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THE IMPACT OF ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT (AMGOT) ON
THE POPULATION OF SICILY JULY 1943 - FEBRUARY 1944:
A CASE STUDY OF THE TOWNS OF CATANIA AND CALTAGIRONE
IN THE PROVINCE OF CATANIA

Dorothy Ellen Mary Jones

Submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Swansea University

2008

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THESIS SUMMARY

Candidate's Surname/Family name Jones
Candidate's Forenames Dorothy Ellen Mary
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CALTAGIRONE IN THE PROVINCE OF CATANIA

The main objective of this thesis is to describe the problems and difficulties of an island population, which had suffered from extreme shortages of food and other basic necessities for a number of years and also endured months of intense aerial bombardment before being invaded by an Allied army which became engaged in fierce combat with the defending forces. The conquest of the island was followed by the establishment of the first Allied Military Government of an enemy territory in Europe in World War II. This government, a joint UK/US enterprise, also had its problems, caused not only by the war-torn conditions in Catania but by its inefficient and inept military headquarters in Algiers.

The Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs) responsible for the administration had a dual task: to support the combat forces by ensuring roads were cleared for the passage of troops and to obtain supplies for them, and to keep law and order and relieve distress among the civilian population, the needs of the military always taking priority. The thesis aims to show the tenacious way in which the CAOs, in very restricted numbers, coped with acute shortages of food and other necessities, which Allied propaganda had promised the islanders, while the military forces, with only a few exceptions, were most unhelpful.

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed (candidate)

Date 14 November 2008

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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There are a number of people I would like to thank for their help in the production of this thesis. First of all I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr Jonathan Dunnage of the Italian Department at Swansea University for his guidance, counsel, encouragement and patience during the time it has taken to complete the thesis. I am also most grateful to historian and publisher, Dr Ezio Costanzo, and to Dr Alfio Caruso, lecturer at Catania University who both gave generously of their time and knowledge on each occasion I visited Catania for research purposes. I am indebted to both of them for providing a great deal of information relevant to the Allied occupation. To them my very grateful thanks.

I wish to thank the staff of the University library, who have always been very helpful and reliable. A special thank you to Andrew Orgill and the staff of the library at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, who have supplied me with military books and journals and kindly turned a blind eye to the return date!

Abbreviations

A	Adjutant-General's Branch
ACC	Allied Control Commission
AFA	Allied Financial Agency
AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
AG	Adjutant General
AGIP	The semigovernmental organisation in charge of the distribution of petroleum in Italy
AGP	Army Group
AGWAR	Adjutant General, War Department
AMFA	Allied Military Financial Agency
AMGOT	Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories
AT(E)	Administration of Territories (Europe) Committee
Bull	Bulletin
Bur	Bureau
CA	Civil Affairs
CAD	US Civil Affairs Division of War Department
CAO	Civil Affairs Officer/Chief Administrative Officer
CAPO	Civil Affairs Police Officer
CATS	Civil Affairs Training School
CCAC	Combined Civil Affairs Committee
CCAO	Chief Civil Affairs Officer
CCRR	Carabinieri Reali, Italian National Police Force
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff (also CCOS)
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CG	Commanding General
CIC	Counter-intelligence Corps
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
Civ Sup	Civil Supplies
CLN	Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale
CLO	Chief Legal Officer

CMF Central Mediterranean Forces
 CM-In Classified Message, incoming
 CM-Out Classified Message, outgoing
 CMP Corps of Military Police
 CofS Chief of Staff
 DCA Directorate of Civil Affairs
 DCCAO Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer
 Dir Director
 DMI Directorate of Military Intelligence
 DMO Directorate of Military Operations
 DMT Directorate of Military Training
 EM Enlisted Men
 ETOUSA European Theatre of Operations, US Army
 FO Finance Officer
 FO UK Foreign Office
 Force 141 - AFHQ planners for HUSKY
 Force 343 - AFHQ codeword for US Fifth Army
 Force 545 - AFHQ codeword for UK Eighth Army
 FSS Field Security Service
 G-1 Personnel Division, War Department General Staff
 G-2 (Military) Intelligence Division
 G-3 Operations Division
 G-4 Supply Division
 G-5 Civil Affairs Division of AFHQ
 GAI General Administrative Instructions
 GHQ General Headquarters
 GIL Gioventù Italiana del Littorio, Fascist Youth Group
 HUSKY Codename for Allied Invasion of Sicily
 I&C/INC Information and Censorship
 JCAC Joint Civil Affairs Committee
 JICA Joint Intelligence Collection Agency
 JPS Joint Planning Staff
 LO Legal Officer
 MGS Military Government Section

MP	Military Police
Msg	Message
MT	Military Transport
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NATO	North African Theatre of Operations
OETA	Occupied Enemy Territories Administration
OPD	Operations Division
OR	Other Ranks
OVRA	Opera Volontaria per la Repressione Antifascista - A secret organisation to repress anti-Fascism
PHD	Public Health Division
PMG	Provost Marshal General
POW	Prisoner of War
PRO	Public Record Office Kew
PWB	Psychological Warfare Branch
Q	Quarter-Master-General's Branch
RCAO	Regional Civil Affairs Officer
Rpt	Report
SAC	Supreme Allied Commander
SCAO	Senior Civil Affairs Officer
SGS	Secretary, General Staff
SO	Supply Officer
SOS	Services of Supply
SW	Secretary of War
TNA	The National Archives Kew
UNPA	Unione Nazionale di Protezione Antiaerea - Anti- Aircraft Defence Organisation
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
WD	US War Department
WO	War Office
WOSB	War Office Selection Board

Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to examine the role of Allied Military Government (AMGOT) in Sicily in World War II and the impact it had on the civilian population. Much has been written about the campaign by military historians and war correspondents but it has not attracted the attention given to the mainland conflict, possibly because the island was captured in only thirty-eight days. Neither has AMGOT's contribution to the post-war recovery of Sicily been adequately recognised. Even Carlo D'Este, author of probably the most comprehensive account of the campaign in Sicily, makes only a cursory reference to its existence. This was to emphasise its infiltration by the Mafia, without making clear that the Mafia did not then exist in the east of the island, and there is no evidence whatsoever of Mafia involvement in AMGOT there. Although D'Este comments that AMGOT in Sicily was a sincere attempt to restore order in the island, he nevertheless points out that the history of military government in World War II was riddled with instances of graft and corruption.(1) Many other historians have made similar derogatory remarks about AMGOT but I hope to prove that these did not apply to the province of Catania, which has been chosen to illustrate military administration in the island.

The official history of *Allied Military Administration of Italy 1943-1945* did not appear until 1957. In his preface the editor remarked that the subject had attracted little attention from military historians in spite of the fact that controlling a civilian population had never before presented a problem on the scale of World War II. (2) The author, C.R.S. Harris, was AMGOT's Controller of Property in Sicily and wrote from first-hand knowledge. He supplies a comprehensive account of the operational planning details and the organisation to be established in Sicily.

Almost a decade later F.S.V. Donnison produced a volume in the same series of official military histories: *Civil Affairs and Military Government: Central Organization and Planning*. (3) This provides a comprehensive account of the machinery set up in 1941 in the War Office for the administration of territories occupied by British forces, and the establishment in July 1943 of a Combined Civil Affairs Committee to oversee the implementation of a joint Anglo-American administration in Italy. The volume also includes a chapter devoted to the selection and training of candidates to become Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs).

An essential part of AMGOT's programme was to establish an education system free from Fascist influence. The officer responsible was Lt Col George Gayre, whose diary-based account of his efforts to install a new system forms the contents of *Italy in Transition*. (4) Though disclaiming that his book was a comprehensive account of military government or the educational work of that government, his stated aim was to show the difficulties besetting officers in the formative stages of Allied control. (5)

Written from a different perspective is the diary of Sergeant Charles Dobson. *A Quiet War: Italy 1943-1946* is the story of war experienced by a clerk in an AMGOT office in Palermo HQ, who then followed the Allied advance north via Naples, Caserta, Rome, Brescia and Milan. Dobson worked daily with Italians and was frequently invited to their homes, which gave him more opportunity than most soldiers to get to know them as individuals. His diary is a detailed record both of the life of an AMGOT clerk and of Italians during the war and post-war years. (6)

To understand fully the complexities of the tasks faced by a CAO on arriving at his designated commune in Sicily, it is essential to read the initial reports of individual CAOs and those of the Senior CAO (SCAO) of the province to

AMGOT HQ. Many of these appear in an American volume, *US Army in World War II, Special Studies, Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*. (7) The authors point out that excerpts from documents rather than text were given the primary role in their presentation, text being used for linking chapters. Documents cited are from a variety of sources, emphasising the *Allied* aspect of AMGOT.

American military journals published a number of articles in the immediate post-war years, mostly concerned with US input into Military Government. (8) Research has revealed only a few articles in British journals which relate specifically to the work of CAOs. (9) The best source of information is in the National Archives at Kew. Here the Cabinet Office, Foreign Office and War Office files contain a comprehensive collection of documents, including reports from the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, CAOs, SCAOs, Specialist Divisions, AMGOT HQ, Provincial HQ and AFHQ Algiers. (10) These files read in conjunction with AMGOT records in Sicily (some of which refer to local events not included in TNA files) provide a very detailed account of life under Allied administration.

Since Military Government was planned on a provincial basis, following the Sicilian pattern, the province of Catania was selected for the case study. Situated on the east coast, it had no Mafia connections. Two towns were chosen to highlight the different conditions in urban and rural areas, the capital town, Catania, and a smaller country town, Caltagirone, in the south-west of the province. The latter was chosen because it was one of the few towns in this province with AMGOT records in its local archives. Historian Dr Alfio Caruso, who lived in the town, warned me that the AMGOT files were 'in attesa di sistemazione'. (11) An ample supply of documents was available, however, unnumbered and unclassified, but most

were dated. Early documents were signed by the senior of the two CAOs responsible for the town but within a week all communications to the public were signed by the mayor, with an acknowledgement that they were AMGOT directives, 'Presi gli ordini delle Autorità Militari Alleate'. The mayor had taken on responsibility for his town under AMGOT guidance in keeping with Allied policy of indirect rule. The documents included many communications from the SCAO, applicable to all communes in the province, e.g. notices relating to curfew hours and price lists for basic goods and services. Others were specific to Caltagirone, e.g. notices of local events. The most important were the CAO's reports to HQ on the situation in the town when AMGOT arrived, and the follow-up at the end of August, but each document was a valuable supplement to those viewed at Kew.

Catania town archives had no files directly relating to AMGOT administration but information was obtainable from past copies of the local newspaper, which published news items and public notices on a daily basis in a column reserved for AMGOT. (12) Many documents in Caltagirone also related to all communes in the province, including Catania town. In addition a series of histories written by Catania historian, Salvatore Nicolosi, about his home town contain much information about AMGOT, its staff, and the relations between CAOs and the local population. (13) Although no specific AMGOT files exist, there are Prefect's files for 1943-1944 which reveal the conditions existing in the capital town at the time - high unemployment and shortages of essential commodities. (14)

Historian Dr Ezio Costanzo, whom I already knew, had been involved in establishing a museum in Catania dedicated to the invasion. We met with the museum's Director and had a most informative discussion on the museum's contents, including an 'AMGOT' room, and their significance. (15)

Apart from the research sources cited above and the oral interviews listed in the bibliography, I have had many opportunities to discuss the events of World War II with British historians and ex-servicemen on an informal level, because of my close associations with the Services. These included employment in the libraries of the Army Staff College and Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, attendance at presentations given by the Military History and War Studies Departments at Sandhurst and military lectures at Aldershot. Many of the Sandhurst staff had taken part in the campaigns of the European Theatre, including Sicily and mainland Italy. (Lt Col G.A. Shepperd, author of *The Italian Campaign 1943-1945*, was for many years the Senior librarian at Sandhurst)

Personal contact with a former CAO proved impossible and enquiries made at various military sources when my research began drew a blank, unsurprisingly, since the average age of a CAO in 1943 (35+) would have made him 90+ in this century. Neither did the Army Lists for 1943-1944 yield any recognisable names, although CAOs recruited from civilian sources would not appear in the lists. The CAOs provided much information in their individual reports to the War Office about their work in the communes but few gave details about themselves. Local historians in Catania have recorded interviews with many Catanesi and Calatini about their memories of the war. In Caltagirone CAO Corbin was remembered: "... Con Corbin, tutto andò bene perché sapevamo di avere finalmente un nuovo capo che avrebbe messo ordine." (16) Nicolosi also provides details of AMGOT staff, but these are from secondary sources.

I have made the fullest use of my research sources, in particular in Caltagirone, where I was apparently the first English visitor to the AMGOT archives. I have travelled extensively in Sicily over ten years, especially

in Catania province, and gathered as much information as possible in every town and village visited. In writing a case study of this particular area, I have concentrated on the effects of full-scale combat on a population which had not only endured acute food shortages but suffered from Allied air bombardment for three years prior to an invasion, which brought even more death and destruction. Yet the invaders were welcomed as liberators. It was only when the Allied promises of food and other essential supplies were not forthcoming that disillusionment set in.

The AMGOT staff, in no way responsible for the absence of supplies, did all they could to help the civilians, even though their priority was to support the military. This entailed strict enforcement of the Proclamations and compulsory requisitions of local properties which caused much ill-feeling. But in spite of these upsets, most civilians realised that AMGOT staff were doing all they could to ameliorate conditions, as I hope to have shown in the relevant chapters. The conclusion I have drawn from my research is that a genuine and honest attempt was made by AMGOT personnel to restore a measure of normality to a war-torn province and I have failed to find any traces of alleged corruption among the staff.

As far as the originality of the thesis is concerned, I am not aware of the existence of any similar case study based on Allied Military Government in Italy.

A Contents page precedes the thesis, which begins with a definition of military government, the planning of the measures necessary to form the Anglo-American partnership, followed by the planning of the invasion, the military administration to be established, and the training of the personnel. This leads on to the landings in Sicily and an in-depth study of AMGOT's work and achievements in Catania town and Caltagirone.

Notes

1. D'Este, Carlo, *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily* (London: Collins, 1988), p.631.
2. Harris, C.R.S., *Allied Military Administration of Italy 1943-1945* (London: HMSO, 1957), p.ix.
3. Donnison, F.S.V., *Civil Affairs and Military Government: Central Organization and Planning* (London: HMSO, 1966)
4. Gayre, G., *Italy in Transition* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946)
5. *Ibid.*, p.21.
6. Dobson, Charles, *A Quiet War: Italy 1943-1946* (Market Harborough: Troubador Publishing, 1996)
7. Coles Harry L., and Albert K. Weinberg, *US Army in World War II, Special Studies, Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1964)
8. Articles in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* (January 1950)
9. Military Journal archives in the Prince Consort's Library Aldershot.
10. The National Archives, Public Record Office, Kew.
11. Caruso, Alfio, lecturer at Catania University.
12. *Il Corriere di Sicilia*, supervised by PWB.
13. Nicolosi, Salvatore, author of *La Guerra a Catania* (Catania: Tringale Editore, 1983)
Uno Splendido Ventennio: Catania 1944-1964 (Catania: Tringale Editore, 1984)
14. Archivio di Catania, Prefect's File 1943-1945.
15. Museo Storico dello Sbarco in Sicilia, Catania.
16. Caruso, Alfio, *Caltagirone e gli Alleati: Politica e Società, 9 luglio 1943-25 gennaio 1944* (Catania: Le Nove Muse Editrice, 2004), p.157.

Chapter 1

The first section of this chapter seeks to define the exact nature and purpose of Military Government as interpreted by the military leaders responsible for its implementation in Italy, and to examine previous Allied experiences of establishing this type of post-hostilities administration in the past. Britain had been at war for over a year when the Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East Forces requested an experienced administrator to be responsible for Italian territory in Africa, which he was soon to occupy. No preparation for administration of this kind had been made and there were no detailed records of past experiences in this type of administration. The War Office was chosen as the Office responsible for Military Government and the machinery required to implement it was set up in that Department.

At this stage of World War II, December 1940, the United States had not entered the war but when the time came for the invasion of Sicily, Britain and the USA were in active partnership, having fought side by side in North Africa. America, too, had been responsible for a number of previous military administrations but this would be the first occasion for the two countries to be involved in a joint implementation of military government.

The Casablanca Conference in January 1943 revealed the fundamental differences between the British and American conceptions of the strategy to be followed in the conduct of the war. Relations between both Armies in North Africa had become strained and continued to degenerate until the Allied victory in Tunisia in May. Problems often arise in coalition warfare between both political leaders and military forces in the field. The problems in this coalition extended to Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ), where planning for the invasion of Sicily and its military government was taking place. These partnership problems and those at AFHQ are described in the final sections.

Section 1. Allied Experiences of Military Government
before the Occupation of Sicily

Many definitions of the exact meaning of Military Government and what it entails for the population of an enemy country, conquered by force and then occupied by the victors, are to be found in the writings of military historians and in the accounts by the individuals actually responsible for organising the military administration for an occupied territory. Major-General A.V. Anderson, head of the Directorate of Civil Affairs (DCA), established in the War Office to oversee the administration of occupied territories, defined the expression "military government" as the special relationship which exists between a military force in occupation of enemy territory in time of war and the civil population of that territory. He pointed out that certain rights and duties are involved on each side and the actions of both sides are governed by the Laws and Usages of War on Land. These consist partly of customary rules which have grown up in practice and are described in Chapter XIV of the Manual of Military Law, and partly of written rules drawn up in the Hague Convention of 1907.(1)

Customary rules involve principles of humanity, mutual respect and a belligerent's right to apply the amount of force strictly necessary for the purpose of war. The body of written rules forming the Hague Convention concern the rights and duties of the combatants and the restrictions on their behaviour. Forty-four delegations at the Hague produced thirteen Conventions of which No.IV, 'Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land' was particularly important. It sought 'to diminish the evils of war as far as military requirements permit' and banned certain weapons (such as poisonous substances) and certain practices (for example, harming an enemy who had surrendered). (2)

Military historian, F.S.V. Donnison, drew attention to the laws of war governing the occupation of enemy territory in 1939. These laws, set out in the Hague Convention, Articles

42-56, accepted the right and duty of an occupant of enemy territory under the customary laws of war to set up military government, on the grounds that, when enemy territory had been occupied, the authority of the hostile state passed *de facto* to the occupant. Article 43 stated that 'the occupant shall do all in his power to restore and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety.' The remaining Articles were designed to restrict the military authority from exercising absolute power. (3)

Since Britain was a signatory to the Convention, General Anderson ensured that British implementation of a military administration conformed to the Hague Rules, while pointing out that in order to enforce Article 43, the occupying power had the right to demand and enforce such measure of obedience as was necessary to secure public order. If strong measures were needed to safeguard a commander's troops while he carried out appropriate administration, they were justified. (4)

A commander's powers in regard to military necessity were also emphasised by Lord Rennell of Rodd, Chief Civil Affairs Officer (CCAO) of the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory (AMGOT) in 1943, when he wrote that 'in an occupied country which is a theatre of war there can be no other authority than that of the commander of the troops who exercises that authority by the oldest sanction known in law, the sanction of force arising out of conquest.' (5) Rennell also referred to problems arising when the central government is cut off from the territory occupied and local government consequently collapses, as occurred in Sicily. This was underlined by General Holmes, Head of the Liaison Section at AFHQ, when he wrote: 'After 20 years of control the Fascist Party was so woven into the warp and woof of all phases of life that when the Party officials fled, provincial and municipal administration came to a standstill... Officials and populace alike seemed unable to do anything to help themselves.' (6) To set up a new administration could have required the use of the sanction

of force but this did not prove necessary in Sicily.

Military Government of Italy was planned as a joint venture by an integrated force of British and American Civil Affairs Officers (CAOs). Rennell constantly stressed the element of integration, declaring himself 'head of a corporate whole of British and American officers', who belonged to him in the same way that troops of a military unit belonged to the commander of that formation. (7) The result was a uniform policy being put into practice so that all areas of occupation were administered in the same way.

Neither partner in this Allied venture was a stranger to military administration of a country following occupation. In his report on the American Military Government of Occupied Germany, 1918-1920, Col Irwin Hunt referred to the history of the United States as offering an uninterrupted series of wars which demanded the exercise by its officers of civil governmental functions. He cited the experience of former American military governments in California, Mexico, the Southern States, the Philippines, Cuba, Porto Rica and elsewhere to underline his assertion that nothing had been learned from these previous occupations which would have been of assistance to officers involved in the civil administration of the Rhineland. (8)

In the years leading up to World War II Britain had also been involved in a number of occupations, each followed by some form of military government. In 1900 Britain set up an administration in South Africa and in World War I further British military governments were established in Palestine, East Africa and Mesopotamia. Britain was also involved with America in the occupation of the Rhineland. Between 1941 and the invasion of Sicily in 1943, Britain had already set up no fewer than nine military governments in African territory. In fact World War II saw more countries invaded and occupied than in any previous conflicts, with Britain involved in the occupation and subsequent administration of territories in three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Donnison cites the South African War as the first occasion

on which British forces had undertaken extensive occupation of enemy territory as opposed to mere invasion.(9) Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), appointed a Military Governor to administer the Orange Free State. Problems quickly arose because no British regulations defining the powers and duties of a Military Governor existed. The C-in-C's lack of control over his subordinates prompted Sir Alfred Milner, the South African High Commissioner, to inform the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain: 'Wherever soldiers are doing civilian work, things are going badly.' Chamberlain's reply clearly revealed his views: 'I am dying to hear that you have commenced some sort of civil administration...I utterly distrust military administration and believe it is calculated to increase the number of our enemies and to exacerbate their hostile feelings.' (10)

Some civil officers had in fact been provided to help with the administration but they were entirely subject to the instructions of the Military Governor. The situation became chaotic due to lack of previous planning and of clear-cut guidelines as to the Governor's role. Leo Amery, a World War II Cabinet member involved with military government, wrote that the first lesson to be learned from the South African War was 'the necessity of defining the duties of a military governor and his subordinates, and their position with regard to other officers exercising military command within the area of their jurisdiction.' (11)

Whether the failure of military government was due to sheer incompetence on the part of this particular military command or the lack of clearly defined parameters in which the civil administrators were working is difficult to assess but probably both factors were involved. Milner recorded that prejudice was growing against the military's 'hard and fast, follow-your-instructions and never-take-local-advice, spirit in management of civil affairs.' (12) Civilians did not always comprehend the military ethos, based on immediate compliance with orders given by superiors and it would have been difficult for servicemen

to depart from patterns of behaviour inculcated by years of disciplined training. Tensions would inevitably arise.

No lessons were learned from the South African experience and virtually no planning took place for the four military administrations set up in World War I. In Mesopotamia a Chief Political Officer, Sir Percy Cox, accompanied the military force. Cox was very experienced and ideally suited to deal with political and civil administrative matters. He was not an army officer but understood the workings of the military and enjoyed very good relations with the military commander, General Barratt. According to Donnison he was very successful in his dual role of dealing with the needs of the local population and helping the military obtain essential supplies and services such as a labour force, food and billets, (primary tasks also for CAOs in Sicily in 1943). The arrangement worked well until General Sir Stanley Maude was appointed commander. Maude saw no need for a political presence, and made his own decisions on administrative matters without reference to Cox. Donnison writes that 'to the new commander a political officer was a figure of fun and difficult to accept in an army environment.' (13)

To remedy the situation the title of Political Officer was changed to Civil Commissioner and Cox placed under the jurisdiction of the India Office of the UK Government instead of the Foreign Department of the Government of India. The dispute ended in 'the civil authority depending on London and the military authority conforming, save where urgent local necessity required otherwise.' (14)

According to Rennell the attachment of a Political Officer to a military force had long been a feature of campaigns in India and the arrangement had always worked well. Any difficulties arising were usually due to personality clashes with one party not realising the requirements of the other. (15)

Conquered territory in German East Africa in 1916 was administered by political officers drawn from the staffs of

British Colonies. They were not given military rank but their authority came from the C-in-C, General Jan Smuts. Once military operations came to an end a Civil Government was established under an Administrator from the Colonial Office, directly responsible to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on matters of civil administration. Military matters remained the responsibility of the C-in-C. (16)

The channels of authority cited above were similar to those formally established in Mesopotamia after the arrival of General Maude, but this did not establish a pattern for British administration of an occupied territory. At the end of 1917, Palestine was occupied and General Clayton, a Regular Army officer with experience in political posts, became Chief Political Officer to C-in-C, General Allenby. His administrative responsibility was to the War Office, and his administration was more military in character than those in German East Africa and Mesopotamia. (17)

The dominant military aspect of Palestine's administration continued when General Money took over. He led an energetic and constructive administration, setting up departments of Finance, Justice, Education, Agriculture, Health and Public Works, similar in character to the Specialist Divisions that were established in Sicily. Rennell draws attention to the fact that in the administrations described above, obedience to the Hague Rules bound a military government to administer the laws of the country as they were found, save where the Army Commander might otherwise direct. In Palestine, for example, the administration was not entitled to change the system of taxation but means were found to lessen the corruption involved in tax collection. (18)

Only military forces were involved in the post-Armistice occupation of the Rhineland in 1918. Its limited scope did not allow for a civil affairs staff to undertake any administration. It was basically a military measure to ensure German compliance with the terms of the surrender. At Army HQ a small Civil Affairs Branch of the General Staff was formed but Donnison comments on the unlikelihood

that any of the staff had received special training or had been recruited on account of qualifications that would fit them for posts in Civil Affairs. He cites the words of the official historian of the Rhineland occupation: 'No special preparations had been made by the Allies to deal with the problems of occupation and control of enemy territory.' (19)

Rennell, who served in the administration of Syria in 1918 and the military administration of Africa from 1941 until his appointment as CCAO for Operation HUSKY, points out that no records of World War I military administration were kept for the guidance of Army planners of future wars. References could be found in campaign histories, individual memoirs and biographies but the only official work devoted exclusively to Allied Military Government was Command Paper 1061, "Mesopotamia - Review of the Civil Administration" produced by Gertrude Bell, whose extensive knowledge of Arab politics had led to her secondment to the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force in Basra and Baghdad. (20)

Having emphasised the paucity of literature dealing with the subject of military government and its omission from the curricula of Army Training Establishments in the post-war years, Rennell comments that 'this singular absence of study, direction and material led the more cynical to conclude that the British Army was not designed, and never expected, to occupy enemy territory!' (21) Donnison cites another reason for the neglect of all preparation for military government, namely the need for peace-time economy in defence expenditure, which tends 'to compel neglect of preparation against all but the most important risks.' (22)

This comment accurately reflects what happened in Britain after 1918. Her conscript army was rapidly demobilised and defence industries dismantled. Huge reductions were made in service budgets, following recommendations by the Geddes Committee, set up by Lloyd George, to reflect the need for economy in post-war Britain. These financial cuts affected the Army in particular, and planning for possible future Military Governments was not a priority. (23)

According to Donnison the first reference in World War II to military government occurred on 7 December 1940 when a telegram was sent by General Wavell, C-in-C British forces in the Middle East, to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), stating the urgent need for an experienced administrator to be sent to the Middle East to formulate plans for the administration of Italian territories in Africa. The telegram went to the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), was then passed to the Directorate of Military Operations (DMO) and finally to MO 5, a branch of DMO in the War Office (WO). Donnison points out that no official in these branches was specifically responsible for dealing with the subject. (24)

At the time Wavell was preparing to attack enemy positions near Sidi Barrani. A successful outcome would lead to the fall of the Italian colony of Cyrenaica and the need to set up a Military Government there. British forces were also advancing in Italian territory in East Africa and it was only a matter of time before an administration would be needed there. (25) Wavell had little to guide him by way of written documentation, apart from Chapter XIV, Laws and Usages of War, in the Manual of British Military Law. The latter explains the rights and duties of military commanders but does not prescribe the formal practice of administration which should be imposed. (26) Presumably this is because of the widely varying circumstances under which administration may be carried out. Wavell's experience in the Middle East in World War I had made him aware of problems which arise when occupying an enemy country and the urgent need for an expert to deal with them. (27) Although the military commander has overall responsibility for governing an occupied territory, his military duties leave him little time, hence the need for an experienced administrator who accepts that the final decision on matters of policy must be given by the commander in order to ensure that administration policies do not conflict with military requirements.

The War Office, having assumed responsibility for the provision of military government, proposed Sir Philip Mitchell, the pre-war Governor of Uganda, as Chief Political Officer. As a Colonial administrator he had an extensive knowledge and experience of African affairs.(28) Wavell had also requested an officer qualified to assume responsibility for the financial and economic affairs of the administration, which were to be kept separate from the Army's finances. Major Francis Rodd (later Lord Rennell of Rodd) was appointed Controller of Finance and Accounts, with the rank of Colonel. He had served in the Syrian administration in 1918 and also had substantial banking experience. (29) Rodd and Mitchell were joined by two Colonial Service officers, Majors Arundell and Thorne-Thorne, (the latter eventually becoming the Senior Staff Officer at AMGOT HQ in Palermo). Mitchell was given the military rank of Major General in keeping with the War Cabinet's decision to place the administration of occupied territories under the War Office. This decision involved appointing military officers only or commissioning all civilians invited to join the administration because of their relevant experience or specific ability. (30)

Since the need to administer occupied territory arose rather unexpectedly, the planning machinery in London was non-existent. Mitchell took sole charge of organising the administration in GHQ, Middle East, based in Cairo. At that time communications with London were difficult and since decisions had to be made quickly, the staff in Cairo, designated the Occupied Enemy Territories Administration (OETA), were under pressure to recruit and train suitable officers and to draw up a programme specifically tailored to the needs of African countries. The first officers were recruited from the Colonial Services and from serving Army officers who could be spared from their regiments. Some Cairo residents with relevant knowledge of the countries to be administered were invited to join the administration, as were a number of local bank officials who acted as finance

officers. (31)

As the conditions surrounding both the organisation and implementation of the civil affairs administration for Sicily were so different from the situations in Africa, a detailed account of the administrations there would not be relevant. One specific problem, however, arose in the first Italian colony to be occupied, Cyrenaica, which resurfaced later in Sicily. Both territories were rich in Greek and Roman classical sites and monuments. The manual of Military Law states that 'any seizure or destruction of, or wilful damage to, historic monuments and works of art is forbidden and should be made the subject of legal proceedings', and also that 'during bombardment, all steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, historic monuments.' (32)

Cyrenaica was a battleground on three occasions as armies advanced and retreated across the desert. Of the three administrations set up in Cyrenaica the first, in December 1940, was a short-lived, rather improvised form of military government with a restricted staff and without specialist officers. After the Italians reoccupied the country in April 1941 they alleged that the British had vandalised the monuments on the site of the ancient Greek city of Cyrene and produced an illustrated pamphlet, '*Che cosa hanno fatto gli Inglesi in Cirenaica*', to support the accusations. The photographs in the pamphlet, however, were later proved to be fakes. (33) The British military authorities, although anxious to safeguard the Army's reputation, did nothing to prevent acts of vandalism during the second British occupation of Cyrenaica which lasted only a month.

It was not until 1943 during the third occupation of Cyrenaica that officers were instructed to preserve any monuments which might come into British possession. The Tribal Affairs Officer of the military administration placed guards on the museum and antiquities of Cyrene. Meanwhile two Eighth Army officers, Lt Col Mortimer Wheeler and Major Ward-Perkins, professional architects in civilian life, and concerned that ancient sites such as Leptis Magna

could be irreparably damaged in the coming battles in Tripolitania, requested that measures be taken to protect these Roman sites. Ward-Perkins was granted temporary leave to oversee their care, and then seconded to the military government organisation, becoming the first appointed Monuments Officer. (34) The recognition by the military of the need for such an officer was reinforced by a letter sent to the Adjutant-General at the War Office from the directors of a number of prestigious museums, enquiring if steps could be taken to avoid unnecessary damage to buildings and works of art in the course of an invasion of the continent. (35) Consequently an Adviser on Fine Arts and Monuments was later appointed to the CCAO's staff for the administration of Sicily.

Rennell points out that in the early days of the first administrations in Africa the officers responsible received no specific instructions from London on procedure, method or policy but relied on their own judgement.(36) London in fact was still in the process of organising a central authority to meet the need for both a properly planned administration of the territories to be occupied or liberated in Europe and the Far East, and also for the provision of carefully selected and fully trained staff to carry out this administration.

Section 2. Establishing the Machinery for Military Government

The previous section revealed that no specific government department was in a position to deal with General Wavell's request for an administrator to be sent to the Middle East. It was essential to address the issue without delay, and at a hastily convened meeting at Whitehall, representatives from the War Office, Foreign Office, Colonial Office, India Office and the Treasury agreed that in the field the military commander must have responsibility for military and civil administration, with military governors serving under him to take charge of the civil administration. The War Cabinet was asked to select the appropriate department in Whitehall and chose the War Office, since the Foreign Office was not organised to carry out administration and the Colonial Office might signify British intentions to incorporate the territories in the Empire. (37) Since other departments would be involved in some issues, an Inter-Departmental Committee was set up to consider questions of major importance affecting more than one department. Donnison notes that, after this meeting of the War Cabinet, the subject of military government disappeared from its agenda for the next two years. (38)

On 31 March 1941 a new branch, MO 11, was established within the War Office to deal only with Military Government Affairs. It was placed in the DMO, and consisted of two officers only, with clerical assistants, a number which was considered sufficient for the relatively limited work at the time. Any matter arising which needed to be considered at a higher level was referred to the Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff (VCIGS). When planning later began for the invasion of North-West Europe, another committee was formed in June 1942, the Administration of Territories (Europe) Committee (AT(E)). Part of their brief was to consider the steps necessary to ensure efficient civil administration of territory liberated in Europe. The AT(E)

Committee proposed that a Chief Civil Affairs Officer, not a Chief Political Officer, should lead the civil administration.(39) This would be a more acceptable title to friendly countries in Europe, which would still need interim administration after the expulsion of the enemy occupier but not the same form of military government necessary for an enemy country.

Consequently when MO 11 expanded it became the Directorate of Civil Affairs, not of Military Government. Before this took place there were discussions between the VCIGS, General Archibald Nye, responsible for MO 11, and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State (PUS) at the War Office, Sir Frederick Bovenschen. Following the discussions the latter wrote to the VCIGS on 8 February 1943, stating that he was anxious for a full director to be placed in charge of all aspects of Civil Affairs in order to safeguard military interests. He emphasised the need for "a strong organisation capable of dealing with any aspect which may arise and of watching that military interests are not encroached upon by the various bodies which may arise in connection with the question of civil administration, relief and resettlement." (40) Since, as Bovenschen pointed out, constant liaison among the Whitehall departments would be needed, the new Director would be best placed with the PUS.

In his reply the VCIGS insisted that the term "Civil Affairs" should not obscure the fact that it referred to the military administration by a Force Commander of populations under military occupation. "Civil Affairs" was 'an operational concern and should be adequate, efficient and economical in manpower and services.. its policies have an immediate bearing on military security, on the tying up of troops on employments which are not operational.. In view of this the Director should be a soldier.' (41)

In June 1943 Major General S.W.Kirby was appointed Director and a number of Deputy Directors were brought in to head technical departments, including one for procuring

the supplies needed for 'the prevention of disease and unrest in occupied territories', a problem which would later occur in Sicily and on the Italian mainland. As planning for the administration of territories in North-West Europe proceeded, the Directorate expanded and by the end of 1944, by which time Kirby had been replaced by General Anderson, ninety officers were employed. (42)

Meanwhile in the United States the decision of where to place the organisation of post-hostilities administration of occupied territory did not have the same urgency as in Britain, although the US Government was clearly aware of the need for such future administrations. Many Federal agencies, including the State, War and Navy Departments and the Board of Economic Warfare were engaged in preliminary studies. Already an Army School of Military Government had been set up in Charlottesville. At the same time civilian agencies were staking claims to be involved in post-war administrations. The President was inclined to favour these and made his views quite clear in October 1942, when he wrote to the Secretary of War: 'The governing of occupied territories may be of many kinds but in most instances it is a civilian task and requires absolutely first-class men and not second-string men.' (43) At a Cabinet meeting he commented that the instructors at Charlottesville Army School of Military Government 'did not seem to be the best that could have been collected but were rather second-rate.' (44)

The civilian agencies maintained their campaign to take responsibility for post-war administration during the summer of 1942 but the War Department was determined to assert its leadership in the Military Government field and directed the Provost Marshal General, Major General Allen Gullion, to set up a Division of Military Government (MGD) in his Office (PMGO). It was a small Division and the only agency in the WD at that time involved in preparing for a role in civil affairs and, although authorised to engage in broad planning, it was scarcely in a position to extend its

activities beyond the training of prospective civil affairs officers. Coles and Weinberg make the point that the MGD 'was on too low a level to speak for the War Department as a whole and did not command much active support.' (45)

After the invasion of French North Africa in November 1942 by a joint Anglo-American force (Operation TORCH) agreement was reached between the American and French authorities, whereby the administration was carried out by the French and did not involve any form of Allied military government. General Dwight Eisenhower, C-in-C of Operation TORCH, was informed by the WD that purely civil matters, apart from those which affected military operations, would be the responsibility of civil agencies, since the President had charged the Office of Lend-Lease Administration (OLLA) 'with providing food and other essentials for all occupied territories. Civil activities in occupied areas have been made the responsibility of the State Department.' (46)

A Civil Administrative Section was already in place within General Eisenhower's American staff at Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) in London before the launch of Operation TORCH. The section was headed by a civilian, Robert Murphy, whose role was defined by the President as 'Operating Executive Head of the Civil Affairs Section and Advisor for Civil Affairs under General Eisenhower'. (47) Murphy began his duties in November after the occupation of French North African territories but he soon discovered that the President's decision to entrust civilian agencies with the responsibility for civilian relief was not vindicated. Disunity, competition and a complete lack of coordination between the various agencies resulted in shortages of civilian supplies.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that the Director of the Bureau of the Budget warned of impending breakdown and referred to the Army's grave concern over dealing with civilian agencies whose competition 'play into the hands of the enemy ... The Axis propaganda machine is making the most of the conflict of American agencies.' (48)

Eisenhower's concerns over the effects of civilian supply shortages on military operations prompted him to inform the WD that since civil needs were so closely tied up with the success of the military campaign, serious disaffection among the French would ensue and threaten military security unless tonnages were increased.(49)

It had become clear that a stronger military agency than the MGD was necessary in Washington for future planning of military government, especially in former enemy territory, and a Civil Affairs Division (CAD) of the WD was set up on 1 March 1943. (50) Its primary function was 'to inform and advise the Secretary of War in regard to all matters within the purview of the War Department, other than those of a strictly military nature, in areas occupied as a result of military operations.' (51)

Both Allied countries now possessed departments within the military domain dedicated to civil affairs. The decision made at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 that the next Allied operation would be the invasion of Sicily, and the establishment there of a joint military government, necessitated the creation of a combined machinery in order to achieve full coordination of British and American policies. A Combined Civil Affairs Committee (CCAC) was formed in Washington in July, under the chairmanship of the Assistant Secretary of War, John McCloy. (52) The invasion of Sicily had already been launched before the first CCAC meeting took place. This was due to months of negotiations between the two sides before agreement was reached on the CCAC's charter. Coles and Weinberg attribute the delay in establishing both national and combined agencies partly to the unprecedented scope of civil affairs in World War II and partly to the fact that civilian agencies had taken on responsibility in North Africa and having proved to be inadequate, the Army then had to begin belatedly to establish its own organisation. (53)

Establishing the CCAC brought into sharp relief the differences in approach of the two Allies. The British were

at first reluctant to house this Committee in Washington, believing that London was preferable. Its proximity to Europe, its wealth of experts on European affairs, and the fact that it was host to friendly governments in exile, made it a more suitable venue. An even more valid reason was the fact that the AT(E) Committee had been functioning there since June 1942 and had already gathered a great deal of information about civil affairs, relevant not only to Europe but to other areas. (54) Since, however, the CCAC would serve as an agency of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) who were based in Washington, the British agreed, although rather reluctantly, to locate it there.

Coles and Weinberg refer to the tortuous negotiations which took place in the setting up of this international partnership, and 'the inexhaustible patience and semantic ingenuity required of the negotiators.' (55) The documents associated with the lengthy discussions reveal the tenacity with which both sides defended their policies, in particular the British insistence on the retention of the AT(E) Committee in London. It was finally agreed under the terms of the CCAC charter that an American officer from the staff of the European Theatre of Operations, United States of America, would be delegated to serve on this Committee. He would transmit the views of the WD to the AT(E) and refer any problems relating to other theatres of operations from the AT(E) back to the WD. (56) Thus a compromise was finally reached but only after much waste of valuable time which delayed the planning taking place at AFHQ in Algiers and which also reflected the often difficult relations between the two Allies.

Section 3. Britain and the United States
in active Partnership

The previous section referred to the lengthy talks and negotiations between the two Allies which preceded the establishment of the CCAC. Discussions of this nature became the norm after the Washington Conference in December 1941, when Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt decided to set up a joint command in the form of the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee (CCS), to direct the military effort of both Allies.(57) Another decision taken at this conference was to confirm a previous decision made secretly in March 1941 by representatives of both nations that *if and when* America entered the war, her main military effort would be the defeat of Germany. (58)

Setting up the CCS was the first step in the preparation for coalition warfare in the European theatre of operations. The degree of success of a coalition must obviously depend on the extent to which the interests of the members coincide. The interests of all members are rarely identical and military objectives need to be established which reflect the interests and aims common to each partner. Constant dialogue is necessary to preserve the coalition. With only two partners, both sharing a common language and the same basic concept of democracy, a successful partnership seemed at first assured.

Although the defeat of Germany was the primary aim of Britain, she was in no position at that stage of the war to launch a cross-Channel attack against the massive defences which Germany had put in place. Military commitments in India, the Middle East and the Western Desert, naval commitments to anti-submarine warfare, convoy and support operations, and an Air Force short of planes and trained personnel made a cross-Channel attack out of the question. Churchill put forward his proposal that the main objective for 1942 should be action in French North-West Africa.

The Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General George Marshall, however, wanted troops and matériel to be built up in the United Kingdom from where Germany could be attacked as soon as possible by the most direct route through Northwest Europe. He dismissed Churchill's plan for an operation in French North Africa, favouring instead 'a massive assault aimed directly at the heart of Germany' and not the British plan of 'successive stabs around the periphery to bleed the enemy to death.' (59) General Sir Alan Brooke, (later Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke), Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) had a rather low opinion of Marshall's knowledge of strategy, commenting in his diary that the American had not studied any of the strategic implications of a cross-Channel operation.(60) It was soon evident that significant differences existed between the Allies' views on the course to be taken.

A second conference took place in Washington in June 1942, when Churchill again pressed for action in North Africa, but the discussions again resulted in stalemate. The President, however, had become aware that a major invasion of Europe was not feasible until a vast amount of men, equipment and supplies, to be provided mostly by the USA, could be assembled in Britain. Anxious to bring US ground troops into action and to create a 'second front' to relieve the Russians under pressure in Eastern Europe, he told his Chiefs of Staff in July that he had made the decision in favour of the North African operation. This, according to military historian Rick Atkinson, was the most profound American strategic decision of the European war, and was made by the President in direct contravention of his generals and admirals.(61)

The British, although liberally contributing both men and supplies, took a secondary role in the North African invasion, codenamed Operation TORCH. This was because of the strong anti-British feelings still harboured among the French following the Royal Navy's attack on the French Fleet at Mers el-Kébir, on 3 July 1940, which had resulted

in more than a thousand French fatalities. (62) Roosevelt considered that the French would offer less resistance to an American invasion of French North Africa which did not include British ground forces. Churchill accepted a junior role for Britain, informing the President that 'in the whole of TORCH, military and political, I consider myself your lieutenant, asking only to put my viewpoint plainly before you.' (63) Having won the main issue he was prepared to concede that the operation was an American enterprise.

General Eisenhower, Commander of the European Theatre of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA), based in London, was appointed C-in-C of Operation TORCH on 13 August. Aware of the difficult relations between the two Allies, his primary aim was to instil a feeling of common purpose among his British and American staff which would overcome nationalistic interests: 'In the organisation, operation, and composition of my staff we proceeded as though all its members belonged to a single nation.' (64)

This was not always easy since agreement needed to be reached on two main issues, sites of the landing zones and timing of the arrival of British forces. The President had suggested that the British contingent should not land in North Africa until a month after the American troops had arrived but the British would not agree. They wished for early occupation of Tunisia and all landing sites to be within the Mediterranean. The President was insistent that at least one landing site should be on the Atlantic coast of Morocco to guarantee an open supply line from the USA. Churchill agreed to this and on 5 September planning went ahead. Eisenhower later acknowledged that difficulties did at first occur: 'Officers of the two nationalities were apt to conduct their business in the attitude of a bulldog meeting a tomcat.' (65) He would later claim that with the passage of time a unity of purpose and absence of friction developed which could not have been excelled if all members were of the same nationality.

In his autobiography he referred to the many difficulties

associated with coalition warfare: 'History testifies to the ineptitude of coalitions in waging war... Even Napoleon's reputation as a brilliant military leader suffered when students in staff colleges came to realise that he always fought against coalitions - and therefore against divided counsels and diverse political, economic and military interests.' (66) There was certainly no shortage of the latter in French North Africa. In spite of the unity of purpose achieved by Eisenhower among the planners in London, Operation TORCH revealed tensions at Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers and between the two armies on the North African battlefields. These tensions would continue in the next phase of military operations in Sicily.

Eisenhower himself was the subject of doubts as to his suitability for the role of C-in-C. He was very well liked by both Allies but patently lacked the battle experience of many senior British officers. He was still a Lt Colonel in 1941 but achieved rapid promotion to Lt General. He was, however, subordinate in rank to the senior British generals and this apparently irked his compatriots, including General Marshall. At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, Marshall requested the President to promote Eisenhower to a four-star general. The request was refused 'until there was some damn good reason for doing so.' (67) General Brooke was not bothered by the C-in-C's rank but by his ability, and in his *War Diaries* revealed his concerns about the slow rate of progress of Operation TORCH, for which he firmly attached the blame to Eisenhower, who 'had never even commanded a battalion in action when he found himself commanding a group of armies in North Africa.' (68) A further entry records: 'I am afraid that Eisenhower as a general is hopeless! He submerges himself in politics and neglects his military duties, partly, I am afraid, because he knows little if anything about military matters.' (69)

Even allowing for Brooke's customary acerbity Eisenhower does not emerge as the most suitable C-in-C for a large-scale campaign to expel Axis forces from the North African

continent. His gifts lay in his capacity to achieve unity between the British and Americans. He consistently refused to tolerate any criticism couched along nationalistic lines and was adamant that any American officer spreading anti-British talk would be sent straight home.(70)

It was at the Casablanca Conference that the respective Chiefs of Staff Committees revealed the differences in their conceptions of the future conduct of the war after the fall of Tunisia. Admiral King, in General Brooke's opinion, was biased entirely in favour of the Pacific, and still considered that priority should be given to operations there. The US Joint Planners had also changed their minds about Germany being the primary enemy and thought Japan should be defeated first. According to Brooke, Marshall initiated nothing in the policy for the future conduct of the war, his part being restricted to 'somewhat clumsy criticism' of the British plans.(71) However, agreement was finally reached and the outcome of the Conference was the confirmation of Sicily as the next Mediterranean target and the appointment of Eisenhower as the C-in-C, General Alexander as his deputy and ground force commander, Admiral Cunningham and Air Marshal Tedder in command of the navy and air forces.

