel,
Director,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUB COMMISSION.

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