Alexander took over command of British and American troops in Tunisia on 19 February 1943, following the German breakthrough at Kasserine Pass, which resulted from Allied inexperience and poor coordination. He was appalled by what he saw of both armies. In his view the commander of the British First Army, General Anderson, 'had lost the initiative and was unable to control his headquarters', and the American troops appeared 'soft, green and quite untrained...They lack the will to fight,' and 'They do not know their job as soldiers and this is the case from the highest to the lowest.' (72) After communicating with Alexander, Brooke recorded in his diary on 21 February that the American Army would need a great deal more training before they would be of any use.(73)

There was certainly some truth in his comment but this was the first campaign of the war for these inexperienced troops, many of whose officers had not undergone the intensive training programmes which were introduced in the USA only after war had actually broken out.(74) Their morale inevitably suffered as Eisenhower's Naval Aide, Captain Butcher, made clear when he described in his diary the humiliation of 'the proud and cocky Americans after one of the greatest defeats in our history at Kasserine Pass.'(75) Atkinson rightly points out that Alexander's impression of American incapacity, formed on his first visit to the front, lingered on to damage Allied comity in Italy. (76)

Eisenhower soon made command changes after the defeat, which had resulted in 6,000 American casualties. General Patton was appointed temporary leader of the American II Corps, which the C-in-C now placed under Alexander's 18th Army Group, in order to create what he termed 'a feeling of partnership between British and Americans.'(77) Butcher recorded Eisenhower's belief that to create the proper atmosphere for the development of friendly relations, the top commanders must at all times preach it and police it. At the same time the C-in-C also emphasised to Alexander the need for the British "to respect Americans and to prevent loose critical talk." (78)

In spite of Eisenhower's efforts relations between the military, particularly Patton and the British commanders, gradually worsened. American commanders objected to being addressed in a patronising manner by their British counterparts. Patton particularly objected to being given precise instructions by Alexander on how to deploy his troops. Complaints to Air Vice Marshal Coningham that his units were not given proper air cover, provoked a reply from the latter that the American units concerned were not battleworthy. (79) Such comments did nothing to improve Allied relations, and when British General Crocker, well known for his low opinion of American military capability,

suggested that the American 34th Division 'should be withdrawn from combat and retrained under British guidance' senior American officers were furious. (80) Atkinson points out that 'Proximity to the British had only deepened the latent Anglophobia of many American generals, Patton, Clark and Bradley among them.' (81) The latter were also furious with Eisenhower for allowing the British to 'run the show to their advantage', as angry entries in Patton's diary reveal. (82)

Bradley, more restrained than Patton, recognised the difficulties of the Allied Commander, who 'walked a chalk line to avoid being branded pro-American.' He acknowledged that 'it would be foolhardy to deny that tense national differences sometimes split the British and American commands. Those differences persisted throughout World War II... the suspicions and jealousies that split us centred largely in the Headquarters commands.' (83)

The official view of Anglo-American relations was expressed by Churchill when he met British and American commanders in Algiers on 3 June 1943 after the fall of Tunisia. He spoke of 'the comradeship which characterised action in this theatre'. Eisenhower's reply acknowledged that there were differences of opinion at HQ but they were not based upon national lines. (84) As C-in-C he had in fact worked very hard to eliminate nationalistic sentiments at AFHQ. It was rather more difficult to achieve this in the field of combat operations and hostility would soon resurface in Sicily.

Historian Michael Howard, however, provides a thoughtful insight into the reasons for the difficulties experienced in achieving total Allied cooperation. Referring to his research for the volume on British Grand Strategy, written as part of the United Kingdom Military Series of the History of the Second World War, Howard describes how it confirmed for him 'the existence of two fundamentally different military cultures, shaped by National attitudes and experience, that made Allied cooperation surprisingly

difficult.' He describes the American approach as logistical and managerial, their strategy depending on the concentrated application of their overwhelming industrial strength, whereas the British were conscious of the paucity of their resources in manpower and matériel. Their approach was shaped by memories of the First World War and a deep respect for the fighting qualities of the Germans. After three years of war experience, 'they tended to patronise their allies, who seeing in that experience only a series of defeats, responded with something like contempt.' (85)

Howard, who himself served 'two bitter winters in the mountains' as an infantry officer in Italy, remarks that he had noticed this tension in Italy and was 'interested to learn how deep it went.' His observations confirm that there was little, if any, improvement in Anglo-American relations as the war moved from North Africa to southern Europe. The following section in this chapter about Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers will also refer to a similar atmosphere of tension and lack of trust among senior staff at Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers.

Section 4. Allied Force Headquarters in Algiers

Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) was initially set up in November 1942 to serve as HQ for planning Operation TORCH, the campaign in French North Africa. After the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, when a decision was taken to invade Sicily, it expanded to become the planning centre for the invasion of the island (and subsequently the Italian mainland), and remained the official HQ until July 1944 when it moved to the Palace of Caserta.

On 13 August 1942 General Eisenhower, already serving in London as commanding general of the European Theatre of Operations, was named Commander-in-Chief of Operation TORCH. Under his supervision planning took place in London until 5 November, when the general moved his HQ to Gibraltar to await the capture of Algiers. Although the town was taken on 8 November and his intention was to move immediately, he decided to wait until 23 November because the undersea cable from Gibraltar gave a better communication service to Britain and the US than he would obtain from Algiers where, at that time, the system of communications was relatively primitive. However, the C-in-C's HQ needed to be closer to the military action, and by the last week of November, he was installed in one of the largest hotels in Algiers, the St Georges, which had been requisitioned to serve as the administrative HQ for Operation TORCH. (86)

General Eisenhower had decided that his new HQ, designated AFHQ, would be streamlined and able to function with a staff of one hundred and fifty officers. Within a fortnight staff numbers had doubled and eleven extra buildings were needed. The increase in personnel was due to the transfer of a considerable number of staff from the UK to support the operations of the British 1st Army. When planning began for Operation HUSKY the functions of AFHQ naturally broadened and increased, requiring more officers and secretarial staff. (87)

At the same time a separate, parallel American Theatre Command, the North African Theatre of Operations, US Army (NATOUSA) was established at AFHQ. The reorganisation necessary to incorporate the new personnel led to a number of changes within the internal structure of staff sections to accommodate the proliferating joint committees, joint planning staffs and joint conferences, which were all part of coalition warfare. (88)

AFHQ celebrated its first anniversary in August 1943 having grown beyond recognition from its inception in London in 1942. Concern was expressed that the increase in personnel would create a top-heavy organisation and it does appear that bureaucracy had gone mad when Eisenhower's original estimate of one hundred and fifty officers reached a total of more than one thousand. In addition fifteen thousand enlisted troops were employed in various capacities and the original hotel accommodation had expanded to two thousand buildings. This 'huge chairborne force' inspired among the troops a parody of Churchill's famous words: "Never were so few commanded by so many from so far." (89)

D'Este refers to the early months of AFHQ as 'a dismal period of intense growing pains.' (90) With a staff of sixteen thousand it was inevitable that problems would arise between the British and Americans, who had very different ways of dealing with military matters, different office routines, and on a more serious level, different conceptions of how the war should be conducted. Mutual mistrust and antagonism had characterised the combat forces in the field and was found in almost equal measure at AFHQ, in spite of Eisenhower's policy of refusing to permit any criticism couched along national lines. As D'Este comments: 'The commonality of language could not obscure the fundamental differences between the traditions practised in the British Army for centuries and the rawness of the peacetime American Army suddenly thrust into a global war.' (91)

Citing his own experience, Harold Macmillan suggested that the strained atmosphere at AFHQ was often due to the lack of communication at the highest level. He had been appointed Minister Resident at AFHQ by the Prime Minister with the knowledge and approval of President Roosevelt. The latter neglected to inform Eisenhower of his appointment and this omission resulted in a very awkward initial meeting between the new Minister and the C-in-C, retrieved only by Macmillan's diplomatic skills.(92) Ably supported by his American opposite number, Robert Murphy, the British Minister worked hard to create an atmosphere of harmony at AFHQ, for which Donnison gives him credit: 'In the creation of this Anglo-American instrument of government, much was owed to the efforts of General Eisenhower and Mr. Macmillan.' (93)

On one occasion Macmillan described the British staff at AFHQ to Richard Crossman, a newly arrived British officer, (later an MP and Government Minister), as 'the Greeks in this American empire' and advised him that he would find the Americans much as the Greeks found the Romans, 'great big vulgar, bustling people, more vigorous than we are and also more idle, with more unspoilt virtues, but also more corrupt. We must run AFHQ as the Greeks ran the operations of the Emperor Claudius'. (94) Atkinson comments that relations between the two armies were characterised by 'a divided-by-a-common-language mutual incomprehension' but after defeat at the battle of Longstop Hill in Tunisia on Christmas Eve 1942, 'a harsher, toxic tone now seeped into the alliance.' This was caused by the British after-action report on the battle, fought by US and British troops side by side, in which the 1st Guards Brigade commented that the Americans 'were unfitted and unprepared for the task they were asked to perform.'(95)

The efforts of Eisenhower and Macmillan to achieve better relations between the Allies were not supported by American General Mark Clark. Before being assigned to command the US Fifth Army, he served as Eisenhower's deputy at AFHQ and,

according to Brigadier Ian Jacob, assistant to Churchill's Chief of Staff, General Ismay, was considered 'a hugely disruptive influence who intrigued against the British, caused immense irritation by his habit of issuing direct and sometimes contradictory orders to the staff, terrified American officers and was considered the 'evil genius' of the force.'(96) Jacob, responsible for drafting the final agreement document at the end of the Casablanca Conference, also referred in his diary to the 'great deal of confusion' at AFHQ during preparations for the Conference. (97)

David Hunt, a Military Intelligence officer on General Alexander's staff, was already acquainted with the Hotel St Georges from a pre-war visit. He refers to the building as 'an obviously unsuitable place and not well adapted for a HQ.' Following a visit to AFHQ's Intelligence Branch in November 1942, he stated his concern about the efficiency of the staff, all British except for one American, commenting that 'not only did they not know what they ought to be doing, they had learned a whole lot of wrong things which they ought not to be doing.'(98) He also confirmed the inadequacy of the signal system, which had been one of the reasons for Eisenhower's delay in moving his temporary HQ from Gibraltar to Algiers. The accommodation in the Hotel St Georges was so crowded that the cryptographic machines were kept in a bathroom, balanced on a wooden frame over the bathtub. (99)

A small Civil Affairs Section had been set up at AFHQ to take responsibility for civil affairs in North Africa, but because the Americans were initially taking the leading role in the campaign, the Section was virtually 100% American, part military, part civil, and headed by a civilian official of the State Department. No British planning or preparation for civil affairs had been organised. Donnison describes the department created for dealing with civil affairs as being 'more in the nature of an American-French liaison section designed to establish contact with the French colonial administration.' (100)

The French, to the Allies' dismay, were not initially eager to cooperate with the Allied invaders and it was only a deal struck between the Allies and Admiral Darlan, who happened to be in Algiers, which brought about a cease-fire. The French civil authorities, supported by the Allies, continued to administer the French territories which the Allies occupied. This agreement with Admiral Darlan, although very unpopular in both Britain and the United States, prevented the difficult situation which could have arisen from the Allies' lack of planning for the administration of these occupied territories.(101)

It was inevitable that economic problems would arise in a war situation and, in agreement with the French, General Eisenhower had set up the North African Economic Board (NAEB) after his arrival in Algiers to help restore the economic life of French North Africa. This Anglo-American agency ensured adequate supplies of food and clothing and supervised imports and exports. The Board was presided over by Harold Macmillan and Robert Murphy, and the members consisted of British and American military and civilian personnel, including British officials seconded from the Ministries of Food and Supply. The Board experienced some of the same problems that would occur later in Sicily, such as the hoarding of wheat and the emergence of a black market. Macmillan, aware of the difficult relations between the Allies at AFHQ, emphasised the close and effective cooperation between the Allied members of the Board.(102) The French civil authorities, however, still remained in charge of administration.

Not until 18 June 1943, a month after the end of the Tunisian campaign and less than a month before the scheduled date for the invasion of Sicily, was a Military Government Section (MGS) set up at AFHQ. Its functions and responsibilities were "to act as the executive section for the Allied C-in-C in questions pertaining to the military government of occupied territory, including political questions arising out of military occupation." (103)

Col Julius Holmes moved from his post as Head of the Liaison Section to head MGS, as assistant Chief of Staff and Adviser on Civil Affairs to the C-in-C. Harris points out that the creation of this new section raised some misgivings in the mind of Lord Rennell 'who was anxious to avoid the tendency of staff branches of the higher echelons to intervene in the operations of the lower.'(104) His concerns were assuaged by the Chief of Staff, General Bedell Smith, who instructed Col Holmes, in the CCAO's presence, that this new staff section would not interfere in political and administrative matters in Sicily and would act only as a channel of communication for the C-in-C with the CCS in such matters as the C-in-C could not himself settle.

The MGS was one of the smaller departments in AFHQ's vast organisation, with an authorised allotment of twenty-three officers and eighteen enlisted men. It was a completely integrated staff section, British and Americans working together at all times.(105) It was designated as the channel of communication in matters of military government for Force 141, the Planning Group for the invasion of Sicily, and for the Task Forces carrying troops and supplies. Among its more difficult tasks was the estimation of the minimum essential civilian supplies needed in occupied areas, since accurate information regarding the harvest and the state of inflation on the island was not available.

The Section was also responsible for reviewing the requisitions submitted for civil supplies by civil affairs organisations in the field. Apart from food, there was likely to be an acute shortage of winter clothes and leather for shoes. In addition the concentrated air attacks on the island would have caused a large number of casualties and presumably a shortage of hospital supplies. The MGS was not always up to the task, and inadequacies and mistakes would later cause serious problems in the supply of essential items to the island, beginning with a failure

to send instalments from the stockpiles of food ordered by AMGOT. The food had been stockpiled but then accumulated at ports in North Africa, at which convoys did not load. (106) These supply problems and their effect on the population of Caltagirone and Catania will be examined in a later chapter but are mentioned now to show the deficiencies already apparent in the pre-invasion planning. As an example, the NAEB had encountered a number of difficulties in the hoarding of supplies and in black market activity but there is no evidence that the MGS Section had learned anything from the Board's experiences which would possibly be of practical use to those undertaking the Civil Affairs administration in Sicily.

A much more serious aspect to be considered is the fact that this first joint military operation, fought by two coalition partners dedicated to the same aim, had revealed not only strained relations between them but open hostility. This was not just confined to troops on the front line but was evident among senior generals in North Africa and senior politicians who had conflicting views on where and when campaigns should be fought.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the senior commanders chosen for the invasion were all British, although General Eisenhower was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief. The Combined Chiefs of Staff had wisely directed that two separate Task Forces, one wholly British, the other wholly American, would be employed in separate areas, thus avoiding any possibility of friction during the actual landings. But inevitably other service arms, air and sea, would need to be involved in certain areas of combat and this would provoke further ill feeling as the invasion progressed.

The number of British and American officers involved in the Military Government administration of Sicily was minute in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of troops taking part in the invasion. Unlike the majority of wartime troops few were conscripts. Some were already 'Regulars', others

were specially recruited from professional institutes as will be explained in the next chapter. Most candidates received their training either in an American or British establishment, and then the two nationalities followed a short course together in North Africa, where the Chief Civil Affairs Officer impressed on them the need to respect one another's nationality. There is no evidence to be found in AMGOT records of any antagonism between the British and American CAOs among the staff in either Catania town or the Caltagirone district.

Chapter 2

This chapter is concerned with the planning of Operation HUSKY, both the military invasion and the establishment of subsequent military government. Planning for both was made more complicated because it involved two countries working in coalition. The military commanders of both countries had radically different views on the way the campaign should be conducted. As the commanders of all three service branches were engaged in the North African campaign, of which the outcome would not be certain for many months, they were frequently unavailable for discussion with the planners.

Planning for the establishment of military government was initially delayed by the non-availability of planning staff. Then difficulties arose with regard to issues of policy towards the occupied country, since the coalition partners had opposing views regarding the degree of control to be imposed on conquered regions. This and other issues took months to be resolved. The final section of the chapter examines the process of selecting and training the personnel responsible for implementing military government.

Section 1. Planning the Invasion of Sicily

In January 1943, after the decision was taken at the Casablanca Conference to invade Sicily, the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, had been directed by the CCS to create a separate headquarters to plan the operation. He formed a planning group, known as Force 141, since its first meeting took place in Room 141 in the Hotel St Georges, AFHQ in Algiers. The group later moved into a separate building, the Ecole Normale at Bouzaréa but only became a separate HQ under General Alexander when the Tunisian campaign ended in May. (1)

It was a very difficult operation to plan since the assault forces were to be launched from the Middle East, North Africa, the UK and the USA. As mentioned above, the three British commanders involved in the invasion were not available to monitor closely the stages in the evolution of the operational plan. (2) Since Alexander was ground force commander with overall responsibility, his presence was particularly needed. He later complained that his front-line duties prevented him from returning to Algiers to give the required thought to such a complicated affair. (3)

The CCS instructed that two separate task forces were to be formed for the invasion, each inter-service but not inter-Allied. Given the stormy relations between the American and British armies in the TORCH campaign, this was probably a wise decision. The British Eastern Task Force HQ, Force 545, was placed under the command of General Montgomery, and based in Cairo; the American Western Task Force HQ, Force 343, commanded by General Patton was initially based at Rabat but later moved to Mostaganem. Since the invasion plan also included the shipping of the Canadian 1st Division from their base in Britain and the US 45th Infantry Division from America, both London and Washington had to set up planning centres. (4)

Five separate planning operations were now taking place in five widely separated locations, inevitably leading to great confusion because of the absence of the ground force commander. In fact Force 141 had no commander until May when the campaign in Tunisia concluded and Alexander was free to take over. The two task force commanders were also involved in Tunisia and far from the planning taking place in their own HQs. (5) Meanwhile Anglo-American relations were again becoming strained through the reports published in the American press that Eisenhower had now become merely a figurehead in North Africa and that the actual command was in the hands of his three British subordinates. Eisenhower in fact had very little control over the actions of his ground, naval and air commanders, as his Naval Aide,

Captain Harry Butcher, recorded: 'Ike has put an excellent front on the command set-up but actually has been burning inside.' (6) General Brooke admits in his diary that the American COS did not appreciate the intentions of the British, who brought in Alexander to deal with the military situation while elevating Eisenhower to Supreme Commander where he could devote his time to political and inter-Allied problems.(7)

Force 141 began their planning by considering the options of the original plan drafted in London by the Joint Planning Staff (JPS). Composed of experienced officers from all three services the JPS provided the COS with outline plans for future military operations. The original plan had been approved in principle by the CCS at Casablanca and the Force 141 plan was in essence the same: a series of dispersed landings in the south-east, east, west and north-west of the island. General Gairdner, Chief of Staff at Force 141, presented the plan to Eisenhower and his three service commanders, who approved it. When Montgomery, who was personally not in favour of further action in the Mediterranean after the fall of Tunisia, heard the details of the plan he was horrified and reported to Brooke: 'HUSKY is in a fearful state....the proposed plan would involve us in a first-class disaster.... To operate dispersed means disaster...' (8)

A number of variations of the original plan were then debated and rejected because of conflicting army, air and naval demands. Montgomery demanded a concentrated assault in a restricted area to give his troops more strength in the attack. Citing the desperate resistance put up by German and Italian forces in Tunisia, he stated that the invaders would meet stiffer opposition in Sicily than anticipated and the fight would be hard and bitter.'(9) His proposed plan was not well received at the next planning conference and deadlock ensued. A further meeting was called on 2 May at which Montgomery, this time backed up by General Bedell Smith, appeared in person to present his

plan, which was accepted by Eisenhower the next day. (10)

The American generals objected strongly to any change in the original plan and felt they were once again playing second fiddle to the British. Not only were the American commanders furious, so also were both Admiral Cunningham and Air Chief Marshal Tedder. Cunningham had no wish to concentrate his shipping in one area, and Tedder insisted on speedy acquisition of airfields. Patton later referred to the discussions as 'an internecine war.'(11) This new plan excluded both a major port facility for supplying the American Seventh Army, and the complex of airfields in the south-west and Catania-Gerbini area, both of which were considered essential for a successful invasion. US forces would therefore be obliged to rely on beach maintenance for supplies. Patton then demanded a 'definite written promise' that his troops would be supplied via Siracusa, and also that a definite boundary between the Eighth Army and the Western Task Force should be drawn up. (12)

The new plan placed the US force in the south-eastern corner of the island with landing sites along the Gulf of Gela from Licata to the Pachino peninsula, and the UK force concentrated along the same peninsula almost to Siracusa. Hence Patton's demand for a definite boundary between the two. Clearly Anglo-American relations were further soured.

The military problems resurfaced as political ones in mid-May at the TRIDENT Conference in Washington when the Allied leaders could not reach agreement on future strategy after Sicily. General Marshall's desire to limit operations in the Mediterranean was as firm as ever, as was Churchill's determination to continue the Sicily campaign into the Italian mainland. He and Marshall flew to Algiers together to discuss post-HUSKY operations which would keep Allied forces further engaged in the Mediterranean.(13) Talks with Eisenhower and his commanders were held, but Marshall, in Churchill's words, 'remained up till almost the last moment silent or cryptic'.(14) It was then agreed that Eisenhower would send not only information to the CCS but also strong

recommendations for future action, based on the success of Operation HUSKY and conditions prevailing at the time, to enable the CCS to decide on future operations. (15)

After the successful conclusion of the campaign in Tunisia on 13 May the respective commanders could now concentrate full attention on Operation HUSKY. With the acceptance of Montgomery's plan to situate the landing points in the south-east of the island with only a twenty mile gap between the right wing of the American and the left wing of the British forces, detailed planning for deployment of both armies could proceed. The introduction of a new amphibious vehicle, the DUKW, used in conjunction with LSTs (Landing Ships, Tank) solved the problem of maintaining supplies to the Americans over the beaches. (16)

The final plan, approved by the CCS, detailed five phases for the capture of the island:

1. Air and naval forces to gain air supremacy and neutralise enemy shipping in the Mediterranean in order to allow safe passage for the vast armada of ships and landing craft bringing troops and supplies.
2. Airborne and glider landings on the night of 9/10 July to disrupt enemy communications, followed by assault troops to capture airfields at Gela and ports of Siracusa and Licata.
3. Establishment of a secure base for further operations.
4. Capture of Augusta, Catania and the Gerbini airfields.
5. The reduction of Sicily. (17)

No indication was given of the means by which Phase 5 should be carried out. Both Patton and Montgomery aimed for the capture of Messina which would seal the island from mainland Italy. D'Este comments that the ground commander, Alexander, wished to allow the land battle to develop before any decision was made to specify action from the two armies. (18) Although Alexander was held in high regard by Churchill and Macmillan, his fellow commanders deplored his indecision, his inability to plan for all eventualities and to give specific guidance to his subordinates. Brooke made

many unflattering comments about his leadership skills and lack of strategic vision. (19) As the war in Italy continued in 1944, Brooke's opinion did not change. In April, after a discussion with Alexander on the campaign, he commented that the latter was palpably devoid of any ideas of his own, and that he had previously 'been carried on Monty's back and McCreery's efficiency.'(20) McCreery was Alexander's former Chief of Staff and Brooke had 'the very greatest confidence in his ability.'(21) Even Eisenhower, who admired many aspects of Alexander's character, remarked;'It seems that he alters his own plans merely to meet an objection of a subordinate, so as to avoid direct command methods.' (22) D'Este comments that the invasion needed aggressive leadership but the commander distanced himself from his subordinates as 'the campaign developed into two private wars fought by Patton and Montgomery while Alexander stood mutely on the sidelines.' (23)

Planning for the military government was taking place at the same time at AFHQ. The discord which had characterised relations between the military planners and the ground, naval and air commanders was fortunately absent from the Civil Affairs planning group. The next section of this chapter will deal with their particular problems, which were the result of the failures of their respective governments to reach consensus on a number of important issues which led to long delays in the detailed planning process. When these issues had finally been resolved fresh problems surfaced between the Civil Affairs and the military planners, which concerned landing schedules and transport provision for the CAOs charged with setting up the Military Government administration.

Section 2. Planning AMGOT in Sicily

One of General Eisenhower's first actions after receiving his directive from the CCS to plan the invasion of Sicily was to raise the question of the policy to be adopted towards Italy by the military government to be set up there. In a message to the War Department on 8 February he requested a directive on US policy, and included his own recommendation of 'a firm policy of joint Anglo-American responsibility and joint conduct of military government under an agreed system, to function under the Allied Commander.' He underlined the importance of clarifying matters of policy before the operational planning progressed too far and of reconciling British and American attitudes, pointing out that the British might well feel that they should have primary responsibility for the administration of Sicily because of their vital interests in the Mediterranean. (24)

While awaiting instructions from the WD, Eisenhower sent an American officer, Col Charles Spofford, to Tripoli to observe at first hand the operation of British military administration in the former Italian colony. Spofford's report on his visit formed the basis of an 'Appreciation and Outline Plan' for military government in Sicily. Col Julius Holmes, head of the Liaison Section at AFHQ and responsible for Civil Affairs, submitted the plan to General Bedell Smith, COS at AFHQ, pointing out that the Allies' first occupation of enemy territory would set the pattern for future operations and should be carried out with care and efficiency.(25) The plan assumed that London and Washington would be jointly responsible for the military government and would share political, legal and financial responsibility for both its planning and conduct. British and American staff would be employed on an approximately equal basis. (26) The plan was submitted to Washington and London in the last week of March. The scheduled date of the invasion was 10 July.

Assembling a staff of specialists to carry out detailed planning proved to be a serious problem. Spofford's own post-war report on Allied Military Government in Sicily refers to the long delay in obtaining staff due to the difficulties of procurement and transportation, since virtually the entire staff had to be recruited from outside the theatre.' (27) Surveys made to identify suitable personnel within the theatre yielded only thirty Americans and the WD undertook to make up the balance. British staff were more readily available from Cairo which had provided staff for the military government of the former Italian colonies, but it was impossible to meet the proposed establishment of four hundred officers suggested in the Appreciation and Outline Plan. Enlisted men (EM) in the theatre who spoke Italian were interviewed by an Italian-speaking officer and a number were offered posts in the future administration. (28)

Spofford points out that as the key personnel were not immediately available, detailed planning was considerably delayed. On 15 April the British staff consisted of Major General Lord Rennell, Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Lt Col Maxwell and some administrative officers already serving in the Middle East. The American staff was made up of Col Spofford and two officers who had not yet arrived at Algiers. When an Administrative Memorandum from AFHQ announced the Establishment of Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory (AMGOT) on 1 May, Spofford was still the only American planner involved. The US staff was increased by the arrival in the first week of May of two specialist officers, Col Grafftey Smith, Chief Finance Officer (CFO), and Lt Col Bernstein, Advisor on Currency and Exchange. Major Henry Rowell came from the School of Military Government at Charlottesville to set up the Training Centre for officers, designated in the plan. The Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer (DCCAO), Brigadier General Frank McSherry, did not arrive until June. (29)

The lack of planning staff was not the only reason for the

delay in formulating detailed plans. Serious disagreements of policy had arisen between the two Allied governments. Washington was in favour of direct Allied rule of the island, a policy which would involve the removal of all provincial Prefects and also the Mayors of important communities. These would be replaced by Allied officers. A draft message from the President to the Prime Minister, prepared by John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War and chairman of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee (CCAC) in Washington, stated "we should avoid all risk of implications arising from attempted selection of suitable Italians for these important positions. Believe much preferable remove any Italians from these positions as they are all prominent Fascists and replace them with Army officers for time being thus avoiding stirring up factions on the ground and repercussions at home." (30)

A message on the same day from Churchill to Roosevelt referred to the degree of control which should be imposed on newly conquered regions: 'It seems wise to make them run themselves as much as possible.... I am sure it would be a mistake to flood all these places with hundreds of British and American gauleiters...It should be left to the Supreme Commander to propose to our Governments what British and American officers he wants and the degree of infusion into local life.' (31) Both these messages reflecting opposing views were sent on 10 June. Four days later the President agreed that the issue should be left to the discretion of the Supreme Commander but the final directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff for Operation HUSKY was not sent until 28 June. C.R.S.Harris, official historian of Allied Military Government of Italy, comments that this directive left General Alexander free to decide the issue at his own discretion, removing from his shoulders 'the incubus of a mandatory dismissal of Prefects and Mayors of the important communities, irrespective of the actual conditions discovered upon occupation.' (32)

The dispute between the Allies on the question of direct

or indirect rule had taken a considerable time to resolve in spite of a memorandum sent by Lord Rennell to Spofford on 18 April in which he set out the principal reasons why, in his opinion, a system of indirect rule would be more appropriate. The reasons, briefly summarised, were as follows;

- i) Economy in Civil Affairs personnel. Fewer officers required to control, supervise and give directions than are necessary for their actual execution.
- ii) Local subordinates more likely to obey the orders of their own superiors.
- iii) Fewer language difficulties.
- iv) More incentive for local personnel to remain at work.
- v) Less likelihood of strikes if employees know they are responsible for well-being of local population.
- vi) Any administrative breakdown will be attributed by public to their own civil servants.
- vii) Local administrative machine will be educated and improved by Allied direction.
- viii) Allies will avoid impression of instituting a colonial-style government.
- ix) No void would be created when the time came for the Allies to leave. (33)

The memorandum concluded with Rennell stating that a decision on which system to implement was of immediate importance, since the two alternatives had a direct bearing on the mechanics of administration.

All the reasons put forward by Rennell for indirect rule appear to be valid, since their aim was not only to help both Allied and Italian administrators, but also the civil population. In fact even with indirect military government the number of Allied staff proved to be insufficient and, as reports from Civil Affairs Officers later revealed, language problems occurred which would have been even greater under a direct administration.

Since the President did not give his decision until 14 June, Rennell was justifiably frustrated by the delay. He

had taken up his post in Algiers on 6 April and less than a month now remained to complete the planning of the first administration of an enemy territory other than colonial.

Direct versus Indirect rule was, however, by no means the only issue which held up progress. One of the problems of coalition is the tendency of one partner to claim seniority in an area in which he has had a special interest in the past and which he wishes to retain in the future. In this case both partners had special interests; Britain in the Mediterranean as a whole and America in Sicily because of the several million Americans of Italian origin living in the USA. As mentioned above, Eisenhower's initial message to the WD on 8 February had referred to a possibility that the British might wish to claim responsibility for the administration of Sicily. In early March, a memo was prepared for the President to inform him that Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had informed Harold Macmillan that the British were inclined to the view that they should have prime responsibility for the control of civil affairs in Sicily. (34) When the WD was informed of the British view and Eisenhower's opposition to it, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirmed the American Government's decision that there should be no "senior partner" in the joint military administration. (35) It was Eisenhower's opinion that if either government assumed primary responsibility, this could invite 'undesirable speculation with regard to imperialistic intentions which could be exploited by enemy propaganda.' (36)

This was not the end of the matter. A month later the President stated that 'the administration should be so organised that in its relations with the local population the greatest emphasis possible is given to the American character of the operation.' He referred to the strong pro-American feeling in Sicily and emphasised 'America's historical detachment from questions involving the relations of European states with each other.' (37) On 13 April, however, he accepted the AFHQ proposal for a joint

administration after receiving a letter from Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, and Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, which made clear that planning was being made on the basis of joint Allied responsibility. (38)

The Prime Minister wrote to the President on the same day suggesting that since the Force Commander for Operation HUSKY was British, Britain should be senior partner in the military administration.(39) In his reply Roosevelt stated that there should be no "senior partner" but pointed out that the military problem would be made less difficult by giving to the Allied Military Government as much of an American character as was practicable.(40) Churchill hastened to withdraw any implication that Britain should be the "senior partner" and agreed that at least half of the officers of the administration should be American.(41)

In an entry in his War Diaries, Harold Macmillan refers to the "senior partner" dispute, which he could not make public at the time but explained in a later postscript. He referred to it as an affair which caused him 'more trouble and anxiety than all the other work, even including French politicians...The stupidity of London and Washington from the highest quarters downwards has been almost incredible...All that has been achieved is a great waste of time and straining of tempers... My position with Eisenhower and Co. is strengthened, because I have stuck resolutely to my agreement with them, even under rather heavy fire from London.' (42)

The role that Macmillan should play in the organisation of military government was also a source of contention between the Allies. The British considered it reasonable that as Resident Minister at AFHQ, he should be kept informed of all political matters pertaining to the military administration of Sicily. The American view was expressed in a memo from John McCloy to Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's special assistant, which emphasised that the administration plan for Sicily did not include a political figure. McCloy was of the opinion that the presence of a British Cabinet

member in addition to a British Military Governor and a British CCAO would give such a strongly British flavour that it would destroy a joint partner arrangement. (43) Roosevelt took up the issue with Churchill, who pointed out the need for heads of governments to have immediate and intimate information about events in the civil and political sphere. It was then agreed that both Macmillan and his American counterpart Robert Murphy would continue to communicate with their governments, purely to pass on information, but in each case would inform the Supreme Commander.

According to his diary entry for 17 June Macmillan had also been concerned about his future status at AFHQ for some time, and was delighted to learn from the President that he was to stay with Eisenhower. Macmillan was aware that Washington did not like his presence at AFHQ and hoped it would end with North Africa but, as he recorded: 'The President has given in to the PM on this, largely at Eisenhower's own request....The Chief of Staff was very nice and said they could not do without me.' (44) After their first inauspicious meeting at AFHQ in January the Supreme Commander and the British Minister Resident were now working closely together. Communications between Algiers and Washington were very slow and Macmillan received confirmation of his role only three weeks before the planned invasion date.

So much time had been taken by the Allies to reach agreement on various aspects of the invasion that the final directive had not yet been made available. To avoid unnecessary delay, the directive was sent to AFHQ in three instalments: the first on 31 May, the second on 10 June and the final on 28 June. The complete directive consisted of three sections: political, monetary and fiscal, and economic guides, to which, consistent with military necessity, the planners were obliged to conform. (45) The content of these guides will be examined in a later section.

An essential part of the plan was the establishment of a training centre for civil affairs officers destined for Sicily. Chr ea, thirty miles from Algiers, was chosen and British and American officers began to arrive there in June. (46) For most prospective CAOs it would not be their first period of training since both Britain and the United States had previously established their own separate military government schools but this would be the first combined training. Before describing the instruction given at Chr ea, the courses provided by the British and American schools will be examined.

situated for lecturers visiting from Oxford, Cambridge, other universities and various Government Departments, and would be easily supervised by the War Office. Each course should last eight weeks and an intake of three hundred students would be a minimum requirement. The sub-committee provided a list of various sources from which suitable candidates might be selected. They included military sources, ministries, civil departments and professional bodies. A recommendation that the minimum age of trainees should be not less than forty was also made. (51)

The Centre was established in a large house in Wimbledon, 'Southlands', and the first course started on 25 February 1943 with an intake of 150 students. Colonel T. Robbins, former Assistant Commandant of the Army Intelligence Training Centre, Cambridge Wing, who had been in administrative charge of the politico-military courses there, became Commandant.(52) He was an obvious choice as he was also well acquainted with the School of Military Government at Charlottesville, which had been established in May 1942, and had reported on the courses held there. Donnison describes the course as 'a pioneering venture for the staff as much as for the students; both were learning together as nothing was yet known as to the probable organisation, policy or plans for civil affairs.' (53)

The A.T.(E) Sub-committee also suggested that, apart from language qualifications, candidates should have experience in specific areas such as Trade and Industry, Finance and Banking, Public Health, Legal and Police. (54) These would be areas organised by specialist personnel in the military administration of Sicily but the implication that language qualifications were also required was not borne out by the number of Civil Affairs Officers in Sicily who had virtually no knowledge of the Italian language and depended on interpreters. The CCAO, Lord Rennell, later wrote that his officers included a fair proportion of Italian speakers and men with administrative experience, but 'the combination of these two qualifications in any one

individual was indeed rare.'(55)

The Chief Instructor of the Non-Military syllabus was Lt Col J.R.M. Butler, (later to edit the United Kingdom Military Series of the History of the Second World War). Understandably the syllabus was broadly based since it was clearly difficult at this early planning stage to forecast future events. A general instruction course of 88 lectures was given to all officers by visiting experts. These were mainly on the political and economic development of contemporary Europe, administration and local government systems, international law appertaining to belligerent occupation and in-depth studies of enemy and occupied countries in Europe. Since both Allies would be involved in the administration of occupied enemy territories and liberated friendly ones, it was essential that British officers were made aware of American points of view on European affairs and therefore a significant part of the course was allocated to study of the United States, with lectures delivered by both American and British speakers. A number of international administrative bodies such as the League of Nations and the High Commission for Refugees also contributed to the course. (56)

Apart from receiving general instruction small groups of officers were provided with the detailed knowledge required for specific kinds of administrative work in the countries where they were likely to be involved. Six regional study groups and seven functional study groups were formed, each officer being assigned to one of each group according to the region in Europe in which he was intended to work and the nature of his post. (57)

In addition to the non-military syllabus a specific military course provided student officers recruited from civilian sources with the necessary military background to carry out their duties on the Civil Affairs staff of a military commander in the field. Teaching methods combined group study, syndicate discussions, lectures and practical and planning exercises designed to clarify the duties of a

Civil Affairs staff in the various phases of military operations. Newly commissioned civilians were assisted by students who were already serving officers. The syllabus covered all branches of Army organisation, with special reference to the differences between British and American staff functions. Also studied in depth was the Army's role in Security, Communications, Transport and Maintenance, and the work of the Royal Engineers (RE) and the Pioneer Corps in the field. Even the functions of NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) and the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) were on the agenda. (58)

The final planning exercise of the course was based on an operational situation likely to be encountered in an assault on enemy territory, such as the capture of a bridgehead area including a port, with a subsequent advance involving the capture of heavily populated areas. This was the situation after the Eighth Army landings south of Siracusa. The exercise was designed to illustrate the duties of CAOs in the various phases of an invasion from their preliminary work with the combat forces when active operations were still in progress, followed by the organisation of civil administration in base areas, and then the phase of regional organisation when the area was still under military control but local administration had been sufficiently re-established to enable it to function with the aid merely of general supervision. (59)

The recruitment and training of suitable officers was the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer (DCCAO), Brigadier S.S.Lee. A number of civilians, mostly civil servants and police officers, were selected from the list of sources suggested by the A.T.(E), then interviewed by a War Office Selection Board (WOSB). If successful they were then commissioned before following a training course. This procedure was not welcomed by all departments in the War Office. The Adjutant General's Office objected to the granting of a Captain's rank to a civilian training for a CAO appointment, pointing out that it would be disliked by

the Army and could give rise to 'grouses from equally well-qualified serving officers who are not selected'. Objections were also raised concerning the cost of providing the uniform allowance, estimated at £5,000. (60)

Service recruits were drawn from among both serving and retired officers. As Donnison points out, the demands of civil affairs could not be allowed to interfere with the needs of the more combatant branches of the services and so no officer below the age of thirty-five, with a medical category higher than B was eligible to serve in civil affairs. An officer above that age but below fifty-five with a medical category of A or B was eligible, as was anyone over that age who held special qualifications. (61) Other ranks were not normally accepted for training as CAOs, unless they possessed special qualifications. They were required to attend a preliminary interview and, if successful, they progressed to a WOSB. Once selected, they were granted a direct emergency commission. (62)

In a letter to the DCCAO on 25 October, the Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) expressed his doubts that the fighting services would be a good source of supply for students as it would be unlikely that any efficient officer, having done one of the courses, could be kept in reserve until required. (63) A more positive approach came from the Operations Directorate suggesting that reliable personnel could be found among the considerable number of Lt Cols who had finished command of units but were unlikely to achieve further promotion. There were also majors with experience and energy who, though valuable as such, were not recommended for command. (64)

Not every recommendation of the subcommittee was adopted. The suggested minimum age was lowered to thirty-five from forty and the first course lasted thirteen weeks instead of the suggested eight. Subsequent courses became five weeks as the need for an increasing number of CAOs in the field in Autumn 1943 and throughout 1944 forced the course length to be shortened and its content reduced. A greater emphasis

was given to training in general administration which became one of the functional subjects, and the number of background lectures was cut. (65)

Police officers would play an extremely important role in the military administration of Sicily. Eight senior police officers joined the first course at the CASC, followed by thirteen in each of the next two courses. On 12 May, shortly after the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory (AMGOT) had been formally set up to administer Sicily, an urgent request was received from Rennell for a minimum of fifty police officers to come to Algiers by the end of May. Sixty-six members of the London Metropolitan Force were quickly commissioned into the army. With no time to train at Wimbledon they arrived at the MGS, Chr ea, in June for a course of instruction in the principles of military government and the Italian language. Twenty-five officers were, however, needed immediately to join the Eighth Army contingent scheduled to land in Sicily on 10 July, and were unable to attend the course. (66) The qualities of these untrained British Police officers are described by Harris from his own first-hand observations: 'Their tact, common-sense and resourcefulness amply compensated for any lack of knowledge of the country or the language...they formed a tower of strength.' (67)

Two further police contingents left for Sicily and Italy during August and September, having received training at Wimbledon or, in the case of junior police officers, at Peel House, which normally housed the Metropolitan Police Training School. This had been temporarily closed during the war, but reopened to provide accommodation for staff and students attending one of the seven three-week courses which were organised there under the auspices of the CASC. At the conclusion of each course students returned to duty with their own police forces until required for military duty. (68)

Other branches of the army, including the Corps of Military Police, senior commanders, staff and regimental

officers, were given short courses of instruction to familiarise them with the work of civil affairs. Visiting lecturers toured army bases to explain the purpose of civil affairs and to recruit potential CAOs at the same time.(69) In spite of the existence of MGS at AFHQ and the presence of the AMGOT planning staff, it appears that army staffs at AFHQ and the HQs of Seventh and Eighth Armies had apparently not been given any information concerning the organisation or functions of military government. Harris states that most of the military commanders of tactical units were totally ignorant of the functions, or even the existence of Military Government. (70)

Much criticism was later expressed of the quality of training provided by the CASC. Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden referred to Wimbledon as 'rather a farce'. (71) Harris wrote that 'most of the officers had to be recruited with only the barest minimum of training for the jobs they had to do.' (72) Donnison, however, describes the instruction given at the school as excellent and refers to the many students within his knowledge, who passed out from the CASC as first-class CAOs. He concedes, however, that many of the students were not of the 'calibre or disposition to profit from the excellent instruction given' and were in fact 'of grievously inferior quality, the rejects from elsewhere.'(73) He also draws attention to the high proportion of candidates rejected by the selection boards because they did not meet the standards or possess the varied qualifications demanded by the boards.(74)

Lord Rennell pointed out that few people outside the realm of the professional administrator knew much about public administration apart from the fairly large number of Colonial civil servants produced by Britain. Regimental training in both the British and American Armies did not normally produce good administrative personnel, since a regular officer was trained to be 'a fighting man for whom administration is simplified as much as possible in order to let him devote his time to the art of war'.(75) Rennell

was referring to the armies of an era when regular officers had little experience outside their own regiment, lived in a relatively secluded environment and did not acquire the type of skills needed for military government. He emphasised that his comments did not apply to senior staff officers who would have acquired wide administrative experience.

Rennell's observations explain why, of the men accepted for training, few could offer the range of qualities needed by a general administrative officer. Civilian applicants may have had more relevant experience but would, in addition, need to prove an ability to work with and command respect from the military.(76) Since in the early stages of occupation of an enemy territory it was quite likely that a CAO would find himself in sole control of a remote area, without transport or reliable means of communication with senior officers, he needed the ability to make quick decisions and decide on priorities. Local administration might have collapsed but 'first things first' meant that corpses had to be buried, and food found for a hungry population as soon as law and order were established. It was not easy to attract men of the right calibre for these tasks, for either they could not be spared from their posts or they were reluctant to leave appointments to which their abilities had promoted them. Donnison describes the civil affairs organisation as being 'last in the market'(77) and Ellwood refers to it as a 'Cinderella' service suitable for Ancient Military Gentlemen on Tour. (78)

In the United States the question of military government had arisen as early as September 1941 when the Judge Advocate General (JAG) proposed that commissioned personnel should be trained 'for the possibility of future service involving the administration of military government by the United States Army.' (79) Shortly afterwards Jesse Miller, a civilian consultant at the WD, produced a preliminary memorandum, which outlined the nature, scope and personnel of a School of Military Government (SMG), to be established

by the Provost Marshal General (PMG).

The scope of instruction embraced international conventions and American regulations, procedure and experience relevant to the administration of military government, and the historical, political, social and economic backgrounds of the occupied regions in which the officers would function. It was recommended that the Commandant should be a regular Army officer and the Director either a civilian or an officer commissioned from civil life for that purpose. Miller stressed that only student officers whose background and ability indicated aptitude for the assignment should be selected. (80)

On 13 March a directive from the Adjutant General (AG) announced the establishment of the School of Military Government at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, with General Wickersham as commander, under the supervision of the PMG, Major General Allen Gullion. (81) The School opened on 11 May 1942 with forty-nine student officers following a course of instruction which comprised mainly civil subjects in a greatly expanded curriculum from the original suggested by Miller. The course had no prescribed length but was not to exceed sixteen weeks in duration.

In June Wickersham suggested that the School's next intake should number one hundred and fifty students. Gullion was strongly in favour but doubted that the Army could supply that number given the reluctance of commanders to release good men with ability and qualifications. Wickersham had suggested a number of outside agencies as sources of personnel but Gullion was not inclined to commission civilians. His view was that the Army was responsible for the administration of any military government, and the Army should therefore prepare the plans and policies for it, including the procurement and training of personnel. (82)

At the same time Arthur Ringland, a member of the War Relief Control Board, proposed to the President that private institutions should be involved in the provision of personnel for military government. (83) Miller was now at

the SMG as Wickersham's assistant and he wrote to the Office of the Under Secretary of War pointing out the 'unwisdom of permitting premature interference by civilian agencies'. Citing examples from American history as evidence of the unfortunate results of civilian influence in the Civil War, and in the occupation of the Philippines, he emphasised that the direction and administration of military government belonged wholly to the military command. (84)

The first course at Charlottesville ended in August and an inspection gave the SMG a generally favourable report, stating that the course was practical and that the student intake possessed 'a very reasonable spread of skills and success in civilian pursuits'.(85) As would later occur in Wimbledon, the second course was amended to remove the over-emphasis on areas not considered essential for subordinate officials. There were, however, many criticisms from government departments and independent agencies both of the Army's plans for military government and of the Charlottesville SMG faculty, although the doubts originally expressed by the President regarding the quality of the staff seem to have been allayed.

Gullion vigorously defended both the School's faculty and instruction but admitted that the SMG was vulnerable 'in one particular, i.e. *we are not getting enough high class students.*' (86) He also admitted that the intake for the course in January 1943 was distinctly below the average of previous students. It was decided that for future courses commanders would be held responsible for ensuring that only the best type of officer, those who possessed outstanding leadership qualities and unimpeachable character, should be selected for training. But as Donnison has shown, neither Britain, nor the USA had a sufficient number of outstanding serving officers to provide the hundreds of CAOs needed, not only for Italy but later for North-West Europe.

After their separate training at Charlottesville and Wimbledon, it was essential for prospective CAOs to follow

a joint course not only to prepare them to administer a specific territory but in order to establish good working relationships between officers whose background and traditions were very different.(87) Officers came to Chr ea not only from the USA and UK but from North Africa and the Middle East. On 2 June more than 100 Americans arrived, followed on 27 June by nearly 100 British. An intensive instruction course, comprising the Italian language, and Military Government with reference to conditions in Sicily and Italy, also provided seminar groups for officers in their own special fields such as finance and civil supplies. A compulsory part of the course was Physical Training since a high level of fitness would be as necessary for CAOs in the insanitary living conditions of bombed towns as for combat troops and would be essential for those landing in the early assault waves from Landing Crafts over the beaches.

Visiting lecturers included General Eisenhower and other high-ranking commanders. A number of British officers who were involved in the administration of Tripolitania and thus had practical experience were on hand to assist in the instruction of the three hundred and fifty-seven Allied officers who attended the two courses held at Chr ea from 2 June to 14 July and the third shortened course held later at Tizi Ouzou, a Military Government Holding Centre near Algiers. AMGOT had been allocated a War Establishment (WE) of four hundred and forty officers plus four hundred and sixty other ranks in support roles. (88) This number included provision for future landings on the mainland. The numbers of CAOs actually on the island at any one time are difficult to ascertain as the number naturally increased as more areas were captured and as specialist officers joined the CAOs already in place. A common complaint in CAOs' reports was the shortage of ORs to assist with clerical work and to man offices when the CAO was in the field. Staff obtained locally were not always suitable, either because of language difficulties or the confidential nature

of the work involved.

Harris comments that the most important function of Chr ea was not the instruction but the inculcation of a spirit of cooperation between individuals of two nations, speaking the same language but with very different traditions and prejudices. (89) In view of the acrimony which had characterised relations between Allied military commanders during the Tunisian campaign and which had influenced the attitudes of their troops, Rennell was determined to avoid a similar situation developing among officers of the Military Government. In the first General Administrative Instruction (GAI No.1) issued to all field personnel as part of the AMGOT Plan, Rennell referred to differences in procedure, custom and outlook between the Armies, warning CAOs that the differences must not affect their efficiency or form the subject of complaints or gossiping. (90)

Harris describes the parade at Chr ea on 4 July when the British saluted the 'Star-spangled banner' and entertained the Americans, after which 'no more was heard of Americans versus British...AMGOT had indeed become one.'(91) Rennell's efforts to inculcate a spirit of cooperation had indeed paid off. He later wrote that the Italian experiment in military government was an unqualified success and that those associated with it were, justifiably, very proud of the success achieved. (92)

Although the short courses at Chr ea and Tizi Ouzou were more focused than those at Wimbledon and Charlottesville, which necessarily dealt with the more general problems of an occupied territory, they were not immune to criticism. Gayre, the Educational Adviser for Italy, refers from his own experience to Tizi Ouzou as the place where 'waifs and strays who some day might be used for military government studied problems of Italian government from instructors, the confidence of some of whom was the greater in proportion to their ignorance.' (93) These were the comments of a senior academic, formerly Staff Officer for Education at Oxford, and not a typical prospective CAO.

A very different view was put forward by an American CAO. It was the prospective CAOs, not the Chr ea staff who were criticised by Henry Adams. Referring to the 'serious efforts of the informed instructional staff who presented their material carefully', he writes that 'only a minority took to heart the importance of this knowledge as a basis for efficient action in military government. The majority failed to take the instruction seriously and failed even to bother to read the material at their disposal.'(94) Adams describes the atmosphere at the centre as one of boredom, scorn and despair.

The second course at Chr ea finished on 14 July and was followed by a third at Tizi Ouzou. A Civil Affairs Staff School had also begun to function in June at Mena in Egypt. Not all the CAOs taking part in the administration of Sicily would come from the above-mentioned centres. Individuals from more than a dozen countries, most of them "unknown quantities" were scheduled to arrive in Algiers to join the Chr ea graduates and were then sent to an embarkation port for the invasion.

Meanwhile detailed planning of the proposed administration of Sicily was taking place at Chr ea. To ensure continued close contact with the main planning staff, liaison officers had been left behind with Force 141 at Bouzar ea. Since the two separate Task Forces, American Force 343, and British Force 545, had HQs at Mostaganem and Cairo respectively, their planning staffs were kept informed of draft military government plans by visits from MGS AFHQ staff. Lt Col Charles Poletti, designated head of Seventh Army AMG and SCAO of Palermo province, went to Force 343 for final planning consultations, while the designated head of Eighth Army AMG, Group Captain C.E. Benson, went to Force 545. (95)

Plans for the two Military Government organisations were finalised and, as Harris points out, the principle of division on a fifty-fifty basis was not always applied with mathematical exactitude, since it was laid down that the

Senior Civil Affairs Officers and two-thirds of the staff of the two Army AMGs should be of the same nationality as their commanders. (96) As part of the AMG of British Task Force 545, the SCAO of Catania was therefore British and British CAOs outnumbered their American colleagues in the province. Of the nine SCAOs heading the nine provinces in the island, five were American and four British. (97)

As there were six specialist divisions, these could be fairly divided. Legal, Civil Supply and Public Safety were headed by Americans, and Finance, Public Health, and Allied and Enemy Property by British officers. Officers for these specialist divisions were selected on the basis of their qualifications and experience in a particular field. (98) Apart from a number of trained Police officers (mostly British) in the Public Safety Division, who initially acted as CAOs as well as CAPOs in the early stages of the occupation, the specialist officers, who arrived later than CAOs, were responsible for advising the SCAOs and CAOs on matters pertaining to their division, and also for assisting hard-pressed CAOs in specific areas of their administration. The following is a very brief resumé of their respective roles, described in more detail later in the context of the administration of Catania.

The Legal Division's role in the planning stage was pivotal since it was responsible for drawing up the Proclamations and setting up the Allied Military Courts. It also advised the CCAO on his powers under international law and the Hague Rules. As the Allied Military Government would be based on a system of indirect rule, the role of the Public Safety Division was of vital importance since it was responsible for the maintenance of law and order. Allied officers with police training were entrusted with the supervision of the local *Carabinieri*. Another division concerned with the welfare of the population was the Public Health Division. Staffed by medical officers who were aware of the possibility of epidemics following the destruction of water mains and sewers during bombardments in the height

of summer, they were also responsible for welfare matters, including the care of children and refugees.

The Finance Division had a number of specific tasks, which included the establishment of the Allied Military Finance Agency (AMFA) to issue military *lire* to the forces and to provide currency for AMGOT to cover its administrative expenditure. It was also responsible for the regulation of banks and financial institutions. The first task of the Enemy Property Division (later renamed the Allied and Enemy Property Division) was 'to take into their control any Enemy State property not required for the time being by any other branch of the Allied Forces', and its second, according to Proclamation No.6, was 'to assist all other branches of the Allied forces to ascertain, secure and take possession of all Enemy State property which is susceptible of military use that they might require.' The function of the Civilian Supply Division was to plan and supply essential requirements of foodstuffs, such as flour, milk, meat and sugar, medical supplies, including vaccines, to last three months after the invasion. As a precaution against a failure of the harvest, it was also decided to create a stockpile of flour in North Africa. (99)

With the involvement of AFHQ, Force 141, Chr ea, Force 343, Force 545, and London and Washington in the planning process, and also with the need for constant communication between scattered locations, it is clear that organising the deployment of AMG staff was fraught with difficulties. These were compounded by the fact that most of the military commanders of tactical units seemed to be unaware of the existence of Civil Affairs Officers. (100) As a consequence neither Force gave CAOs priority in their landing schedules nor in transport for them in spite of instructions from Force 141, issued on 22 May. These clearly delineated the role of CAOs, both with the assault forces and with Task Force HQs during the initial phases of the invasion, during which CAOs would act as Staff Officers to the Commanders and be subject to their authority. (101) CAOs would be only

provided with a nominal scale of transport, the remainder arriving in the follow-up convoys. They would therefore have to depend on locally requisitioned military transport (MT) and combat units' MT. Assault commanders were aware of this and instructed to assist CAOs in the execution of their duties but this was an instruction more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Seventh Army HQ were most reluctant to accommodate AMG personnel and transport. In fact Lt Col Poletti's presence at Mostaganem was so resented that the 1st US Division declared that they were capable of looking after Civil Affairs themselves. A similar lack of cooperation at AFHQ provoked Rennell to remark that they seemed to regard his requirements as 'nothing but an unmitigated nuisance to be met only when nothing else could be done in the face of direct orders from the Chief of Staff'. (102) There was a friendlier atmosphere at Force 545 but even there Rennell's wish to attach CAOs to the beach assault forces was refused. Benson was told that only four officers could embark in the second wave, the rest to be called forward when needed from the various embarkation ports. This was not acceptable as CAOs would not be available to take over territory as it was occupied. Force 545 finally agreed to take 30 officers in the first 3 days but not transport. The administrative and logistical problems caused Rennell to describe the month before D-Day as 'a nightmare.' (103) It was 28 June before the complete directive for the organisation of Military Government for Sicily was finally dispatched to General Eisenhower. The Directive consisted of political, monetary and fiscal, and economic guides. The three sections are summarised below and represent the measures to be taken by CAOs and Specialist Officers immediately after occupation of the island.

Political Guides

1. Both Allied flags to be displayed at HQ to emphasise Allied aspect of administration.
2. No political agencies to participate.
3. No civilian agencies to be involved.
4. A benevolent attitude towards the civilian population to be adopted.
5. Military Commander to decide replacements of prefects and mayors.
6. Immediate dissolution of Fascist Party organisation except those organisations whose removal would adversely affect the efficiency of the administration.
7. War criminals to be imprisoned.
8. All discriminatory laws to be annulled.
9. Prompt release of political prisoners.
10. No local political groups to be involved in the policies of the administration.
11. Powers of the crown to be suspended.
12. Position of Church to be respected and all efforts made to preserve local archives and monuments.
13. Transfer of title of property to be prevented if intended to avoid fines or punishments on owners.

Monetary and Fiscal Guides

1. US yellow seal currency and British Military Authority notes to be used initially until Allied military [AM] lire available.
2. US Treasury will provide AM currency when needed.
3. The above will supplement local lire currency.
4. Rate of exchange: 4 US dollars = £1, 100 lire = 1 dollar,
400 lire = £1.
5. US yellow seal and BMA currency to be withdrawn as soon as possible.
6. All persons must accept the rate of exchange.

7. All foreign financial transactions prohibited.
8. Establishment of Allied Military Financial Agency (AMFA) to provide pay and cash requirements for military formations and CAOs.
9. All banks to be closed, vaults sealed and inventories made of banks' assets.
10. National funds and Fascist Party funds to be impounded.
11. Banks to be reopened when deemed desirable by AMG.
12. Banks permitted to arrange loans.
13. Local banks permitted only lire accounts.
14. Existing tax laws to be maintained.
15. Branches of National Insurance Institute to be under military control.
16. Public services and government monopolies and their revenues to be under military control.
17. No revenues to be used to pay interest on national government obligations.

Economic Guides

1. Measures to be undertaken to enable the country's own services of production to assure as far as possible the provisioning of local population. Direct relief employed only where necessary.
2. Measures to be taken to procure essential materials to establish utilities and maintain agricultural production.
3. Maximum prices to be quickly established.
4. Associations of employers and employees may be temporarily continued but Fascist officers to be removed.
5. Control to be established over import and export of goods by local business concerns. (104)

When the Directive was in the planning stage Paragraph 4

of the Political Guides decreed a benevolent attitude towards the civil population of Sicily and prompted a letter from Rennell to Col Maxwell at MGS in which he drew attention to General Administrative Instruction No.1. This had outlined a code of conduct for CAOs which began with the following words:"You will be guided in your attitude towards the local population by the memory of years of war in which the Italians fought against your people and your Allies." This statement was clearly inconsistent with the attitude of benevolence laid down in the Directive and was in fact later omitted from the printed manual given to CAOs.(105)

Rennell pointed out to Maxwell that his experience of British troops was not of having to restrain them from being vindictive but of trying to prevent them from immediate fraternisation with the local population. He feared that an invitation to the troops to be benevolent would encourage them in these habits. In a more serious vein he pointed out the difficulty of creating a fighting spirit among troops in a general atmosphere of benevolence. (106) Having made known his own views, Rennell obviously had no choice but to accept a Directive which came from the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Reference has been earlier made to GAI No.1 and its emphasis on the joint nature of Allied Military Government. These General Administrative Instructions, sixteen in all, dealt with general policy and attitudes towards civilians, and also the immediate duties of CAOs upon entering occupied areas. GAI No.1 stressed the importance of assisting the troops in their operations in the early stages of the invasion, even if this was at the expense of efficient administration. (107) Combat troops can only carry limited amounts of field rations and depend on supplies from local sources, particularly if port facilities are lacking, as they were in the Seventh Army invasion zone. Helping combat units to procure food would become a far more difficult task for CAOs than their other

specified task of maintaining order in the immediate rear of the advancing armies. This problem did not arise as the Allies were greeted everywhere as liberators, much to Rennell's relief. Acutely aware of the limited number of CAOs at his disposal, he confessed: "We have got away with things here because the population was friendly and the Carabinieri have worked." (108)

Apart from the Directive and the GAIs, all AMGOT officers were issued with a detailed handbook, compiled by the Foreign Office, the *Sicily Zone Handbook*, which provided information on the people, their way of life, the island's administration, the organisation of the Fascist Party, economic conditions, and a comprehensive list of *Who's Who* in the nine provinces and in communes with a population over 5,000.(109) A section on the islanders' attitude to the war, to Germans, to Fascism and to the Allies was included but readers were informed that the information supplied was not necessarily up to date and that attitudes could have undergone considerable alterations.

The Foreign Office compilers of the handbook forecast that neither strong resistance nor active collaboration from the population was to be expected.(110) In the event there was very little resistance and in most areas there was active collaboration. The compilers were certainly accurate when they wrote: 'Substantial improvement of the food situation and material advantages of this kind would undoubtedly do much to influence the behaviour of the population as a whole.'(111) For those CAOs unable to attend the courses at Chr ea or Tizi Ouzou the Handbook provided much background information, which would be useful once the administration was established, but was not particularly relevant to the early situations encountered in which practical solutions were required, as will be described in later chapters.

The words of General Bradley, commander of II Corps of Force 343 succinctly sum up the military preparations for operation HUSKY: 'Seldom in war has a major operation been

undertaken in such a fog of indecision, confusion and conflicting plans.'(112) He was referring specifically to the changes in the invasion plan brought about by General Montgomery, which aroused so much anger in the American camp, not only against the British influence on the planning process but what was regarded as Eisenhower's yielding to British pressure. As D'Este points out:'All the controversies which ensued in Italy and Northwest Europe had their roots in the planning for Sicily and in the campaign itself.' (113) He also cites Nigel Hamilton's biography of Montgomery, which states that the creation of two Allied Armies for Sicily ushered into Allied operations a principle that committed the Allies to failure, since no overall commander could be found with both the tact to combine the separate national wills of their forces and the military genius to command them in the field.'(114)

In contrast to the military planning, the preparation for Military Government was on a very much smaller scale and did not involve the logistical problems entailed by two armies with a combined total of almost half a million men. Even so, as previously pointed out, problems of a political and diplomatic nature between London and Washington prevented any firm planning until they were resolved. At AFHQ it became clear that the military authorities were not in the least concerned with the needs of a small minority, who although they wore uniforms, were not considered part of the military force. Even Rennell's requests were regarded by both AFHQ and Seventh Army HQ as a nuisance and very reluctantly granted. Harris rightly points out that the AMGOT planning group at HQ lacked experienced officers from Q Branch, (Quarter-Master-General's Branch whose remit includes the movement of forces). Their presence would probably have facilitated the inclusion of CAOs in the early landing schedules, which the military were reluctant to do.(115) The resulting problems are described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

This chapter will give a brief account of the invasion of Pantelleria, which gave the Allies their first encounter with Italians on their home ground rather than in one of their colonies. It was also here that the first Allied Military Government was set up, albeit on a very limited scale. It also includes a description of the military measures which had been taken to defend Sicily, the role played by Germany in the defence of the island, and the relationship between the Sicilians and their Axis partners, which might determine the degree of resistance to the Allied invasion. An account of the landings will underline the fact that the strained relationships between the two armies in North Africa and during the period of planning operation HUSKY still continued.

Section 1. The Invasion of Pantelleria and Establishment of the first Allied Military Government

In June 1943 the Allies decided to send a force to capture the islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa. The decision was mainly based on the fact that in the previous February General Marshall had informed General Eisenhower that the US Navy could not provide the eight auxiliary aircraft carriers requested for air cover of the American assault on Sicily. Pantelleria possessed an airfield from which Allied fighters could support operations in Sicily. This airfield was equipped with underground hangars and radio direction finder stations, (RDF), used to detect ship and air movements in the Sicilian straits.(1) Planners at AFHQ, however, were not in favour, believing that all available Allied resources should be kept for the attack on Sicily. Churchill had earlier suggested to the COS that the capture of the island would remove the threat to British convoys in the Mediterranean but the arrival of the

German Air Force in the island caused the plans to be shelved.(2)

When the invasion plans for Sicily were changed with both Allied assaults scheduled for the south-east corner of Sicily, Eisenhower saw the advantages of acquiring the Pantelleria airfield. It would provide good air cover for the July landings, eliminate the enemy's use of the RDF stations and deny its port as a refuelling base for enemy ships. The C-in-C, supported by Admiral Cunningham and Air Chief Marshal Tedder, now decided that if the island was subjected to intensive air bombardment, the assault would be relatively easy. In three weeks 6,400 tons of high explosives were dropped on a small area of the island in an operation which D'Este describes as 'one of the greatest examples of overkill of the war.' (3)

The result was severe damage to housing, communications and roads, but above all to morale. On 11 June the island commander, Admiral Pavasi, and his staff decided that the lack of water and ammunition, and the danger of disease, made the island untenable and surrendered as the assault troops of the British 1st Division approached the landing zone.(4) David Hunt recalled that the garrison troops guided the Allied landing parties around the numerous obstacles in the harbour. (5) The following day the garrison of Lampedusa surrendered to a Fleet Air Arm pilot, forced to land on its airfield when he ran out of fuel. Two small islands nearby, Linosa and Lampione, were captured on 13 June.

The surrender of Pantelleria and Lampedusa without a single shot being fired had implications for both the Allies and the Axis partners. The fact that both islands were captured through concentrated bombing alone led many senior Allied air staff, particularly US General Carl Spaatz, commander of the bombing operation, to believe that air power and strategic bombing would be the key to final victory. (6) Garland and Smyth point out that for the Germans 'the loss of the islands meant not only a military

defeat and a blow to Axis morale but also served as an indication of the performance they could expect in the future from their Italian allies.' (7) The surrender of Pantelleria was also a great shock to the Italians. American historian, Martin Blumenson, stresses the decline of Mussolini's prestige among his own military establishment and his political colleagues, but most of all among his people.' (8)

The will to resist of Pantelleria's garrison had been overestimated by Allied Intelligence which predicted that an opposed landing would produce heavy casualties. (9) However, no chances were being taken with the invasion of Sicily, after Montgomery had predicted that resistance would be fierce, since Germans and Italians were fighting desperately in Tunisia and would do so in Sicily. (10) His prediction was later challenged by Hunt, who wrote that it was based solely on the battles at Enfidaville in April where the Italian infantry 'were putting up a good show' and from this Montgomery deduced they would do even better on their home ground.' (11) Whether his views regarding the strength of Italian resistance would prove accurate or not, this first large-scale amphibious operation into Europe would naturally, as Liddell Hart comments, 'err on the side of security.' (12)

The capture of the islands was followed by the first experiment in Allied Military Government. Carried out under the supervision of an American SCAO, Lt Col Monfort, it was on a very limited scale with only three of the thirteen Proclamations published, Numbers 1, 2 and 4, which respectively set up Military Government, detailed War Crimes and established Military Courts. For security reasons the occupying forces were issued with Italian *lire* and not the 'spearhead' military currencies planned to be used after the invasion of Sicily until Allied military *lire* were circulated. (13)

Monfort's main problem was the amount of damage caused to housing, roads and communications by the intensive bombing.

The existing administration had collapsed but all the administrators were retained in office. They proved to be cooperative, as were all the civilian inhabitants. Although Pantelleria and the smaller islands produced very little food, the garrison was normally well stocked, but civilians from the port town had looted most of the military supplies. For naval security reasons AMGOT was initially obliged to restrict fishing, an important source of food and income for the population, but was soon able to issue permits for a limited number of fishing zones. AMGOT also agreed to buy the crop of high quality raisins produced from the local grape harvest, and in so doing contributed to the island's economy.(14)

Harris points out that AMGOT's experience in Pantelleria did not provide a fair sample of the difficulties which would be encountered in Sicily, particularly in the field of civilian supplies. He draws attention, however, to the revelation of certain characteristic deficiencies, such as a complete lack of the basic materials needed to set up an administration, namely paper, ink and typewriters. A more serious deficiency, even though Pantelleria had a limited administration, was the absence of coordination between the operating forces and AMG officers. (15)

Four weeks after the fall of Pantelleria eight Allied divisions took part in the simultaneous assault landings on the south-east coast of Sicily, and a total of 478,000 troops were ultimately involved in the invasion of the island. Before detailing the combat operations a brief outline of the state of the island's defences will show that Mussolini's speech in Palermo after the summer manoeuvres of 1937, in which he declared: "Qui non sbarcherà mai nessuno, nemmeno un soldato" would not stand the test of time. (16)

Section 2. The Island's Defences

Liddell Hart comments that the complete capture by the Allies of eight Axis divisions at the end of the Tunisian campaign 'left Italy and the Italian islands almost naked of defensive covering.' Of the 225,000 prisoners taken, half were Italian, including 'the pick of the Italian army.'(17) The 'death march' retreat in Russia in 1943 resulted in the loss of 175,000 Italian troops, killed or captured.(18) These losses, added to those suffered in the earlier Middle East and East African campaigns and in the Balkans, had reduced the Italian Army by almost 550,000 troops.

By July 1943 these manpower losses had not only deprived the Army of a large percentage of battle-tested troops who would have been invaluable in defending Sicily but the series of defeats had gradually lowered the morale of the military. At the same time Allied morale was steadily rising. January 1943 had seen the German surrender at Stalingrad, with the loss of 250,000 men. (19) On 13 May the Tunisian campaign came to an end, making the Allies, in Alexander's words, "masters of the North African shores."(20) In the same month Admiral Dönitz, commander of the U-boat force, withdrew all submarines from the North Atlantic after they had sustained heavy losses in convoy battles, and by September the battle of the Atlantic had been won.(21)

Two months remained for the Allies in which to organise the final preparations for the invasion of Sicily. Montgomery was still convinced that combat troops would encounter strong resistance on the island even though Allied Intelligence had no agents operating there to support this view. Hunt confirms that the Allies had 'no contact whatever with the enemy troops in Sicily and none of the formal means open to Intelligence.' (22) Even though their wireless security was good, the Italian military made much more use of internal telephone circuits giving little

opportunity for Allied interception. However, as Hunt explains, a great deal of information was obtained from reading the mail sent to POWs by friends and relatives serving in the forces. All mail was routed via Cairo where letters were examined by a special Allied unit to check whether the writer had stated the location of his battalion, which in most cases he had. Either the Italian censors overlooked the service address or they hid it with easily removed Indian ink, which was replaced before the letter was sent on from Cairo. (23) Since there were hundreds of thousands of prisoners in Allied hands, a large amount of information was obtained as to troop numbers and division locations on the island.

In addition, photo-reconnaissance flights had enabled detailed maps of the 10,000 square miles of the island to be drawn up, which revealed locations of anti-aircraft and other gun emplacements and the continuing efforts of the Germans to strengthen the line of defences.(24) Apart from the relatively small number of airborne troops employed, the invasion was an amphibious operation and it was essential to ensure that the beach gradients in the landing zones allowed the various types of landing craft to beach close to the foreshore. Before the invasion landing parties had been launched in dinghies from submarines to check beaches and beach exits but if they were unable to land, a second method was used whereby a mathematical formula was applied to reconnaissance photos to ascertain the slope of the beach from the interval between the crests of the waves, which showed up plainly in parallel white lines on photographs taken from the air. (25)

Sicily's military capacity and the firm resolve of its inhabitants to withstand any enemy aggression had been vaunted by Fascist propaganda for some years. Historian Paolo Maltese points out that the island was regarded as the frontier of the Imperial Empire and for that reason was chosen as the venue for the 1937 summer manoeuvres, due to begin on 10 August. On the same day the "*Giornale d'Italia*"

observed that the *Duce*, on a rare visit to the island, would see "come i Siciliani sono ai suoi ordini per qualunque compito dell'avvenire." The "*Corriere della Sera*" stated that the manoeuvres would fully show the "efficienza raggiunta dalle forze italiane, soprattutto per ciò che riguarda le armi più moderne ..." (26)

The King, Prince Umberto and Mussolini declared their satisfaction with the performance of both men and machines in the final exercises of the manoeuvres. The Press referred to the perfect security of the island against any future invasion, adding that the warlike spirit of the people, combined with the geography of the island, made Sicily practically invulnerable. (27)

For the next few years Italy paid scant attention to Sicily's military needs. All three armed services were involved in the Spanish Civil War and the resources consumed there left the Army and Air Force seriously weakened. (28) Arms and equipment lost or left behind were not replaced. In addition much of the army's more modern equipment had been expended in Abyssinia. As American historian Douglas Porch has written, there was an almost complete neglect of elementary military preparations in Italy from the time Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939 until Italy joined in the conflict in June 1940. More importantly, no proper structure for strategic decision making existed and the power of the Chief of Staff, Marshal Badoglio, had been reduced by Mussolini to purely advisory functions. (29)

Shortage of raw materials combined with industrial inefficiency starved the Army of essential modern weapons and transport. Porch points out that the shortage of vehicles (a 1:20 ratio of vehicles to men) explains the relative lack of mobility of Italian forces in the desert in 1940-41 and their consequent capture. (30) Gaetano Salvemini relates that when military parades were required in Rome, the Chief of Police provided the army with police armoured cars, repainted khaki, to cover up the shortage of

transport. (31)

The lack of modern weapons (many units had rifles dating back to World War I), substandard uniforms, unsuitable for winter conditions, barracks without basic amenities, all contributed to the army's increasing loss of morale. But it was the military system itself which was mostly responsible for the collapse of morale, a system ascribed by Porch to the caste mentality of Italian officers, which 'caused them to look upon their soldiers with condescension'. (32)

The majority of senior commanders were not up to date with developments in modern warfare and lower ranking regular officers sought the large number of desk jobs available, leaving field operations mostly to poorly trained reserve officers or World War I veterans. An average infantry battalion had only two regular officers and few non-commissioned officers (NCOs).(33) Unlike their British army counterparts, the latter were not trained for their role and as a result lacked any initiative. A clear distinction was drawn between officers and other ranks, leading Field Marshal Rommel to deplore 'the differentiation between officer and man' which he saw in the field in North Africa, where the men's rations were so bad that they begged food from German troops, while officers were served meals of several courses.(34) Hunt points out that British officers and men drank the local water, as did Italian troops, but Italian officers had bottled water from Reccoaro Spa, of which thousands of bottles were imported into Libya and transported in vast quantities to far-flung outposts. (35)

Of the three services the Italian Navy was better equipped and commanded. Its submarine attacks on British shipping in the area between Sicily and Tunis, the 'Cauldron', were very successful in the early years of the war.(36) In March 1941, the fleet, having lost three battleships at Taranto

in a torpedo-bomber attack the previous November, again suffered heavy losses after an engagement with British warships off Cape Matapan. (37) After this encounter the fleet became reluctant to leave port. Mussolini had not sanctioned the construction of aircraft carriers during the Thirties and the fleet was dependent on the Air Force for air cover. Unfortunately Italian pilots were not trained in coordinated exercises with ships and were of little assistance in combat. The fleet was also handicapped by the acute shortage of fuel affecting all services and industries after the outbreak of war. Italy produced only 13,000 tons of crude oil annually and was thus heavily dependent on imports, but the war had cut off almost all her suppliers apart from Romania, and Germany took the lion's share of Romanian oil. (38) Fuel shortages and lack of raw materials also limited the production of new vessels and Italian commanders were reluctant to risk losing ships which they knew could not be replaced.

During the Thirties Italy's Regia Aeronautica had been at the forefront of aviation, setting speed records and winning international competitions. (39) In 1940 when Italy declared war on Britain she had over 3,000 aircraft at her disposal but only 900 bombers and 270 fighters were technically advanced enough to compete with British aircraft. By July 1943 when Sicily was invaded, only 620 planes remained combat-effective. (40)

Since the autumn of 1941 the Italian Sixth Army had been based in Sicily and was responsible for its defence. When its new commander, General Rosi, made his first inspection of the island, he realised that there was a lack of almost everything needed for defence, from barbed wire to binoculars for observation posts and paint for camouflage. Oil lamps had replaced electricity in barracks but there was no oil. (41) Rosi soon recognised the low calibre of his officers who were mostly reservists with no battle experience since World War I. Many did not live at their stations but with their families, most of whom, according

to D'Este, were not authorised to be on the island. (42) Discipline was almost non-existent and officers frequently took leave without arranging a replacement. Many troops were of Sicilian origin and chose to live at home or with relatives instead of in barracks. This made them more aware of the increasing misery of daily life for the population. By 1943 many were disillusioned and no longer prepared to fight for a cause they considered lost and for a state which they felt had done nothing for Sicily. (43)

Memoranda continued to arrive from the General Staff in Rome on measures to extend the defence system. Anti-tank obstacles were to be erected using metal beams but these were unobtainable on the island. More troop mobility was advised but there were no spare lorries. Small groups trained to counteract enemy airborne landings had no transport. Rosi advised them to use the civilian buses, which were allocated to their garrisons. (44)

The king visited the island in December 1942, ostensibly to inspect the defences but in reality to boost the morale of the people, now subject to increasing air raids and food shortages. Newspaper reports referred to the "altissimo morale delle truppe" but this was clearly propaganda. (45) The New Year saw the recall of Rosi and the appointment of General Roatta as commander of the Sixth Army. He tried to improve the situation by establishing a unified command to make him responsible for all Italian service elements. Previously the command authority was divided among seven military and nine civilian agencies, based on a system of cooperation and persuasion, which had evidently proved unsatisfactory. The new unified command also made Roatta responsible for German ground troops on the island, and the civilian administration of the provincial Prefects. (46) The island was prepared for war, including measures for the

evacuation of civilians from likely battle areas, the construction of air raid shelters and stockpiling food. Both soldiers and civilians were organised to improve the defence systems but nothing was accomplished because the necessary building materials were not forthcoming. (47)

At the same time Allied propaganda in the form of radio broadcasts and leaflets dropped by aircraft told the islanders that Italy was not really concerned about their fate. (48) When Roatta made a speech in May referring to "...you proud Sicilian citizens and we Italian and German soldiers.." it was interpreted as an insult to Sicilian patriotism and he was replaced by General Guzzoni.(49)

Alfredo Guzzoni was sixty-six years old and had been in retirement for two years. It was a surprising appointment, as Garland and Smyth point out, since Guzzoni had neither visited Sicily nor displayed any interest in the island or its military problems. (50) His Chief of Staff, Colonel Emilio Faldella, was also a stranger to the island, and contrary to the Italian Army custom of keeping a commander and his Chief of Staff together, he had not previously served with Guzzoni.(51)

Although Roatta had succeeded in obtaining a unified command over the various service elements on the island, in practice the command structure had not greatly altered. German units were partially under German and partially under Italian control, which naturally led to confusion in the command organisation and added to the mutual distrust between the Axis partners.(52) The German troops and airmen stationed in Sicily were becoming very unpopular and were openly cursed in the streets. Local officials did nothing to stop these verbal attacks, according to Baron von Neurath, who was in Sicily to report on the situation there. More important was Roatta's declaration to Neurath that it would be impossible to defend Sicily because of the damage inflicted by Allied raids on the railways. (53)

Guzzoni soon discovered the inadequacy of the island's defences and the poor morale of the troops, especially the

coastal divisions, who displayed 'an almost unbelievably low standard of morale, training and discipline'. (54) In June he informed Mussolini of the situation but to no avail. At this time Sicily's military defences consisted of six coastal divisions, two coastal brigades, one coastal regiment and four mobile divisions amounting to 200,000 men, supported by a number of tactical groups deployed fairly close to the beaches. Special groups had been organised to defend the airfields which would be primary targets for the invaders. The mobile divisions were the most combat-effective troops but they too had the same antiquated equipment as the coastal divisions and lacked sufficient ammunition. Of the four, only one, the *Livorno* division, possessed its own transport. (55)

By contrast the two German divisions on the island, the *15th Panzer Grenadier* and the *Hermann Goering* Division were well equipped and trained and also relatively mobile. It was almost entirely on the island's ground forces that the responsibility for the defence of Sicily lay, since Allied bombing of airfields and a series of air battles had depleted the Axis air strength. (56) This in turn had prevented the main Italian battle fleet from leaving its base at La Spezia because it could not operate without air support. Although a few U-boats were still operating in the Mediterranean the main German naval contribution was the responsibility for the ferry service across the Straits of Messina to bring in supplies to the island.

Hitler had believed that the Allies would choose to invade Sardinia or Greece, an idea implanted in the enemy's mind by a British deception operation, codenamed MINCEMEAT. (57) Guzzoni, however, was convinced that Sicily would be the target, as was the German Commander-in-Chief South, Field Marshal Kesselring. The two commanders were not initially in agreement about the military tactics to be adopted or the order of battle but by the end of June mutually agreed plans had been drawn up. These involved immediate counter-attacks by coastal divisions against the landings in order

to prevent the establishment of a continuous front, and the deployment of the four mobile divisions positioned near the coast. (58)

Guzzoni's intelligence sources reported early in July that Allied convoys with naval escorts were concentrated off the North African coast and that large numbers of planes had arrived in Malta. He thought the signs conclusive and alerted his forces to the possibility of an invasion during the period up to 10 July (by which date no moon would be visible). On 5 July he received reports of hospital ships assembling and convoys moving. Further convoy movements in the direction of Sicily were seen by German reconnaissance planes on 9 July. (59) That evening the HQ of the *Livorno* Division at Caltanissetta was bombed, as were Siracusa and Catania, where serious damage was caused to the command installations. At 22.00 hours Guzzoni ordered a full alert.(60) Weather conditions began to deteriorate to such an extent that many of the coastal division troops assumed that no landings would be possible and were off guard. Admiral Cunningham later wrote in his Dispatch that the unfavourable conditions had 'the effect of making the weary Italians turn thankfully in their beds, saying "tonight at any rate they can't come." But they came.'(61)

Section 3. The Landings in Sicily

On 9 July convoys of nearly 3,000 ships and landing craft were assembling off the south-east coast of Sicily from ports throughout the Mediterranean and from as far afield as America and Scotland. On the airfields of Pantelleria, Gozo, Malta and Tunisia, 670 planes were ready to supply an immediate air cover 'umbrella' over the landing beaches.(62) The Allies were assured of almost total air superiority, as 3,000 aircraft had been made available for the campaign.

The Task forces numbered 115,000 British and Empire troops and 66,000 American.(63) The initial assault was on a larger scale than the Normandy landings in June 1944, and by the end of the campaign the total Allied force in Sicily rose to nearly half a million. (64) An estimated 200,000 Italian and 62,000 German troops were defending the island. This number was reinforced by the German 1st Parachute Division, flown in from France, the Headquarters XIV Panzer Corps and the 29 Panzer Grenadier Division transferred from the mainland.(65) The invasion was spearheaded by the British 1st Airborne Division, whose objective was to seize and hold the Ponte Grande bridge near Siracusa. They were flown in by British and American pilots. Unfortunately, the American tug and glider pilots were not fully trained for night flying and this factor, combined with towing a heavily loaded glider in strong winds, and coming under flak for the first time, resulted in complete disaster.(66) The convoy of 144 gliders broke formation, and of the 137 gliders towed in along the Gulf of Noto, 69 were released too early and fell into the sea. Of the remainder only 12 landed in the dropping zone. These were all brought in by experienced RAF pilots who would have received full night navigation training unlike most of the other tug pilots.(67)

The commander of the Glider Pilot Regiment, Colonel Chatterton, had been most unenthusiastic when informed in

April of the plan to use a glider force in advance of the amphibious landings. Examining reconnaissance photographs of Sicily, he saw that the beaches were strewn with rocks, fenced in by large cliffs and the designated landing fields were dotted with stone walls. (68) At that time there were no gliders, tow aircraft or pilots in North Africa. The time remaining before the invasion was insufficient to train tug and glider pilots or to develop the essential teamwork. However, Montgomery had accepted the plan proposed by the commander of the 1st Airborne Division, General Hopkinson, and in spite of strong opposition from Chatterton, the plan went ahead.

In the time remaining before the invasion, pilots had to be brought to Tunisia from Britain and America and then trained in the skills of night flying in variable weather conditions and of teamwork during combat. A number of the American pilots had not advanced beyond the first solo stage of instruction when they arrived in Africa. D'Este, however, comments that 'inexperience was only one of the problems that plagued the operation' and cites the views of a glider expert: 'Even if all the pilots had nerves of steel and eyes like owls, many would have failed through an error in planning. The altitudes prescribed for the gliders were not sufficient to enable them to reach their landing zones against the strong wind...' (69) D'Este also points out the inevitable recriminations which once again threatened Anglo-American relations and began when one survivor of a crashed glider, ironically the instigator of the original plan, General Hopkinson, was rescued from the sea and 'cursed the 51st Troop Carrier Wing with every breath he could muster.' (70) His men accused the pilots of flinching from enemy anti-aircraft fire, and these accusations later caused many brawls between troop carriers and airborne men.

From the 12 gliders a skeleton force of 8 officers and 65 men captured and held the bridge for seven hours against heavy Italian mortar fire until the British ran out of ammunition. The Italians recaptured the bridge at the cost

of very high casualties but it was lost within half an hour to British infantry units who had moved speedily up from their landing beaches. (71)

Meanwhile in the American zone the 82nd Airborne Division had encountered similar weather conditions and the same flak problems, resulting in 3,000 paratroopers landing over an area of 1,000 square miles and not in the 4 specified zones. High winds, salt spray and insufficient practice in night flying in an unfamiliar pattern broke up the formations, and planes in the rear found it difficult to remain on course. The airborne force 'was dispersed to the four winds.' (72) Individual groups of men made the best of the situation by assuming a guerrilla role wherever they landed, causing havoc over a wide area by cutting enemy communication lines and ambushing small parties of Italian troops. (73)

The amphibious invasion fared better in both zones even though a mixture of winds and high seas slowed down landing craft, causing many to lose their place in the convoy. This resulted in disruption of the unloading schedules on the beaches. Cargoes shifted on heavily-loaded ships and troops suffered badly from seasickness. Hunt described the storm as an advantage in two ways: 'First it convinced the Italians that we would not try to land that night, and secondly, on the American beaches it helped the assault craft over some of the off-lying sand bars which we had feared might hamper their access to the beaches.' (74)

On 11 July (D-Day +1) the Americans were involved in very heavy fighting with the Hermann Goering Division and the Livorno Division at Gela. The requested air cover was not forthcoming but US naval guns were brought in to support the land forces. The advancing columns of the Livorno Division were forced to retreat, suffering such heavy casualties that the Division was finished as a fighting force. (75) Survivors who evaded capture were forced to make their escape north on foot as no transport was available. One of these exhausted men described the scene at Gela: 'E

stato un inferno. Non avevamo più che i moschetti contro i carri armati.' (76)

The Eighth Army landings to the south of Siracusa proceeded fairly smoothly and the stiff opposition which Montgomery had anticipated did not materialise until the approach to the Catania plain. Many coastal divisions were prepared to surrender immediately but others fought well. Signals Officer David Cole witnessed the surrender of a column of Italians after a tank battle in which a large number had been killed. Their commander delivered a speech of thanks and farewell to his men and the officers clasped his hand. British troops thought it 'a bit of a pantomime'. Cole was initially amused but then realised 'it was a sad scene, representing the not ungallant swansong of one battalion of the totally disillusioned Napoli Division of the Italian Army.' (77)

The naval garrison of Siracusa soon surrendered, followed by the garrison at Augusta, where hundreds of troops and sailors deserted after dismantling the guns. The commander, Admiral Leonardi, was taken prisoner and later condemned to death by Mussolini. All sentences imposed by the Duce were dismissed after the war and Leonardi's death sentence was replaced by a Silver medal for gallantry in the defence of Augusta.(78)

The south-eastern part of the island had been cleared by British forces in three days and Montgomery ordered a major attack for the night of 13 July to break into the Plain of Catania. This involved the capture of both the Primosole bridge over the River Simeto by the 1st Parachute Brigade and the bridge at Malati over the Lentini river by No.3 Commando.(79) Unknown to the British, large German paratroop reinforcements had landed in the area and they inflicted heavy casualties on the commando force. The 1st Brigade parachute drop was another airborne fiasco. 55 aircraft and 17 gliders were fired on by Allied ships and of the 1,856 officers and men who set off from Tunisia only 295 landed in the correct dropping zone. (80) The airborne

force and the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) who had arrived to support them were involved in the fiercest fighting of the campaign.(81)

The tensions between the Allies which had characterised operations in North Africa and the planning of the invasion had already surfaced in Sicily, as General Hopkinson's outburst against the tug and glider pilots had shown. Now the antipathy among the Americans towards Montgomery, who had persuaded his superiors to make a radical change in the invasion plan to the perceived disadvantage of the Seventh Army, was again aroused. As German reserves concentrated to cover the east coast route to Messina, Montgomery decided to send XXX Corps, which included the 1st Canadian Division, west in an effort to cut Sicily in two. His proposed route was Highway 124 (the Vizzini-Caltagirone highway) which, according to Alexander's pre-invasion instructions, had been reserved for use by the Americans. Montgomery decided to violate the army boundary and sent his XXX Corps directly across the line of advance of the US 45th Division (Highway 124). He informed Alexander of the decision he had taken and General Patton was ordered by Alexander to withdraw the US 45th to new positions. General Bradley, commander of the 45th, was understandably furious, believing the decision implied that Alexander thought the Eighth Army better qualified for the main task. (82)

Patton's reaction was to visit Alexander's HQ to request permission to use II Corps for a drive to the north coast in order to cut the island in two, while the rest of the Seventh Army cleared western Sicily. He did not reveal his intention to capture Palermo.(83) The Seventh Army made rapid progress, meeting little resistance, and took Palermo on 21 July. The capture of the city had little strategic importance but the immense press coverage restored American self-confidence. II Corps reached the north coast two days later and began an advance along the coast in the direction of Messina. (84)

Alexander's decision to accede to Montgomery's request to

use Highway 124 was still rankling Patton, who was now determined to reach Messina before the British. At a meeting of the ground commanders on 25 July, however, Patton was taken aback by Montgomery's proposal that the Seventh rather than the Eighth Army should take Messina, a proposal repeated a few days later. Patton's mistrust of the British, dating back to the criticism of American troops in North Africa, was still deep and his diary entry for 28 July records his desire to get even: 'This is a horse race in which the prestige of the US Army is at stake. We must take Messina before the British.' (85)

American sensitivity was also wounded by BBC broadcasts which referred to the Seventh Army front 'where the going was so easy that the troops were eating grapes and indulging in swimming' while the Eighth Army was facing stubborn resistance. (86) The Eighth Army had indeed faced very severe opposition from the German Schmalz Group in the early days of the invasion. When Schmalz received airborne reinforcements plus two infantry battalions for his Hermann Goering Division, Montgomery knew he had no chance of breaking through the German defences at Catania. (87)

Making use of Route 124, the Canadians of 30 Corps led a circuitous advance over a huge area of very rough, hilly country from Enna to Adrano, while the Highland Division advanced to Sferro. Fighting in both sectors was fierce, involving heavy losses. Meanwhile the American eastward offensive was slowing down as the 1st Infantry Division approached Troina against stiff opposition organised by General Hube, who had taken over control of Italian troops from General Guzzoni after the downfall of Mussolini. (88) Hube's task was now to conduct a delaying action on a shorter front to cover the evacuation of Axis forces to the mainland and he ordered the Hermann Goering Division to withdraw from Catania, which was finally occupied by troops of the DLI on 5 August. (89)

By 10 August the Eighth and Seventh Armies had joined up at Randazzo. Although a few small amphibious landings were

made in an attempt to reach Messina and cut off the escape route of the enemy forces, they were too late to be effective. General Patton reached Messina on 17 August and was patently delighted to lead the American motorcade through the city to receive its formal surrender. Alexander's report to the Prime Minister at the end of the campaign stated: 'It can be assumed that all Italian forces in the island on 10 July have been destroyed, though a few battered units may have escaped to the mainland... By 10 a.m. this morning, August 17, 1943, the last German soldier was flung out of Sicily and the whole island is now in our hands.'(90)

Liddell Hart refers to the well-planned 'get away' in which 100,000 Axis troops escaped to the mainland, as giving 'a rather hollow sound' to Alexander's report to Churchill. (91) The 'few battered units' included 60,000 Italian servicemen transported to Calabria from Messina and other ports, including Taormina, without any loss of life. The battle for Sicily was over but D'Este rightly describes the end of the campaign as 'a dismal conclusion to one beset from the start by controversy and indecision.'(92) The carefully organised and phased evacuation of the German forces was linked to an efficient ferry service with a roll-on/roll-off system of moving cargo, an innovation at that time, which could speedily move large numbers of vehicles, tanks, guns and heavy equipment in addition to troops. (93) The movement of the ferries was protected to a great extent by the attachment to them of barrage balloons, which were towed back and forth across the Strait and prevented Allied planes from flying directly at them. (94)

Much has been written about the Allied failure to prevent the enemy withdrawal from Sicily in spite of the warnings given as early as 3 August by Alexander to both the Naval and Air Force commanders. (95) Although small craft operated from Augusta they were unable to disrupt the ferry service, and Royal Navy destroyers rarely ventured far into the Messina Strait. Admiral Cunningham was not prepared to

risk his ships in a narrow channel and his staff ascribed this to his memories of the fate of some of the ships sent in to bombard the heavy gun batteries in the Dardanelles in 1915.(96) Nearly ten thousand sorties were flown by the two Allied Air Forces from 29 July to 17 August but only one quarter of these were against targets in the Messina Strait. The concentration of anti-aircraft defences on both sides of the Strait was one of the heaviest experienced by bombers during the war, but in spite of this D'Este states that the air forces 'never made anything resembling an all-out effort to block the Axis evacuation.'(97) Since most of the bombing was carried out at night the German naval command switched most of its ferry services to daylight hours, thus speeding up loading and unloading operations and enabling more crossings to be made.

On 7 August Montgomery had written in his diary that he was unable to find out the combined Navy-Air plan to prevent the evacuation and had concluded that no formal plan existed because of the total absence of inter-service coordination: 'Cunningham is in Malta; Tedder is at Tunis; Alexander is at Syracuse. It beats me how anyone thinks you can run a campaign in that way, with each of the three commanders about 600 miles from each other.'(98)

Hugh Pond cites the War Office after-action report which described the campaign in Sicily as a "strategic and tactical failure" and a "deplorable example of everything that planning should not be".(99) Given the overwhelming Allied strength in numbers, air and naval superiority, and the unwillingness of many Italians to resist, the campaign ought to have been short and decisive. Even though the geography of the island favoured defensive warfare, the generals showed little initiative in their offensives, and the ground forces were, in D'Este's words, 'left to fight a needless, frontal battle of attrition.' (100) This was most clearly seen on the approaches to Catania and in the area of Mount Etna, where intense bombing of villages, which the enemy had evacuated, resulted only in civilian casualties,

blocked roads which severely hampered troop movements, and further damage to an already fragile infrastructure.

The policy of saturation bombing before a ground attack was heavily criticised later by General Fuller, who referred to the bombing of Pantelleria as a failure in so far as only two of the fifty-four shore batteries on the island had been completely knocked out. (101) However, the saturation bombing of Pantelleria, as earlier stated, had convinced the senior commanders that it would be the best method of attack in Sicily. War correspondent Christopher Buckley, who followed the advance of British ground forces through the island, wrote that each combat operation was a repetition of its predecessor. 'The preliminary bombardment from the air grew heavier and heavier. Villages like Regalbuto, and later Randazzo (in Catania Province) were blotted out by bombing from the air on a scale unprecedented in the history of war.' (102)

Buckley also stressed that the bombings, though frequently killing large numbers of civilians, as a rule did no harm to German soldiers because the latter seldom established defensive positions in the villages themselves but a short distance to the rear. This indiscriminate bombing of civilians was largely blamed on the Americans, particularly in Catania province, where the general impression seemed to be from my conversations with Catanesi who remembered the invasion that British planes bombed strategic and military targets only but the Americans dropped bombs anywhere. Charles Dobson noted in his diary that in Catania town 'people are very cold to members of the American Air Corps. Sergeant Muller wears the Air Corps insignia and he has been cut dead in the middle of a conversation when they notice the badge.'(103) This type of bombing was also a self-defeating policy because when Allied troops entered the villages they had to spend hours clearing away rubble in order to continue the advance.

The CAOs, who followed the troops, had to deal with the dead and injured, the homeless and orphaned, the absence of

power and water when public utilities had been destroyed as a result of this indiscriminate bombing, in addition to their military duties to the combat forces which took precedence. All CAOs had been issued with the sixteen General Administrative Instructions (GAI), which they were obliged to follow. The first dealt with the immediate duties of CAOs upon entering occupied areas. It stated that the most important thing 'is to assist the troops in their operations.' In this context CAOs would first have to organise working parties to clear the streets of debris to enable unhindered progress for troops and transport bringing up supplies for the advancing combat troops, and also to maintain public order in their immediate rear. It emphasised also that the rule of "first things first" must be observed and the first thing was to clear the enemy out of the territory. Therefore the first duty of a CAO was to help the combat units, 'even if this is at the expense of efficient administration....'(104)

The task was easier if more than one CAO was available for one could take responsibility for the immediate needs of the civilian population, such as arranging burials and locating food supplies, while his fellow officer worked with the combat troops. It frequently happened that CAOs were unavailable to help the forward troops because loading schedules and lack of their own transport prevented many of them from arriving in their destined area in time to accompany the combat force.

Army attitudes to Civil Affairs Officers and to AMGOT in general will be further addressed in the next section, which details the establishment of military government in Sicily after the setting up of a limited administration in Pantelleria.

Section 4. The Establishment of AMGOT in Sicily

In the first section of this chapter reference was made to the Military Government set up in Pantelleria and to a comment by Harris concerning the absence of coordination between the operating forces and AMG officers.(105)

In the intervening weeks before the invasion of Sicily, coordination between these two arms of the military force showed no sign of improving, neither at AFHQ nor at junior command level. Reference has previously been made to Lord Rennell's problems at AFHQ before the invasion. (106) CAOs arriving in Sicily encountered similar attitudes from Army personnel, who seemed unaware of AMGOT's dual function of assisting the combat forces during the assault phase, and establishing law and order in the rear after they moved on. AMGOT officers, in particular those attached to the Eighth Army in a liaison capacity, had to assume the responsibility of informing army units with whom they came into contact of the role of military government. (107)

Reference has also been previously made to the reluctance of both Force 343 and Force 545 HQs to fit CAOs into landing schedules. Gr Capt Benson, in charge of CAOs in the Eighth Army sector, succeeded in landing 30 officers within 3 days, most of whom, as Harris relates, 'had been smuggled on board.' (108) Within a fortnight 50 more CAOs, who had been assembled in pools at Malta and Sousse, arrived in Sicily.

The Army's initial refusal to include CAOs in their first landing schedules resulted in complaints from fighting formations that AMGOT did not do enough to help them. An irate Lord Rennell wrote to Col French, Deputy Director of Civil Affairs at the War Office, pointing out that the Army commanders 'grouse at having to transport AMGOT personnel and feed my miserable people and grouse because there are not enough of us to do everything we ought to do.'(109) The comment about 'feeding' AMGOT staff refers to Army ration packs issued to troops but frequently withheld from CAOs.

General Montgomery himself sent for the CCAO to complain that there were never sufficient CAOs to take over towns as they were occupied. Rennell explained that CAOs had no vehicles of their own and Army staff refused to convey them on Army transport, in spite of clear instructions to do so. (110) Montgomery suggested that they got cracking on a bike. (111) Greatly offended by the General's high-handed attitude, Rennell complained to Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, who passed on the complaint to Montgomery. His reply to Grigg included the following: "Rennell, dressed as a Major-General, arrived at my TAC HQ... He was very pompous and rather superior; he gave the impression that it was good of him to come. I told him AMGOT was going very badly and hampering our operations. He disagreed and became rather argumentative. He resented any criticism of his show. In my opinion they have a poor lot of chaps in AMGOT; old school ties, the peerage, diseased guardsmen, etc." (112)

Montgomery and other senior officers seemed unable to grasp the fact that it was the Army authorities who were responsible for the lack of CAOs. In the Seventh Army area the situation was even worse and it was not until 28 July that a reinforcement of 62 CAOs reached Palermo. In the meanwhile Lt Col Poletti and his second-in-command, Lt Col Rodd, took over the administration of Palermo city as well as being responsible for the whole of the Seventh Army area until this reinforcement arrived. Even when all CAOs were in their designated towns, many still had problems acquiring transport. One CAO, Capt Dyer, was in sole control of four towns in the province of Trapani, with responsibility for a total population of 42,000. He had no office assistance, his provincial HQ was 40 miles away and transport was essential. In his report to the WO he pointed out the absolute necessity for efficient transport: 'CAOs must get about as much as possible to check matters personally, the reports of local officials often being very unreliable. Motor bikes are not satisfactory, as one can do

little without taking the interpreter as well. The only solution is to requisition a car, if, of course, one is obtainable...'(113) Even if a car could be obtained, the state of the inland roads caused frequent punctures or other breakdowns, which were almost impossible to repair without the necessary spare parts or the accessibility of Army workshops.

General Alexander, summarising the situation on 14 July for General Brooke, reported that the shortage of transport was hampering the progress of infantry, who were forced to march long distances in very high summer temperatures.(114) Buckley describes the sight of British infantry marching mile after mile along perfectly good motor roads as 'anachronistic in modern war.' (The good roads to which he referred were the main southern highways.) Landing at dawn on D-Day, he reported seeing officers riding 'sequestered bicycles, horses and donkeys', because of the lack of transport. (115) In the first stages of an invasion priority is understandably given to tanks and weapons but once assault troops have landed and formed up, transport usually follows in the next wave. In Sicily the transport was slow arriving and when it did arrive, AMGOT was last in the queue.

The 'smuggling aboard', to which Harris referred, of extra CAOs in the Eighth Army sector enabled a complete AMGOT provincial administration to be organised for two southern provinces, Siracusa and Ragusa, in less than a fortnight, in spite of the fact that a number of British CAOs were spared to reinforce the Seventh Army AMG until their full force arrived.(116) In some areas, as military commanders complained, CAOs were not immediately available to take over a commune, through no fault of theirs. The occupying force then took responsibility.

This happened in the town of Biancavilla in Catania Province, when a battalion of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders occupied the town on 6 August. The troops were greeted by a very large crowd, waving white handkerchiefs,

obviously delighted to see them. In the absence of AMGOT officers, the CO, Lt Col Munro, took over responsibility for the town. He arranged meetings with the Maresciallo and the commander of the Carabinieri at the Town Hall to discuss what needed to be done. There were no problems with law and order but the most pressing administrative work was in the hospital where, as Munro records, 'the local doctors having fled, no care had been paid to the patients for over forty-eight hours.' The Battalion's Medical Officer (MO) immediately took over and gradually restored order. (117)

Munro gives no details of any other actions taken but the army personnel could obviously deal with emergencies. Not all Army officers, however, would be acquainted with AMGOT procedures on taking over a town, as detailed in the Directive for the Organisation of Military Government, e.g. the immediate closure of banks and sealing of vaults. When AMGOT officers were able to follow the Army into a commune, both Army and CAOs could be mutually helpful, although, as earlier stated, the lack of coordination between the two Army branches still persisted.

Munro, who kept a diary of the battalion's progress through Sicily, reports that, as in other areas, the retreating Germans had commandeered all food supplies and destroyed what they could not take away. Local citizens reacted by attacking the Germans with resulting casualties on both sides.(118) It is not clear what steps were taken to feed the population in Biancavilla unless army rations were used, and no reference is made in Munro's diary to the arrival of CAOs. The Battalion left the town on 13 August and the first CAO's Situation Report from this area is dated 15 August. It stated that Biancavilla was one of the less badly damaged towns in the Mount Etna region and was reverting to normal but stressed that the whole area was short of food. (119) By this date German forces had begun their withdrawal from the island and the entry of American troops on the night of 16-17 August into Messina signalled the end of the campaign. Within a matter of days the whole

island was under the administration of AMGOT.

General Eisenhower had prepared a message for the Italian people to coincide with the launch of the invasion. The message announced the occupation of Italian territory but emphasised that the invading Allied forces had not come as enemies of the Italian people but as liberators to free them from Fascist and German tyranny. The Allied Military Government to be put in place would take all measures needed to eliminate the Fascist Party organisation, and all its appendages. The operation of discriminatory laws would be ended, political prisoners released, freedom of speech and the press instituted, as far as military interests allowed. Eisenhower ended his message with a reminder to the people of the Italian role in World War I: 'It is therefore your interest, as men whose fathers fought for their freedom, not to resist the Allied Army but to facilitate their mission - the lifting of the Nazi yoke from Europe by quick and total victory.' (120)

Copies of the full text of Eisenhower's message to the Italian people were given to CAOs to display alongside AMGOT Proclamation No.I, which announced the establishment of Military Government and was signed by the Military Governor, General Alexander. This Proclamation made clear that citizens' personal and property rights would be fully respected but that all orders given by AMGOT were to be obeyed. Citizens were warned to refrain from acts hostile to the troops or calculated to disturb public order.

A joint message from the American President and the British Prime Minister was planned to be delivered to the Italian people after the success of Operation HUSKY was assured and was actually broadcast on 16 July. Leaflets containing the message were dropped over Rome and other Italian cities. The message blamed Mussolini for taking Italy into a war fought by Italian soldiers for the interests of Germany and advised the people that their sole hope for survival lay in honourable capitulation.(121)
In connection with the text of this message, the comments

made by Churchill on the original text, submitted by Roosevelt, are worth noting. In the War Cabinet's view, it did not give due account of the British role. The Prime Minister pointed out to Roosevelt that the British were only mentioned once in the text, the emphasis being on the United States or United Nations. He expressed his concern that 'untoward reactions might grow among the British people and their forces that their contribution had not received sufficient recognition.' (122) He then sent an amended text to the President, who, as Churchill recorded 'recognised the justice of our case', and accepted the amended version. Although the matter was settled amicably, it revealed that a measure of uneasiness still existed in the coalition partnership.

Allied propaganda channels had earlier begun a campaign to convince the Sicilians that resistance was futile. BBC Radio London, Radio Algiers and the New York Voice of America broadcasts told the islanders that the mainland Italians did not care about them, and that they would enjoy a better standard of living under Allied occupation. (123) Allied bombers also carried out leaflet raids which pointed out the ever-increasing German influence over the Italian nation, and warned the people that if Germany did win the war, Italy would become a province of Germany under Nazi rule. This was of special significance for the Catanesi whose town had been the base for thousands of German servicemen, who by 1943 were treating their Italian counterparts with undisguised disdain. Hugh Pond refers to the brawls and scuffles which occurred daily in the streets and which the Carabinieri and the Italian Military Police were unable to control. (124) According to Macmillan, General Alexander attributed the weak resistance of the Italians in Sicily to 'the excellence of AFHQ leaflet and broadcasting work.' (125)

At the same time the Italian Government was waging its own propaganda war. Lurid posters were displayed, depicting a beleaguered Italy threatened by a malevolent spider with an

innocent child in its clutches, or American planes bombing schools, churches and hospitals. (126) By early summer 1943 it appears that few Sicilians were heeding Fascist propaganda. They were rapidly becoming disenchanted with the war, with the German presence on the island, with the deteriorating conditions in which they lived and with Fascism. Referring to the atmosphere of despair among the islanders at the time, Maltese states that it led them to wish only to "farla finita, non importa come." (127)

This wish for the war and Fascism to be brought to an end, no matter how, raises the question of what exactly twenty years of Fascism had brought to the island. This will be considered in the next section.

Section 5. Conditions in the Island

Denis Mack Smith has referred to the history of Sicily under twenty-one years of Fascism as 'surprisingly empty' since Mussolini had given less thought to the island than most previous Prime Ministers.(128) He had achieved a measure of success in bringing the Mafia to heel under the leadership of the Prefect, Cesare Mori, and although murders and violent crime in the west of the island had decreased significantly, it was impossible to destroy the organisation completely. Judith Chubb points out that only minor and middle-level Mafiosi fell into Mori's net since the most influential Mafia leaders had become respectable and many were closely linked to noted politicians or influential members of Palermo society.(129) In the 1930s two large Cosche (organised bands of Mafiosi) had come to light in Agrigento province, and the arrival of the Allies in 1943 and the subsequent release of Mafiosi claiming to be 'political' prisoners showed that the organisation had by no means been destroyed. (130)

Apart from visiting the island or working there, (as had the CAO for Catania town), it was not always easy to obtain an accurate picture of conditions in Sicily during the pre-war years from native sources. Journalism in Italy had been brought under Government control by special decrees in 1923 and 1928, so that only approved journalists on the Professional Roll were employed. (131) The Foreign Office obtained most of its information via its diplomats and visitors' reports and much of this later formed the basis of the Sicily Zone Handbook issued to AMGOT officers. Among the reports in the early nineteen-twenties was one from the British Chargé d'Affaires in Rome in October 1920 which stated that the Italian Government's attitude of almost total neglect of the island was largely responsible for the agitation in favour of Separatism, which although not a very strong movement, was not foreign to Sicilian sentiments.(132) The British Embassy's Commercial Secretary

visited Sicily in 1927, and his report on the island was very negative. He stated that it was hopelessly behind the times as a business centre; 'There are some honest men and traders but they are said to be few and far between.' (133) He added that an attempt had been made to bring Sicily up to date with the construction of roads and railways but the mental attitude of the people could not be changed in a day. The lack of progress made in the development of means of transport in the island was a striking contrast with the great progress being made on the mainland in electrifying principal railways and making them efficient. (134)

FO reports in the early 1930s revealed that trade was still stagnant, unemployment was increasing and the poorer classes were short of food. Poverty in the island was greater than in any other part of Italy, according to the British Ambassador. (135) The island census in 1936 revealed that day labourers had a maximum of 200-220 days of work per annum. (136) The Provveditorato alle Opere Pubbliche per la Sicilia published impressive statistics for the 'bonifica' in course of execution, citing over 300,000 hectares between 1932 and 1938 which had been reclaimed and improved. These figures, according to Paolo Arena, were quite evidently "una delle solite mastodontiche esagerazione di pretto stile fascista". (137)

In the attempts to make Italy self-sufficient in cereals, marginal lands were brought under cultivation, and subsidies paid by the government to the landowners. Because of these subsidies the latifondisti saw no reason to change their traditional methods of production with the result that the same fields were sown with grain every year and there was no crop rotation. This led to decreased fertility as the dust bowl spread, the situation being compounded by the lack of fertilisers. Less pasture land was available for animals and by 1938 Sicily had only 2% of the cows and pigs in Italy, although possessing more than 20% of the horses and mules. Mack Smith points out that this was an index of poverty since it represented the many wasted hours



travelling to work and back in the deserted Sicilian countryside.' (138)

One of the most urgent problems in the island had long been the control of water for irrigation and electricity but little action had been taken to remedy it. During his visit to Sicily in 1937 the Duce was reported to be much displeased by the backwardness of public works, particularly in regard to the water supply of Palermo. (139) Mack Smith reports that in four years only one aqueduct had been constructed in Sicily, compared with four hundred in the rest of Italy. (140) Large areas of land, including the plain of Catania, were affected by the lack of properly constructed water channels and suffered from floods when rivers broke their banks. The plain of Catania was drained after the war under a scheme promoted by the Cassa del Mezzogiorno. (141)

The FO's annual report for 1937 referred to the fact that Fascism was still less popular in Sicily than in other parts of Italy, which was probably one of the reasons for the Duce's decision to hold the annual military manoeuvres there and to pay a personal visit to inaugurate new works. The report stated that many promises had been given to the islanders but 'grinding poverty still continues, taxation is heavy and prices are rising; much show is made with the public works which have been put in hand but so far the problem of slum clearance has hardly been touched.' (142) During this visit, however, Mussolini promised not only to remove the shanty town still existing near Messina since the 1908 earthquake, but also to liquidate the latifondi. He announced his programme for the settlement of large estates in July 1939 along with his proposal to house labourers on the land which they worked, saving them time and energy in travelling. Most Sicilians did not want to change their way of life and almost all the new villages remained empty. (143)

The Assistant Military Attaché to the British Embassy in Rome visited Sicily in April 1940, and formed the impression

that 'feelings were running higher in Sicily on contemporary events than they were in Rome. The reaction to German aggression against Denmark and Norway was much sharper; there was a strong, outspoken desire to avoid war and equally strong feelings of resentment that produce from the island was being exported to Germany.'(144)

Once war had been declared, most information on conditions in the island came via foreign agencies, and although warning that reports of conditions in enemy countries must always be treated with reserve, the FO added that those received from different sources 'have largely corroborated each other.' Among reports cited by the FO was one from the Holy See in September 1940 which stated that anti-Fascist agitation was growing in direct proportion to British bombing. By August 1941 US sources in Rome indicated growing Sicilian disaffection and increasing pro-British sympathy. In October a Swiss source reported that a crowd in Palermo had torn up ration cards; in November the Greek Minister in London, citing what he termed a reliable source, stated that the sympathies of the people, always rather indifferent to Fascism, were being influenced partly by propaganda made by relatives in the USA and partly by British bombing. This 'reliable source' also reported that over two-thirds of the officials of Sicilian origin serving in the island had been moved to other parts of Italy. (145) A report prepared by the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) also referred to the expulsion from Sicily of government officials who openly expressed anti-Fascist sentiments, but stated that the order had later been rescinded. There are, however, further references in later PWE reports to Sicilian officials who had been transferred to Northern Italy. (146)

Between September 1942 and March 1943 morale-boosting visits were made to the island by members of the Royal Family and by Vidussoni, Secretary-General of the Fascist Party. A special Mass for Peace was celebrated in Catania Cathedral in December 1942. The propaganda campaign reached

its peak on 31 March 1943 when the anniversary of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 was commemorated. The campaign did little to raise the morale of the population. Letters sent during this period from Sicilians to relatives in the armed forces reveal not only the extensive food shortages but the difficulties among the farming communities of finding workers. (147)

It was clear that none of these morale-boosting endeavours could remedy the essential causes of the island's malaise. Fascist propaganda had proclaimed the island invulnerable, and to preserve an illusion of normality, no steps were taken to evacuate the coastlines so that fishermen and contadini, as well as other workers in the coastal towns, continued to work there, and were well aware of the paucity of coastal fortifications. (148) Air raids on industrial towns, airfields and railways had further lowered morale and disrupted the transport of badly needed supplies. As an island, Sicily relied heavily on imports, not only coal, steel and cement for war purposes but foodstuffs and medical supplies for day-to-day living. Ferries from the mainland were obliged to give priority to military traffic and by March 1943 an already serious civilian supply situation was becoming precarious. Maltese points out that even the basic ration of 200 grams of substandard bread a day was soon unobtainable and only oranges were available to those who could not afford Black Market prices.(149)

Richard Massock, Rome correspondent for The Associated Press until his expulsion from Italy after America entered the war, describes Italian anger at the flow of foodstuffs to Germany: 'These food products were the principal means of payment for the supplies of coal, machinery and munitions from Germany.'(150) The Agenzia Economica Finanziaria answered critics by publishing figures to show that Germany received 'only one-fifth of Italian citrus foods and cauliflowers and even less of other products.'(151) Most of the citrus foods and vegetables, however, came from Sicily.

Reynolds and Eleanor Packard, of the Rome Bureau of the United Press, wrote an account of life as correspondents in Italy until, like Massock, they were repatriated. They list the number of items rationed even before Italy went to war; coffee, gasoline, coal, sugar and soap. The first three items were rationed because of the effect of the war on overseas shipping. Sugar was being used to manufacture alcohol to supplement the limited supplies of gasoline, while increased production of armaments caused a shortage of fats formerly used in making soap.(152) Shortly after Italy entered the war, a number of foods were added to the list. These included rice, flour, butter, lard, pasta and olive oil. By May 1942, when the Packards left Italy, the food situation was 'immeasurably worse' and even chestnuts, lentils and beans were very scarce. These shortages also applied to Sicily, particularly in the large urban areas. Here, too, the Black Market flourished as in Rome. The Packards comment that the aptitude of the Italians in bootlegging rationed products 'showed almost a national characteristic.'(153) In spite of the attempts of OVRA to stop the house-to-house peddling of contraband produce, bootlegging flourished and the only people who did not buy contraband goods on the Black Market were those who could not afford them. (154)

Shortage of food was not the only hardship. In Sicily winters can be very cold and the lack of heating in homes and office buildings added to the general malaise. Clothes rationing had been introduced in October 1941 and shops and factories were suddenly closed on 30 September to allow for stocktaking. However, shopkeepers were keen to sell their goods before a price ceiling was introduced and those with available money rushed to stock up on clothes, starting, as the Packards wrote, 'a bootleg regime of a magnitude far overshadowing anything that had thus far occurred on the food market.'(155) This was the situation in Rome and in the large towns in Sicily but villagers in the interior of the island lacked both shops and money to stock up.

By May 1943 rations provided barely 1,500 calories a day for the normal consumer in Sicily, with a supplement for those in heavy manual work. Fruit and vegetables were fairly abundant in some areas but transport problems often prevented them from being available across the island. Basic rations were 1,050 grams of bread per week, 625 grams of sugar and 100 grams of fat, with extra bread for workers in heavy industry. (156) The Black Market flourished but the workforce, the operaio and the impiegato, whose wages were frozen on the outbreak of war, were unable to pay the ever-increasing prices. Contadini, however, who possessed their own plots of land, could sell produce at Black Market prices to those who could afford to pay, and consequently became better off than they had ever been. (157)

Newsreels and photographs taken by Army film units, directed by Capt Alan Whicker, show the reception given to British troops, whose arrival signified an end to bombing and the German presence. Ezio Costanzo described the reason for the welcome given to the soldiers marching through Catania town: 'La gente continuava ad applaudirli e lo faceva perché quegli elmetti a forma di padella significavano la fine delle privazioni e della fame. Rappresentavano anche la fine del fascismo ma questa era l'ultima considerazione che i Catanesi facevano, dato che, per prima cosa, quei soldati significavano cibo.' (158)

AMGOT officers had been instructed to 'put first things first', the first thing being to help combat units clear the enemy out of the territory. The next was to 'bury the dead and feed the living'. In Catania the dead could not be buried because the cemetery was under constant bombardment and there was no food in the town. (159) Flour arrived the next day but it was a temporary measure and obtaining food supplies became the main preoccupation of AMGOT staff in almost every town. Burials continued to be a problem and one RASC officer, who arrived at Catania on 14 August after

spending a month in the south of the island, described Catania as 'the most unhealthy location we had had so far. There were German and Italian corpses lying about all over the place. Most had not been buried, some hastily buried under a small heap of earth including on our location. The smells were frightful.' (160) The situation had not improved at all by 2 September, when an Infantry officer, waiting on the quay at Catania to board his LCI for the invasion of the mainland, wrote of sniffing 'the odour of decomposing corpses.' (161)

The whole island would suffer from the underestimation by the planners at AFHQ of the chaos and disruption which would be left behind at the end of hostilities, and which led to a shortfall in available supplies. In particular Catania, as the second largest province in Sicily, had more problems to be solved by AMGOT than most other provinces, since its capital had been bombed 67 times, compared with Palermo and Messina, both bombed on 50 occasions, and consequently had suffered more damage to its infrastructure. Even those plans which AFHQ had made were not properly carried out, so that the population's belief that the Allied soldiers signified food would soon prove erroneous.

The occupation of the province took exactly one month, from 14 July, when Vizzini fell to the Eighth Army, to 14 August when British troops entered Castiglione. The immediate problem faced by AMGOT staff in every town they entered was that of finding sufficient food supplies and finding ways of distributing them, as will be examined in the next chapter.

Introduction to Chapters 4 and 5

Allied Military Government in Catania Province

July 1943 - February 1944

The province of Catania has been specifically chosen for this study of Allied Military Government in Sicily because it presents a distinctly British (and Empire) element in the joint Anglo-American administration of the island. It was the British Eighth Army who fought across the plain of Catania and took the surrender of the provincial capital and it was a British officer, Lt Col Lord Gerald Wellesley, who became the SCAO of the province. The nationality of the SCAO determined the ratio of British and American CAOs in each province so that AMGOT in Catania had a higher proportion of British staff. When Lord Wellesley resigned from his post in October, he was replaced by another British SCAO, Lt Col Charles French, who had been SCAO of Siracusa province since the invasion.

Catania had suffered more than any other province from Allied air raids and had borne the brunt of ground combat. Civilian casualties were consequently much higher and damage to the infrastructure considerably greater than in other provinces. This could well determine the attitude of the local population towards the occupiers in spite of the historical connections which Sicily, and the province of Catania in particular, had with the British. The Sicily Zone Handbook (SZH), a manual produced by the Foreign Office and issued to all military government officers, pointed out that these connections dated back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Nelson rescued Ferdinand I from Naples and was rewarded by the King's gift of the abbey and estate of Maniace in Brontë in Catania province. Some years later, in 1811, Lord William Bentinck arrived in Sicily as C-in-C British forces. He drew up the Constitution of a national government for the island, the first in its history. The SZH pointed out that Bentinck had

created a great love for England among the Sicilians and English laws had given them a great sense of security, of which a memory still remained. The SZH added, however, that it would be rash to suppose that the population would welcome a British invasion.(1)

Another reason for the choice of Catania province is that the deterioration in the relationship between the local population and its Axis partner is most clearly seen here. Catania was host to thousands of German servicemen based in the provincial capital and nearby bases. By the summer of 1943 these relations had become openly hostile, the Germans now being regarded more as occupiers than coalition partners. Would the Catanesi regard the British, who unlike the Americans, were a relatively unknown quantity, as the liberators announced by General Eisenhower in his message to the Italian people or as yet another set of occupiers?

For many years there had been very close relationships between the Americans and Sicilians because of the large number of emigrants to the USA, particularly from the western provinces of the island, where the American Seventh Army was scheduled to operate. The Seventh contained an estimated fifteen per cent of men of Sicilian origin, and the SCAO, Lt Col Poletti, was also of Sicilian background. Emigrants and their families in Sicily maintained close contact and many of the older islanders, having worked for years in the USA, had returned to the island. Sicilian connections with Americans were therefore far closer than with the British. The SZH, however, forecast that pro-British feelings would be found in certain circles of the higher aristocracy and among traders with long-established business connections with Great Britain.[The reference to the aristocracy was taken up by Professor Mangiameli of Catania University in his preface to an Italian publication of the SZH when he pointed out that SCAO Lord Wellesley retained in office the Podestà, the Marquis Di San Giuliano.](2) The reactions of the average Catanese would be more difficult to assess.

Two towns in the province have been chosen to illustrate the variety of problems and difficulties which faced AMGOT officers. The first is Catania, the provincial capital, an Archdiocese and University town, seat of the provincial administration and corporative organisations, a thriving port, whose population of almost 260,000 made it the second largest town in the island. The second is the rural town of Caltagirone, with a population of 40,000, situated in a commanding position 2,000 feet above the south-western edge of the Catania plain, 50 miles from the provincial capital. Its livelihood was based almost solely on agriculture and a small number of ceramic workshops. For AMGOT administrative purposes after its capture it became the HQ for fourteen other villages in the south-west of the province, forming 'Caltagirone district'.

The Senior Civil Affairs Officer and his staff, including specialist officers who regularly visited the communes in their province, were based in the provincial capital, where possible in the same offices used by the previous administration. Apart from its role as provincial capital, Catania was an important military and air base, particularly for German servicemen, and its port, used to transport Axis troops and supplies to North Africa, had been one of the main targets for Allied bombers, resulting in heavy damage to the city's infrastructure. Since the port facilities were needed for the forthcoming invasion of the Italian mainland and the import of supplies, CAOs setting up the AMGOT administration had the additional task of finding suitable warehouse and storage facilities. They also had to deal with the return of thousands of refugees once the war had passed beyond Catania and this led to ever-increasing shortages of supplies for which the Allies were unprepared.

Many of these refugees were returning from Caltagirone or its neighbouring villages. Although considered a safe area in the province, the town had been subject to two air raids on the eve of the Allied invasion. These refugees became a

problem for both towns. They needed housing and employment but many lacked the relevant documentation necessary to register for work or to obtain state benefits in the town to which they had fled, and when they returned home, they often found their houses destroyed. Since Caltagirone was one of the first towns in the province to be captured, AMGOT became involved in the refugee problem at an early stage of the invasion but the real difficulty for the administration in this wheat-growing area proved to be the collection of grain from producers determined to hoard their crop.

The efficiency of the provincial SCAO, his ability to work with the local Italian municipal staff and his capacity to support his CAOs largely determined the degree of success of AMGOT administration in each province. However, the role of AFHQ was crucial in providing essential supplies, not only basic food but medical requirements and other materials to rebuild the local economy. Unfortunately the organisation in Algiers was not always up to the task and inevitably the local people blamed AMGOT officials for shortages for which they were not responsible.

The senior AMGOT officer in charge of the early months of AMGOT administration in Catania province was Lt Col Gerald Wellesley, third son of the fourth Duke of Wellington. In common with all SCAOs, he was subject to the directives, instructions and orders issued by the CCAO, Major General Lord Francis Rennell, second Baron of Rodd. Since these two officers played important roles in the administration of the province and, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, did not always share the same views on matters of interpretation of regulations, some biographical details of both men are included in this introduction. Rennell, son of a well-known diplomat, had spent much of his childhood abroad, and was fluent in French, German and particularly Italian, his father having served on three occasions in Rome, the last as Ambassador from 1908 to 1919. Rennell had served in the Royal Field Artillery during World War I, in

both France and Italy. In 1918 he was involved in the military administration of Syria. In 1919 he entered the Diplomatic Service and held posts in Rome and Sofia. He resigned after five years to begin a new career in banking. During periods of leave he explored areas of the Sahara and Libya, and the books he produced on his studies of tribal life there gained him awards from the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), of which he was later appointed President.

He returned to the Army in World War II as Major the Hon Francis Rodd. His previous experience in Syria in 1918 and his successful career in banking led to his appointment as the Controller of Finance and Accounts at HQ, Middle East. In July 1942 he was appointed Chief Political Officer at HQ Nairobi, and was also responsible for the administration of Madagascar. He was appointed Chief Civil Affairs Officer for AMGOT in March 1943, and served in this post until January 1944, when he returned to England. After the war he resumed his banking career and worked actively for the RGS. In 1948 his *British Military Administration of Africa* was published.(3)

Lord Wellesley, ten years older than Rennell, entered the Diplomatic Service in 1908, and served as Secretary in Rome and St Petersburg, before resigning in 1919 to study architecture. He became a FRIBA specialising in decorations to existing buildings and was appointed Surveyor of the King's Works of Art. He shared Rennell's interest in desert travel, publishing accounts of his journeys to Sinai and Judea. Although in his mid-fifties, he enlisted in the Grenadier Guards when war broke out, serving with the British Expeditionary Force in France. He then attended the first 'politico-military' training course in Cambridge, set up to train officers for liaison duties, and was posted to the Middle East, serving in Cairo until his departure for Sicily, where he had been appointed SCAO of Catania in the AMGOT administration.

In September 1943 his nephew, the then Duke of Wellington, was killed at Salerno and he inherited the title. This led

to his resignation the following month and his return to England. After the war he published a number of books relating to the first Duke, and generously gave the Duke's London house and its contents to the nation as the Wellington Museum. (4)

Both officers had similar educational backgrounds and diplomatic careers. Their families were well acquainted, Rennell's father being godfather to Wellesley's son, the present Duke. Their personalities, however, appear to be quite dissimilar. Rennell's official reports and letters give the impression of a forceful personality with a wide variety of interests, ready to speak his mind and prepared to upset colleagues if necessary. Harold Macmillan, British Resident Minister at AFHQ, who was in regular contact with Rennell during the planning phase of AMGOT, states in his *War Diaries* (22 August 1943) that 'Francis (with occasional lapses into a 'prima donna' mood) is really awfully good at his job. He is quick, intelligent and persistent. His chief fault is that he is sometimes impulsive and makes decisions almost too rapidly.' (5)

Wellesley appears to have been a determined and dedicated officer, who took his work very seriously. He kept a diary which provides a great deal of information both on his experiences after landing in the first assault wave on the island and his day-to-day work. As SCAO his reports to HQ are detailed and the dedication to his work is evident. He appears to have had a good working relationship with his staff and the municipal authorities, (but not with the pro-German Archbishop of Catania). He followed administrative instructions to the letter as far as local circumstances allowed. Although always aware that an AMGOT officer's first obligation was to the military, (his province had the largest military presence), he was always conscious of the needs of a population which had endured more hardship than any other as a result of war.

There were, however, clashes of personality between the two men which could have arisen from any number of reasons,

and which will be described in the next chapter. Here the focus will be on the problems associated with a large town, a provincial capital, in the immediate aftermath of a bitterly fought war.

Chapter 4

AMGOT Administration in Catania Town

5 August 1943-10 February 1944

Section 1. The Arrival of AMGOT in Catania

The Sicilian historian Salvatore Nicolosi, who has written a number of books on Catania, begins his account of war in Catania with a description of the scene in front of the Cathedral in the Piazza del Duomo, where, on Monday 10 June 1940, a huge crowd had gathered to listen to Mussolini's declaration of war on Great Britain and France. The Duce's speech was relayed by loudspeakers to the crowds in the Piazza and in the neighbouring streets. On the balcony of the Fascist Party HQ were the Prefetto, Tommaso Ciampani, Podestà Emanuele Giardina and Party officials. Telegrams sent to the king and Duce described the local reaction as 'una grandiosa dimostrazione popolare di esaltante certezza nella vittoria.' (6)

This apparent euphoria did not last long. In less than a month the reality of war came to Catania. On 5 July its airport was bombed. 17 people were killed, 12 seriously injured. Nicolosi points out that the Catania newspaper, *Il Popolo di Sicilia*, recorded only a few casualties. This was in line with the policy of *minimizzazione*, introduced by Minculpop, to minimise enemy victories and play down the scale of Italian defeats and losses, a policy specifically designed to 'sostenere il fronte interno'. (7)

More than three years and sixty air raids later, on 5 August 1943, the AMGOT team, led by the SCAO, Lt Col Wellesley, entered the provincial capital. The SCAO had arrived on the island in the first assault wave of combat forces on 10 July and, not having his own transport, begged a lift on an army lorry to Siracusa, which had been quickly captured. At the Casa del Fascio he met the mayor and local

authorities and took the first steps in setting up an AMGOT administration. Although no food was apparently available, some stores were later found and the SCAO ensured that the Carabinieri, who had been disarmed by combat troops, were rearmed to guard these stores. (8) A British sailor, later describing conditions in Siracusa at the time of the invasion, recalled seeing local people searching dustbins for left-overs from army rations - the first indication of Sicily's chronic food shortage. (9)

On 12 July the AMGOT party of CAOs assigned to Siracusa arrived and Wellesley and his team made their way north to Lentini in readiness to move on to Catania following General Montgomery's planned attack across the Plain of Catania. The General had hoped to take the provincial capital by 14 July but, thwarted by the unexpected strength of the Axis resistance around the Primosole bridge, changed his strategy to divert his troops to the west around Mount Etna. Wellesley was obliged to stay in Lentini, where he carried out typical AMGOT duties; organising bread queues, issuing travel permits and finding billets for CAOs and Army officers. He also had the unusual task of settling a strike of local grave diggers. (10) Wellesley's diary says little about Lentini, described by historian Paul Ginsborg as a typical agro-town in the rural south of Sicily, where 80% of the male workforce were day labourers and most of the population suffered from malaria. Roads were unpaved, without drains, and 'were an evil smelling muddy mess in winter and a dust pit in summer.' (11)

A number of towns in the southern half of Catania province were soon captured in a secondary attack inland by Eighth Army units, including Vizzini, Grammichele, Scordia, Mineo, Militello and Caltagirone. On 25 July the SCAO was told by Gr Capt Benson, head of Eighth Army AMGOT, to take over the administration of all Catania province already in Allied hands. Wellesley visited these communes and sent in CAOs. By the end of July most of the specialist officers of the six Divisions were in place, except for the Legal Division,

which had only one officer attached to each Task Force, both employed as CAOs for a month following D-Day. At Lentini Capt Ball of the Public Health Division (PHD) and Major Spencer of Civil Supply, were kept very busy, Ball dealing with anti-malaria precautions and an outbreak of typhoid, and Spencer with a serious food shortage. (12)

On 5 August Catania town was captured. As Capt Gardner of the Durham Light Infantry led his troops into the Piazza del Duomo, he was handed a note from the mayor stating that the municipal authorities awaited orders at the Carabinieri HQ in Piazza Giovanni Verga. When he arrived there with other British officers, the mayor, the Marchese Di San Giuliano, surrendered the town. Lt Col Wellesley could now set up his administration. He had a staff of six CAOs; Majors Rolph and Monk, Capts Carr, Liddell and Thornitt-Smith, Lt Hunter, and two Civil Affairs Police Officers (CAPOs), Majors Battersby and Gould. (13) Units of the RE and Signals were also available to deal with technical problems. The capital had no water (the mains had been cut by the Germans), and no electricity. Heavy bombing and shelling had resulted in streets blocked with masonry and buildings in a dangerous state. Wellesley noted in his diary that he had met the mayor and Prefect and arrested the Questore (Chief of Police), presumably for political reasons. He was later reinstated. (14)

Two days later a more formal meeting was held with the SCAO, CAOs, Major Battersby, and the municipal authorities. Nicolosi reports that the Prefect, Salvatore Azzaro, requested the mayor to present him to the SCAO as the nomination of Badoglio and not of Mussolini. (15) Azzaro was Vice-Prefect to the former Prefect, Emilio Grazioli, who fled to Rome on 14 July on learning from a foreign news broadcast that he was wanted by the Allies as a war criminal on account of his activities when he was High Commissioner of Ljublyana. (He later served as the Prefect

of Ravenna under the Italian Social Republic until October 1944 and then Turin until April 1945). When Mussolini heard of Grazioli's hasty departure, he appointed Azzaro to replace him. (16)

Presumably the SCAO retained the Prefect in post because he had been presented as a Badoglio nomination. The mayor and his deputy, Russo, were retained on a temporary basis. Capt Thornitt-Smith, who had worked for a firm of sulphur exporters for five years in Catania before the outbreak of war, became the town CAO.(17) The Catanesi were informed of the appointments and the fact that all municipal offices had reopened via the local newspaper.

Catania town had been regularly bombed before the invasion but from 13 July to 5 August it was subject, with other towns in the province, to concentrated attacks not only from the air but from heavy ground artillery and off shore naval guns. Damage to property was extensive and compensation claims to the War Damage Department of the Provincial Finance Office numbered nearly 50,000. (18) The Prefecture's estimate of the number of casualties in the province from 23 June 1940 to 31 December 1943 was 4,918 killed and 4,054 injured, many of these resulting from an Allied raid on 14 July on the town of Paternò.(19) Situated at some distance from military targets, this town was considered a safe haven for refugees and more than 6,000 inhabitants of Catania had moved there. Although an Allied leaflet drop had warned people to stay away from road junctions, hundreds of local residents and refugees became casualties when the junctions there were bombed. (20) It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of figures supplied by the authorities, not only from the government policy of under-reporting casualties but because not all victims were identified. Names and addresses of refugees were not always known to the local commune authority. For various reasons many people did not carry identity documents and were not registered for legitimate employment or state assistance. Although relatives were asked to report any missing family

members, not all did so. Historian Alfio Caruso suggests that if a victim was in receipt of a sussidio (state benefit) his family would be reluctant to report his death and lose the only source of income they received.(21)

When the Eighth Army entered Catania, only 60,000 of its population of nearly 260,000 were still in the town. Of these 12,000 were living in what Wellesley described as 'huge underground shelters', lacking both sanitation and light. (22) These were the sunken remains of the Anfiteatro Romano, built from lava blocks in the second century AD, much of which lies under Piazza Stesicoro in the Via Etnea. Wellesley closed these shelters during the day to have them thoroughly cleaned, and moved the homeless who had been living there into an empty army barracks, considered too insanitary to billet British troops. (23)

Christopher Buckley described his entry into Catania as 'the gloomiest, most profoundly depressing entry' of any town he had known as a war correspondent. 'The people were hungry and tired, frightened and nerve-ridden.' When he entered the Piazza del Duomo, the city seemed frozen into immobility and not a soul was in the streets. Within ten minutes a 'haggard, wild, cheering mob appeared and broke into a German-owned drapery store nearby, which they began to loot from top to bottom.' (24) Their actions were probably a form of revenge for the looting carried out by the Germans in retreat but also an opportunity for the poorest to acquire an item normally out of their reach. As Buckley wrote: 'Only the poorest remained in Catania.'(25)

Constant bombing, shortages of food and basic items such as soap, damaged or destroyed homes, all these factors had taken their toll on the population. Morale was very low and would take some time to improve, as the SCAO's report on progress up to the end of September reveals. He writes that a Catanese, recently returned from Palermo, had observed that life in the island's capital had almost returned to normal and people looked gay and happy, whilst in Catania there appeared to be an air of general depression as though

the city had not yet recovered from the impact of war. (26) The SCAO adds his own comment: 'Possibly the military control is more thorough in Catania than in Palermo and this may account for the slower return to normal.' The large number of servicemen in the Catania area and the strategic importance of the town in the build-up to the invasion of the mainland clearly necessitated strict military control.

The town was a staging post where combat troops and their back-up units were waiting to embark, using the port as the Allies' main channel for transporting men and supplies. It was AMGOT's task to provide accommodation, arrange leisure facilities and help the army in every possible way. In the SCAO's report, cited above, he had written: 'Every day large numbers of fresh troops come into the town requiring billets. This leads to evictions and requisitions on a large scale.'(27)

The day after AMGOT's arrival in Catania town, General Montgomery appeared and instructed Wellesley to clear the streets immediately to allow tanks and lorries to pass through. This was in accordance with Directives which stressed that the needs of the military took priority over everything else. As no POWs were available, Wellesley arranged a work force of local men to clear the vast amount of masonry lying in the roads and noted in his diary that it was an important point, after feeding the population, to clear the streets.'(28)

He had, in fact, put the needs of the Catanesi first when he arrived because there was no flour in the town and he had immediately made arrangements to procure some grain and transport it to the mill by horse-drawn carts because he could not risk losing army lorries since the mill was still under enemy fire.(29) Wellesley was very aware of military needs and devoted a large proportion of AMGOT's efforts to meet them but he was also very concerned with the humanitarian aspect of AMGOT's work and noted in his diary: 'My supply officers and I did our best to grapple with the

terrible problem of feeding the refugees.'(30) At the same time it was vital to establish law and order in the local society so that the new administration could function properly. This was the task of one of the administration's six specialist divisions, the Public Safety Division, led by a team of CAPOs, who, when necessary, could call on the services of Military Police and CAOs.

Section 2. The Public Safety Division

In a large urban conurbation of over 250,000 inhabitants and a mobile force of servicemen of equal number passing through, the presence of a strong Public Safety Division was imperative. The AMGOT planners had initially deferred a decision on the establishment of a police force to maintain law and order until the debate on Direct v Indirect Rule of the occupied territory was settled. (31) The planners were aware that in the first stages of occupation, Allied MPs would be in short supply because of duties with formations, and military personnel with no police training would not be suitable. (32) A report from the Prime Minister's Office stated that an AMGOT police force for the whole island would have required 10,000 men, who could only have been obtained from the combat forces. (33) The choice was to use Italian police forces, either commanded by Allied CAPOs or by their own Italian officers, supervised by CAPOs. The latter alternative was chosen, thereby solving the manpower problem and ensuring an experienced force with local knowledge.

The functions of CAPOs, many of whom were recruited from the London Metropolitan Police Force or from a large city force such as Birmingham or Manchester, were as follows: To take over and supervise the administration and control of the existing police forces; to set up patrols for security in conjunction with combat units; to coordinate with Military Intelligence and Military Police officers; to assist CAOs in enforcing military law locally (e.g. obeying

instructions set out in the Proclamations) and civil laws; to assist in requisitioning billets for combat units and to help organise military courts. (34)

The first of the General Administrative Instructions, GAI No.1, had listed the principles of good administration and emphasised the preservation of law, order and justice. (35) The presence of a CAPO was of great help to a hard-pressed CAO in achieving this objective but in the early stages of the invasion CAPOs were frequently not available and a CAO was obliged to supervise the local police in addition to his normal duties. On the other hand, it could happen that the only AMGOT official in a commune was a CAPO, who then undertook all the duties of a CAO.

The Carabinieri Reali (CCRR) formed the basis of the Public Security force employed by the Allies. They were a military organisation, housed in barracks, and subordinate to the War Ministry for recruitment, organisation, pay and discipline, and the Ministry of the Interior for Police duties. Urban police, Agenti di Sicurezza Pubblica and Guardie Municipali were also utilised, although Wellesley's September report to AMGOT HQ stated that it was difficult to impose discipline on them. (36) There was criticism in the British Parliament and press at the decision to employ 'the chief agents and instruments of Fascist dictatorship', as MPs Aneurin Bevan and Ivor Thomas described the CCRR. These views were refuted by the CCAO, who pointed out the impossibility of establishing a new police force from Allied sources, or of using untrained troops and reducing the strength of the combat forces. He chose to rely on the CCRR because of their past tradition and because they were deemed less corrupt than other police organisations. (37) Their service dress was almost identical to that of the regular army, apart from insignia, and many were mistakenly taken as Prisoners of War by Allied combat troops. As a result the prestige of the force was soon diminished, and

many of the less law-abiding citizens concluded that the Italian police force would be abolished. This led to a number of minor disturbances and looting but when the force's authority was restored, conditions returned almost to normal. Harris comments that the restoration of the morale of the CCRR was 'the notable achievement of the Metropolitan Police officers'.(38) General Alexander also commended their work and issued an Order of the Day to the CCRR's commander in Sicily. (39)

The senior CAPO, Major Battersby, a former Birmingham Police Officer, was assisted by Major Gould from Croydon and both did much to boost morale among the CCRR by introducing patrols in which an Allied MP and a Carabinieri worked together. Apparently instruction needed to be given to the local police in crowd control, to ensure that bread was fairly distributed to people, who by nature were not inclined to form orderly queues. Until the police were trained the crowds were supervised by AMGOT officers and enlisted men, whose time was needed for more pressing matters. (40) After some training from MPs, CCRR personnel also proved their usefulness as traffic controllers.

Nicolosi relates the story of a local Catania policeman, Warrant officer Rosario Torrisi of the Guardie Municipali, who was the first to report to Battersby for orders after the surrender of Catania. The senior CAPO promptly promoted him Lieutenant. This promotion was not in Battersby's power to confer but such was the latter's presence and authority that Torrisi's promotion was never disputed.(41)

Problems of military indiscipline soon arose in both Catania town and in the surrounding country areas, and was noted in Wellesley's first report to AMGOT HQ. He referred to the waning popularity of British troops, who 'frequently insult respectable women and go into shops and simply take anything that pleases them... One report indicates the serious popular feeling against the British Army and the local Catanesi now compare their behaviour unfavourably with that of the Germans.' (42) Instances of drunken troops

lying in gutters were becoming common. When AMGOT's Educational Adviser arrived in Catania on 5 September, he was shocked by the 'drunkenness throughout the place among British, Empire and American troops. Catania is in a terrible state, much of it a shambles, rubble lies across to the town everywhere.' (43) Catania was indeed in a sorry state 'with the population still cowed' as Wellesley had stated in his report. However, he adopted a more optimistic tone in a letter to friends in which he explained the reason for the amount of debris in the streets: 'As the houses have thick walls built of large stones this is much greater in volume and has been more difficult to remove than it is at home. Now after one month life has almost returned to normal. A few shops have even opened and some parts of the town have water and electric light. You cannot imagine the excitement as these things gradually return.' (44) Taking into account the extensive damage to the town, a return to complete normality would be very gradual indeed.

The full support of the CCRR in maintaining law and order was essential to every SCAO. Wellesley had at first expressed some reservations about the quality of the force: 'There is no reason to suppose that the CCRR are less loyal to this Administration than they were to the former. But it cannot be maintained that they are an efficient police force. They are very slack in enforcing curfew, preventing the return of refugees to the town and taking action against the Black Market. Not one serious Black Market case has been brought to light by their efforts.' (45)

However, it seems that the efforts of Majors Battersby and Gould were paying dividends. The next monthly report from Wellesley refers to a considerable improvement in the Carabinieri's efficiency 'and as a consequence of energetic instructions' there were a large number of Black Market prosecutions and sequestrations of Black Market goods. The

urban police and the Customs and Excise officers, (Guardia di Finanza), although not up to the standard of the Carabinieri, had done much useful work in suppressing trading offences.(46)

Although Wellesley was pleased to report an improvement in the CCRR's performance in Catania, their full cooperation was lacking, as Harris indicates, in AMGOT's attempts to suppress black market activities. (47) The main reason for this was the inadequacy of police pay in a time of increasing inflation. This led to frequent acts of police connivance with black market operators. AMGOT HQ ascribed the low morale of the police not only to insufficient wages and a rising cost of living but to their loss of prestige resulting from military occupation and interference with police functions, and other attendant circumstances. It was decided to alleviate the problem by increasing wages. Consideration was also given to increasing their bread ration but it was thought that this would provoke prejudice among the public against the force. A request was made to AFHQ to supply cloth for new uniforms for the police. They were also given priority on local leather stocks to repair boots. More requisitioning of vehicles for the use of the CCRR was also ordered. These measures restored a degree of independence to the force but they had little effect on black market operations and more stringent measures were later introduced.(48)

The CCRR had proved their reliability in dealing with infringements of AMGOT's Proclamations and they were made responsible for the collection of all civilian 'firearms, ammunition and explosives', which had been surrendered by local people in accordance with Proclamation No.2. This listed the possession of such items without an AMGOT permit as an offence punishable by death.(49) As agents for the collection, they were obliged to issue receipts and compile lists of all weapons handed in. Guards were posted to prevent weapons from being stolen from the collection points, a necessary measure since much looting of unguarded

firearms took place in the early days of the invasion. (50)

The latter were found along with mines, shells, bombs and ammunition 'littering the countryside after the tide of war had moved on', as one CAPO reported. He was able to get small amounts collected and stored with the larger dumps but some items were too dangerous to allow untrained men to collect them. Military bomb disposal units were too busy dealing with explosives that affected military operations to deal with objects left on farm lands. Accidents occurred daily to children and farmers and it was inevitable that many explosives found their way into the wrong hands. (51) Forty-two deaths due to abandoned explosive devices or accidents involving military vehicles were recorded in the province, many occurring after the end of hostilities. (52)

No instances of serious crime occurred in the provincial capital but there were many cases of looting from damaged buildings. Curfew prosecutions were numerous but had very little effect on the public's observance of curfew hours, when most looting took place. Wellesley reported that it was almost impossible to stop curfew-breaking in so large a town as Catania. Curfew hours brought an extra problem to the town, that of clandestine prostitution, a problem arising from the closure of brothels by the Military authorities. As this involved Allied troops, the Military Police gave valuable help to the civil police forces.(53)

The Prison Section of the Public Safety Division had been divided into six regions for the supervision of prisons with one inspecting Police officer for each region, to whom CAPOs and CAOs were required to give details of prisons in their area. These were then forwarded to the Prison Section HQ in Palermo. In each large provincial town there was a state prison but locations of the smaller 'Mandamentale' (district) prisons were not always known. An early AMGOT inspection of Palermo prison carried out by Capt Brown, a London Metropolitan Police Inspector, revealed deplorable conditions of overcrowding and verminous cells, totally inadequate food rations and air raid debris still uncleared

from the prison buildings. Capt Brown found soap for the men to wash themselves and to clean the cells, thus improving both their morale and living conditions.(54)

No details about Catania prison in Piazza Pietro Lupo were available but given the heavy bombing, broken water mains and shortage of food and soap in the town, conditions were probably similar to those in Palermo. The Mandamentale prisons, maintained by local authorities, were equally overcrowded and Capt Brown reported that the local judges responsible for their administration had mostly 'flown to safer regions.'(55) The slow judicial process often resulted in prisoners spending months, or years, in jail awaiting trial. To prevent these delays re-occurring Proclamation No.13 was issued. Entitled "Legal Rights of the Italian People", it decreed that no person should be put in prison by an Italian official unless charged with a specific crime and no person was to be detained in prison without a trial taking place as soon as circumstances permitted.(56)

The basis of Allied administration was equal partnership of both Allies and before the preparation of the Proclamations and General Orders necessary to set up legislation in Sicily it was essential to ensure the unity of the legal procedures in use in Britain and the United States at the planning stage of HUSKY. Much of the work which this involved fell to the Legal Division, headed by Lt Col W. Chanler.

Section 3. The Legal Division

As Coles and Weinberg point out, there are universally recognised means of dealing with economic, financial, medical and other problems of government, but in the field of international law and procedures relating to military government, there could be considerable differences of opinion as to the proper course to follow.(57) It was the responsibility of the Legal Division to ensure that unified

planning and unified action was implemented in this area. All points of view had to be considered before the Proclamations were drafted but agreement was soon reached as both British and American views regarding an occupying power's duties and rights were very similar.

By the end of June after two months of deliberation, the twelve Proclamations were ready for D-Day. Only the first three were taken ashore initially; the announcement of occupation, the definition of crimes against the Allied Military Government and the creation of the currency carried by the troops as legal tender. The remainder would be distributed after the assault troops had moved on from the area. While the Proclamations were being written, a group of Legal officers planned a system of military courts and rules of procedure, which were a compromise between British and American practice. All Legal officers attached to AMGOT were given a period of training in procedures at Chr ea to ensure that the operation of the courts in Sicily would be uniform. (58)

The closure of all Italian civil and criminal courts was announced in Proclamation No.1, Article 4. This suspension, as Harris explains, 'was to allow time for an examination of the records of the existing judicial officials, in order to ascertain whether they could be relied on to dispense justice impartially.(59) Law and Order would be maintained by Allied Military Courts, established to deal with offences against Proclamation No.2, which detailed war crimes which might be committed against the Allied forces. These Courts were graded according to the gravity of the sentence which they were allowed to impose. General Military Courts were the highest and could impose a death penalty; Superior Military Courts could impose sentences up to ten years; Summary Military Courts were limited to maximum sentences of one year and fines of 50,000 lire.(60) Summary Courts could be set up by any AMGOT or Allied officer. Nearly 1,300 cases which involved lesser offences against Proclamation No.2 were brought to Summary Courts in

the first six weeks of Allied occupation. These were mostly connected with curfew and black market offences.

Wellesley opened the first Summary Court in Catania on 10 August only five days after entering the city. He recorded that 'proceedings were rather muddled' and remanded most of the prisoners.(61) At the first meeting of SCAOs in Palermo on 20 August he complained that he had held further Court sessions but no Legal officer had been present at any of them.(62) Reference has earlier been made to the employment of these officers as CAOs during the first month of the invasion, making them unavailable for their specialist work. In addition the HUSKY planners had failed to provide a sufficient number to meet the requirements of the Courts. The shortage was highlighted in a report from Major Rowell, in which he suggested that Legal Officers should be allowed to carry out their specialised functions from the start 'in order that sanctions may be imposed justly, quickly and decisively in serious cases and deserving prisoners released without delay.'(63)

General Alexander had announced in Proclamation No.1 that all Italian civil and criminal courts would be closed until further order of the Allied Military Government. During the suspension of these courts, enquiries were made by AMGOT into the extent of Fascist influence in the Italian judiciary. Some of the higher judicial officials had already fled to the mainland, and these vacancies needed to be filled but the enquiries showed that Fascist influence was less than originally feared. Nevertheless, officials were carefully vetted and all committed Fascists removed before the courts were permitted to reopen. All Fascist-controlled Bar associations were abolished and free ones took their place at the request of Italian lawyers. Harris points out that, considering the poor state of communications which made the service of papers and documents very difficult, and the dispersal of witnesses, of whom many were refugees or POWs, restarting the courts so quickly was a very creditable achievement.(64)

One difficult problem for Legal officers was investigating pleas for release from prisoners who claimed to have been detained for purely political reasons. The first waves of Allied troops had frequently freed those prisoners claiming to have been jailed for anti-Fascism. When Legal officers were available, prisoners could be more thoroughly checked. Relatively few Catanesi had been imprisoned locally for offences against the Fascist regime between 1926 and 1943. According to Carbone and Grimaldi, only 74 arrests were made in Catania town for offences against the regime. They ranged from selling fish below the official price, reading anti-Fascist poetry in cafes, to making defeatist remarks about the war. In Catania province 61 cases of similar subversive activities occurred. Their case histories show that many were only cautioned. Of those assigned to confino, the majority had their time reduced by two-thirds.(65)

One of the many topics discussed at the first meeting of SCAOs in Palermo was the state of health of the population. Although aiding civilians where possible, the priorities of the Army Medical Corps clearly lay with battle casualties and the general health of Allied troops. Local civilian medical services might well be short of resources and it had therefore been considered imperative to set up a Division in the island concerned with Public Health.

Section 4. The Public Health Division (PHD)

A number of specialist officers had been trained to serve in the Public Health Division. Their brief was to deal with general health problems among the population and with any outbreaks of disease which might follow military operations at the height of summer. Lt Col Cheyne, the PHD Director, stated its purpose: 'The Division exists primarily to maintain the health of the people in order that this may never be a menace to the health of the Armies passing through the country or actually engaged in active warfare

in the vicinity of such people.' (66)

In many towns in the eastern sector of the island, and particularly in Catania province, a large number of public utilities including water mains, aqueducts and sewers had been destroyed or put out of action. If power stations were also damaged, the problem was compounded even if water was available, since the pumps could not be worked without electric power. The invasion took place at the height of summer during Sicily's seasonal drought and it was feared that a combination of widespread damage and a lack of clean water would provide conditions for epidemics to flourish.

A detachment of REs repaired the mains in Catania town but to the north-west the towns of Adrano and Biancavilla could only obtain restricted water supplies from local springs at public fountains since the mains near Brontë serving them were broken. The local people were told to boil water but the CAO thought it highly unlikely that they would do so.(67) Both towns were housing thousands of refugees from Catania and a large number of both local civilians and refugees had been injured. An Italian Army medical unit had been recently captured by British troops, and were set free to tend the injured in Biancavilla, doing what the CAO described as 'a splendid job under appalling conditions.' The major in charge of a unit of the 30 Corps Hygiene Section formed what the CAO described as a 'local AMGOT PHD' and detailed one of his NCOs, who spoke Italian, to liaise with the Italian commander. It was made apparent in this report that AMGOT officers had to take the initiative, as the local Podestà and his staff were 'completely devoid of leadership or drive.' (68) [Reference was earlier made to Biancavilla, which until the arrival of AMGOT officers, was administered by British troops, who reported that patients in the local hospital had been left unattended when the Italian medical staff fled.]

Major Rowell's report referred to the local sanitation units as 'having ceased to function. As in the case of other local officials, the ufficiali sanitari had to be led

back to their jobs and told what to do.'(69) Similarly in Catania town it was the SCAO who had immediately arranged for the underground shelters to be cleaned. Nothing had been done by the local authorities. These examples from Catania are typical of the local lassitude which ensued when municipal authorities were not given instructions to carry out tasks by those in higher authority. It appears that when Sicily was cut off from the central government in Rome, local authorities were incapable of making their own decisions on actions to be taken. A report from MGS to General Hilldring in Washington stated that 'In places where the administrative machinery was more or less intact it was in neutral. Officials and populace alike seemed to be unable to do anything to help themselves. (70) Similar reports of municipal inertia came from the Foreign Office, which referred in particular to Messina, where people were living in 'indescribable filth.' In spite of these conditions the same report, collated in mid-September after a tour of the island by the AMG's Director of Health, described the post-war health situation as surprisingly favorable as a whole. Diseases were the ones usually prevalent; typhoid fever, dysentery, malaria and scabies.(71) Major Rowell's report had drawn similar conclusions, although expressed in perhaps slightly cynical terms:'I gathered the impression that public health problems were rather less difficult than might have been expected in a country devastated by war. Standards of sanitation and public health are notoriously low in Sicily and it would be an Augaeon (sic) labor to raise them. On the other hand, their very lowness makes it easier to restore normal (pre-war) conditions after disruption.'(72)

Scordia, in the southern part of Catania province, had a confirmed outbreak of typhoid fever on 29 July. There were no drugs available and all Wellesley could do was to insist that patients were collected together and isolated from their homes. This outbreak was not attributable to war conditions since the disease was endemic in Sicily, and was

in fact in a village where the incidence was only 30% of what it had normally been over preceding years.(73) The incidence of the fever was attributed to 'the neglect of elementary observation of sanitary laws in the smaller towns and villages', and AMGOT's PHD planned to give health advice to the public via the press and radio.(74)

Catania town seems to have escaped these diseases but had some cases of malaria, which was endemic to Sicily and was responsible for 11,500 casualties among Eighth Army troops, many more than were injured in battle. Most cases occurred in the malarial areas of Lentini and the Catania plain. While in Lentini, Wellesley had checked mosquito numbers at Lentini Lake, estimating that they were negligible, and also visited anti-malaria stations with an officer from PHD.(75) Under battle conditions it was not always possible to take anti- malaria precautions, and the SCAO's estimate of 'negligible' mosquito numbers was not very accurate.

The civilian population had long suffered from malaria in this area and it was one reason for day labourers returning to their hilltop villages every evening. Although a civil administration to deal with malaria treatment was already in place, it had not worked effectively for some time. It was reorganised by the PHD to concentrate its work under a single authority in each province. Dusting with an insecticide, Paris Green, was resumed and Allied Anti-Malarial Control Units sprayed the areas of breeding mosquito larvae. (76) By Spring 1944 DDT had become established as an anti-malarial agent, bringing, in the words of Mack Smith, 'the centuries-old scourge under control.' (77)

The PHD was also involved with the treatment of venereal diseases. Clandestine prostitution has previously been mentioned as a cause of curfew breaking but unlike licensed prostitution it was also a punishable offence under Italian law. Harris points out the virtual impossibility of dealing with the enormous volume of clandestine prostitution in the large towns. Those offenders detected were always subject

to medical examination and, if necessary, compulsory treatment.(78)

During the planning phase of the invasion it was arranged for a number of jeeps to be allocated to the PHD to transport three tons of medical equipment to the island. Under the supervision of AFHQ's Director of Medical Supplies, drugs and dressings were assembled in Tunis and divided into parcels known as 'bricks'. An advance party of three Health officers took a consignment in the first wave of landings. Their initial task was to locate hospitals, or buildings suitable for conversion into hospitals, for the Army Medical Corps. (79) Many Italian hospitals were still functioning in spite of bomb damage. Others had been improvised. The Bishop of Agrigento, for example, had turned a large part of his palace into an emergency hospital before the CAO arrived there.(80)

In spite of heavy Allied bombing, two of Catania's five hospitals, the Ospedale Vittorio Emanuele and its dependent Sanatorio Farrarotto, and the Ospedale Garibaldi continued to function. Many doctors and staff left their homes and moved into the hospitals to ensure continuous medical care for patients. The Vittorio Emanuele had the town's only Accident and Emergency Department and was soon overcrowded. Unlike the Garibaldi it was well provided with solidly-constructed air raid shelters but ironically many of its staff and patients were killed by Allied shelling, whereas the Garibaldi suffered no casualties, in spite of being shelled as heavily. (81) With the arrival of the Eighth Army, the Army Medical Corps took over the monastery of La Cabella near Catania and adapted it for surgical cases.(82)

Both the town and province of Catania were relatively well supplied with medical staff in the post-invasion months since all Italian doctors and medical orderlies captured by the Allies were released to work in civilian and military hospitals. The problem was the already existing shortage of general medical supplies in the local hospitals, initially supplemented from some Allied army stocks and from a supply

of Italian army stores, captured at Caltanissetta. These supplies could not be sent where most needed since, as Major Rowell reported, 'distribution across the island was seriously hindered by insufficient transportation.' (83) By the end of August many hospitals were without essential drugs and dressings.

Rowell had the impression that public health problems were less difficult than might have been expected in a country devastated by war. (84) At this early stage of the occupation, and although aware of existing food shortages, AMGOT was relying on the stockpiles in North Africa for the 'topping-up' that had been promised by the AFHQ planners. That these did not materialise would radically change the situation later.

Apart from food supplies there were other shortages, as a document from the Prime Minister's Office acknowledged: 'Problems of Public Welfare develop almost before any others after territory has been liberated.' (85) Commodities such as shoes and clothing had been almost unobtainable for some time before the invasion. In September the chairman of the American Red Cross visited Sicily and made stop-gap arrangements to supply 100,000 sets of second-hand clothing and shoes from stocks in North Africa, to arrive before the onset of winter. Few people had the means to heat their houses and needed warm clothing. The chairman also made arrangements to provide Red Cross staff to assist AMGOT in the distribution of food and medical supplies. (86)

Harris underlines the fact that the dissolution of the Fascist Party contributed to the welfare problems which the PHD faced, since the Dopolavoro movement had been involved in various social welfare schemes for the benefit of their members. (87) This movement had been the first major Fascist attempt to organise the leisure hours of the working population, providing venues and equipment for recreational activities for its members. Established in 1925, it had a large following in Catania, according to Nicolosi. Sport, especially football, was a very popular activity, but music

and drama also attracted much support. Concerts and plays were regularly presented to audiences in Catania and other towns in the province. In 1940 a rest and information centre was established in Catania railway centre for Italian and German servicemen, both those stationed locally and others en route for North Africa, and Dopolavoro members were on hand to provide entertainment. (88)

Other welfare schemes operated by Party organisations for the specific benefit of children included summer camps run by the Opera Nazionale per la Maternità ed Infanzia (ONMI), the Balilla and the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL). One such was the Duke of Catania camp, inaugurated by the Fascist Federation of Catania in 1938, which was attended by two thousand children aged four to twelve as day guests, and two hundred as boarders for a month. Every child was given a medical test to identify contagious diseases and vaccinated against typhus, diphtheria and smallpox. (89)

The advent of war put an end to much of this charitable work. A Foreign Office document, compiled in September 1943 after an official visit to study the welfare problems in the main towns in the island, including Catania, underlined the chaotic state of the organisation and administration of welfare activities encountered by the PHD, the situation being even more confused by the number of agencies involved, the complexity of health and insurance schemes and the loss of records.(90) There were serious housing and refugee problems in many large towns but particularly in Catania, where bombing had been at its heaviest. Many refugees returning to Catania had no ration books and many found their homes had either been completely destroyed or were in need of extensive repairs which could not be carried out.

The provision of temporary shelter for so many people was not easily solved and some unfortunate Catanesi were still living in former military bunkers on the town outskirts in 1956, the year in which they were finally demolished. (91) Extra food had to be brought into the town for the incoming

refugees with a corresponding decrease of supplies to the communes from which the refugees were returning. This often caused traffic chaos as the incomers' carts, loaded with household goods, blocked the narrow mountain roads leading into Catania causing much disruption of deliveries.(92) As early as 21 August Lt Col Kellett, on an official visit to Catania from the War Office, reported the lack of transport due to the Army's failure to return captured Italian trucks to AMGOT in spite of the C-in-C's order to do so. (93) Three weeks later the daily food needs for Catania town had risen to one hundred tons but the trucks had still not arrived.

Returning refugees also added to the numbers of those in need of financial and material help. Sicilians had close relations with the Catholic Church, and the clergy helped the poorest as much as possible. Most CAOs had close contact with the clergy, but the Archbishop of Catania, who had been conspicuously absent from the initial meeting with the AMGOT team responsible for Catania, was described by Wellesley as 'a very unpleasant old man', who asked for the release of all Fascists who had been interned. (94) In keeping with the traditional role of the Catholic Church, all churches, convents and monasteries in the town's twenty parishes would still provide all possible aid to the needy. However, there are no references to this in the SCAO's reports. AMGOT's Relief Policies, set out in GAI No.6, continued to operate those relief and assistance programmes already in existence, as far as was practicable. Relief was defined as 'aid to those with insufficient purchasing power to buy the minimum food, clothing, shelter, fuel, soap, medicines and household necessities to support life.'(95) Ironically some items were unavailable even to those with the means to buy them.

The PHD's Welfare Section created a Provincial Social Welfare Office to provide a means-tested system of family relief through the existing machinery of the Ente Comunale di Assistenza (ECA), which had supervised the distribution

of relief in each commune since 1937. The payment of military pensions, even to veterans of World War I, and of allowances to serving military dependants was discontinued by the Allies, forcing many service wives to rely wholly on relief payments from the commune. (96) Relief rates for each province were set by the respective SCAO, within certain limits. Maj Rowell thought that this was fair and reasonable because the cost of living varied between communes under normal conditions and the war had increased the differences. The rates set by SCAOs varied between 15 and 25 lire a day, the lower rate being set by Wellesley for Catania. Rowell later acknowledged that 'some manifest injustices' occurred, especially since the price of bread was fairly uniform across the island when Allied administration began. It was difficult to justify the rate discrepancy, which, as Rowell admitted, did no good for AMGOT's reputation. (97)

Rennell had asked all SCAOs at their first meeting in Palermo to submit their recommendations to him, and asked them to bear in mind the approach of winter conditions. (98) Setting a fair rate across the second largest province in the island was a rather delicate decision for the SCAO. Conditions in the capital town of Catania varied widely from those in a small country commune. Produce grown and sold locally would obviously be cheaper than that taken to the capital town by the time transport and handling costs were added but Wellesley deemed the lowest rate to be sufficient.

As one of the main reasons for the payment of relief was unemployment, GAI No.6 had stated that the numbers out of work had to be reduced to a minimum by the closest possible cooperation between relief and employment agencies and individual employers. (99) There had been a relatively low rate of unemployment in the island before the occupation, due to conscription and the recruitment of workers to Germany. Once the Allied campaign was over, Sicilian POWs were freed. Many returned to their former jobs on the land

or found work with the Allies, who paid 50 lire a day for casual labour. This rate was later recognised as too high and Wellesley reported the anomaly of an overseer of the works, 'who may be a permanent official of the *Municipio* or the Civil Engineers and who receives less than casual labourers working under him.'(100) Anomalies of this kind frequently occurred and specialist officers of the Finance Division would be called in to try and resolve the situation.

Section 5. The Finance Division

The Finance Division had a number of specific tasks, which included the regulation of Italian banks and financial institutions, the supervision of the island's revenue collection and expenditure, provision of funds to make loans to local communities for immediate repairs to war-damaged utilities and properties, and for relief needs, but their first task was to provide currency. (101) The Allied Military Financial Agency (AMFA) was set up as part of the Finance Division to be the chief office of financial transactions for the Allied Military forces and to provide a source of funds from which to make loans to municipalities, businesses and individuals. AMFA was responsible for keeping complete accounts of all financial transactions entered into by AMGOT.(102) As the production of Allied Military lire was postponed until after the invasion of Sicily for reasons of security, US forces used 'yellow seal' dollars and British troops used either Italian lire, acquired during the North African campaign, or British Military Authority (BMA) sterling, also used in Africa. These so-called 'spearhead' currencies would be replaced by Allied Military (AM) lire, printed by the US Treasury, as soon as the latter became available. The AM currency was not intended to replace local lire, merely to supplement the existing circulation.(103)

As in many of the other spheres of Allied joint planning,

there had been a divergency of views on the exchange rate before a decision was finally taken. The British wanted a realistic rate of 480 lire to the pound sterling (120 to the US dollar), whereas the Americans suggested 240 to the pound. To support this Poletti had cited the President's decision that the military administration should reflect a benevolent attitude to the people and that the rate should reflect this.(104) The inevitable compromise was reached of 400 lire to the pound. Proclamation No.3 informed the islanders of the financial measures which the Allies intended to impose, and which they were required to accept, including the prohibition of transactions at any other rate. When an area was taken over by either AMGOT officials or the military, all banks and other financial institutions were to be immediately closed, vaults sealed and an inventory taken of each bank's assets. This would prevent panic withdrawals and money being diverted into enemy hands. Funds of Fascist organisations were to be transferred to AMFA.(105)

Harris points out that AMFA was not intended to be an independent bank to transact AMGOT business. The Bank of Sicily, whose head office was in the island, would be designated as AMFA's agent, provided that the Bank itself was under adequate control. When this was verified, AMGOT would use the bank for official business.(106) The Bank of Sicily building in Catania housed the office of the Finance Officer (FO) for the province. Lt Col Wellesley reported at the meeting of SCAOs on 20 August that he had 'a most excellent FO in the person of Major McFadzean.' The official Finance report sent to the War Office by the FO, however, was written by a Major Rudd, who described his arrival in Catania two weeks after AMGOT's entry in the town and makes no reference to the presence of any other FO. This seems to be an instance of HQ's frequent personnel changes since Major McFadzean's name appears in the CAO's report from Adrano on 14 August.(107) These sudden changes among AMGOT staff inevitably caused disruptions and brought

confusion to the local Italian municipal staff.

Existing tax laws were kept in force and tax revenues deposited in AMFA. All branches of the National Insurance Institute, railways, telephone and postal services, radio and all government monopolies came under the control of AMGOT, which received the revenues. It took some months to restore the financial machinery of tax collection and the resulting revenue covered only a small percentage of AMGOT expenditure, but, as Harris comments, 'budget deficits on an enormous scale had been Mussolini's normal practice since the beginning of the Abyssian war.'(108)

In his final report to the War Office Rudd stated that the amount of work was too much for one Finance Officer. Revenue officers were needed in large districts. CAOs lacked time and technical knowledge to be sub-accountants, in charge of expenditures and revenues. Their other duties prevented them from keeping financial records up to date and many gave advances which a qualified officer would not have allowed. The lack of ORs added to the work-load, (all Rudd's letters and memoranda had to be written in long hand), and because much of the work was of a very confidential nature, local labour could only be used on a limited scale. (109) Although most bank officials were in post when Rudd arrived, the Italian Provincial Finance Officer, the Intendente di Finanza, had left the town and did not return for several weeks. Communication by telephone was virtually non-existent, the postal service was not functioning and, as Rudd comments, the condition of both the provincial roads and the requisitioned cars caused considerable delays to officers as they visited communes in the province.(110)

The HUSKY planners' failure to provide transport affected all branches of the administration but it was the Finance Division's lack of advance planning in practical matters, such as the provision of official forms for financial dealings, that at times caused problems for CAOs. Rudd also points out that CAOs often obtained receipts on scraps of

paper and because of their insufficient knowledge of procedures, did not obtain signatures from the appropriate officials when making advances. No secure cash boxes were supplied and in remote districts CAOs acting as sub-accountants had only a desk drawer in which to place cash. As there were no ORs to man their office when they were out on essential visits, money was frequently at risk.(111)

The SCAO had already drawn attention to the anomaly of wage scales and the discrepancy in the level of salaries paid by the Army and civilian employers. Rudd cites the discontent in Catania during the first months of occupation when the Army was the largest single employer of labour and the various branches of the services competed with each other and with civilian employees to obtain the best workers by offering higher wages. In the adjoining province of Siracusa the Army was paying employees of a telephone company double the wages paid to employees of the same company in Catania through regular civilian channels. The situation only improved when AMGOT introduced a new uniform wage-scale, which obliged all branches of the services to pay the same rates, classified for 170 jobs. The new scale brought about a considerable reduction in the rates originally paid but as inflation spiralled, the wages of both civilian and government workers had soon to be increased. (112)

By early autumn inflation became one of the most serious problems faced by AMGOT. It was not a product of the Allied invasion but had begun in the Thirties as a consequence of the war in Abyssinia, the intervention in Spain, the campaign for self-sufficiency and the expenditure of the current war. A combination of declining revenue from taxes and a shortage of consumer goods had already begun to push up prices before the Allies arrived but the situation had been exacerbated by the spending power of Allied troops and the continuing growth of the Black Market. Finance Division HQ in Palermo arranged to set up a Finance Intelligence Office to collate information on inflation, and to devise

measures to deal with it. An index produced in mid-August showed that in Palermo black market prices of many food items had risen to 1000% of Italian prices using 1940 as a base, and 500% of AMGOT prices.(113) A similar situation existed in all the island's large towns. By early September the SCAO of Catania had published fixed prices of fish, meat and eggs, wines and spirits and even a list of prices for barber shops, graded according to an official category (extra, prima, seconda, terza). (114)

Major Rowell's report on his visit to Sicily in mid-August had stated that sanctions against violations of price controls were not being enforced by CAOs in Military Courts and that in many towns no military tribunals had even been constituted.(115) This was not the case in Catania where the SCAO had set up a Military Court in less than a week after AMGOT had taken over the administration, and subsequently held two sessions a week. Nicolosi refers to the Court's dealings with 'gli evasori al razionamento' and other wrong-doers as 'sempre inflessibile.' Many people protested at the tribunal's harsh penalties but the local paper, the *Corriere di Sicilia*, took the line that they were 'condanne esemplari e ammonitrici.' (116)

The programme drawn up for the control of inflation had a number of recommendations. These included an increase in tax revenue; resisting pressure for wage increases; continued appeals to troops to use discretion in local spending; the restoration of savings channels; energetic enforcement of all price and rationing orders and systematic supervision of distribution channels.(117) These measures had little real effect since there were too few CAOs to carry them out, in particular those requiring enforcement and supervision. As more shops gradually reopened, so troops spent more money. Rudd reports that personnel were not available in Catania to set the tax machinery in motion, and although he received considerable help from bank managers and senior permanent government officials, the local government employees and officials, in

his opinion, 'were a poor class and of little use.'(118) The Financial Division's report, however, states that Italian Revenue officials received little help from FOs and CAOs and that the Revenue authorities almost completely lacked the transport necessary to reassemble dispersed offices and to collect records from damaged buildings. The report also points out the considerable language difficulties both sides encountered in such a technical and specialised subject as Revenue.(119)

The recommendation to resist pressure for wage increases was withdrawn in November and a General Order issued to grant salary increases to government employees and to permit employers to make increases in the private sector. The following month, however, Col Spofford instructed AMG officers to resist further demands for wage increases, which were 'powerful inflationary forces'. (120) Inflation still increased, however, and the black market continued to flourish in the city. The prefect, Azzaro, had informed the mayor and the Commander of the CCRR on 14 September that 'il commercio clandestino di generi alimentari a prezzi veramente proibitivi continua su larga scala.' (121) Bread sold on a ration basis was reasonably priced but the ration was only 100 grams a day, so recourse to the black market was inevitable for those who had the means.

At the beginning of October the CCAO informed SCAOs that he required their full cooperation in the implementation of a police programme to suppress black market operations. The CCRR were chosen as the enforcement agency, although the SCAO could call on other police groups to reinforce their efforts. The programme would involve house-to-house searches and the sequestration of unlawful excesses of various commodities, in particular grain. Shipments, however small, of any of these goods, (specified in General Order No.5), could now only be made if the local Consortio provided a 'manifest' giving full details of the goods. All police officers who sequestered goods were required to give receipts to every person from whom the goods had been

taken, detailing their exact type and amount. The officers were also obliged to add their own signature, rank and organisation. Each week SCAOs were responsible for sending returns to HQ, and copies of returns to the police Group Commanders. (122) In spite of AMGOT's efforts the measures achieved very little success and Black Market dealings continued unabated. They were by no means a product of Allied administration as the last section of Chapter 3 has shown but were nevertheless exacerbated by the spending power of Allied troops and would continue long after the main body of Allied forces had left.

Within a fortnight after AMGOT was established in Catania the influx of Allied troops into the area and the need for storage facilities for military supplies necessitated the requisition of local properties to accommodate them. This involved one of the Specialist Divisions, whose remit will be examined in the next section.

Section 6. The Enemy and Allied Property Division

C.R.S. Harris, author of *Allied Military Administration in Italy*, was AMGOT's Controller of Property in Sicily and then Head of the Property Control Sub-Commission of the Allied Control Commission in Italy until July 1944. The functions of the Controller were stated in Article V of Proclamation No.6. Firstly he had the power 'to take into his control any Enemy State property not for the time being required by any other branch of the Allied forces.(123) This accorded with the stated aim that the requirements of the combat forces would take priority over any other consideration. The Controller's second function emphasised this priority. It was 'to assist all other branches of the Allied Forces to ascertain, secure and take possession of all Enemy State property which is susceptible of military use that they might require.'(124) All property taken into control was to be recorded and accounted for.

The Controller was empowered to exercise on behalf of the Allied Forces all rights and powers which they might have under international law. He was also accorded other powers under the direction of the CCAO. He could take under his control the private property of any company, institution, corporation, body or person, whose activities were deemed prejudicial to the safety of the Allied Forces or to public order, and whose property might be used or applied, without such control, in furtherance of such activities. Similarly he could take control of property considered essential to the needs of the Allied Forces or to the needs of the inhabitants of the occupied territory.(125) Using these powers many buildings in Catania town were requisitioned as temporary shelters and hospitals for homeless and wounded civilians. Wellesley, as stated earlier in this chapter, had taken over an Italian army barracks to accommodate civilians previously living in the Anfiteatro Romano.(126) Many refugees returned to Catania only to find their homes destroyed or so badly damaged that they were no longer habitable and temporary shelter had to be found for them.

In Catania most AMGOT staff and specialist divisions set up their offices in buildings previously used by the Fascist Party if they were still inhabitable. Offices for the various branches of the administration were, however, widely scattered across the town, and Finance Officer, Major Rudd, reported the difficulties in communicating with other HQ staff and the wasted time going to and fro for discussions and conferences because of the lack of transport. (127)

Requisitions of houses were made to accommodate military personnel and AMGOT staff. No details are available of the SCAO's residence but it appears that most CAOs lived in fairly basic accommodation, both in the town and the nearby communes. The CAO of Adrano, Major Holmstrom, reporting to Wellesley on 14 August, stated that two CAOs were sharing quarters with members of the Field Security Service in the one and only habitable house in the town, while he and his

fellow CAO lived in the AMGOT office. (128) Not all AMGOT staff, however, lived in such conditions. Macmillan, when visiting AMGOT HQ in Palermo, noted the 'magnificent villa' of Lord Rennell, and the 'still more magnificent Palazzo' of SCAO Lt Col Poletti.(129) When Lt Col Gayre, Education Adviser for AMGOT, was able to move into the former British Institute in Palermo after working in one cramped windowless room, he wrote in his diary; 'I shall have to fight to keep other people out. If the Army get their hands on it, they will ruin it.'(130)

AMGOT kept the local population informed of all decisions made by the administration which would affect their day-to-day lives by publishing Proclamations and Orders displayed prominently in the town and also in the daily newspaper, which published all notices from AMGOT and the municipal authorities. One of the less welcome announcements appeared on 28 August, a few weeks after AMGOT's arrival: "Sgombrare la zona portuale". A list of streets in the port zone was published under Wellelsley's signature, and the occupiers of the properties in these streets were warned that they would have to evacuate their homes and business premises to provide accommodation and offices for military units.(131) Unfortunately members of the Allied armed forces soon acquired a reputation for not respecting property they had taken over. Within a few days of entering Catania the British took possession of the main University palazzo, one of the most prestigious buildings in the city, allowing only a few rooms to be used by the Secretariat. The presence of troops in the Sicularum Gymnasium was regarded by the rector, Professor Orazio Condorelli, as an act of profanity. Nicolosi relates that the professor went to AMGOT HQ where he protested so vociferously that the SCAO had him removed from the premises. Shortly afterwards he was sent to Prioli internment camp for his suspected Fascist leanings. The Prefect appointed a new rector, Professor Mario Petroncelli, who resigned when Condorelli was released two months later, in order to return the post

of rector to him. This was not permitted by the military authorities who insisted on Petroncelli remaining in post. They agreed, however, to his request that the academic body should be involved in a formal election. This took place in February 1944 when he was elected almost unanimously.(132)

The military transformed the aula magna into a recreation centre, complete with dance floor, orchestra and bar. The hall also served as a venue for variety concerts by visiting entertainers from Britain and the USA. The adjoining court-yard was used as a field kitchen. University staff and office personnel were banned from the main building and students and members of the public could only communicate with office staff via the ground floor windows on the far side of the University, the window sills being used as office counters. Lectures and seminars were held in various buildings in the town and the Senatus Academicus met in the Rector's house. (133)

The inauguration of the University's new academic year was always held on 4 November in the aula magna and AMGOT agreed to clear the hall to allow the ceremony to take place there as usual. The Rector's address was followed by one from General Mark Clark, who apologised to the gathering for the Army's need to requisition the University palazzo to provide accommodation for military needs and promised it would be returned as soon as possible.(134) It was eventually derequisitioned on 29 October 1944.

The Universities of Palermo and Messina were also taken over by military units and, like Catania, suffered damage and looting. Cesare Sanfilippo, then Professor of Roman Law at Catania, later wrote about the requisition as 'Il più triste capitolo della storia 'guerra-università' referring to the theft of historical documents, research notes, books and geological samples from both the main palazzo and the other buildings in the town used by the University. There was apparently a great deal of damage done to furniture, furnishings, lamps and ornaments. (135)

Former Professor of Agrarian Studies, Sebastiano Di Fazio,

a student at the University in 1943, and whose father was an AMGOT interpreter, confirmed to me the details of the British military occupation of the palazzo but was of the opinion that much of the damage to the premises had been caused by German troops before they left the town. He also praised the British army units, who played a very positive role locally, including organisation of football matches with student teams.(136)

By the end of 1943 the process of repairing the damage to universities was underway. Catania had been granted the sum of 2,000,000 lire for urgent repairs. Messina was granted a larger sum of 8,000,000 lire but repairs in Palermo had been carried out by the Civil Engineer of the city without a special grant. Since all three universities in the island had been occupied by troops, it was difficult to restore normal conditions in the field of higher education but in spite of the military presence, every faculty in each university was functioning.(137)

In a memorandum sent to Brig-Gen Holmes, Chief of MGS at AFHQ, by Col Spofford, Chief Staff Officer, in September 1943, concerning the administrative lessons to be learned from operations in Sicily, it was stated that a lack of sufficient instruction with respect to the procedure of requisitioning property had caused considerable confusion and therefore more definite instructions would be provided in future.(138) No details were supplied but most of the property taken over in the early stages of the invasion involved CAOs acting as Assistants to the Controller of Property. These CAOs, some of whom were working entirely alone, were more concerned with the practicalities of feeding the living, burying the dead and finding billets for troops and homeless civilians. The procedures for requisition of property were very time-consuming and the directions to AMGOT staff that all Enemy State property taken into account was to be recorded and accounted for involved much form-filling and typing of reports. Few CAOs had AMGOT clerical staff to help them. One CAO spent eight

months in Sicily and Italy as the sole AMGOT officer in his area. He reported being 'snowed under' with typing and clerical work which entailed working beyond midnight. (139) Senior staff were aware of this and Col Spofford's report to MGS, referred to earlier, commented on the insufficiency of clerical staff provided for CAOs. (140)

Following Italy's declaration of war on Great Britain in 1940, steps were taken by the Italian government to sequester British-owned properties in the island. One of these was the estate of Brontè in Catania province, consisting of the Abbey of Maniace and its surrounding area. The estate was given to Admiral Nelson by King Ferdinand IV of Naples, together with a dukedom, as a reward for rescuing the royal family from the French army in 1798 and for assisting in their restoration in Naples in 1799.(141) The estate was the property of Nelson's heir, Viscount Bridport, and was looked after by the Viscount's agent in Sicily, Cav. Luigi Modica, Director of the Bank of Rome in Catania. Brontè had been handed over to the Ente di Colonizzazione del Latifondo Siciliano but once the estate was in Allied hands, the Controller of Property took formal custody of it. In February 1944, the Italian Government, to whom Region 1 had now been returned, was asked to repeal the decree expropriating the estate and agreed to take the necessary measures. The Prefect, Antonino Fazio, signed a decree cancelling the sequestration and the estate was returned to Lord Bridport's agent in Catania.(142)

Brontè was an exceptional case because of its size and historical importance, but over 120 Allied properties in the island were eventually taken over, ranging from large business premises, such as Shell and Standard installations which had been acquired by AGIP, to small parcels of land, whose owners had left the island. It was often difficult to trace the legal representatives of these owners but in all cases the sequestration records were examined and in some cases the expropriation measures taken by the Italian government were rescinded and the property returned to the

Allied owners.(143) Harris points out that all persons who had in their possession any property referred to in Section 1 of Article IV of Proclamation No.6, were obliged to declare it immediately to the Controller of Property and continue to maintain and safeguard it until it was taken into Allied custody or transferred to persons designated by the Controller. This procedure in his view was 'of questionable wisdom, since it tended to interrupt the continuity of responsibility of the Italian Government, which it was important in this case to maintain.'(144)

From a practical point of view it was impossible to take possession of all Allied property in Sicily. The manpower was simply not available (the staff consisted initially of only four officers at HQ and five in the field).(145) The most that could be done was to keep a watchful eye on the Italian administrators and make regular enquiries into the state of the properties. The difficult task was to prevent Allied troops from causing damage to them after an area had been occupied. CAOs and Property Control Officers located Allied property as soon as possible and instructed all members of the armed forces not to enter that particular building. Notices signed by the Allied C-in-C were posted on the property stating it was under Allied protection. Summing up the role of his officers, the Controller of Property stated that their most important function was perhaps 'the defence of these properties from abuse by the Allied armed forces.' (146)

There were problems of a different nature arising from the Controller of Property's responsibility for semi-statal concerns, including the property of the Fascist Party. The dissolution of the Party and all Fascist organisations made the Controller responsible for their liquidation. Since a total of over a hundred organisations were involved throughout Sicily a direct undertaking of this was not possible. It was decided to appoint a Judge from the Tribunale at Palermo as liquidator. (147)

The control of para-statal property was described by one

member of the Property staff as 'a very considerable responsibility, which made demands on the ingenuity, knowledge and all round ability of the Property Controller.' One of these properties was ENIC, a national organisation responsible for the distribution of films to the island's cinemas. Most of the cinemas not destroyed were reopened by the Controller in conjunction with the PWB. The *Olympia* cinema in Catania, which had closed down on 9 July, reopened with an American musical on 8 September and shortly afterwards two other local cinemas re-opened, both with American films. (148) Apart from providing entertainment for the islanders, the cinemas made a net profit of two million lire in less than five months.(149) The Controller of Property also operated the local Catania newspaper, the *Corriere di Sicilia*, although he was not responsible for its policy, which involved the SCAO, PWB and Army Censor. This newspaper also produced a profit of over two million lire. (150)

It was stated at the beginning of this section that the Controller of Property had the power to take into his control any enemy State property 'not for the time being required by any other branch of the Allied forces'. Wellesley, however, took a firm line with an army commander who had billeted his troops in Catania museum, from which a few items had disappeared. It was to prevent any possible damage to the museum and to forestall further looting that Wellesley removed the troops and sealed the building. It was then handed over to the museum Director and the SCAO asked to be informed immediately if any further attempt was made to billet troops there. He reported this incident to AMGOT HQ. (151) Since the activities of the Controller of Property were confined to properties of the enemy government not already in custody of some other branch of the Allied forces, the SCAO had acted on his own initiative, to conform with the regulations of a newly established AMGOT department, which will be described in the next section.

Section 7. AMGOT Measures to protect the Cultural Heritage of Sicily

The inevitable destruction and looting which occurs in a combat zone had led to pre-invasion discussions on measures which could be taken to protect the cultural heritage of an invaded country. The President of America's Archaeological Institute petitioned the US Government to create a commission for this purpose. At the same time the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art pointed out that more than fifty museum directors, curators and archaeologists of distinction held commissions in the armed forces and most of them were doing desk jobs as intelligence officers. He suggested that their expertise should be utilised. (152)

Meanwhile instructions had been issued from Britain to officers charged with the third and final military administration of Cyrenaica to take immediate steps for the preservation of any archaeological monuments which might come into British possession during the occupation. (153) As Donnison points out, no list of these monuments was provided and nobody was required to search them out. (154) By chance among the officers in the advancing Eighth Army were two professional archaeologists, Lt Col Wheeler and Major Ward-Perkins. They reported their concerns about the need for protective measures and Ward-Perkins was charged with the salvage and care of all monuments discovered in the combat zone. (155) He was officially seconded to the military government organisation in April 1943.

In London the Directors of the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission had written to the War Office, voicing their concerns on possible damage to works of art and monuments on the European continent, and submitting lists of items and buildings at risk. (156) Both Allies agreed the necessity to create a new department to deal with this issue, and by May 1943 the Office of Adviser

on Fine Arts and Monuments to the CCAO of AMGOT was included in the functions of the Civil Affairs Division. American Capt Mason Hammond was appointed to the post and was joined in September by his British deputy, Capt F. Maxse. (157)

The duties of CAOs in respect of safeguarding monuments were set out in AMGOT GAI No.8. The term 'monument' designated any site, building or structure, whose historic, cultural, artistic, traditional or sentimental value rendered its protection and preservation a matter of public interest. Objectives would include museums, collections, libraries, universities, colleges, churches and similar installations. CAOs were instructed to inspect all the monuments in their areas, to keep open the churches in daily use, to prevent damage and defacement by military or local personnel and to punish any person proven to have caused damage.(158) In some areas of Catania it would have proved difficult for a CAO to keep a church open for daily worship since eighteen had been either totally destroyed or badly damaged in the capital. (159)

The level of saturation bombing first employed in Pantelleria and then Sicily would inevitably cause vast destruction to towns like Catania and, over sixty years on, the evidence still remains in certain areas of the city. Some churches, including the Duomo, have been restored but many other Sicilian Baroque buildings were beyond repair. Damage to the University, Seminary and Civic libraries in the town, both buildings and contents, was severe. (160) There is no evidence of any large-scale looting as later happened in Naples and which prompted a General Order from Eisenhower to military commanders: 'The prevention of looting, wanton damage and sacrilege of buildings is a command responsibility. The seriousness of such an offence will be explained to all Allied personnel.' (161)

Referring to Sicily, Lt Col Wheeler later stated that ' no major monument of art or antiquity is known to have suffered seriously there, owing to the absence of fighting

in most parts of the island and the restricted number of historical buildings in the battle area.'(162) A letter, based on Wheeler's notes, was sent to the Secretary for Air by an MP, Squadron-Leader Keeling, which urged the RAF to refrain from the so-called "Baedeker" raids in retaliation for such raids on a number of British towns and thus avoid damage to historic buildings. (163) The situation on the Italian mainland was considered by the War Cabinet on 20 January 1944 when the Secretary of State for War explained the measures that had been taken before the invasion of Sicily and the Italian mainland for the protection of monuments and the limitations upon what the army could do: 'The Army is concerned with the enemy's destruction to the exclusion of all other considerations...it will not exercise any nice discrimination in the selection of its targets, since the enemy would be quick to take advantage of the sanctuary offered by any such doctrine.' He added that the situation was different in the rear of the advancing armies but even here the prime object 'was to facilitate military operations by attending to certain necessities, of which the safeguarding of objects of historical interest is not one.'(164)

This statement appears to contradict the instructions given to CAOs in Sicily, among whose duties was the constant checking of buildings and monuments listed in AMGOT GAI No.8. By this date, however, the number of CAOs in Sicily was gradually dwindling, and the responsibility for the maintenance of monuments and artefacts soon passed to the relevant SubCommission of the Allied Control Commission, in place on 11 February 1944.

Reference has earlier been made to the Catania newspaper, *il Corriere di Sicilia*, which, in addition to Proclamations and Orders displayed in public places, was also an organ for the distribution of AMGOT information and instructions to the people of Catania. The role of the newspaper and other ways of communicating with the public will be examined in the next section.

Section 8. The Media in Catania during AMGOT Administration

Radio played an important role in communicating news to the Italian people and broadcasts had been promoted by Mussolini as a means of spreading Fascist propaganda. Radios in public places were tuned to official news bulletins twice a day. Listening to foreign channels was a punishable offence, but as war progressed Italians increasingly tuned their radios to Radio London broadcasts, presented by Col Stevens, to Radio Algiers and to the Voice of America.(165) These stations played an important role in bringing news to Italian listeners before the invasion and in counteracting Fascist propaganda. After the Seventh Army established control in Palermo, the PWB set up Radio Palermo, which reached a wide audience. Directed by an American sergeant, the station first broadcast material from London and Algiers from 8 pm to midnight. Transmission time was soon extended to nine and a half hours a day, the content consisting of news items, war commentaries, interviews with touring entertainers, music programmes and morale-boosting talks.(166)

The first part of the programme was for Allied forces, but distinctly American in character, being introduced by the Stars and Stripes. Then came a 'British Programme for Troops'. The second part was for Italian listeners, the station announcing itself as 'Radio Palermo, l'avamposto dell'Italia liberata'. Each day time was allotted to a specific subject, e.g. religious commentaries on Sunday. On other days programmes giving Allied points of view and opinions on contemporary Italy, or discussions on Italy's future, were broadcast. On Friday a programme was dedicated to Il Popolo del Nord and each week the latter included a message to specific categories of citizens such as trade employees, industrial workers, farm labourers etc., which was delivered in the dialect of the region selected for that week. Aware of the difficulties of Italians living in enemy-held territory, the PWB made sure that news bulletins

were punctually broadcast on the hour.(167) Lt Col Spofford at AMGOT HQ considered the impact of these broadcasts on the Italians to be very important and requested information about any 'jamming' which might take place. He also asked for loudspeaker systems installed by the previous government to be reactivated to transmit proclamations, notices, and special announcements. (168) This does not appear to have taken place in Catania but one CAO in Trapani informed the WO that the 'dissemination of BBC foreign broadcasts by public loudspeakers proved a great asset and prevented rumours.' (169)

In his history of Sicily under Allied administration, Lamberto Mercuri cites the research carried out into the listening habits of the islanders during the administration of AMGOT. 10% of the 4,000,000 people (the population of Sicily at that time) apparently tuned in each day. 64% of radios were equipped with short wave. 87% of the population listened to local stations, 61% to New York, 47% to Palermo once it was under Allied Control. The latter was considered by listeners to be the most reliable source of information, although the 22% who tuned in to Radio London thought this channel the most reliable. 50% listened to broadcasts from North Italy, under German and Fascist occupation. Mercuri draws attention to the shortage of electricity in the island which affected the people's listening habits: 'La penuria di elettricit  fu il pi  grave deterrente ad un pi  generale ed esteso ascolto.' (170)

References have already been made to the role played by the Catania newspaper, *il Corriere di Sicilia*, in bringing AMGOT notices and information to the public. AMGOT had no direct responsibility for the control of the Italian press, which was directed by the Information and Censorship Section (INC) at AFHQ and its organ, the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB). It was arranged that any local conflict of opinion between PWB and AMGOT would be referred to AFHQ.(171) AMGOT made no attempt to control the contents published in the two island newspapers. Wellesley, however,

voiced his misgivings to Rennell that the *Corriere* had on several occasions published articles which criticised the Administration or led the population to believe that there would be an early restoration of public utilities and schools etc., which would be impossible to realise. (172) Rennell's response to AFHQ's cable to him re this matter emphasised that relations between PWB and AMGOT were most cordial and that no problem existed. He added that the SCAO of Catania province had perhaps taken 'too rigid a view on the latitude to be allowed to the local press', but, in his opinion, one of the main difficulties of the administration in Sicily was to deal with the disappointments caused by undue optimism as a result of official pronouncements regarding the advent of a reign of plenty.(173)

PWB officers first arrived in Sicily on 13 July, made their way to Siracusa and produced an English-Italian news sheet - the *Corriere di Siracusa*. When PWB discovered the acute shortage of newsprint it was decided that only two daily newspapers could be produced. One was the *Sicilia Liberata* in Palermo. the other the *Corriere di Sicilia*. Some other towns, Ragusa, Caltanissetta and Enna, attempted to produce their own newspapers but these were mostly restricted to weekly news sheets. On 23 October the *Notiziario di Messina* made its first appearance and was subsequently published three times a week.(174)

There was a chronic shortage of all types of paper in the island which not only restricted the printing of newspapers but also affected offices, businesses, and private correspondence. (The Prefect's file in the Catania archives contains letters from members of the public written on scraps of paper torn from posters and AMGOT Proclamations). It was not until the capture of Naples in October when paper stores were found there that the press in Sicily could expand. By the spring of 1944 the *Corriere* was printing about 25,000 daily copies.

The research by Mercuri into the role of the radio, cited above, also encompassed people's reading habits. 61% read a

newspaper the day following its publication, 55% were informed of AMGOT's notices and decrees via the newspaper within two days, or five days if living in a rural area. 50% obtained information via posters, 44% by word of mouth and 23% via radio broadcasts. (175) Many people would obtain their information through more than one channel, especially if living in either Catania or Palermo, where papers were printed daily and electricity had been restored. Since transport remained in such short supply, it was not easy to send copies to surrounding villages.

Eisenhower's message to the Italian people had promised that freedom of speech and of the press would be instituted provided that military interests were not prejudiced. In spite of Wellesley's qualms about the *Corriere di Sicilia*, the PWB seemed to have no problems with the paper's contents but, even when AMGOT handed over the island to the Italian Government on 11 February 1944, the PWB remained in nominal control. Various political parties began to produce weekly papers, such as the Catania Separatist *Repubblica di Sicilia*. This did not appear in the list of publications approved by the PWB. Quintero implies that it was a clandestine publication but without too many obstacles put in its way, 'vista la tolleranza che gli Alleati mostravano nei confronti del Separatismo'.(176) The Separatist movement is discussed later in this chapter but the next section will address a problem which affected all the island's children, that of the closure of all educational establishments apart from universities, which continued to provide a drastically reduced level of service to students.

Section 9. AMGOT's Efforts to re-establish Education Provision

In an island with a high rate of illiteracy a serious problem for the AMGOT administration was the total lack of

education available for those of school age. There had been no official closure of schools before the arrival of the Allies, who in Proclamation No.1. decreed that schools would be immediately closed but Nicolosi writes that from 17 April most schools were already empty: 'I ragazzi non ci andavano, i professori vi fecero qualche apparizione, poi anche loro si eclissarono. Così, di fatto, l'anno scolastico terminò in anticipo.'(177) Many school buildings in Catania had either been damaged during air raids and combat, or requisitioned for barracks and hospitals by the local authorities and later by the Allies.

AMGOT planning for HUSKY did not include a specific division for Education but Lt Col Harris was sent to Algiers in June to take charge of AMGOT's educational responsibilities.(178) However, he was soon transferred by Rennell to the Property Control Division, with the result that no designated staff had any part in the planning stage at AFHQ to prepare the reorganisation of Sicily's education system.(179)

General Eisenhower's message to the Italian people had made clear that all measures necessary to eradicate Fascism would be taken by the Allies. This would necessitate a complete review of the education system, the removal of Fascist staff and the replacement of school textbooks, which were mostly based on Fascist propaganda, particularly in the elementary sector. Lord Rennell soon realised that an Education specialist was urgently needed, not only to get children back into school and to prepare new textbooks but to remove prominent Fascists from senior positions in the education system. He cabled the War Office for an Education Adviser and Major George R. Gayre of the Army Education Corps, then serving as a Staff Officer at Oxford, was selected. It took him some time to reach AMGOT HQ in Sicily, and the account of his journey via Algiers, Tizi Ouzou and Catania to Palermo gives a graphic picture of the incompetence of AFHQ. He was kept waiting for days because, in his words, 'MGS could tell me nothing, seemed unconcerned

over telling me anything, had no instructions, was uninterested in getting any instructions about an educational officer for Italy and generally blamed the War Office.' (180) Gayre was also amazed at the attitude of the Civil Affairs Division in London, which was just as casual as the MGS section in Algiers. He was given no information at all and thought it inexcusable 'how any planners sitting in London and Washington could have overlooked the fact that Italian education could not be reformed without new school textbooks.' (181) Meanwhile Capt Mason Hammond, Adviser of Fine Arts and Monuments at Palermo HQ, had carried out some improvised education measures, in addition to his own work.

According to the Sicily Zone Handbook the latest figures available to the Foreign Office in 1943 showed that in the academic year 1940-41 there were approximately 415,000 pupils and 10,500 teachers in the island's elementary schools. A considerable number of these pupils lived in rural areas and attended school only in the winter months, remaining at home all summer to help with agricultural and pastoral work. Others were enrolled on school registers but did not attend regularly. In the same year just under 45,000 attended some form of secondary school, ranging from Ginnasi to Licei, roughly equivalent to the lower and higher levels of British grammar schools, and the Scuole Medie, lower secondary schools, established in 1940. Of the three universities in the island Catania was by far the oldest, having been founded by Pope Eugenius IV in 1444. In 1941 it was a State University with a total of more than 5,000 students, of whom a large proportion were in Arts faculties, in particular the faculty of Jurisprudence. This was also the most popular faculty in Palermo. (182)

Catania town was well equipped with secondary schools; the Liceo Ginnasio "N.Spedaliere", Liceo Ginnasio "M. Cutelli", the Liceo Scientifico, and four Istituti Tecnici: Agrario, Industria, Commercio, Commercio e Industria. In addition there was a Nautical School, two schools for Professional

Training in Agriculture and Commerce and one specifically for Professional Training for girls. (183)

Gayre began his work in Palermo on 7 September in one room without glass in its windows, no typewriter, no clerk, no telephone. All educational establishments were closed by Proclamation and many teachers and lecturers had fled their posts. The new Educational Adviser began his work with an examination of the complete series of textbooks for the five grades of the elementary school. This series was written and printed under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and used throughout Italy. There was a great variety of these books and teachers were free to choose the ones they preferred. Each one was found to be permeated with propaganda, although in some cases the number of pages of overt propaganda was relatively small and could be removed. Book shops were ordered to cut out the offending pages before selling them and when schools reopened, teachers were told to check that they had been removed before pupils used them. If the number of offending pages was too great, the books were ordered to be confiscated and then deposited with the nearest Sindaco. He would arrange for them to be shipped to a paper mill for pulping when a mill became available. (184)

There was no complete listing of secondary school books and the nine provincial Directors of Education (Provveditori agli Studi) were authorised, subject to the approval of their SCAO, to use their discretion in approving Latin, Greek and purely technical books but had to send a list of the books to the Education Adviser. In other fields the title of the book requested by the school was submitted to the local Provveditore for approval. All history books were discarded and new ones produced. As Italian teachers were accustomed to working to a curriculum laid down for them and since new text books were not immediately available, instructions and a course of study were prepared for them by the education committees set up under the guidance of SCAOs, in keeping with Gayre's policy

of granting as much responsibility as possible at a local level.(185)

As Gayre did not arrive in Sicily until September, he was working under great pressure, as his diary reveals: '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.'(186) Gayre was delighted when Major C. Washburne arrived on 8 October. He was an experienced American school administrator and the designated Education Officer for Rome and had been sent to Palermo for a short while to understudy the work being done there. As Gayre was working alone with only an interpreter and the typist he had acquired, Washburne offered to assist him. Soon he was in charge of elementary and secondary education, freeing Gayre to concentrate on policies, universities and the elimination of Fascist personnel.(187)

In the latter task he was greatly assisted by Major Aldo Raffa, an Italo-American officer, who worked directly under the Chief of Staff, Lt Col Spofford, and whose job was to investigate the background and past history of all public officials. Raffa had drawn up a Scheda Personale which every official was obliged to fill in with full details and precise dates of his past history and connections with Fascism. Heading the Scheda was a warning 'N.B. Penalità severissime, di prigione e di ammenda, sono previste per chiunque faccia delle dichiarazioni false nella presente scheda.' After completing the Scheda the writer was required to write 'Giuro che le precedenti dichiarazioni sono vere.' Then he was told; 'Rileggete prima di consegnare la scheda, e se avete scritto il falso, correggete. Vi ricordiamo che le superiori dichiarazioni sono state fatte sotto giuramento e che pene severissime sono stabilite per il falso giuramento.' (188) The CAO would then add his comments and recommendations as to whether the person in question should be retained in post, suspended or dismissed. Gayre commented on the unlikelihood that anyone

would deliberately lie on this questionnaire, as he had never seen a document so covered with threats before.(189)

Making full use of the Scheda personale, Gayre proceeded to check all teaching staff. Out of a total of 1,676 copies of the Scheda used in all divisions of Military Government in Sicily to sift Fascist personnel, 1,100 were used in the field of education.(190) A beginning was always made with key administrators - Provveditori, Rectors of Universities, Directors of Higher Institutes - and it was in these categories that most dismissals and substitutions were made. As the War Office report points out, only evidently serious cases of overt Fascist activity among the lower teaching grades were immediately dealt with, since 'all efforts were made to recommence scholastic functioning with all despatch, allowing for the necessary first revisions of syllabus, organisation and material.'(191)

In December Gayre visited Catania to preside at a meeting of the Senatus Academicus, and to carry out the completion of the dismissals and suspensions of the fascist professors, one of whom, Gaetano Zingali, was causing a great deal of trouble. Zingali had been suspended for six months for his overt Fascism, and 'had created pandemonium in Catania, accusing the rector, Petroncelli, of being a Fascist.' The latter's innocence was proved and he was delighted to obtain a forthcoming transfer to Naples University, where he could relinquish the post of rector and resume his studies. Before leaving the University Gayre expressed his regret that the building had been turned into a NAAFI when it was badly needed for its proper purpose. He acknowledged, however, that it was being very well looked after, unlike Palermo University, which had tended to disintegrate under military occupation. (192)

On 25 November Gayre, with other AMG officers and heads of subcommissions of the Allied Control Commission had visited Brindisi for a conference with Italian Government ministers. He met Badoglio's Minister for Education, Cuomo, 'an old and weak man who had been out of office for twenty

years and had only come back as an ex-deputy and patriot to serve his king and country.' (193) The official minutes of the conference reveal that the Minister had not formulated any plans for the internal working organisation of the Ministry of Education and that he needed more time to consider the matter. He wished the Allied Education Advisers to continue to be responsible for education until Rome was taken. It was clear that he had given no thought to the matter and had no sense of urgency but he did state that his purpose would be to get rid of Fascist influence.(194)

Later events rather belied this stated aim. Gayre learned that Cuomo was securing appointments for Italian education officials after they had been dismissed from their posts by Allied officers. Capt Vessolo, British Education Adviser for Region II, informed Gayre that the Provveditori agli Studi in Calabria, and several other Fascists dismissed from their posts, had been given new positions. As Gayre wrote: 'It means that someone who has been got rid of by us as a Fascist only needs to walk across the 'frontier' into Apulia, where the King's Government of Badoglio rules, and get a job from Cuomo'.(195)

Reference was made above to the presence of officers of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) at the conference in Brindisi. Details of this Commission, which was formed to replace AMGOT in February 1944, will be provided later but brief mention is made now of the impact of the somewhat premature arrival in October of ACC personnel on the Education section at AMGOT HQ. It caused, in Gayre's words, 'a moral collapse' of the AMGOT staff, because the incomers immediately took over their posts. (196) Gayre admits his shock when Lt Col T.V. Smith, a professor of Philosophy at Chicago University, arrived unexpectedly to take over his job. However, after discussion with General McSherry and General Joyce, head of the new Commission, Smith said he was willing to serve as Gayre's deputy. (197) Gayre continued to head operations at Palermo HQ, and Smith went

to Brindisi to liaise with the Italian Government.

Meanwhile American Major Koopman, an experienced school administrator, had come from Tizi Ouzou via Charlottesville to join the Education section and subsequently took over responsibility for Sicily, where he remained as Regional Education Officer. By the beginning of December, with the help of the extra officers in his department, Gayre had produced Educational Directives for all schools, laid down general policies, rewritten school programmes, ensured that text books had been expurgated and new elementary textbooks prepared, ready for the official reopening of schools.(198)

The damage to educational buildings was estimated at 25% for Sicily as a whole, with coastal cities suffering most. The repair of school buildings was given a very high priority and minimum repair work was done on most of those that were partially damaged. Where buildings were completely or nearly completely demolished, other buildings were requisitioned to serve as school premises. (199) All schools in Sicily were scheduled to open on 1st December. By this time most of the buildings occupied by troops and refugees had been evacuated and were available for schools again but it was not possible to obtain details for the availability of Catania schools.

Considering the difficulties and problems he encountered, Gayre had achieved a great deal in a short time but he was justified in taking a very pessimistic view of the future of Italian education. After his return to Britain in February 1944, he was informed by ACC that the Italian Government had been released from any obligation to honour appointments made by him in his capacity as Education Adviser, and that in fact all AMGOT appointments would be terminated with the end of the military occupation. (200)

AMGOT staff had removed Fascist personnel from the Education system, making full use of the Scheda Personale. The next Section will deal with the removal of Fascists in other professions.

Section 10. The Removal of Fascists under AMGOT

Administration

The previous section referred to the use of the Scheda Personale, the method employed by AMGOT's Education staff to discover those in administrative and teaching posts who were committed Fascists, not just nominal Party members. The Scheda Personale was not drawn up until September and therefore unavailable during the actual invasion and the early days of AMGOT administration. Although it was obvious that the Party Machine could not be broken up or Fascist influence eliminated in a day, certain steps had been taken to identify those in public administration who held high appointments because of past services to the Party, or who, for example, had been Squadristi or part of the March on Rome. (201)

Since almost all administrative officials were members of the Party, if only nominally, removing them would cause a breakdown not only of the whole administration but also of all public and technical services. The removal of Fascists was essentially the responsibility of AMGOT officers in cooperation with the British Field Security Personnel (FSP) and the American Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC). They held the 'Black List' of Fascists considered to be a threat to military security and, when a town was entered, FSP or CIC staff checked the list with the local Carabinieri. If an arrest was made, the nearest CAO was to be informed but, because of transport difficulties, it frequently happened that the security personnel arrived in a town before AMGOT staff, made some arrests and moved on without leaving any records. By the end of August 1,500 Sicilians were in local prisons without charge sheets. (202)

A Cabinet document on Field Security emphasised the importance from the security point of view that AMGOT should arrive in a town at the same time as the FSP, not only in connection with the arrest of Fascists but because the civilian authorities expected FSP personnel to provide

all the same services as CAOs, such as providing food, directing traffic and imposing discipline.(203) The Cabinet document also pointed out the need for closer collaboration with AMGOT in the employment of former Fascist town officials:'Numerous occasions have occurred when FSP have refrained from arresting such undesirable persons at the request of AMGOT who stated that they were essential for the restoration of order and the civilian services.'(204) As the same document recorded;'It must be admitted that there have been occasions when FSP and AMGOT have not seen entirely eye to eye.... Those responsible may consider taking steps to remove any causes of friction...if our Administration is to be the most efficient possible.'(205)

Rennell had already made clear that AMGOT's first aim was not defascistisation but the avoidance of administrative breakdown:'Initial arrests for obstruction, hostility or strong Fascist sentiments were few in the first two weeks owing to lack of information and a desire to do nothing which would cause a breakdown in the administration while AMGOT officers were trying to get something running.'(206)

He later reiterated AMGOT's intention to find a controlling staff over an Italian administrative machine from which the 'most undesirable Fascist element had been, and would progressively be, weeded out, without a breakdown.' (207)

It was only when the Scheda Personale was available that a more accurate assessment of a person's past connections with the Party could be made. As stated previously, the SCAO of Catania had the Questore, Molina, arrested at AMGOT's first meeting with the municipal authorities. Presumably Wellesley was in possession of the local Black List, which contained the Questore's name. Molina was later reinstated after further enquiries were made by FSP.(208)

After the Scheda Personale was introduced it became much easier to examine the facts about an individual's past associations with the Fascist Party. Major Raffa, who had devised the Scheda, pointed out that the concerns of CIC and FSP were with Allied military security of an immediate

character, whereas AMGOT's concern was with the long-range necessities of military government. (209) In Catania, after investigation and the examination of each Scheda Personale, a number of local public figures were sent to an internment camp at Priolo, or imprisoned in the old Pietro Lupo jail in the town. The names of six professors, removed from their University posts, and seven teachers dismissed from local secondary schools, were published under an AMGOT announcement in the *Corriere di Sicilia*, even though it did not appear until 1 March 1944, after the island had been returned to the Italian authorities. The dismissals had been made months earlier and included the head of the Liceo-Ginnasio *Cutelli*, Rosario Verde, who had actually been dismissed on 19 November. Verde then disappeared from the town and was not found until September 1945, when he was arrested for spying activities in collaboration with OVRA. He had betrayed an anti-Fascist teacher on his staff, who was subsequently deported to Germany, where he died in a concentration camp. (210)

On 27 October a new Provveditore agli Studi for the province was appointed. No reason was given but presumably the previous post-holder had a Fascist past, verified by a Scheda Personale. (211) In other areas of public life individual checks were being made but it was quite clear from the very beginning of AMGOT's administration that it was impossible to attempt to remove all ex-members of the Fascist Party, since membership had been an imposed necessity for employment, particularly for those in State employment. A War Office document points out that the criterion employed was one of active participation and 'how far in the lower ranges, participation could be held to be forced or deliberate.' (212)

Rennell had emphasised the progressive nature of weeding out Fascists. The process would take longer than the actual term of AMGOT administration, and was hampered by the withdrawal of many CAOs from their communes before the scheduled date of 11 February 1944, leaving many areas with

no AMGOT representation in January.

In the Allied plans to eradicate Fascism from the island the Fascist Corporative Syndicate system was dissolved and all Fascist officials removed. The various workers' unions were also dissolved and replaced by a provincial Labour Office. (213) All individuals were banned from promoting any aspect whatsoever of Fascism, but as stated above, it would take time to remove every single Fascist in a position of authority and, at the same time, find a competent replacement while the war continued on the mainland. Many Sicilians holding public office had been transferred from the island to various towns in Italy by order of Mussolini. It was not until May 1944 that a provincial Commission for Defascistisation was formed, months after AMGOT had ceased to exist in Sicily.

The CCS Directives for the Military Government of Sicily had stated that no political activity whatsoever in the island would be tolerated but that freedom of speech and the Press were to be instituted in so far as military interests were not prejudiced. Harris points out the difficulty in reconciling these two freedoms with a complete prohibition of all political activities. (214) In spite of the ban, the political vacuum remaining after the dissolution of the Fascist Party soon began to fill, as is indicated in the next section.

Section 11. The Re-emergence of Separatism and other Political Parties

In Catania town the SCAO had become the target of Avv. Prof. Andrea Finocchiaro-Aprile, head of the Comitato per l'Indipendenza della Sicilia, a movement which had existed for many years in the island and whose aim was to separate Sicily from mainland Italy and to establish it as an independent Republic. Finocchiaro-Aprile was not himself a

Sicilian but hailed from Tuscany, and before the advent of Fascism had been Under-Secretary for War and for the Treasury in the Nitti Government.(215) According to a Sicilian journalist, working in Rome, who sent a document on the 'Separatist Point of View on Sicilian Problems' to Col Switzer, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the movement had a strong following in the island, and was supported by both intellectuals and the working classes, 'since everyone looks to it as the only protection of real democracy against a possible future Social-Communist dictatorship.' The writer insisted that Sicilians were tired of being ruled by the Italian peninsula which had never protected the island's interests.(216)

Finocchiaro-Aprile collaborated closely with Concetto Gallo, son of a former mayor of Catania, and both had links with Catania University. According to Gavin Maxwell's account of the life of the Sicilian outlaw, Salvatore Giuliano, the Separatist movement was actively fostered by American Special Services after the invasion, and involved a guerilla army under the control of Professor Canepa, a lecturer in Law at Catania University. The army was known as EVIS (Esercito Volontaria Indipendenza Siciliana). (217) However, the sequence of events after the invasion bringing the downfall of Mussolini, the Armistice, and the King's declaration of war on Germany resulted in the Americans no longer wishing to be involved in the movement. They adopted a negative attitude, of neither condemnation nor official support.

Nicolosi relates that when the British entered Catania, they knew the exact whereabouts of certain locations in the town and immediately found Professor Canepa, who, after carrying out an act of sabotage at Gerbini, had taken refuge in the home of Professor Petroncelli, his colleague at the University. He apparently provided the British with a great deal of information about the town and its residents. (218)

On 30th September Finocchiaro-Aprile wrote to Rennell. He

wished to draw his attention to the situation in Catania 'che appare anormale da molti punti di vista.' He alleged that the SCAO was excessively tolerant towards the Fascist elements who were continuing to serve in the municipal offices. In particular he referred to the CAO, Thornitt Smith, who had worked for the sulphur exporters, Baller Saraw, for many years and had now renewed contact with his past Fascist acquaintances. He pointed out that the vice podestà, Russo, was a former Squadrista and supporter of the regime. He named Cesare Polizzi, head of the town's Industrial Technical Secondary School, as one who had denounced non-Fascist teachers.

The Commissioner of the local Consiglio dell'Economia, Luigi Carnazza, was also identified as a leading Fascist. Carnazza's father was a former Minister for Public Works, and his mother was the sister of General Enno von Rintelen, German Military Attaché in Rome. Carnazza was apparently trying to reorganise former Fascists into a new Liberal Party. Finally Finocchio-Aprile directed his attention on the Sindaco, the Marquis Di San Giuliano, whom he accused of being a former Fascist Party inspector, who had achieved office through his connection with an illustrious ancestor and was now intent on replacing non-Fascist staff in the Municipio with former Fascists.(219)

The ancestor was his uncle, a former Italian Foreign Secretary. War correspondent, Christopher Buckley, decided to call on the Sindaco and described him as 'a small, pleasant, English-speaking gentleman, dressed in immaculate Bond Street suiting, who received us courteously.' During the conversation the Sindaco claimed that his uncle had been responsible for Italy entering World War I on Britain's side. Buckley knew this was not true but did not contradict him 'because he seemed so nice.' However, he found himself wondering how the Marquis had been appointed if he really was as anti-Fascist as he claimed during their conversation. Since he was one of the biggest landowners in Sicily, Buckley wondered if Mussolini appointed him without

exacting more than lip service to the Fascist creed. (220) Finocchiaro-Aprile then turned his attention to Wellesley, alleging that the latter had declared in the presence of other Allied officers that the Anglo-American forces had not come to Sicily to fight Fascism. On hearing this the faith of Catanesi in the English was badly shaken. (221)

Rennell would have paid scant attention to these complaints. In his view the leaders of the Separatist movement were 'certainly anti-Fascist but were an embarrassment all the same.' (222) Finocchiaro-Aprile was obviously keen to publicise his own anti-Fascism and hoped to exploit the growing unpopularity of the Allies who had neither removed all Fascists nor brought the promised reign of plenty. He had written a series of letters putting forward the case for Sicily's independence, beginning with an open letter to the people of Sicily, dated 12 June 1943, in which he denounces the Axis leaders: 'Vogliamo far sapere al mondo che la Sicilia è la prima a non riconoscere più la loro autorità e il loro arbitrio.' He wrote to a number of Western leaders, including Roosevelt, Churchill, Eden, Cordell Hull, King George VI and Pope Pius XII and persisted in his correspondence to them, even writing to Eleanor Roosevelt after the President's death. (223)

Although it had been made clear that while AMGOT was responsible for the island's administration no political parties would be tolerated, the SCAO of Palermo province permitted the Separatist Party to hold public meetings, which he and other officers attended. In September the Separatist Lucio Tasca was nominated Sindaco of Palermo, the vice-Sindaco, Di Napoli, also being a member of the Party. (224) Rennell had realised that the ban on political activity was not welcomed in the island and told the Foreign Office that many groups had already formed and even produced handbills. His attempts to stop these activities had been unsuccessful. (225) Apart from the Separatists in

Catania it appears that other groups were making discreet moves to organise themselves but were in no particular hurry in the first few post-war months. It was not until January 1944 that the CCS informed Eisenhower that 'the Italian people may be permitted to participate in such political activities as do not lead to rioting or disorder... they have the right to peaceful assembly, attendance at meetings of political committees, and publication and distribution of political works.' (226) ACC officers were told to ensure that the Italian Government permitted similar freedom of political activity in parts of Italy restored to Italian jurisdiction.

The decision of the CCS was transmitted to the Italian people on 10 January 1944 by Lt Col Poletti when he issued Order No.17. They were to have freedom of political activity within certain bounds. (227) Finocchiaro-Aprile was the first to take advantage of the new freedom. He wasted no time in hiring the Massimo Theatre, one of the largest and most impressive buildings in Palermo, and on 16 January delivered his first officially permitted public speech on Separatism. As previously mentioned, the Separatists had already been active in Palermo province and Rennell had readily admitted the impossibility of preventing political meetings. As it was now legal to hold them an anti-Fascist committee meeting was arranged in Catania on 24 January. It included representatives from groups of Socialists, Communists, Christian-Democrats, Social-Democrats and Republicans. The first meeting of the Socialist Party took place a week later and Domenico Albergo was made responsible for reorganising the Party in Sicily. The Liberal Party decided to set up its own provincial section and all political groups began to plan their future activities.(228) Since the AMG was due to hand over responsibility for the island on 11 February, little progress in the development of the various political parties was made during the remainder of AMG administration.

Section 12. The Slow Return to Normality

Previous Sections have revealed the extent of the problems faced by the AMGOT administration in Catania. Chronic food shortages, a flourishing Black Market, rising inflation and wage anomalies, and lack of accommodation for large numbers of homeless, which was exacerbated by requisitions to house Allied forces. Added to these was an acute lack of transport for both CAOs and civilians. The SCAO's first report to HQ at Palermo, which covered the first month of AMGOT administration, was not encouraging. (229) The first popularity enjoyed by the British troops had waned due to a number of incidences of deplorable behaviour and the *Corriere di Sicilia* was publishing various public grievances. There was still a shortage of lire currency, which, as Wellesley pointed out, was affecting prices, but there was no shortage of well paid labour. (230) It was not all bad news, however, as the only reminder of the war had been a few German air raids which caused little damage. The UNPA units (Unione nazionale di protezione antiaerea) were now being used to clear away the vast amount of debris in the streets. All branches of the Municipality were now open and a list of the location of their offices published. Electricity and water supplies had been restored, if only partially, in most areas of the town. By the end of August water would be available in the neighbouring Etna communes. (231)

Wellesley's report for September begins with a reference to 'an air of general depression in Catania as though the city had not yet recovered from the impact of war.' (232) Although some shops had opened, the majority remained closed. However, fresh funds had been received from AMFA, banks had reopened and there was no sign of panic withdrawals, in fact, most banks had received new deposits. Meetings with Finance Officers, Mayors and Tax Collectors had taken place to discuss a tolleranza for Catania town.

There was a growing need for labour due to the approach of

seasonal occupations such as harvesting citrus fruit and grapes. Wellesley also reported the return of a postal service in the province. This would use the already existing service which delivered the *Corriere di Sicilia* in the province.(233) The return of this civilian postal service, albeit with a number of conditions attached to it, was announced to the public in the *Corriere* on 10 September. Only postcards would be accepted, written in Italian or English, destined to addresses in Catania town. Postcards addressed to other towns would be destroyed. AMGOT stamps costing 15 centesimi would be on sale on weekday mornings at the Ufficio della Corrispondenza, (Palazzo delle Poste e Telegrafi) (234) This was not quite the same information as given by the SCAO in his report. After the island's surrender AMGOT had organised a collection service for letters written by families to POWs. The envelopes, bearing the last known address of the prisoner, were placed in a special box in the central post office of each town and notices to this effect were displayed at the usual AMGOT sites such as the Town Hall, AMGOT HQ and municipal buildings.(235)

Relations between AMGOT staff and municipality officials appear to have flourished during these difficult times. Presumably the presence of a town CAO, with fluent Italian and long acquaintance with the local people and their particular characteristics, would have been a great advantage to the administration, as was an Italian-speaking SCAO. In addition the Mayor's ability to speak excellent English would have been very useful with members of AMGOT staff. Nicolosi refers to the efforts made and recorded in the Cronaca di Catania column of the *Corriere*, towards the step by step rebirth of the town: 'Fu una faticosa ma alacre attività, nella quale tutti i Catanesi e l'autorità alleata si impegnarono con una unità di intenti ed efficacia di risultati quali negli anni successivi non si sarebbero più viste.' (236)

Concern about the slow reopening of shops would presumably

have been the reason for an announcement from the Commissariato per gli Affari Economici della Provincia di Catania, stating that shops were to be reopened in the town. A stern warning was issued to all wholesale and retail shopowners who had left the town to return immediately with any goods they had taken with them, or they would be severely punished. (237) On a lighter note the reopening of cinemas in September was another step to normality, even though the presence of the PWB was evident since cinema managers had to obtain a permit and provide the name and details of the film.

Progress was still very slow in restoring the town because of the amount of rebuilding needed and the total lack of building materials available.(238) Food and clothes were still in short supply in spite of Red Cross deliveries. With the gradual departure of troops for the mainland, the Army no longer required as much labour but the surplus could not be absorbed by local industry, which was still inactive and inevitably unemployment would result,

It would be a long, slow process to rebuild the city, and the lives of its inhabitants. AMGOT seems to have done all it could to speed that process within the limitations imposed on it. One area, however, would prove extremely difficult to implement because it depended on thorough planning on the part of AFHQ and on the total cooperation of the Sicilian grain producers. This will be addressed in the following Section relating to supplies and resources to provide for the needs of the civilian population.

Section 13. The Civilian Supply and Resources Division

Before the invasion the Allies had anticipated a possible need for civilian supplies arising from the effects of air raids and combat and to this end had drawn up plans for the stockpiling of essential commodities in North Africa. AFHQ had informed the War Department in May 1943 that the island produced adequate food and 'when the whole area is occupied

there should be no need, on the basis of the existing standard of living, for the import of essential food.'(239) Nevertheless it was thought prudent to establish reserves to avoid local shortages if urban centres should be cut off by military operations from their rural sources of supply, or if the grain harvest should prove insufficient. The CCS had charged the United States with the main responsibility for obtaining and shipping civilian supplies to Italy but the MGS assumed that sufficient stocks would be available in North Africa, if needed.(240)

It had become clear, however, even during the first days of the occupation of an urban centre, Siracusa, that the Allies had underestimated civilian food requirements to a serious degree. It appears that the planners lacked reliable Intelligence reports and had based their calculations on the misrepresentation of yields and imports published by the Fascist government, which, in the words of Major A. Alexander, Acting Chief of the Economic and Supply Division, 'were designed to make its self-sufficiency programme appear more successful than it was.' (241) AFHQ also failed to take into account the potential damage to crops from military operations. This, together with the almost total lack of fertilisers available in 1943 led to a significant reduction in the yield of the grain crop. In addition, the effect of the black market and the reluctance of farmers to deliver grain to the ammassi (warehouses), greatly reduced the amount available to implement the bread ration. (242)

During the planning stage provision had also been made for shipping to bring civil supplies to the island. Arrangements made in North Africa were later changed and instead of operating through the HQ of Fifteenth Army Group as planned, the administration of civilian supplies was transferred to FORTBASE in Siracusa, the British supply district for the Eighth Army. This change in the administrative set-up contributed to the difficulties experienced by AMGOT's supply organisation in acquiring the

food needed for the island, but the main cause of the problem was the inadequacy of the MGS at AFHQ. They failed to keep a watchful eye on the French authorities, with whom they had made an arrangement to provide a reserve of 32,000 tons of flour, milled and bagged, from the Tunisian and Algerian grain crop. (243) Far from supplying the flour, ready bagged, the French had not even collected the grain.

MGS had also stockpiled 13,600 short tons of provisions ready to be shipped in stages from D+15 to D+60. Although mostly made up of foodstuffs, it also included medical stores and items such as soap. When the Deputy Director of Civilian Supply from Palermo visited AFHQ in October, he discovered that most of the 13,600 tons had been stockpiled by MGS in ports where convoys did not load. (244) The consequent delay in delivering the shipments, caused by this mismanagement, resulted in only 3,200 tons of the 13,600 tons reaching Catania by coaster on 30 August. Of this amount, all but 500 tons was diverted to Reggio di Calabria in early September to relieve the mainland's food shortage, exacerbated by the retreating Germans who destroyed much of the 1943 grain crop on their way north. Over the next two months a further 6,800 tons were brought in but only 5,800 tons of flour commissioned from the French authorities materialised. (245)

The Civilian Supply Division originally consisted of seven sections dealing with civilian requirements - Agriculture and Fisheries; Industries; Mines and Resources; Public Utilities; Communications; Transport; and Labour. After the occupation it was reorganised into four separate divisions and on 24 October taken over by the ACC - three changes in less than six months. (246) The head of its Agricultural Sub-Division, Major J. Chayton, was not sent to Sicily until 25 July. It took a further six weeks before two assistants arrived to help him enforce the laws for the collection and distribution of grain. This delay further increased the already heavy workload of CAOs, one of whose main functions was to deal with local supply matters.

In his report the Major refers to Article 4 of Proclamation No.8, which stated that "All existing laws, Decrees and Regulations relating to Agriculture will be strictly enforced and observed". (247) In practice this was virtually impossible to carry out as the Italian system of agricultural control was 'a very intricate and delicate piece of mechanism'. Breakdowns had occurred before the occupation and after the invasion 'the machine was almost completely wrecked and impossible of reconstruction'. The only alternative was to reconstruct the system completely - a task beyond the realms of physical possibility. (248)

Under existing Italian law, almost every agricultural product was subject to the compulsory system of delivery to the ammassi. As the shortage of bread increased, the collection of wheat to provide an adequate ration became even more vital and SCAOs concentrated their efforts in this direction. Chayton reported that not enough efficient and trustworthy native personnel were available so SCAOs built up their systems around individuals. The result was that agricultural organisations in all Provinces varied considerably in their structures. (249)

For their part farmers were justifiably dissatisfied with official prices. Rennell issued General Order No.3., which increased the rate for August deliveries to the ammassi from L.360 per quintal to L.500. September and October prices were set at L.450 and L.400 respectively, offering a premium for early delivery. At the same time the price of bread was raised from 2.5 to 3.6 lire a kilo, and the maximum ration *per capita* raised to 300 grams of bread a day and 280 grams of pasta per week, although the actual ration varied from province to province and town to town and could be as low as 100 grams a day. The ration in Catania town never reached the maximum.(250)

Major Rowell's fact-finding tour of Sicily in the second week of August underlined the problem of ration books. The pre-occupational ration books were being used but many people claimed that books had been lost or destroyed in air

raids. Some claimed they had been told by retreating Fascists that Allied forces would punish anyone possessing a Fascist ration book and they had consequently destroyed their books. (251)

Reference was made earlier to the shortage of bread in Catania when the SCAO and his party of CAOs first arrived. Lord Wellesley's prompt action in obtaining emergency supplies was welcomed by the local population but within a very short time the influx of returning refugees created further serious shortages. In theory the rationing system, which provided extra bread for workers in heavy industry, was fair but a Cabinet document described it as 'handicapped by the corruption of the local bakeries and the Italian administration'. (252) In Catania the cure was to close most of the bakeries to ensure proper supervision of a limited number on a rota basis. The distribution of the bread ration initially took place in the presence of CAOs or MPs. (253) During August the average basic daily ration was 200 grams a day. Not only bread but other items of food were in very short supply. Before AMGOT arrived in Catania the Prefect had authorised police searches of shops and warehouses to find any hidden items of food: 'Per fronteggiare la gravissima situazione alimentare della città di Catania autorizzo il Comando dei Vigili Urbani ad eseguire perquisizioni nei negozi e magazzini, anche se chiusi, allo scopo di reperire generi alimentari.' (254)

After AMGOT's arrival the situation showed little signs of improving, and the HQ September report cites the 'continued source of embarrassment caused by the food shortage in the face of statements made by responsible officials of both governments as to what has been done and what is to be done in supplying the population.' The report pointed out that the propaganda agencies must realise that enemy populations are prone to remember promises even made over the air and that the result of predictions which cannot be carried into effect is the reverse of that intended. (255)

By early October the main grain-producing provinces, Enna,

Caltanissetta and Agrigento had realised that the promised supplies to Sicily were not forthcoming and that the mainland was also experiencing grave shortages. Quite naturally they wished to keep the grain they had produced for their local population and therefore reduced supplies to other provinces. (256) The non-arrival of the promised imports from AFHQ caused the military commander great concern as the total lack of food reserves would inevitably lead to civil unrest. An extra problem was the increasing difficulty of movement by road, even when transport was available, owing to the number of blown bridges. During the summer months diversions crossed dried-up river beds but with the onset of winter the streams would fill them, making them impassable. In an attempt to solve the October crisis, emergency army food reserves were called on but nevertheless food riots erupted in a number of areas, including some villages in Catania.(257)

General McSherry, DCCAO, set out the facts of the situation in an AMGOT HQ meeting, laying the blame squarely on the black market. He stated that considerable quantities of wheat had disappeared into hoards and into the hands of black market operators before the start of effective control. The quantities amassed since then were exceedingly disappointing due to continued black market cornering and to withholding by producers. He warned that the quantity of wheat available from controlled sources would not support even an inadequate ration for more than a month or two. The price for black market sources would probably increase considerably with a consequent decline in the numbers able to afford it. (258) At the same meeting the question of the discovery and collection of grain supplies outside controlled channels was discussed, and as the matter had become one of the gravest urgency and was essentially the concern of the police, the Public Safety Division would have to take immediate action to deal with the problem, or, in McSherry's words, 'face the prospect of handling grave and growing food disorders.'(259)

Major Alexander took such a serious view of the situation that, in a memorandum for the Regional CAO (RCAO) on 13 November, he referred to a medical aspect of the situation, pointing out that malnutrition would entail susceptibility to epidemics which in turn would bring a serious risk for the Allied Armies. As existing stocks were so low, amounting to less than 800 tons of flour for over 1,000,000 people in the four main cities, he emphasised that imports must begin at once in order to prevent such a deterioration in the situation 'as might involve total failure of the occupation of Sicily.' He pointed out the repercussions which might arise, including the possibility of recalling troops needed elsewhere in order to control the civilian population.(260)

Alexander's pessimistic view of the situation was amply justified. Catania had just one day's supply of flour left when a ship arrived on 20 November. General Patton had already informed General Eisenhower on 18 November that the situation in Sicily due to shortage of flour was very serious 'and may become critical with resulting riots and bloodshed' (261) Emergency borrowing from American military stocks staved off a crisis which might well have led to a breakdown of law and order. By December when demands for food supplies in Naples and other occupied towns on the mainland were added to those on the island, the necessity for military action was realised. On 19 December the C-in-C issued an administrative instruction, which recognised the fact that 'it may be an over-riding military consideration that the civil population be fed.' Rennell welcomed this statement which 'put the supply of civilian requirements in its right perspective'. (262)

AFHQ, whose MGS had failed to supply food from the North African stockpiles when requested by AMGOT, informed the CCS in Washington on 14 December that 'conditions in Southern Italy and Sicily are such that unless reasonable quantities of food are supplied very promptly we will experience sabotage, unrest and complete cessation of those

activities necessary to our advance.' (263)

Meanwhile in November Regional Order No.13 had been issued in an effort to ameliorate the situation. The maximum bread ration was reduced from 300 to 200 grams per person per day, bringing down the consumption in grain-producing provinces nearer the level in the rest of the island, which had actually averaged only 165 grams of bread and 15 grams of pasta. The situation in Messina was worse even than in Catania, with a daily ration of 100 grams. The Order provoked much resentment and led to an attack on a truck carrying grain to another province. The grain was stolen, the truck burned and an AMG officer disarmed. (264) The Order reduced the grain allocation to producers by 20%, which had to be sold to their ammassi. Without the sale certificate producers could not obtain a milling permit. All CAOs in grain producing areas were ordered to spend four days a week searching for illegally held grain, setting up road blocks at night and seeking help from officers in other areas. Major Monk at the Civil Supply Division in Catania wrote to CAOs emphasising the extreme importance 'of pushing this grain collection campaign to the limit as no reliance can be placed on imports of grain from outside the province during the next few months.' (265)

The Supply Officer for the AMG, Eighth Army, thought that only civil motor transport to move the grain would solve the situation. Mule transport was of some help, but was 'inadequate statistically and unsatisfactory in practice as the mules were now wanted for ploughing, etc., and the Army object to them on the roads anyway.' (266)

Although bread had been in short supply for months, fruit and vegetables were more easily obtained, although a drought had affected the citrus crop. Olive oil, an essential ingredient of the Sicilian diet, would be sufficient to provide a ration of half a litre per person per month. The price was fixed at 22 to 24 lire per litre according to quality, an increase of 50% on 1942. The yield of oil was less because the crushing process needed coconut

fibre mats, imports of which ceased when Italy entered the war. (267)

Milk and meat formed only a small part of the diet so the reduced stocks of meat and milk animals were of minor concern. Eggs were in short supply, since they were in great demand by the invading armies and the price increase soon put them beyond the average family's purse. Even before the invasion, government posters urging the Italian people to "Eat to live, don't live to eat" became more unpopular as people stood in queues with ration cards, under police supervision, only to find frequently that supplies had run out. The black market continued to flourish, particularly in large towns like Catania, as the shortage of transport prevented the normal flow of goods from the surrounding rural areas. In his comprehensive report on the island in August, Major Rowell referred to the problem of getting the food out of the hands of the producer into the hands of the consumer at the official prices and suggested that the only two ways to destroy a black market were to change the ratio between supply and demand, and to persuade or compel observance of artificial prices. The first could be achieved by importing sufficient food to meet consumers' demand at prices which were not too high for the poorer classes. The second would be achieved by compulsion, which would consist of punishment meted out by military tribunals.(268) As AMGOT was quite unable to bring in sufficient supplies and as in many towns CAOs were too busy with more urgent matters, Rowell's suggestions were not easily implemented. When resources were available, particularly in the form of clerical assistants, CAOs could bring black market offenders or other transgressors to court quickly, with the certain effect of deterring others.

To augment food supplies, fishing, an important industry in Sicily, was resumed on the south-west coast within a few days of the landings and soon extended to the remainder of the American coastline. On the eastern side, where military progress was slower and naval traffic heavier, a resumption

of fishing on a large scale was not permitted until the end of September. For security reasons permits were needed and limits imposed. Boats were not allowed out during the hours of darkness and were obliged to stay within three miles of the coast. In spite of these limitations, the catch was a valuable addition to food supplies in coastal towns. (269)

A document from the Prime Minister's Office, undated but probably produced at the end of August, entitled 'REPORT ON THE WORKING OF AMGOT (MATERIAL FOR A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT)' was written to provide essential information on the military administration of Sicily in answer to questions raised in the House of Commons, some of which revealed ignorance of the role of CAOs. This document described the background and development of AMGOT and the environment in which CAOs worked. (270)

The section dealing with Civilian Supplies, although recognising the difficulties of food distribution, was somewhat optimistic, apart from supplies for the three main towns. For example, "Food is reasonably plentiful - Owing to good management food is being distributed everywhere as required - We have reserves available to meet emergencies - Stocks of wheat are in hand nearly everywhere for the next few weeks, except in Catania, Messina and Palermo - AMGOT is not worried over the food situation except in Messina - the bread and pasta ration has been increased generally, except in large towns, to 340 grams. (271) Regarding agriculture, reference was made to the special AMGOT division 'whose duty is to restore and improve agricultural production' through consultations with the Sicilian Farmers Organisations, the Ispettorato Agrario and the Consorzio Agrario. The document was clearly designed to give a positive view of the military administration, and well-deserved credit to AMGOT staff, who would achieve solutions for seemingly impossible situations. It was probably not within the scope of the document to consider possible future difficulties. Certainly there is no hint of a likely food crisis on a large scale.

Harris points out that the least satisfactory part of the planning for HUSKY was the organisation of the Civil Supply Division, 'which was conceived on much too small a scale for the bundle of diverse responsibilities which were finally thrust upon it. (272) It contained no specialists in road transport or communications, for which the military were responsible, and when the military moved on, the needs of the civilian population could not be met. The solution was to bring in AMGOT specialists as early as possible, to work alongside the military and to ensure that civilian needs were not neglected. In this respect it is no surprise to read Lord Rennell's remarks that the military technical services had shown themselves very jealous of allowing AMGOT to have anything to do with public utilities. (273) The situation improved after the invasion of the mainland when officers of the Transportation Sub-Commission were attached to the Military Railways Services, showing that some lessons at least had been learned from the Sicilian experience.(274)

Because of its location and port facilities Catania was to be the central distribution warehouse for the eastern side of the island, covering the provinces of Siracusa, Catania and Messina. The Supply Division CAO in charge of the port was Capt P. Gurney. He did not arrive until 11 October. His task was to organise and train teams of Sicilian storemen and foremen to supervise them, to check the competence of stevedore detachments, and to arrange for a fleet of lorries to be on standby when a ship arrived. It was five weeks before the first ship, carrying a consignment of flour, arrived but he comments that the preliminary work paid off, as 2,000 tons of flour were discharged, part warehoused and part delivered to Messina and Siracusa in record time.(275) But even with a well-trained work force problems frequently occurred, although mostly caused by AFHQ. Information sent from Algiers regarding the arrival times of ships would be incorrect, a ship's diversion to another port would not be notified, and boats would arrive

without warning and without cargo details. Complications were frequently caused by the different weights of unmarked sacks and the number of broken sacks, so that no accurate check of total weight could be made and correct invoicing was impossible.(276)

Capt Gurney had one American assistant to help with account procedures but no ORs to supervise local employees, needed especially for a 24 hour discharge if two boats docked at almost the same time. Both CAOs were required to supervise the unloading and distribution as the warehouse was 1½ miles from the port. Gurney's report reveals the need for more staff to supervise loading and unloading, especially if goods were distributed by rail, as this would act as a deterrent to looting and black market activities. Armed guards were needed to safeguard the warehouse at night. Gurney's report to the War Office pointed out a number of deficiencies in the planning of the Civil Supply Division, in particular the paucity of staff mentioned above: 'The whole organisation suffered from the lack of personnel... Hasty and unused methods had to be employed to meet the situation..'(277) Like most other CAOs, he was concerned about the constant moving of AMGOT officers, almost always without notice; 'Personnel was continually changing to the detriment of any organisation set up to deal with supplies.'(278)

In London, meanwhile, a meeting had been arranged at the Foreign Office to discuss the shortage of food in Sicily. Algiers had requested in November that 20,000 tons of flour should be sent to Sicily immediately, stating that civil strikes appeared imminent if supplies were not forthcoming. Washington was unable to ship supplies from the USA before 10 December and requested that supplies should come from the Middle East. (279) Complaints were received from General Eisenhower that a convoy advised as bringing 8,000 tons of flour brought only 1,180 tons. There was also a shortfall of other foods ordered in a second convoy. The general asked for these deficiencies to be immediately made

up in the form of sacked flour as it was impossible to distribute bulk wheat with the existing facilities of the island.

The War Office had ascertained that the shortage was not due to faulty administration since Lord Rennell, when reporting the gravity of the situation, had pointed out that hoarding was the main cause of the shortage and no administration would be likely to extract the frozen grain. He added that if military operations on the mainland were to proceed at the current scale the port facilities, shipping and inland transport would not be able to cope. Consequently the military authorities would have to be prepared to face starvation among the civilian population.'(280)

In December AFHQ admitted that the original estimates of civilian food requirements had not taken into account the many factors which had altered the situation but the crux of the problem still remained the lack of inland transport.(281) CAOs in the field were under pressure from Major Monk at provincial HQ to ensure that the grain collection campaign was being maintained. Those CAOs in a grain-producing area, such as Caltagirone, were ordered to spend at least four days a week exclusively on searching for and confiscating illegally-held grain. (282) Monk had informed them that no reliance could be placed on imports of grain from outside the province during the coming months.(283) Although the military presence in the province had diminished, thus decreasing the need for local food supplies for Allied troops, this had no significant effect on those civilians who could not afford Black Market prices for items such as eggs and meat.

The arrival of the ACC, whose role and impact on AMGOT HQ will be examined in the next chapter, coincided with the sudden departure of the SCAO, whose reason for leaving was his unexpected inheritance of the title of Duke of Wellington from his nephew, killed at Salerno. He decided to return to England to take his seat in the House of Lords

and presumably to deal with the affairs of the dukedom. Wellesley, who from his reports, letters and diary entries, gives the impression of having carried out very conscientiously the duties associated with his post, may possibly have been influenced in his decision to leave Sicily by the recent criticisms from Rennell, which he felt were totally unjustified, regarding his choice of town CAO, his failure to visit communes and his critical attitude to some of the items in the *Corriere di Sicilia*, referring to AMGOT administration.(284) He informed the mayor of his impending departure and donated 5,000 lire to the homeless of Catania.

He was replaced by Lt Col Charles French, former SCAO of the neighbouring province of Siracusa. His new province was much larger with an estimated population of 713,160 in 53 communes, compared to Siracusa's 277,570 in 19 communes. In addition Catania province still had large numbers of British and Empire troops, stationed or passing through. Few details are available about Lt Col French, unlike his predecessor, but according to Nicolosi, he was regarded by the local people as 'un gran signore: a gentleman.' (285)

Unlike Wellesley he spoke no Italian and was always accompanied by his interpreter, Capt Bateman. Soon after his arrival, the mayor, the Marquese di San Giuliano, resigned, although, according to the latter, in the short time he knew Lt Col French, a 'forte amicizia' developed. Ardizzoni, editor of the *Corriere*, was nominated by AMGOT as the new mayor, and he occupied the post until September 1945. (286) French and some of the staff of the provincial HQ in Catania remained in post as members of the ACC when administration was handed back to the Italian Government.

The next chapter is based on the problems of administering a rural area of fourteen communes, which, although it did not suffer in the same way from the effects of combat, had other problems to overcome, including the provision of accommodation for refugees, and military indiscipline.

Chapter 5

Allied Military Government in Caltagirone, Province of Catania, July 1943 - February 1944

Section 1. War comes to Caltagirone

The first large town captured in the province of Catania was Caltagirone, an agricultural centre built on three adjoining hills dominating the south-western edge of the Catania plain. Its commanding position is recognised by the description of the town as Regina delle montagne.(1) One of the most ancient of Sicilian towns, it had suffered badly in the 1693 earthquake. Its reconstruction resulted in some fine Baroque churches and palazzi, many decorated with local hand-painted ceramics, a traditional industry for which the town is justly renowned and which in recent years has become a well-known tourist attraction. (2) The area's prosperity still depends mainly on the production of grain, vines, olives and lowland crops from the numerous small towns and villages, situated on the slopes leading from Caltagirone to the Catania plain.

Sicilian writer, Francis Guercio, visiting the town in 1938, praised the town's architecture but deplored its low standard of cleanliness. To him the town recalled 'only too vividly the pre-sanitary period of European history, when even large cities were littered with refuse and pervaded by unclean smells.' In spite of this, Guercio reminds his readers that Caltagirone had long been regarded as 'the most civilised provincial town in Sicily.'(3) Like other towns in the Mezzogiorno the largely peasant society had a strong sense of identity and cherished their traditions and customs. They cherished, too, the memory of the town's most famous citizen, don Luigi Sturzo, priest, mayor, and founder of the Partito Popolare in 1919, who became one of the fuorusciti in the nineteen-twenties, when he went into

exile in the United States. (4) Historian Alfio Caruso, who has lived for many years in Caltagirone, refers to the town of Don Luigi as 'una vera spina nel fianco per la provincia di Catania fascista perché considerata antifascista dai Federali.'(5) He also writes about the belief shared by many Calatini during the war that Sturzo's contacts with members of the American government would spare the town from Allied bombing. (6) In 1937 the Congresso Eucaristico Regionale held its annual meeting in the town. Public displays in the large central park demonstrated the strength and militancy of the members of the Caltagirone Church. (7) The diocese was led by Bishop Capizzi and consisted of 150,000 Catholics from 37 parishes, 130 priests, 5 convents and 5 monasteries.(8) Each church had various religious and social organisations attached to it and the priests played a leading role in the life of the town, following the custom in rural areas. As every other town in Italy, Caltagirone was also subject to the fascistizzazione process and the town park was also the location for regular fascist parades and school gymnastic displays in which all children participated.(9)

Caruso suggests from his many interviews with older residents in the town that, apart from the numerous religious festivals, Calatini enjoyed a busy social life based on marionette theatre performances, concerts by the town band, films, plays performed by pupils of the high schools and by students from Catania University, as part of their dopolavoro activities. From time to time performances were given by visiting opera companies from Catania and Palermo.(10)

Mussolini's declaration of war in June 1940 gradually brought about a change in the citizens' way of life. Although the war seemed far away from the island, food shortages soon led to rationing which halved the pre-war consumption of staple foods such as bread, rice and pasta. In spite of efforts to grow vegetables in their own 'orti di guerra', many Calatini were obliged to go to surrounding

villages to obtain food from the rural communities, paying black market prices. As Caruso comments: 'I contadini diventarono i nuovi ricchi.' (11)

Meanwhile the town was gradually becoming a military base. In June 1943, 4 junior school buildings were requisitioned and adapted for use as military hospitals. Barracks and open air camps housed troops of the Italian XVI Corpo d'Armata. 9,000 men of the Hermann Goering Division had been moved into the town in readiness to defend the southern beaches. Anti-aircraft batteries had been set up on one of the town's hills and a radar station on another. A squadron of German fighters were lined up on the nearby airfield of Santo Pietro. (12)

War in the shape of Wellington bombers came to Caltagirone on 9 July in spite of the belief that the town would be spared through Sturzo's influence. Three previous raids on the Santo Pietro airfield had resulted in death or injury to thirty servicemen. (13) On this occasion the town centre took the brunt of the attack. The Podestà had issued orders only two days earlier that, in the event of an air raid, people were to take refuge in 'covered places' as there were no properly constructed air raid shelters in the town. Disobeying the order would incur a prison sentence of up to three months and a fine. (14) The first raid took place in daylight without any warning siren, and people took refuge in sheds, stables and makeshift tents in the countryside or risked sheltering in the railway tunnel on the line from Caltagirone to Piazza Armerina. Others hid in the prehistoric caves in Montagna, north of the town.

The Allied invasion began in the early hours of the following day. According to Caruso, the German tanks, before leaving to counter-attack the American Seventh Army at Gela, broke down the doors to shops and warehouses. The troops took what they wanted and left the premises open for local inhabitants to help themselves, which they did, since many had been without food since they fled the bombing. Some went on the rampage and stripped many private houses

of all their contents, taking them away on any form of transport they could find. (15)

The Eighth Army, meanwhile, after a relatively easy landing in the south-east sector of the island, had been halted in their attempts to cross the Catania Plain. The plan for the capture of Catania was changed, Montgomery deciding to move west along the Vizzini-Caltagirone highway. The 1st Canadian Division was directed to take Caltagirone and on 16 July entered the town without resistance, all Axis troops having left.(16) The previous day the Division had captured Grammichele, which was heavily defended by the retreating Hermann Goering Division. According to Caruso the Canadians were welcomed along the Via Roma by crowds who were also celebrating one of their many feast-days, that of the Madonna del Carmine.(17)

It is worth noting that most Sicilians during the early stages of the invasion made no distinction between the various Allied nationalities. They were all referred to as Americani, whether British, Canadian or from the United States, and in most interviews recorded by Caruso with Calatini about the war, the latter refer to the American entry into the town.(18) US combat troops would have passed through the town on their way north and, as in all towns in the province with a hospital, barracks for billeting troops and rest areas, these facilities would have been utilised by Allied servicemen of all nationalities. Support and logistical troops from both the Seventh and Eighth Armies would still operate in the region.

According to Caruso, the Canadian invaders were welcomed by the Calatini, relieved that for them the war was over in a relatively short time. They had probably not then heard of the Biscari incident in which American troops had shot Axis prisoners.(19) Their euphoria would be short-lived when it was realised that the new government had no immediate solutions to their problems. The sweets and cigarettes handed out by the Canadians as they marched into

the town were no substitute for bread and pasta. Caruso writes that the CAOs governing the town would face 'una società incontrollabile, ormai al collasso una società caratterizzata dal mercato nero, dall'incertezza del futuro prossimo e dove si viveva "alla giornata".'(20)

Section 2. The Arrival of AMGOT in Caltagirone

The CAOs responsible for governing Caltagirone arrived in the town at 9 a.m. on 18 July. The senior officer of the team was Major P.F. Benton Jones, a Regular Royal Artillery officer, recruited into AMGOT. He was accompanied by Capt H.C. Corbin and Legal Officer, Major Gilshennan. With them were four clerks to provide office assistance before they moved forward to the town of Enna after its capture, when office staff would then be sought locally. (21) CAOs Benton Jones and Corbin were both British in keeping with the agreed ratio of CAOs in a province headed by a British SCAO, in this case Lt Col Lord Gerald Wellesley. The latter had set up a temporary provincial HQ in Lentini while awaiting the capture of Catania, the provincial capital.

The only troops in the town were personnel of the 30 Corps Military Police (CMP) and the Royal Engineers (RE). The CMP were there to keep law and order in the town following its capture and the RE unit was employed to clear the roads of debris from the recent bombing in order to ensure the free flow of military traffic proceeding north. (22) In this they were assisted by recently formed squads of air raid wardens from UNPA and many civilian volunteers, who had already begun to move fallen masonry in the search for victims of the bombing. (23) As in the many other Sicilian towns which had been bombed, some bodies could not be locally identified because thousands of refugees had moved from coastal towns and densely populated areas, such as Palermo, Messina and Catania, into Caltagirone and the small towns and villages in the district. (24) In spite of

its recent development as a military base, Caltagirone was considered erroneously to be a safer location.

As the Fascist Party HQ, normally the first choice of HQ for an AMGOT team, had been razed to the ground, the CAO placed a police guard on the remains of the building until a thorough search of it could be made, and set up the AMGOT Office in the Palazzo Municipale. Nearly all the records had been destroyed, either by bombs, or as frequently happened, by deliberate Fascist action. The Podestà, Baron Marco Iacono della Motta, a landowner appointed in April 1943, handed over the keys of the town and was invited to remain in post along with the municipal staff. Following administrative instructions from AMGOT, the CAO informed the staff that continuation in post would be solely on the basis of their satisfactory cooperation, performance and behaviour. (25) Apparently the Baron was considered by the local Calatini to be anti-Fascist because he had lost part of his estate in the colonisation of the latifondi. (26) He was willing to cooperate with the new authorities and remained in post until October when he sought permission to resign in order to devote more time to his estate.

One of the first tasks of the CAO was to display three proclamations, the first announcing the establishment of military government in the town, the second listing the offences against Allied forces which were punishable by death or imprisonment, and the third establishing the currencies used by the Allied forces as legal tender. These were displayed in public places, e.g. outside the Town Hall but not on church walls. (27) Both the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes were also to be displayed on the local AMGOT office. Maj Benton Jones had not been provided with these and in his first report to HQ on 20 July asked for some to be sent to him. (28)

The need for CAOs to enlist the aid of the clergy was noted in the previous chapter. They had been warned of the high rate of illiteracy in the island compared with other Italian regions and help from a local priest to explain the

contents of the Proclamations to his parishioners would be vital. In a report to HQ, the CAO of Caltagirone emphasised this problem in his own area and confirmed that the local priest could be relied on to explain the proclamations from the pulpit.(29) Unlike the situation in Catania where the Archbishop was conspicuous by his absence, the CAO had contacted Bishop Capizzi soon after arriving in Caltagirone and requested permission for the AMGOT staff to attend Mass in the cathedral on the following Sunday. The request was welcomed and as Major Benton Jones noted in his August report to AMGOT HQ, all the clergy had proved to be very cooperative. He also wrote that 'the importance of utilising their influence cannot be too highly stressed.'(30)

Harris points out that the AMGOT plan to rely on existing police forces, particularly the Carabinieri, to maintain law and order was amply justified.(31) This was the case in Caltagirone, where both they and the Guardie Municipali remained in post, and worked well under the leadership of their captain with only general Allied supervision. (32) The Carabinieri had been disarmed by the Canadian combat units when they entered the town and their weapons removed. They were soon rearmed by the CAO with the weapons which civilians were obliged to hand in under the conditions of Proclamation No. 2. (33)

Maj Benton Jones obviously realised that the standard of discipline found in the British police forces of the period was not applicable to the Sicilian character. In a detailed report submitted to AMGOT HQ for the southern half of Catania province, he wrote that it was hopeless to expect that the Allied civil police organisation could be imposed on Sicilian police forces. He pointed out that it was not always easy for a professional Allied policeman to realise that 'what appeared to be the beginning of a major riot was merely two Sicilian friends passing the time of day.'(34)

A transit camp for captured Axis prisoners was set up in an outlying part of the town, from which Italian POWs were

brought in to help the RE and UNPA squads remove the many bodies still buried in the ruins of bombed buildings. While this took place roads and piazzas were closed to traffic. As this was a local matter, the public was informed by an AMGOT order issued under the name of the Podestà. (35) Harris states that the mayors of most communes were removed by AMGOT CAOs and their title with its fascist association, was changed back to that of sindaco. (36) This did not happen in Catania and it is noticeable that in Caltagirone not only was the mayor retained in post but throughout his tenure of office he continued to use the fascist designation of his official appointment.

Fortunately units of the RE had remained in the vicinity and were invaluable in locating the many unexploded bombs in the town. As soon as they were discovered the CAO publicly displayed lists of the twenty-six sites to be avoided until the bombs could be safely defused. (37) To help identify the recovered bodies local inhabitants were asked to report the names of their missing relatives and acquaintances to the Ufficio dello Stato Civile. (38) This served as a precautionary measure to prevent a dead person's ration card being used by someone else.

It was essential to ensure the safety of the area by eliminating any possible underground resistance from remnants of Axis forces. The German garrison was stationed in Caltagirone for only a few months and, unlike Catania where relations between German troops and local civilians had deteriorated by summer 1943, there was no evidence that the same situation had arisen in Caltagirone. There remained a possibility that some local people might shelter a member of the armed forces, or help a POW to escape, in contravention of Proclamation No. 2. To emphasise how grave such offences were, a special Manifesto was issued by AMGOT in both Italian and German to remind citizens of the punishment they would receive if this proclamation was ignored. A reward was offered to any citizen who provided information leading to the arrest of a German soldier or a

POW wearing civilian clothes.(39)

A curfew was imposed between sunrise and sunset, except for those in possession of an AMGOT pass.(40) As in most areas, it was often ignored. Benton Jones suggested to HQ that CAOs should be already armed with permission to open Summary Military Courts as soon as they entered a captured area. The first person caught breaking the curfew could then be brought immediately to court, punished and the punishment made public the same day.(41) This would act as a deterrent to others.

The CAO imposed a blackout on all houses and buildings in use after dark and a total ban was placed on lighting fires outside. These were measures to counter possible enemy air attacks and to help prevent acts of sabotage. It appears that infringements of these rules took place in Caltagirone since the CAO issued a special decree, authorising both the military police and Carabinieri to shoot, without warning, in the direction of any source of light. (42)

Benton Jones visited the local prison and pronounced it 'in good order'. 12 of the 15 prisoners were either serving long sentences or awaiting removal to criminal lunatic asylums. One Italian soldier charged with theft and two civilians, charged with attempted murder and double murder respectively, were awaiting trial. The prison had contained 165 inmates but 150, who were serving short sentences, had been released provisionally during the bombardment prior to the arrival of the Allies. The prison authorities promised to provide the CAO with a list of prisoners' names. (43) No further report was available in the records to confirm whether these men returned to complete their sentences. The CAO had followed the directions of the PHD and checked the health of the local population. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Guercio had drawn attention to the low standard of cleanliness in Caltagirone immediately before the war. The absence of water in parts of the town and the lack of soap might well have lowered the standard even more and endangered public health. Benton Jones, however, could

report that 'the health situation seems satisfactory.' (44) At a height of 2,000 feet, the town, although on the edge of a malarial plain, showed no evidence of the disease which troubled so many Allied troops. Although the civilian hospital had been destroyed, an Italian military hospital, taken over by the Canadians, had space for civilian patients. Others could be housed in schools requisitioned for use as hospitals when the town became a military base. The CAO arranged for five military doctors to be released from a local Italian POW camp to work in the hospitals. As local hospitals did not normally deal with large numbers of civilian wounded, they lacked sufficient stocks of dressings and bandages. These were ordered by him but not delivered, in spite of his complaints to provincial HQ.(45)

The usual Monetary procedures were followed i.e. all banks and financial institutions were closed, placed under military custody, a general moratorium declared and an inventory of assets taken.(46) Before the vaults were sealed, the CAO checked the assets and recorded them in his report. The Banca di Sicilia had L.7,000,000, the Banca del Sud L.680,000 and the Banca Casa Rurale L.3,500,000. The managers and clerks compiled details of all accounts belonging to Government institutions, Fascist political organisations and persons in senior government posts.(47) The banks had not been damaged but one of the keys was in the possession of a cashier killed in an air raid. This was unimportant as one key was useless without the others. (48)

Benton Jones was given permission by Gr Capt Benson to open the Treasury of the Banca di Sicilia, as it was responsible for the financial affairs of the commune. It paid the wages of State employees and the costs of grain brought in by farmers. The bank was instructed to advise the public that the farmers of Caltagirone, Grammichele, San Michele and Mirabella would be paid against presentation of their receipts for consigning grain to the ammassi. A copy of the budget estimate for these four communes was to be immediately submitted to AMGOT. (49)

The military government also had authority to maintain the existing tax laws. Apart from giving payments, the opening of the Treasury was necessary to receive taxes which were now required to be paid. This was not of course applicable to those taxes which had benefited Fascist organisations. The public, unsurprisingly, showed no enthusiasm, as a report from Grammichele on 30 July revealed. The CAO had been informed by the Commune treasurer that most people would pay the taxes, so he authorised the issue of the usual notices. However, he had since learned that the public were refusing to pay.(50) Harris writes that 'in spite of the prevalent wishful thinking that the four freedoms inscribed on the A.M.lire notes included also freedom from taxation', revenue slowly began to trickle in.(51) This was only after HQ had issued a General Order on 13 August which ordered the prompt payment of all taxes but with the proviso of a tolleranza (extension of time for payment) in cases where collection difficulties occurred, e.g. in heavily bombed areas. (52)

The CAO's first report of 20 July listed public buildings damaged or destroyed. Included was the Post Office, bombed and then ransacked by the Germans. It was placed under guard, and staff made responsible for clearing up the mess. The safe could not be opened as the Germans had destroyed the hinges. Other bomb damage included the aqueduct, but this had already been partly repaired and could provide three-quarters of the town with water. The remaining quarter of the town would be without water until certain essential spare parts became available.

There was no electricity, since the supply came from Catania town, still in enemy hands. The Caltagirone mains had been damaged in the air-raid but Benton Jones had already arranged to have them repaired to ensure that power would be immediately available to the town when the supply was eventually restored. Meanwhile the mills, normally driven by electricity, could be operated by DERV, ample stocks of which had been found in abandoned military stores

in the town.(53)

After the initial stages of setting up the administration, which in Caltagirone had proved relatively painless in spite of the very recent bombings, the CAO was now able to give his full attention to the day-to-day administration of the town. He was fortunate in receiving help from the RE, UNPA and Italian POWS, and obtaining the full cooperation of the Podestà, the municipal staff, police and clergy.

Although the health of the population was not a cause for immediate concern, it could be affected at any time if food supplies were not forthcoming on a regular basis. In the early weeks of the occupation, particularly in this corner of the province, there were few hints of the severity of shortages which would later occur. Although not one of the island's three main grain producing provinces, this area, nevertheless, was able to provide a significant yield.

The responsibility of the Civilian Supply and Resources Division for ensuring that both adequate food and other basic necessities reached the civilian population has been described in Chapter 4. The work of the Division will be continued in this chapter on Caltagirone because the town was both consumer and producer of grain and it was here and in the surrounding communes that the problems of bringing grain to the ammassi can be seen, not only from the reports of local CAOs but also from a study of the ammassi system by one of the specialist officers of the Civil Supply Division.

Section 3. The Food Situation and the Ammassi in Caltagirone

Capt Corbin, second in command to Major Benton Jones, had assumed responsibility for the acquisition, collection and distribution of food supplies for the town. After locating all food warehouses, enemy food dumps and wholesale food suppliers, he had placed them under guard and drawn up an inventory of their contents. He also checked the amount of

grain left in the ammassi, after the Germans had removed as much as they could take away. He then instructed the municipal officials to continue the existing collection and distribution system.(54)

There were accessible supplies of food for Caltagirone sufficient for forty-eight hours and officials considered that the community would be self-supporting if civilian transport were available. (55) But there was a distinct shortage of transport, as the original Spofford Plan had foreseen. The Plan assumed that most roadworthy vehicles would have been commandeered by the enemy armies and Allied transport would be responsible for supplying urban centres. However, as the pre-invasion planning progressed, it became clear that no army vehicles could be spared for civilian purposes. CAOs would therefore be instructed not to seek help from military transport units to move essential food supplies unless no other sources of transport could be found.(56) In this connection the owners of all lorries in the commune had to declare their vehicles and were forbidden to drive them without a permit, granted only for essential civilian services. Freight was given priority over passengers and a priority list of freight movements was drawn up. Even with local lorries, the requirements of the occupying forces took priority over the transport of supplies for civilians.(57) At the beginning of August the CCAO himself had referred to the ample food supplies available but pointed out the problem of transporting them to towns where they were needed.(58) At the end of August a memo to the Services of Supply reiterated that the primary objectives of civilian supply planning were 'to prevent civil unrest and to prevent disease.' (59) But as Harris points out, the dominating problem in Sicily was to keep the populations in the towns properly fed, by assuring the transport and distribution of essential foodstuffs.'

Transport, or rather the lack of it, had become the main source of unrest. Capt Corbin, with only forty-eight hours supply of food for the town, and no transport obtainable in

the area had no choice but to bring in the necessary supplies by mule convoys. (60) This was a method eminently suited to the steep hills surrounding the town and one used by most of the local farmers. Not only were CAOs obliged to utilise mule transport, combat forces had already found mules ideal for carrying arms and ammunition over rough terrain unsuitable for motorised transport.(61) The Eighth Army's Order of Battle had originally called for seven companies of pack mules to accompany the troops but a staff officer at AFHQ decided to cancel the order and locally procured animals had to be called in.(62) The US Seventh Army brought their own pack mules with them as did units of the Berber Goumiers, who were used to mountainous conditions. (63) In his first AMGOT situation report to General Alexander, Lord Rennell referred to the fact that AMGOT's organised trains of mule carts were frequently seized by combat formations and CAOs were now moving the mule trains at night to avoid capture.(64) Mules had apparently been in short supply in the island for some time before the invasion began. This was due to the Italian government's requisitioning of animals to compensate for the lack of motorised transport in the island. (65)

Capt Corbin's first task was to gather statistics of the local grain production. Of the 41,000 local inhabitants, 16,000 grew their own supply, and the remainder depended on the ammassi. 10,000 hectares of land were cultivated, producing 22,000 quintals of grain in 1942, but 1943 estimates from the Consorzio (consortium) showed a shortfall of 25,000 quintals to meet the town's needs.(66) However, the Comprensorio (district consortium) covered a much wider area and could provide the shortfall. The towns of Ramacca and Raddusa already exported their surplus grain to Caltagirone. The problem was not one of insufficient grain stocks but only of transport. Even the CCAO referred to the food situation at the time as 'not unsatisfactory, grain is available in outstanding quantities.'

Initial emergency supplies, brought in by the combat force

for both their own troops and the civil population, were to be continued, according to the C-in-C, until the food, especially stockpiled in North African ports for the civil population, arrived. (67) But as explained in Chapter 4, this did not materialise because of the errors committed by MGS at AFHQ. When finally a limited amount of grain was brought to Catania at the end of August, most was diverted to the mainland to relieve the shortage there. This caused grain producers in Sicily to fear that their own supplies would run short if they were compelled to supply the mainland, and consequently they continued to hoard.

The way in which growers were obliged to sell their crops of grain had never been popular in Sicily. Benton Jones referred to the word *ammassi* as possessing 'unpleasant connections for the farmers. Where practicable better results are obtained by using some wording which indicates that the system is controlled by AMGOT.' (68) The system was retained for the simple reason that no other system could be devised. In Caltagirone small producers often accused the *ammassi* of fraud and there was a universal lack of faith both in the system and the officials responsible for its organisation. The fact that it was a Fascist system and the same Fascist officials had been retained by the Allies implied that nothing had changed. (69) With the very limited number of AMGOT officers and the limited time to gather in the harvest, there was little that could be done to change the officials.

There were also other factors which contributed to the reluctance of producers to bring in the grain, in particular the *Carabinieri* guards posted at the *ammassi* entrances to check that the grain producer was keeping to the time stated on his entry pass. The opening times of the office which dealt with the paper-work did not always coincide with the working hours of the *contadini*, and frequently wives were obliged to come to the office on their behalf. (70) The producers were not paid on the spot but were given credit notes for the exact amount brought in

which they then took to a bank. This was not popular as it was time-consuming and was later altered by AMGOT to the direct paying of cash at the collecting centre on delivery of the grain.(71)

It is not surprising that a large portion of the grain found its way on to the black market, not only because of the higher price which the producer would receive but also because he avoided the irksome procedures of the ammassi. When the SCAO of Ragusa, the province adjoining the southern border of Catania, raised the amount paid to grain producers to almost double that paid in Caltagirone, local farmers naturally smuggled their grain over the border to obtain the better price. But this inducement was short-lived. As related in Chapter 4, Lord Rennell then introduced a sliding scale of payment per quintal throughout the island, designed to bring in grain as quickly as possible. This helped in the short term but was generally not as effective as had been hoped. What had more effect on de-hoarding was the raising of the maximum bread ration to 300 grams a day in most occupied areas, except Palermo and Catania.(72)

A Civil Supply Section Officer, Major Spencer, had joined the AMGOT team in Caltagirone to collect statistics on local grain production and collection, and to review the current situation of food supplies. All the following information is taken from his report, dated 1 August 1943, which he submitted to the Director of Civilian Supply and Resources, at AMGOT HQ. (73)

Maj Spencer's enquiries concerning average yields of grain produced figures of four to five quintals per hectare from small farmers, but almost eleven per hectare from a large experimental farm supervised by a civil servant. Even allowing for varying soil quality and cultivation methods, this was a very large difference, which was interpreted by Spencer as 'confirmatory evidence of the diversion to the black market.' He welcomed the new grain prices introduced by the CCAO but pointed out that it would take time for all

communes to be informed and advised that farmers should have fourteen clear days to sell their crops at the new price of L.500 before it was decreased.

It has been pointed out earlier that the ammassi system was of necessity retained under AMGOT administration. From his own observations in the Caltagirone area Maj Spencer made some suggestions which would not disrupt the system but which might possibly reduce the amount of grain to the black market. Each grain grower was allowed to keep 250 kg a head in his family and, as small children did not consume that amount, large families had surplus supplies which they sold on the black market. Spencer thought a ration of 300 kg per male adult over 16 and 125 kg for other family members would be more realistic and would prevent the accumulation of surplus grain.

Poaching by one commune from another was one of the main administrative problems in the collection of grain. Spencer described the process: 'A fruitful source of statistical evasion arises from the practice of people living in one commune and working in another. They then claim to "amass" in the commune of their residence or else if they "amass" in the commune of growth, they claim it is to be "credited" to the commune in which they reside.' Spencer wanted this to be regulated so that 'a man who owns or sharecrops land in a commune must be regarded as a "resident", and the fact that he sleeps elsewhere is irrelevant.' This would bring a more reliable degree of control, enabling the CAOs to obtain accurate figures of the stocks in their communes. They could then arrange transfers between them to meet consumption needs.

Threshing of the gathered grain was also a problem. It was almost impossible to obtain oil for the mechanical threshers which would speed the process. Caltagirone had already found a local supply of oil to replace the non-existent electricity for milling, and a second abandoned military oil dump had also been discovered. Cross-country convoys were organised to bring this oil to the farmers so

that threshing could start in August.

Spencer's research in Caltagirone covered a number of areas including what he considered to be the excessive charges of the carters, who were profiting from the lack of lorries. He advised CAO Capt Corbin to permit only mule carts registered by AMGOT to be on the roads, and to pay carters for freight at public rates. Without the pressures of a CAO's work-load, Spencer found time to talk to local people and obtain their opinions on the measures being taken by AMGOT to ameliorate the food situation. The raising of the bread ration to 300 grams a day had naturally been welcomed, although the pasta ration of 280 grams a week was considered rather small.

Although this report to Col Seitz at AMGOT HQ was an official account of Major Spencer's assessment of the Civilian Supply situation in the Caltagirone area, it contains a number of personal observations which cast some light on the problems faced by CAOs and AMGOT staff in the field. The Major, for example, ends his report by thanking Col Seitz for the NAAFI rations which he had brought. (74) Although perhaps not relative to the subject of his report, mention of NAAFI rations shows the isolation of CAOs in the field. These rations were intended to be distributed to all service personnel but frequently the Quartermaster of a combat unit refused to supply a CAO because he was unaware of his position in the army. One of the main criticisms made about the HUSKY planners in Algiers was their failure to explain the role of AMGOT to the army. The CCAO also blamed the War Office for 'never inculcating in staff courses, etc., the integration of Civil Affairs personnel in the Army organisation.' (75)

The fact that CAOs were few in number in the first waves of the invasion, lacked transport to carry food and medical supplies for themselves even when operating far from Army hospital units, must have reinforced their feeling of isolation from the main body of troops. Major Spencer had not been provided with transport and was totally dependent

on finding local vehicles to take him to outlying farms and villages. His need for a car was urgent since he had been instructed by Wellesley to proceed to Catania as soon as the town was captured. This order was given him despite his recent appointment by Benson to AMGOT HQ.

The problem of supplying food on a regular basis was becoming increasingly difficult. Some of the initial emergency food supplies for civilians brought over in the first landings had found their way to Caltagirone in the form of dried and evaporated milk. Those who possessed a doctor's certificate were able to obtain a half litre per day. When fresh milk was available it was sold without need of a certificate to nursing mothers and babies. (76) Other badly needed commodities, such as soap, clothing and shoes, had not been included in the shipments. This was a result of the military decision that relief supplies should only meet the population's minimum essential needs. (77) The narrow scope of this decision was attacked by a senior civilian official who deplored the absence of clothing and footwear. He informed the American Embassy in London that 'the inclusion of such supplies in the programme does not imply pampering - rather it implies sober provision for a minimum level of health, efficiency and security.' (78) It would appear that the military decision-makers were unaware of the hard winter conditions in the island, especially in the mountainous interior.

Much of Corbin's time continued to be spent on supervising grain production and collection in the district. It was not easy to obtain accurate statistics as not all the crop had been harvested by August, because the location of the grain growing areas, in valleys, on hill slopes or on the flat plain, normally determined the time of harvest. In the summer of 1943 many farmers feared their fields would become battlegrounds and harvested the crop while still unripe. Unable to take the grain to the mills, which were under guard, they tried to grind the ears between lava stones. Many would not venture into their fields because of

rumours that enemy planes fired on peasants harvesting crops.(79)

By the end of August Benton Jones was able to provide HQ with a fairly detailed report on the grain situation in the district, even though local CAOs often had difficulty in obtaining full information from the mayors or else disputed their findings. In Palagonia the Sindaco estimated a harvest of 1,000 quintals but the CAO's enquiries led him to believe 10,000 quintals could be obtained.(80) What emerged from the enquiries in each commune was the complicating factor of growers living in one commune, whose land was in a nearby commune, bearing out the earlier observations of Maj Spencer in his special report to the Director of Civilian Supply.

Some CAOs referred to the Sindaco's lack of knowledge. The CAO of Mineo said the mayor was not at all well informed on agricultural matters and Corbin commented that the mayor of San Michele di Ganzaria was unsuited to his post. In this commune, as in many others, information on whether the grain was registered in the grower's home commune or in the commune of growth made an accurate assessment impossible. The CAO at Grammichele summed up the situation in that commune by stating that figures he had obtained suggested 'a considerable deviation to the Black Market.' (81) Conclusions drawn from the assessments showed Ramacca and Mineo to be the principal grain growers with a surplus. San Michele, Vizzini and Militello were not self-sufficient, and Mirabella, Grammichele and Palagonia varied from year to year. The CAO of Scordia was unable to supply figures but believed the town would not be self-sufficient. Although the report sent by Benton Jones was the result of much painstaking research by Corbin and the other CAOs, it was clearly not a reliable forecast of the amount of grain which would be available for the province after the harvest. It also cast doubt on the competence of some Sindaci.

The influx of refugees from large towns, including Catania

but as far afield as Messina and Palermo, not only complicated the assessment of the amount of grain required for the coming months but caused both material problems and tensions in the local communities. Many of these sfollati were unemployed or moving from one temporary job to another, Some were living with relatives, many lived rough in the countryside. Since all schools in the island were closed, the S.Luigi school in Caltagirone, which had not been converted into a hospital, was used as the main hostel for the homeless. Rooms in some public buildings were also made available and permission given to refugees to remain until the end of September. The situation was similar in many other towns in the district, notably Scordia with an estimated 6,000 refugees added to its normal population of 11,000 and Militello with 5,000 added to its normal population of 11,000.(82) This figure was not static, and when a refugee family's home was liberated, the family might decide to return immediately, if they had the means to do so. Many left Caltagirone, only to return, having found their homes destroyed or damaged to the extent that they were uninhabitable. Most of these were from Catania or Palermo. Others chose to stay put until they could be rehoused in their home town.

Caruso refers to the different cultures and outlooks brought to Caltagirone by the refugees, which profoundly changed the atmosphere of the town. It was a tightly-knit community, each parish having close links with its priest and the various clubs and associations attached to the local church. Guercio had referred to Caltagirone as 'loud, gesticulating and sophisticated in true Catanese style.' (83) But the Calatini were country as opposed to city-style Catanesi, their town was one-sixth the size of the provincial capital and differences in *mores* were to be expected. Most rural areas 'invaded' by townspeople would react in the same way. As Nino Savarese pointed out, even danger failed to 'sanare i disagi delle forzate convivenze.' (84) AMGOT undertook its share of helping the

homeless by cooperating with the municipal authorities who had provided temporary shelter for the refugees and their own citizens who were homeless. It was not always an easy task and, according to Caruso, some of the refugees installed themselves in private houses and refused to move out, claiming they were unable to return to their original homes. (85) This naturally aroused much local antagonism.

Capt Corbin became involved in the task of finding suitable accommodation for the homeless by establishing a Commissione Allogi, composed of local businessmen, lawyers and other representatives of the legal profession. They organised searches for empty houses and offices or any premises which could be converted into temporary homes. They also helped to resolve problems between landlords and tenants of damaged properties by instigating speedy repairs, if the necessary building materials, which had been in short supply for some time in the island, could be obtained. (86)

Living in penury, the refugees needed state subsidies. These could only be obtained via a form providing full information about themselves and their circumstances, and signed by the head of the local police. To obtain the form relevant identity documents were essential but, for various reasons, many could not produce them. (87) Local unemployed Calatini were paid a "sussidio di beneficenza" of L.10 a day for a head of family and L.2 for each dependant, but not if they were fit for work or if they refused to clear debris from the streets after the air raids. (88) In Grammichele, before the Allied occupation, about 2,000 heads of family were in receipt of a sussidio. Each family was estimated to be composed of three persons. The rate of cash relief had been set at L.15 for the head of the family and L.5 for dependants, amounting to a total daily cash payment of L.50,000 in a commune of 15,000. Maj Benton Jones estimated the rate paid to the Calatini as adequate, with the result that the sussidio in Grammichele was subsequently reduced to bring it into line with other

communes.(89) This obviously did not improve AMGOT's standing in Grammichele.

At the first combined meeting of SCAOs at AMGOT HQ in Palermo, SCAO Wellesley stated that he had established a rate of L.10 + L.5 for the province of Catania, marginally increasing the dependants' allowance which was established by Maj Benton Jones in the early days of AMGOT administration.(90) All communes were obliged to conform to the rate set by the SCAO and Benton Jones duly increased the allowance for dependants. In his report covering the whole Caltagirone district, sent to HQ on 27 August, Benton Jones stated that he had made a rule that no able-bodied man (other than a pensioner) would receive public assistance unless he was prepared to work for four hours a day clearing roads and removing debris from bombed buildings etc. (91)

One of AMGOT's problems was the shortage of staff in the field, not only in Catania province but throughout the island. This frequently led to sudden movements of CAOs from one commune to another or from one area to another part of the province. Sometimes the decision came from HQ in Palermo, who for various reasons needed a replacement for a CAO, or from provincial HQ, who judged that a certain commune might perhaps benefit from an experienced officer. Explanations were rarely given but of the two staff reorganisations in Caltagirone it appears that Benton Jones may have instigated the first but the second was caused by AMGOT HQ withdrawing a number of CAOs from Catania province, leaving Wellesley with no choice but to re-arrange the areas in the province.

Section 4. The Reorganisation of the Communes around Caltagirone

On 2 August a re-grouping of the communes into five areas, each with two AMGOT officers, took place. The areas

formed a district, based on Caltagirone. This was possibly to even out the ratio of CAOs to communes and to place the more senior staff in the more populated areas. The groups were as follows:

1. Caltagirone
San Michele di Ganzaria
San Cono
Mirabella
2 CAOs, Major Benton Jones and Capt Corbin
Population = 56,660
2. Ramacca
Raddusa
Castel di Judica
1 CAO, Lt Vos, 1 CAPO, Lt Sacken
Population = 19,546
3. Scordia
Militello
Palagonia
1 CAO, Lt Shannon, 1 CAPO, Capt Coxhead
Population = 36,000
4. Grammichele
Mineo
1 CAO, Capt Munday, 1 CAPO, Capt Chaney
Population = 25,000
5. Vizzini
Licodia
1 CAO, Lt Verderame, 1 CAPO, Lt Fleetwood
Population = 21,600

These statistics do not take into account the large number of refugees in the above towns, e.g. an estimated 6,000 in Scordia and 5,000 in Militello, plus hundreds scattered among the smaller villages and hamlets. (92)

The new District now had only six CAOs to administer a population of 160,000 people, without counting the numbers

of refugees. There was, however, one CAPO in each of the four communes with only one CAO, and as previously mentioned, CAPOs undertook the duties of a CAO whenever necessary. Even so, the CAPOs had their own areas of responsibility and at times were hard pressed to deal with both. The largest commune, Caltagirone, had two CAOs, both of whom appear to have been highly efficient, but no CAPO for a population of over 56,000, plus refugees. As previously mentioned, the clerks who arrived with the CAOs were destined for Enna and there is no evidence that they were replaced. Some CAOs were in a far worse situation. One was in sole control of four towns, total population 42,000, for four months with no CAPO or OR to assist him. (93)

This was an inevitable result of the decision to adopt the principle of indirect government, strongly advocated by Lord Rennell during the planning stage of HUSKY, and to which he remained committed, as he emphasised to SCAOs at the Palermo meeting. However, economy of Civil Affairs personnel was taken to its limits in the last week of August when another phase of administration began. The whole province was reorganised into five districts, Caltagirone district being joined by Acireale, Ionia, Brontë and Paternò. Wellesley informed all CAOs in the province that 'owing to the sudden loss of twelve officers who have been removed from this province for duty elsewhere, it has been found necessary to reorganise the districts once again.' (94) Although the districts were much bigger than before they all had at least three officers. The number of CAOs for Caltagirone district was halved from six to three, Capt Corbin, Capt Munday and Lt Hunter.

There were now only sixteen CAOs to cover the whole province although they were reinforced by a number of CAPOs and specialist officers. Major Benton Jones was one of the CAOs posted elsewhere. Such postings, especially of CAOs who had proved their efficiency from the early days of AMGOT administration, were becoming more frequent because experienced officers with proven skills were needed to help

establish military government on the Italian mainland. It was at this time when CAOs were being withdrawn from the island that problems connected with the occupying forces rather than with civilian administration began to demand the attentions of CAOs in the Caltagirone district.

Reference has been made to the growing tensions in Caltagirone district due to the large number of refugees and the difficulty of integration between town and country communities. Food shortages, inflation rates, inadequacy of sussidi, restrictions imposed by curfews, the ten kilometre limit on travel and punishments for infringements of the Proclamations had all gradually built up an atmosphere of oppression. The Allies' entry into the town had been warmly greeted but their continued presence was becoming more and more oppressive. Benton Jones drew attention to the problems for the police which, as he reported to HQ, 'have occurred all the time with our own troops, whose discipline has not always been of the highest standard.' (95) As a Regular RA Major he knew that the number of MP personnel in any occupation force was of necessity limited but in his report he pointed out the advantages of having at least one detachment of MPs in each major town, either in rest areas or on the lines of communication.

A number of local incidents had occurred, mostly as a result of excessive consumption of alcohol. This was not surprising given the low cost and easy availability of wine in the island, the intense heat of a Sicilian summer and post-battle euphoria. On 8 August Lt Theodore Shannon, CAO of Scordia, wrote to the SCAO to report incidents of military disorder occurring continually in the town of Militello. The CAPO responsible for the area, which included Scordia and Palagonia, was Capt Percy Coxhead. The CAO was concerned that these frequent incidents prevented the CAPO from attending to his normal duties, and if allowed to continue, would result in chaos and disruption of civil affairs activities. (96)

The previous day the CAPO was summoned to Militello, where

he found a Canadian firing a revolver in the town square. When questioned the soldier aimed at the CAPO, who promptly knocked him down. Other Canadians came to help the CAPO who soon after had to deal with another soldier who had broken into the house of the former mayor, fallen through a glass cabinet and caused damage to the room and himself. Coxhead brought charges against the men and the CO of their unit undertook disciplinary action and arranged reimbursement of the damage. (97)

The CAO listed the measures taken to eliminate the problem of disorder:

1. The MP unit in Scordia was contacted but had insufficient men to control the towns.
2. Towns were placed out of bounds to military personnel.
3. Arrangements were made to sell wine to soldiers if officers would purchase it and then take it out of town for distribution to troops.

The measures were not successful. In spite of the number of troops involved in the invasion, 450,000 having passed through Sicily by the end of the campaign, there were not enough MPs to control troops' behaviour. Of the total number of these troops only one third consisted of active combat forces, the rest were made up of support and logistical units. (98) The Canadians involved in the Militello incidents served in the 1st Tank Delivery Squadron of the 1st Canadian Division, part of 30 Corps of the Eighth Army. US and Canadian troops were also causing serious problems in Caltagirone, Vizzini, Scordia, and Palagonia, where they walked up and down the streets insulting and assaulting women. Many of these troops came in by truck from the USAAC bases 85 and 87 near Palagonia, and when drunk would indulge in free fights in the street. On one occasion MPs were overwhelmed by sixty US and Canadian servicemen fighting among themselves. (99) Road blocks were the only way to stop them entering towns but this would prevent the free passage of essential military traffic.

A further incident took place in Scordia when three Canadians broke into a peasant's house, attacked him and attempted to rape his wife. Incidents of indiscipline in the provincial capital were reported by Wellesley where British troops were behaving badly. Apart from drunken behaviour, resentment was caused by the amount of looting by Allied troops. The suggestion by Benton Jones that some MP units should be kept in areas where support troops were based was echoed by Lord Rennell in a letter to Col French at the War Office. He realised the value of guard platoons and thought they would be able to restrain troops from looting. (100)

A detailed memorandum had been issued to military personnel, warning them that theft and robbery were 'as punishable in war as in peace; nothing is more demoralising to troops or more subversive of discipline than plundering, and a soldier in an enemy country must observe the same respect for property as in his garrison at home.' (101) AMGOT staff, in constant contact with the people in their communes, deplored the soldiers' drunken behaviour, which reflected badly on the military government.

It is difficult to obtain reliable evidence of the local civilian reaction to the presence of Allied troops in Caltagirone, since most local residents interviewed by Caruso were very young at the time. Maria Vecchio, whose family had moved from Catania to escape the air raids, recalled that 'gli ufficiali americani e inglesi si comportavano bene, perdevano i freni la sera, quando si ubriacavano. I più cattivi erano i Canadesi, ci incutevano paura.' (102)

A fundamental part in re-establishing a degree of normality in the lives of the Calatini was the readiness of the Carabinieri to support the Allies in keeping law and order. Reference has been made earlier to the willingness shown by the local force to collaborate with the AMGOT administrators immediately after their arrival and both they and the Guardie Municipali were praised by the CAO for

their work in apprehending offenders against AMGOT Orders and Proclamations and for arresting large numbers of looters in the area.(103) The civilian offenders were swiftly brought to one of the Summary Military Courts, set up on 2 August in Caltagirone, Vizzini, Grammichele and Mineo. (104) Most offenders were in court on charges of looting and flouting the curfew laws. Sentences ranged from one to six months in the local (Caltagirone) prison but those guilty of serious looting from bombed houses were initially sent to Priolo transit camp and then transferred to other camps some distance away. (105)

The CAPOs, rather thinly spread across the rural areas, were responsible for obtaining information on aspects of law and order in their area, which could vary from one small village to another.(106) In country districts they kept in close touch with local police to maintain order as they had been instructed not to rely on the possibility of obtaining detachments of Allied MPs to assist them.(107) As in large towns, they were responsible for traffic control and maintaining the free flow of military convoys, important in Caltagirone, where a large number of support and logistic units were based, particularly in the build-up to the invasion of the mainland.

An important function was to draw up registers of private and trade vehicles in their area and to issue driving permits to civilians who provided essential services in hospitals and public utilities and who might be called out during curfew hours.(108) All CAPOs were instructed to observe the directions contained in their AMGOT 'Bible', the name given to the handbook containing the General Administrative Instructions, so that applications for passes would be first endorsed by the local CAPO and then sent to Provincial Police HQ to ensure uniformity of practice across the province and to prevent passes from falling into the wrong hands. Registers at local Police Stations were to be securely filed. Daily crime reports went to the SCAO to keep him informed of the state of crime

in his province. The reports listed all details in full - name, age, address, occupation, complainant, witnesses, details of property involved etc. In addition, a monthly crime report, covering all crimes from murder to traffic offences and giving full details of the investigation, was to be returned. (109)

As the number of AMGOT staff gradually decreased it became more difficult to maintain strict control over record keeping, particularly after the second reorganisation, when some of the CAPOs, including Capt Coxhead, involved in the Militello incidents, had been posted. He was sent to Ionia in the north of Catania province then in 1944 to Rome, where, as Nicolosi relates, he was received by the Pope and awarded the title of Cavaliere dell'Ordine di San Matteo della Croce in recognition of his work in Sicily. (110) The reduction of AMGOT staff in the district, which apart from a decrease in numbers, often involved a change of CAO as well, naturally resulted in a lack of continuity in the administration. More significantly, as Caruso points out, 'Tutto ciò provocava un ritorno, con forza, di rigurgiti fascisti.'(111)

Section 5. Political Activity and Defascistisation in Caltagirone District

When AMGOT entered Caltagirone, the senior CAO, Major Benton Jones, interviewed the Podestà and other municipal staff and retained them in post. There is no evidence that he was other than satisfied with their work and there is no mention in his early reports of any overt Fascism. In fact, as mentioned in Section 2, he was probably soon made aware that the podestà was regarded locally as anti-fascist. But as Caruso observes, there were many of the 'old regime', who for obvious reasons had kept a low profile, but now, with fewer AMGOT staff, felt it was possible to emerge into the open. The Allies had made it clear from the start of their

administration that they would not tolerate political activity even from anti-Fascist groups, and when some of the latter in Grammichele on 31 July showed their delight at being liberated by wearing a red disk in their jacket buttonhole, AMGOT officials immediately prohibited the display of this emblem. Caruso does not believe that their intention was to set up a movement with political aims but merely to "apporre il rosso in contrapposizione al nero." (112) The Sindaco, De Grazia, expressed his concern that these demonstrators, closely associated with a similar group in Caltagirone, would gain the political upper hand once the Allies left Sicily. Following this occurrence the AMGOT reorganisation allocated Capt Munday to serve as CAO in the town.

Meanwhile a letter, signed by several citizens from Grammichele, had been sent to the editor of the *Corriere*, asking him to complain to the SCAO that the local AMGOT office had issued an order which contradicted Proclamation No.2 and 'curtailed elementary liberties' in the town. The letter vaguely referred to mistakes and misunderstandings created by inefficient interpreters. The SCAO sent the letter to the CAO in Caltagirone, whose reply made clear that the order was connected with Proclamation No.11, which dealt with the need for written permits for public meetings and that the original letter was signed by members of a political group, who, since the bread ration was reduced, were spreading rumours that the Fascist Party gave more to the people than the Allies. The CAO asserted that there could be no misunderstandings since he spoke fluent Italian and no interpreter was involved. He wished to arrest them as political prisoners but the Field Security Section in Catania decreed that this was not possible but that the Group should certainly be prohibited. (113)

The citizens of Grammichele were not the only ones showing signs of unrest. In his report at the end of August, Benton Jones stated that 'in almost every commune there exists the element of a so-called Partito Democratico, who regard our

entry into a town as the arrival of a terrestrial paradise, in which they are the only possible leaders.' He referred to wild accusations, most of which he judged pure nonsense, made against officials in the local administration either retained or appointed by AMGOT. These protesters insisted on their right to take over, having always been anti-fascist, but in his opinion they would be incapable since they had not held office for very many years. Benton Jones advocated treating them very firmly.(114)

One of the first political parties to emerge in Caltagirone was the Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI). Caruso states that secret meetings began in 1941 in the house of Silvio Milazzo, a supporter of Sturzo, who had been designated Cavaliere dell'Ordine Equestre di S. Silvestro for organising the Congresso Eucaristico in 1937. Many Catholics, including Luigi La Rosa, later appointed to office by AMGOT, attended these meetings, which continued in secret after the installation of Allied administration. Although many local PPI members wished to retain the Party's name, it was changed to the Democrazia Cristiana (PDC), and Milazzo became its provincial Secretary in 1946.

Two meetings of the Christian Democrats took place during AMGOT administration. The first was held on 30 November in Casa Carcaci, when a provisional provincial committee was elected with a local lawyer, Carmel Caristia, as President. The second, the Congress of Caltanissetta, took place on 16 December. Although not every province was represented, many important issues were discussed, including the position of the PDC in the Committee of National Liberation (CLN), relations between workers and employers, and the strength of Separatism, which had been the first political group in the island to advertise itself after the Allied invasion.(115) Sturzo's influence was still strong in other parts of the province and many Catanesi became part of the Calatini group, sharing the same political programme. Caruso points out that this group took a leading role in the constitution and coordination of various sectors of the

Party.(116) Other political groups such as the Socialist PSI took more time to regroup and reorganise and it was not until October 1944 that representatives of all these groups met to form the local CLN under the presidency of Professor Bevilacqua. Lord Rennell continued to insist that no AMG officer was to become involved in any political matters whatsoever and there is no evidence that Capt Corbin actively engaged in local politics, although he must have known, as did other CAOs, that meetings of local political groups were openly taking place.

Paolo de Grazia had provided Capt Corbin with the names of all the prominent Fascists in Grammichele but the latter took no action. He assumed that the shortage of CAOs in his town allowed the leading Fascists to remain in senior posts. He wrote again to Corbin in September commenting that, in order to feed their families, the 'impiegati statali erano costretti ad indossare la camicia nera o portare il distintivo fascista al petto', and they would be the ones suspended from their posts, not the 'gerarchi', who, until the invasion, 'predicavano in conferenza al Fascio o al teatro la santità della guerra.' (117) Some impiegati were indeed suspended but reinstated on appeal but there is no indication that any high-level Fascists were removed.

Although complaints were heard about the retention of Fascists in the Caltagirone district, there is no evidence that protests, apart from those of De Grazia, were made. In Enna, Lt Col Rodd, concerned about the demonstrations in some communes caused by AMGOT's failure to remove high-profile Fascists, advised the CAOs involved to replace those in office who were obviously mistrusted by the local people. (118)

Once the Scheda Personale was in operation, it was used in Caltagirone as elsewhere, particularly in the sphere of education. As in Catania town most schools had closed before the arrival of the Allies, either to be adapted for use as military hospitals for the Axis garrison in the town

or for refugee accommodation. Caltagirone had ten elementary and four secondary schools, the Ginnasio Liceo, Scuola Agrari, Scuola Avviamento Professionale and the Scuola Ceramica, providing both academic and practical education for a rural market town with an industrial sector. Each elementary school served a Sezione of the town. (119) By early December children could return to those schools which had been reopened and approved by the Provveditore and AMGOT HQ. There were no staffing problems as very few teachers had been dismissed after examination of their Scheda Personale. In fact the number of Fascists removed from their posts appears to be low in this area. Whether this was in any way due to the early withdrawal of AMGOT staff in advance of the handover to the Italian Government is not clear. As pointed out in Chapter 4, it was only some months after the departure of AMGOT that a High Commission for Defascistisation was established in the island. Commissari Prefettizi were given the power to draw up lists of Fascists for the Commission, but Caruso comments that they often excluded names for their own political reasons. Their investigations were frequently delayed or indefinitely postponed and many named Fascists were reinstated. (120) He also points out that the local Church in Caltagirone actively supported those who had been Fascists "di facciata", in order to keep their jobs, and adopted a policy of letting 'byegones be byegones'. (121)

Section 6. A heavy Workload for CAOs in Caltagirone District

The epuration process was only one of the many spheres of AMGOT administration rendered more difficult by the inadequate staffing levels in the province. When the second reorganisation occurred at the end of August and Major Benton Jones was sent elsewhere, only three CAOs remained to administer the district of fourteen communes. Acireale,

on the coast north of Catania town had eleven communes, all easily accessible to both district and provincial HQ, and four CAOs. Major Rolph, in charge of the district, was requested to release one of them, Lt Vos, to help Capt Corbin. Vos was chosen as he had initially served for a few weeks as CAO in Ramacca and Raddusa, and knew the district.

Apart from his regular duties Capt Corbin was hard pressed by the constant letters and appeals he received, not only from those believing that they were wrongfully suspended from their posts and asking to be reinstated, but also from citizens in need of some form of assistance. Pleas for basic necessities such as shoes, clothing, blankets and food, bicycles or mules to travel to work, and even shotguns for hunting, were received daily at the AMGOT office from all communes in the district. Many also sought information on the whereabouts of relatives taken prisoner or missing. Of the hundreds of letters received, many were in English and many written on behalf of those unable to write. (122) One letter begged for the return of a car confiscated by an English officer on the first day of the occupation, since when the owner had been unable to get to his place of employment. His wife wrote that since her husband had been unable to work, the family, which included four young children, were on the brink of starvation.(123) Most of these letters are dated September - October 1943, after Major Benton Jones had issued his Manifesto to the local population requesting them not to waste time seeking personal interviews at the AMGOT office.

Efforts were made with the active cooperation of the Church to alleviate the misery of those who could not afford black market prices for food. A kitchen was set up for the poor at S.Orsolo school to serve free hot meals on a daily basis but so many people queued for them that frequently the supply ran out. (124) Fortunately a close relationship with the Church had been maintained by CAOS, as they were well aware of both its influence and the contribution it made towards the welfare of the population.

This relationship was much easier to forge in a small rural community than in a large industrial town like Catania.

As the AMGOT office in Caltagirone was the district HQ all CAOs were required to report there before contacting HQ Catania. For example, the CAO of Scordia, where typhoid had broken out, wrote to Corbin on 29 August to inform him of the acute shortage of food in the hospital. Only a few days supply of milk remained. Corbin, about to visit HQ, was requested to arrange a consignment of both tinned milk and urgently needed medical supplies and, if possible, more medical assistance.(125) The chances of obtaining them were slight, as Benton Jones had advised HQ the previous day that his area was almost completely devoid of medical supplies, in spite of the list of requirements he had sent on 1 August. Four weeks later none had been received.

By mid-October the atmosphere of unrest created by the price of black market food and escalating inflation led to a series of strikes culminating in demonstrations in front of the Municipio and Prefettura in Palermo on 19 October. Italian troops fired on the crowd, killing fourteen. A member of AMGOT HQ staff, Sgt Charles Dobson, kept a diary in which he described the tense atmosphere in the capital and the frequent attacks on Allied troops. He ascribed the trouble partly to Fascists and partly to food shortages, particularly bread, which had caused bread riots.(126) The unrest in the island's capital was beginning to spread and it was at this time that the Commissario Prefettizio of Caltagirone, Iacono Marco Della Motta, retained in post by AMGOT, decided to resign. He wished to leave public life and spend more time on his estate.(127)

Benton Jones and Corbin must have decided when he was first interviewed that his ability to do his job outweighed his Fascist background, and that was probably why he was retained. There does not appear to have been any local antipathy towards his retention by AMGOT. Whether he had completed his Scheda Personale before he resigned is not recorded. Caruso points out that his letter of resignation

was dated 12 October but Corbin must have known in advance because his nomination of Luigi La Rosa was dated 4 October.(128)

Corbin expressed his appreciation of Della Motta's work during the months before the Allies' arrival and during AMGOT's administration, referring to 'l'opera oculata e fattiva da lei svolta a vantaggio dell' amministrazione comunale.' (129) Corbin nominated Baron Luigi La Rosa as Della Motta's successor. La Rosa had been a deputy from 1921 to 1924, a member of the Partito Popolare and close to Sturzo. (130) In his letter to AMGOT HQ, who were checking the credentials of Allied nominees for municipal office prior to the Region's transfer to Italian administration, Corbin made clear that he had taken full account of the views of the Church when assessing the suitability of the candidates. In his opinion La Rosa was 'un uomo di carattere e di assoluta sincerità, scevro di ambizioni personali, economicamente indipendente.'(131) Corbin also nominated two deputies, rather than the usual one, on the grounds that Caltagirone district with its fourteen communes was an exceptionally large area to administer, especially with a reduced number of CAOs. The deputies nominated were clearly anti-Fascist, Socialist teacher, Santi Bevilacqua, and Nicolò Di Bernardo, a future member of the Partito del Lavoro.

The increased importance of the role now given to local administrators was emphasised by Order No.34. from Lt Col Poletti which authorised the payment of an honorarium to the Sindaco. Poletti was now Regional Civil Affairs Officer and it was he who supported a suggestion from the SCAO for Caltanissetta at the first joint meeting of SCAOs that sindaci should be paid salaries. He considered it 'a wise move to encourage self-government.'(132)

A new mayor was later nominated for Scordia. Local anti-Fascist groups had written to Corbin recommending Giuseppe Di Mauro, and praising him for his work in removing some of the 'irregularities' at the local consorzio agricolo. (133)

Section 7. Allied Efforts to improve Food Supplies

With a reduced number of CAOs and the appointment of new municipal administrators in Caltagirone, the role of AMGOT in local affairs gradually began to decrease. All Orders and Proclamations naturally remained in force and all contraventions were duly punished by Military Courts. The problems of inflation and the lack of basic necessities were as great, if not greater, because of the need to supply the recently occupied areas of southern Italy. However, some of the immediate post-war difficulties were being solved. The streets had been cleared, electricity supplies were more reliable, and although water remained in short supply, there was sufficient for daily needs. But problems still remained, some common to all provinces, others specific to agricultural areas such as Caltagirone district, but all connected with the shortage of food.

The many irksome restrictions imposed on the public were even more numerous for those working in agriculture. Reference has previously been made to the rules and regulations applied to those taking grain to the ammassi. Farmers rearing animals were also subject to precise regulations governing the slaughter of cattle, goats, pigs and horses. This was only permitted on Fridays but there was no restriction on the slaughter of lambs and kids under fifty days of age. It was Capt Corbin's task to regulate the number of animals permitted for slaughter each week on the basis of animals available in proportion to the population. There were no restrictions on actual meat sales. (134) All olive growers had to obtain a permit to press their crop, and the pressing was restricted to only a few hours a day. The residue, formerly used by the growers as fuel or for mixing in animal food, now had to be handed over to the Commissariato agli Affari Economici di Catania, who were responsible for its distribution. (135)

Reference has been made to AMGOT's attempts to find a solution to the problems of the Black Market, especially in

grain. Not only was confiscation the new order of the day but millers were now obliged to obtain a bolletta di macinazione from the Consorzio Agrario in Caltagirone before any grain could be milled.(136) In this way AMGOT retained full control of wheat, olive oil and residues from production to consumption but other agricultural products were no longer subject to compulsory delivery to ammassi as they had been under Italian law.

Grain collection still remained problematic in spite of the continued campaign of CAOs, urged on by Major Monk at the provincial Civil Supply Division. It was hoped that the refusal of AMGOT to permit milling of family grain until the grain was delivered to the Consorzio Agrario would be a strong inducement to bring it in. The maximum bread ration was fixed at 200 grams a day and was not to be raised without the prior approval of the SCAO. The supplemental ration of 100 grams for workers on Army projects would be continued and, if the grain was available in his commune, each CAO could use his discretion to award this supplement. There were inevitably occasions when the maximum ration was not available especially in the larger communes in spite of all efforts to bring in the grain. (137)

As 1943 drew to a close tensions were mounting in the district. These were caused by a variety of factors, one of which was the ongoing presence of refugees, unable or unwilling to return to their homes. Local people resented their presence and the supplies they consumed. In addition growing inflation, rising unemployment and above all the unfulfilled expectations aroused by Allied promises before and during the invasion were bringing these tensions to boiling point. In January fifty women in Vizzini staged a protest inside the Town Hall against a reduction of the bread ration from 200 to 150 grams. This followed another incident in the small town of Nicolosi, not in Caltagirone district but in Catania province, where German hand grenades were tied to the door of the Casa Comunale with a note attached: 'Ordine tutto noi popolo riunitosi prega di

aumentare il pane, se no questa è la reazione.' (138)

On 24 January AMGOT notices were displayed in Caltagirone to inform the public that from the following day the daily bread ration would be fixed at 150 grams per person for all communes throughout the province. Reports on ensuing events on 25 January vary according to the source but all agree that a crowd gathered early in the morning, forced their way into the Municipio and set fire to papers and furniture. Capt Corbin had left Caltagirone on the previous day, having been recalled to Palermo. The official report therefore came from the SCAO of Catania, Lt Col French, and was sent to the RCAO. In it the demonstration is ascribed to the low bread ration of 150 grams and the local objection to paying taxes. The SCAO was informed that the demonstration began at 07.30 hours and gathered strength until some fifty bolder spirits forced their way into the Municipio, where they burned some papers and generally made a nuisance of themselves. They eventually calmed down when a unit of Carabinieri fired over their heads. The SCAPO and CAO Capt Reynolds arrived from Catania at 12.30 and with the aid of the Carabinieri dispersed the crowd. The SCAO arrived at 13.15 and sent for the Sindaco, Luigi La Rosa, who should have been at the scene of the demonstration. The SCAO was told that he was in Catania, but he appeared at 14.00, and said he was ill and had just got out of bed. Lt Col French was of the opinion that had the Carabinieri shown more determination and had La Rosa been present to speak to the crowd, they would not have become so disorderly.(139)

All British and Canadian military units had been withdrawn to Catania town on the previous day and reinforcements of a hundred men from the Sabauda Division at Enna were called on. From Catania came the Questore and another hundred Carabinieri who, with the hundred and fifty soldiers and police already on the scene, made an exhibition of force which alarmed the townspeople. Although French thought such numbers unnecessary, he commented that it would not do any

harm.(140) Guards were placed at the Municipio, Consorzio Agrario and the mills. The SCAPO and Capt Reynolds were instructed to remain overnight to await the arrival of a new CAO, Capt Parker, to replace Capt Corbin. No mention was made of the other two CAOs in the district, who may also have been removed elsewhere, although it is unlikely that a district of fourteen communes with a population of nearly 160,000, plus a large number of refugees, would be left without any AMG representative. French decided to order the Prefect to send a Commissario Prefettizio to replace La Rosa, whom he relieved of his post.(141)

Apart from the SCAO's account, the transcription of a telephone message received from the CC.RR. of the Catania group was also submitted by the HQ of the 6th Brigata Carabinieri Reali. It referred to a crowd of 8,000 gathered around the Municipal Piazza and nearby streets. A group entered the building, destroyed some documents of little importance and damaged some furniture. The police fired some musket shots and threw hand grenades which halted the demonstration. 28 people were arrested. Public order was re-established and reinforcements brought in. No recurrence of disorder was anticipated. The SCAO arrived and expressed appreciation for the intervention and the measures used. The absence of the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor was deplored. The only authority present was the Vice-Mayor attached to the Ration Service.(142)

Caruso cites another account in a manuscript kept in Caltagirone library, which relates how 'la folla inferocita assoltò il palazzo dell'Aquila, incendiandolo, il regio esercito sparò colpi, ma la popolazione distrusse gli incartamenti annonari della ragioneria, dell'anagrafe, e dell'igiene e bruciò tutta la mobilia in piazza tra urla e schiamazzi.' (143)

A further development involved the MGS at AFHQ Algiers. The Section had apparently heard that the demonstration involved US troops, who were alleged to have fired machine guns and thrown hand grenades to quell the disturbance. A

full report was requested. The ACC Deputy Executive Commissioner forwarded the reports of the SCAO and the CCRR and noted that demonstrations of a similar nature had occurred in other areas but were always quickly dealt with by the Carabinieri.(144)

Although the reduction of the bread ration had sparked the disturbance, Caruso cites other probable factors which might have given an impetus to the outbreak of violence. The month of January 1944 was a month of transition with the impending handover of the island to Italian sovereignty, and, in Caruso's words, the local population had been expressing 'la paura di essere richiamati alle armi e di vedere stravolto uno status quo cui si era ormai abituati.(145) These sentiments were not confined to the Calatini but common to most areas of the island. In Palermo, Sgt Dobson in the AMG HQ Accounts Office, noted in his diary that most of the Sicilians he had spoken to did not like Badoglio and wanted to be free from Italy. (146)

What was, however, an extra element inciting many local people to stage a demonstration was the return of the goatherds to the town. Caruso explains that when don Luigi Sturzo was mayor, he refused them entry to the town and banned them from returning with their goats and selling milk on public highways. They returned after an absence of more than twenty years to support the rioters in their protest. When the new Commissario Prefettizio arrived, he issued an order banning them from the town.(147)

Reflecting on these disturbances, particularly the burning of papers from the land registers and the registry office, Caruso suggests they could have been efforts to conceal evidence which might reveal that people were drawing sussidi in the names of dead relatives.(148)

On 11 February the island, Region 1, was officially handed over to the Italian Government but disturbances continued. The Sindaco of Militello, after organising the distribution of tinned food to the poor, obtained from emergency rations for civilians, provided by the Allies during the invasion,

was attacked by an angry mob, 200 strong. Carabinieri were called to intervene and restore order. On 8 March an Italian Army unit in a Caltagirone suburb, Mazzarrone, was confiscating grain which had not been delivered to the ammassi in accordance with General Order No.5, when it was set on by an angry crowd. Seven people were arrested and imprisoned in Caltagirone.(149) Similar incidents followed in other parts of the province with women frequently heading many of the protests, especially those connected with bread rations. It was mainly women who stood in bread queues, along with their children when schools were still closed, and it often happened that bread ran out before those at the end of the queue had been served. As bread coupons were date stamped, they could not be used the next day and a day's ration was lost.

It was now the responsibility of the Italian Government to deal with all public disturbances since AMG had ceased to administer the region. In Catania town, as described in Chapter 4, the SCAO and a number of CAOs and specialist staff were given a farewell ceremony on the morning of 11 February 1944 in the presence of the Prefect, the Catania local authorities, provincial Sindaci, English officers who formed part of the ACC staff and many others. Both Lt Col French and Major Elwes were awarded honorary citizenships of the town and expressed their pleasure at remaining in the provincial capital as ACC representatives.(150) They were posted to the mainland at the end of April 1944 and replaced by Major Giles. In Caltagirone a similar farewell, but on a much smaller scale, had been given to Capt Corbin when the municipality awarded him honorary citizenship of the town. A photograph shows him being presented with a scroll by the Sindaco, Luigi la Rosa, in the presence of the deputies, Bevilacqua and Di Bernardo, and another British officer, possibly Capt Munday.(151) No date is given but it was probably mid January, the time when CAOs learned where they would be posted when ACC took over.

At AMGOT HQ two separate groups of CAOs were being formed.

The first consisted of French and German speakers, who would return to the UK to be prepared for duty in north-west Europe. A different form of administration would be established there. Instead of serving in an integrated US/UK force under a CCAO, as in Sicily and mainland Italy, they would serve in separate British and American organisations as staff officers of the various military commanders in whose zone they operated. (152) The second group was destined for further service in AMG on the mainland when required, or would possibly be transferred into ACC. This was not originally envisaged during the planning process when AMGOT personnel from Sicily were to be used only for AMG on the mainland and not transferred into ACC. This was to prevent experience gained as CAOs from being wasted, when it could be used in newly conquered areas. On the other hand many thought the knowledge acquired of the people and area in which a CAO had already served would have been useful to him as an ACC representative after the return of the area to the Italian Government. Education Adviser, George Gayre, as mentioned in Chapter 4, was one senior officer who pointed out that AMG staff were much closer to the local people and knew their problems better than ACC newcomers.(153)

The early arrival of ACC had caused many upsets among the AMG staff in Palermo HQ, including the Education Adviser, who had been placed in an awkward position when the appointed ACC Education representative arrived unexpectedly to take over his post. As for Lord Rennell, he had not even been consulted during the planning stage of the Commission and in December wrote to the Regional SCAOs informing them of his resignation.(154) Harold Macmillan, in his diary entry for 5 November, had referred to the 'waning star of AMGOT' and also to Rennell's determination to resign from AMGOT altogether if he could not become the head of the Commission. (155) Others, rather less kindly, began to refer to the 'Amgötterdämmerung', or the 'Twilight of the Rodds' - a pointed reference to the family members employed

by AMG.(156)

As ACC staff did not take up their posts until the departure of AMGOT from Sicily on 11 February, their work in Sicily is outside the scope of this chapter, and only a brief account of the role it would later play is given here. No ACC field officers would operate in the communes or in a position comparable to that of the CAO or CAPO, except in the transition stage until the Italian Government was functioning satisfactorily. General administration would be subject to ACC control at the provincial level and any necessary local inspection carried out from ACC regional or provincial HQ.

The above details imply that an ACC official would have been allocated to Caltagirone on 11 February but no details of his arrival could be found in the local archives. It is possible that the new CAO, Capt Parker, due to replace Capt Corbin, may have remained in the commune as an ACC officer until the new Commissario Prefettizio had settled into his post. As some of the provincial HQ staff in Catania town remained as ACC representatives in the province for a few months before being transferred to the mainland, they would have been available to give assistance to a district, where, as the Prefect, Fazio, stated in his report on the demonstration, 'lo spirito pubblica continua a mantenersi depresso.' (157)

The tenure of Capt Corbin came to a rather abrupt end, as did that of the Podestà, Luigi La Rosa. It was not the best of outcomes for AMGOT's six months of administration. By mid-February AMGOT HQ in Palermo had closed and the staff transferred to Naples. The Prefect's report on the bread riot, dated April 1944, revealed that 28 demonstrators had been arrested and brought before a military tribunal. Some were sentenced but others released through lack of sufficient evidence. Fazio referred to the situation in the town at the time as 'confusa e incerta'.(158) This was due to the high level of unemployment in both industry and agriculture, and for those still in employment, the average

wage was only L.100 a day.

The war in Italy would prove long and drawn out and conditions on the mainland would be as difficult as those in Sicily, if not more so. As the war progressed in Europe, other countries would be in need of material help from the Allies. Sicily would therefore have ongoing problems of supplies. Whether these problems could have been at least partially solved by a more efficient Civil Affairs administration will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusion. AMGOT in Sicily - Success or failure?

Most post-war literature referring to the role played by AMGOT officers in the Allied campaign in Italy has been, to say the least, negative. David Ellwood refers to 'civil affairs as being 'relegated to the status of a 'Cinderella' service suitable for Ancient Military Gentlemen on Tour, and for a variety of other elements from the middle levels of army life.' (1) Col Vladimir Peniakoff, who operated with his band of British soldiers behind enemy lines, wrote of his problems recruiting suitable officers. Although there were plenty available in depots in Italy, most wanted a staff job or if they lacked enough pull, 'they would be content with a job at AMGOT where they could look forward to comfortable billets, an obliging girl friend and reasonable profits on the black market.' (2)

According to Carlo D'Este, the history of military government in World War II 'is riddled with instances of graft, corruption and illegal black market activities. Many ordinary soldiers could not resist the lure of fortunes to be made by cooperation with the Mafia and criminal organisations in other countries.' (3) The description of conditions in Naples, under Allied administration from October 1943, presented in Norman Lewis's *Naples 44* and *The Gallery* by John Horne Burns also contributed to the image of large-scale Allied corruption on the Italian mainland. (4) Thomas Fisher, who served in Italy with both AMG and ACC, refers to Naples in the winter of 1943-44 as the worst-governed city in the Western world, adding that 'it was not much better a year later.' (5)

Little, however, seems to have been written specifically about AMGOT staff in Sicily apart from a few references to officers in the west of the island where a significant percentage of Americans of Sicilian origin were stationed. Education Adviser Lt Col George Gayre refers to the favours

for relatives sought by these officers. In his opinion no officer with relatives or business interests in Sicily should have been appointed to AMGOT administration.(6)

It was also in the west of the island that Mafia elements re-introduced themselves. The most notorious godfather in Sicily, Don Calò Vizzini, was appointed mayor of Villalba by the Allies and the town soon became a centre for the distribution of black market goods to the mainland, with documents and transport (unknowingly) provided by AMGOT.(7) There is no evidence that this activity occurred elsewhere in the island and certainly not in Catania province, where at this time there was no Mafia presence. CAOs in the field across the island were actively engaged in the prevention of black market dealings, although admittedly with limited success.

Perhaps 'limited success' would be a reasonable summing-up of what was achieved by AMGOT in Catania province if one judges success or failure by the CCAO's definition of the purpose of military government. According to Lord Rennell, its two main objectives were 'to enable the armies which have conquered the territory to prosecute their military operations more efficiently and to provide for the wellbeing and local needs of the population within the limits of policy and available resources of the governments which are waging war against the enemy. (8) These were criteria to be observed strictly and in that order.

AMGOT in Sicily was the first military government in Europe and also the first joint Anglo-American organisation in which the functions of British and American officers were complementary and not duplicated. Britain, although experienced in establishing military governments in Africa preceding the Sicilian administration, had now to take the views of her coalition partner into full consideration since a completely cohesive administration in every area of the island would be imperative. Rennell was determined that there would be no place in his organisation for disharmony. By bringing together all prospective CAOs at Chr ea, he had

succeeded in binding the two nationalities together. His warning to them to avoid criticism of each other was heeded and he was later able to describe the experiment of joint Anglo-American administration as wholly successful. (9) This was certainly the case in Catania province. This success can probably be partly explained by the relatively small number of CAOs involved, working together with common interests, sharing similar qualifications if they served in a specialist division and having followed similar curricula in their respective training schools.

In Catania province the AMGOT staff, especially those based in the town, were more engaged in the first purpose of military government than were CAOs in any other province, since Catania had the largest number of servicemen, both passing through and encamped. Although the invasion campaign was over in less than six weeks, military needs remained paramount since Catania would be used as a launching ground for the invasion of the mainland in September. Widespread structural damage in the town from air and naval bombardments involved CAOs in the immediate organisation of large-scale street clearance operations in order to allow the passage of military transport through to the north. This they did successfully, although lacking the transport to carry rubble away and the materials to start rebuilding. The Eighth Army commander came in person to see the SCAO to ensure that he was giving priority to clearing the streets. (10) The port and surrounding areas needed to be rapidly repaired to accommodate ships and landing craft and close liaison between AMGOT and the army was essential to recruit a reliable civilian work force to carry out these repairs.

AMGOT officers also took responsibility for locating and requisitioning suitable buildings to house troops, who either formed part of the combat forces or were support elements. During the invasion phase it frequently happened that combat troops were in advance of AMGOT units and unlawfully took over protected buildings as billets. AMGOT

officers would then remove them to other accommodation, not always easy to find in Catania town. (One empty barracks in the town was considered far too insanitary for British troops). Although CAOs did their utmost for the troops, relations between them and the military were not always cordial, frequently because AMGOT's role was not understood by many unit commanders. Reference has been made earlier to General Montgomery's complaints to Lord Rennell about AMGOT's performance, which revealed even a General's ignorance of the conditions under which CAOs operated.

Lt Col Wellesley also had to be firm at times in his dealings with the military, some of whom expected AMGOT to supply all their needs. On one occasion he refused to requisition a piano and two refrigerators, requested by the commanding officer of the Perth Highlanders for the Officers Mess, since he did not consider these as military necessities. (11) Where the latter were concerned Wellesley was always helpful, but he informed Rennell at the end of August that so much of his time was taken up with the Military Authorities that he had asked 13 Corps to lend him a Liaison Officer on their Town Major panel to assist with purely military affairs. (12) He ensured that his CAPOs in the provincial capital worked very closely with units of the Military Police and, together with the support of the local Police Forces, they achieved a high degree of law and order in what was considered to be one of the most difficult towns to govern in the island.

Even after the departure of the combat forces from the island, AMGOT staff still maintained close liaison with the remaining military in order to assist them in negotiations with civilians in the acquisition of supplies. These could range from the purchase of large quantities of eggs to any available fresh meat to supplement Army tinned rations. The town CAO, Capt Thornitt-Smith, not only spoke fluent Italian but was well acquainted with the town traders and how best to deal with them. The CAOs also proved their usefulness to the military in requisitioning mules, needed

for portorage in the Etna area, and supervising Sicilian POWs, released from internment and allowed to return home. Even when hostilities ceased, military orders continued to be issued regularly to the population and CAOs were responsible for enforcing these, in addition to enforcing the Proclamations.

They kept in regular communication with the higher military echelons and were on the receiving end of innumerable reports, directives, instructions, letters and orders which came to them from AFHQ Algiers, 15th Army Group HQ, AMGOT Administrative HQ, AMGOT HQ of other provinces and their own provincial HQ. All this mail was delivered by motorcycle courier to CAOs in the field each week from the provincial HQ. Replies from CAOs to these communications were returned through the same channels. As much of this mail was of classified content, the CAO in the field could not use the services of a local English-speaking secretary, even if he was lucky enough to have one, and in the absence of EM and ORs, the amount of paper work was overwhelming, as many CAOs complained. (13) This was not such a problem for the Catania CAOs working at provincial HQ with secretarial help, although the various specialist divisions were scattered around the town, causing time-consuming journeys between offices.

In Caltagirone district there was not the same high level of pressure on CAOs to attend to the needs of the military as in the provincial capital, although they were also at the receiving end of the same avalanche of military mail. Civilian workers were not in demand on the same scale as in the provincial capital where preparations to launch the mainland invasion involved a large workforce: However, there were many Allied troops stationed in the district, mostly from logistic units, and responsible for supplying forward units with rations, arms and transport. There were also respite camps and field hospitals to care for the injured and sick. These establishments would be well staffed and these troops during their off-duty breaks could

be troublesome. Reference has been made to problems caused by drunken behaviour, brawls with other soldiers and attacks on civilians. In the absence of MPs, local CAPOs were called in to restore law and order. This was certainly not the primary purpose of military government. It is ironic that Allied forces were not needed to garrison any part of Sicily or to maintain the authority of AMGOT but AMGOT staff were needed to maintain discipline among Allied forces. They would not have been used if adequate numbers of MPs had accompanied each deployment of troops.

Caltagirone appears to have had two very good CAOs who complemented each other. It is almost impossible to trace the backgrounds of those serving in AMGOT, unless they were from the higher ranks of the aristocracy or recently created barons, or as in the case of a certain Capt Pearson, chose to furnish details about themselves in their reports to the War Office. (14) Major Benton Jones, senior CAO, was a Royal Artillery officer who gives the impression in his first report to HQ of being highly organised, the type of army officer who 'got things done', and was not afraid to speak his mind either to local people, including refugees, or to his superiors in his reports. He adopted a very firm attitude towards those unwilling to work or who wasted his time. (15) Since the number of Allied troops in the area were fewer than in the provincial capital and food supplies initially easier to obtain in the countryside, pressure on CAOs to help the military obtain provisions was not as great as in Catania town. As mentioned above, Allied troops in Caltagirone district were mostly composed of support forces and did not require a large civilian force to work for them as did the Catania-based units.

The implementation of the second objective of military government, as defined by the CCAO, 'to provide for the wellbeing and local needs of the population within the limits of policy and available resources' is perhaps more clearly seen in the smaller town of Caltagirone, where the second CAO, Capt Corbin, was, in addition to his many other

duties, responsible for monitoring the grain production and arranging its transportation in the absence of motorised vehicles. He was ably supported by Maj Benton Jones until the latter was posted, when he himself took over as senior CAO. As one of the few CAOs who remained in post for six months he became well known to the local officials, civilians and clergy, and was an active member of the town rehousing committee. He appears to have made a good impression on the local officials and was popular in the town, being made an honorary citizen of Caltagirone before he was finally recalled to Palermo HQ. Taking into account the large number of refugees in the district, the unacceptable behaviour of Allied troops, political undercurrents and the continued shortage of basic necessities, CAOs and CAPOs would appear, on the evidence available, to have maintained law and order to a successful degree, even when the second reorganisation reduced their numbers. Benefiting from the support of the clergy, they appear to have done all they could to encourage the Calatini to make the best of a difficult situation. It is significant that trouble only broke out locally the day after Capt Corbin was known to have left the town.

The success or failure of an organisation such as AMGOT depended not only on the quality of each individual CAO but on the support given to the organisation by other service branches and also the foresight and acumen of the planning team. Previous chapters have pointed out the disorganised planning processes for the military invasion and the army's refusal to allow CAOs to board in the first waves, or to provide them with their own transport when they arrived in the island. Intervention at the highest level in this context was fruitless. But the MGS at AFHQ also failed to support their own force of CAOs by not ensuring the delivery of promised vital supplies for civilian needs. Pre-invasion Allied propaganda had persuaded the islanders to treat them as liberators and led to great expectations among the population which the Military Government was not

able to deliver because of the shortcomings of the planning staff. As Sicilians gradually realised that the promised benefits of the Allies' presence had not materialised in the form of food and other badly needed supplies, they naturally became disillusioned and less cooperative.

This was entirely the fault of the planners, who, although they apparently had little advance intelligence of the conditions already existing under Fascism, also underestimated the disruption which would inevitably result from their own regular bombing attacks on the island's transport system. They also seem to have overlooked the enemy's tendency when in retreat to employ a 'scorched earth' policy of deliberate destruction of vehicles, rolling stock, bridges and public utilities. In addition, they looted grain stores and livestock as they retreated, so that food stocks were depleted on a large scale.

In fairness to the planners in Algiers many of their problems arose from the disputes between London and Washington about the constitution of AMGOT. According to Macmillan, these took two months to resolve.(16) The delay inevitably affected the planning process and subsequent decisions which needed to be taken during AMGOT's tenure of administration. Requests for these decisions went to AFHQ, Washington and London for discussion before AMGOT could take action, such being the nature of coalition warfare.

The planners' greatest error was their failure to provide AMGOT with sufficient and suitable transport, exclusively for their own use, plus access to Army mobile repair units. Apart from a reasonably paved coastal highway, the island's roads were frequently little more than rough tracks which soon damaged tyres and axles. The planners would have been aware of this from the large-scale photo reconnaissance which had been carried out before the invasion. In addition the enemy had blown up many bridges, and motorised vehicles were regularly forced to drive over the dried-up river beds. Vehicles such as jeeps should have been provided specifically for AMGOT staff to inspect their communes, and

also trucks to deliver food. Military units were told instead to hand over trucks to CAOs for civilian food deliveries. Naturally the units kept their trucks for their own purposes. The delivery situation was only improved when SCAOs organised their own motor pools with the few vehicles which the military finally agreed to pass on to AMGOT.(17) This negative attitude on the part of the military towards AMGOT was yet another example of the lack of understanding of its role. It also contributed to the civilian perception that the liberators were not equipped to fulfil the role promised by propagandists of supplying them with their daily needs.

Apart from reports sent to the War Office by CAOs which contain accounts of individual experiences, few objective post-war assessments of the achievements of AMGOT and AMG in Sicily seem to have been published by British writers. Those comments which do appear *en passant* range from at best merely negative to, in most cases, highly critical. One favourable comment came from Harold Macmillan, following a visit to AMGOT HQ in Palermo. He noted in his diary that he was favourably impressed by the work AMGOT was doing: 'It has really been a great piece of organisation in view of the difficulties, and the critics at home have no idea at all of how great they are.' (18) He also thought AMGOT had done a very fine job in Naples where in the space of three weeks they had got essential services working.(19) But as reported above, a short time later Naples became synonymous with military government at its worst as conditions deteriorated to such an extent that the city was at starvation level.(20)

Many readers assumed that these conditions were the norm in all areas of Italy, particularly as the re-emergence of the Mafia in western Sicily as *sindaci* or interpreters had led to an upsurge of criminal activity. In September 1943 a meeting of CAPOs at AMG HQ in Palermo reported that Mafia activities had begun again. In October Capt Scotten, a Military Intelligence Officer, who had previously served as

American Vice-Consul in Palermo for three years, presented a written report on the Mafia's role in island politics and pointed out that it was in the process of re-asserting itself.(21) At this stage Mafia infiltration of AMGOT was confined to the western provinces. However, with the growth of the Separatist movement in Palermo and its increasing activities in Catania, it was distinctly possible that the Mafia with its former involvement in political affairs, would wish to become associated with this movement. It might well have begun to infiltrate into the eastern provinces at the time when Finocchiaro Aprile launched his attack on AMGOT staff in Catania, but as stated above, no evidence is available and no mention made of the Mafia in literature produced by local Catania historians at that time.

Scotten believed that many senior Allied officers had fallen under the influence of the Mafia and were being misled by corrupt interpreters and advisors 'to the extent that they are in danger of becoming the unwitting tools of the Mafia.' He also understood that for many Sicilians AMG's inability to curb the increasing criminal activities, such as looting of food from Allied-controlled warehouses, which frequently resulted in rations being unobtainable, made the situation possibly worse under the Allies than it had been under Fascism. (22) In this respect AMG in some areas could be seen as a failure but there is no evidence whatsoever in Catania province of CAOs being 'the tools of the Mafia.'

American military historians appear to have been more interested than their British counterparts in analysing the work and impact of Civil Affairs in Italy and seeking reasons why it was judged to have been less than successful. Many articles appeared in the years following the end of the war, most of them critical of AMGOT's lack of achievement. This may partly explain why certain branches of the Army in the post-war years decided to include the study of civil affairs in their curriculum, and

this led to small units being utilised in a number of post World War II conflicts, either alone or in combination with other countries who had set up similar units.

Most of the American authors of articles on AMGOT or ACC tended to emphasise the role of the Americans in the Military Administration. In Spring 1946, Maurice Neufeld of Cornell University published an article entitled 'The Failure of AMG in Italy', in which he stated 'The Allies, with the United States as senior partner in popular esteem, have chosen to enter occupied areas with a philosophy of lofty intentions....but no clear-cut program designed to fulfil these ends.'(23) There was no senior partner. Weeks of wrangling during the planning phase had resulted in the decision that neither ally was to be regarded as the senior partner but the large number of US troops of Sicilian origin, particularly in the western half of the island, and the senior position of Lt Col Poletti, himself of Sicilian origin, led Sicilians to believe that Americans were in charge of Allied administration. This view was later reinforced when supplies which eventually reached the island were known to have come from the United States. Another reason for this emphasis on the American role could be that Britain's economic situation made her unable to contribute to Italy's post-war recovery on the same scale as the US.

In his assessment of AMG's lack of success, Neufeld blames basic administrative weakness which was compounded by staffing the administration with inexperienced men of limited political and administrative vision. They may have been 'industrious individuals with good intentions', but their circumscribed professional training, education or point of view would render them incompetent in the field of military government.(24) Rennell had previously pointed out the difficulty in recruiting staff for AMG who had all the necessary capabilities since, apart from the professionally trained, those with a knowledge of public administration were few in number in both countries. Good serving officers

could not be spared from their active roles and in Rennell's opinion, regimental training did not normally produce good administrative personnel. There were obvious exceptions, as Major Benton Jones proved. Apart from Britain's Colonial civil servants, initially drawn on for service in North and East Africa, men with academic qualifications or business or legal experience, were, according to Rennell, the most readily adaptable for posts in administration.(25) Whether or not they were trained and taught sufficiently well is a matter of dispute. Education Adviser, Lt Col Gayre, was of the opinion that some American CAOs had done infinite harm to AMGOT's prestige and cites one US serviceman, who as a result of serious misdemeanours, was given a choice of being courtmartialled or becoming a CAO.(26)

Gayre's comments about the ignorance of instructors at Tizi Ouzou were scathing: 'The confidence of some of them was the greater in proportion to their ignorance', but CAO Henry Adams did not believe the fault lay in the shortcomings of instructors but in the attitude of the majority of CAOs, who failed to take the instruction seriously and ignored the written material at their disposal. They assumed that innate practicality and common sense would produce efficient administration. (27) Many CAOs, however, considered that much of the course content was irrelevant and lacking in essential elements, such as a more intense study of the Italian language. This was a common criticism in CAOs' reports, many of which referred to problems with local interpreters who had a restricted knowledge of English or who deliberately mistranslated. This issue was later addressed in the Civil Affairs Training Schools set up in American universities, where new courses included intense foreign language teaching.

Not surprisingly it was difficult for the organisers to find instructors with knowledge of the grass roots levels in areas where CAOs would be operating, particularly as conditions would have changed very much since the outbreak

of war. Instructors were also faced with 'mixed ability' classes where mature and highly qualified civilians who were experts in their field were taught alongside Army officers seeking a 'cushy number'.

CAO Adams was one of seven officers who arrived together in Palermo. He had been informed that he would be with the Public Safety Division in Palermo city but on arrival was ordered to join a group of CAOs to be distributed in Palermo province. The group was smaller than originally planned but the same number of communes had to be administered. They had one small-scale map between them, which they had managed to acquire from an MP as they left Palermo for Cefalù. There a truck would pick them up and take them to their posts in the interior but it was not known when it would arrive. Each CAO had been told by the SCAO to make his way back to Palermo a week later to report the progress he had made in his allotted communes. It was up to him to find his own transport.(28) These 'detailed planning arrangements' given to CAOs would prove typical of the casual attitude of AFHQ.

Adams found himself in sole charge of four communes and his report highlights the varied nature of their problems. These depended on the particular conditions in each area, but there were certain needs common to all communes in the island; the restoration of a transport system, production and distribution of food, provision of medical and relief services and the imposition of economic controls. His report also points out variations in the way military government was organised in each province. Each SCAO could choose the administrative technique suitable for his province. Three of Catania's adjoining provinces, Ragusa, Caltanissetta and Messina, were administered from their capitals with CAOs going out on a daily circuit instead of being permanently stationed in one of the communes. Citing his own experiences based in Petralia, Adams describes the difficulty in achieving cooperation between local military government areas, since a CAO tended to 'hold onto, to keep

secret and to guard jealously what resources he had.'(29) This attitude was also reflected at a higher level in inter-provincial exchanges, when for example, none of the surplus amount of olive oil in Ragusa Province was made available to Palermo, which had none at all. (30) Similarly local sindaci in Caltagirone district had been vague when questioned about their commune's grain stocks.

The report cited above typifies the lack of precise planning on a local scale. On a broader scale there were interminable delays in obtaining decisions for problems arising at various stages of the administration. These delays became even more frustrating when ACC personnel moved into AMGOT HQ in October and immediately took over the posts occupied by AMG staff. Gayre commented that as ACC officers were so completely ignorant of what was to be done, and AMG staff were no longer allowed to take decisions, almost nothing was done. He described the situation at the end of October as 'a country run by a military government, most of whose officers have now lost interest in the work, with a Control Commission slapped on top of it, and which is not yet a functioning organisation.' (31)

At that time, Rennell was supervising the administration of the forward provinces at General Alexander's HQ on the mainland and his deputy, General McSherry, was in charge of the rear provinces at Palermo HQ. Rennell's comments on the superimposition of the ACC on the AMG long before the Italian Government resumed administration of Sicily were later expressed in a more measured way than Gayre's. He stated that the obvious course would have been to add staff progressively to the AMG organisation and to have formed the ACC out of the former when the time came. The new body would then have had the experience gained by AMG officers *in situ* since the invasion, instead of 'finding themselves usually superior in rank but inferior in experience and knowledge to those whose work they proceeded to take over.'(32)

The comments made by Gayre and Rennell concerning the lack of experience and administrative ability of most ACC staff were borne out by the administrative chaos which followed their arrival at Palermo HQ. Macmillan added his own comment about the ACC's Acting Deputy-President, American Major-General Kenyon Joyce: 'His qualifications appear to be absolutely nil.' (33) CAO Adams describes the impact of ACC representatives at Palermo HQ, where CAOs from the province met regularly for discussions. ACC staff were there to investigate AMGOT at work. Ostensibly there to learn, they often began to instruct CAOs on matters they themselves had not experienced. Adams refers to 'the vast horde' inundating AMGOT HQ, bringing 'new forms, new verbiage and new faces, making it a foreign citadel, and driving the old guard back to their jobs among their Sicilian co-workers, where everybody understood everybody. AMGOT became ACC but the problems and difficulties continued as before.' (34)

There were still three months of military government to be implemented before the island was handed back to Italian rule. Morale had been high among the vast majority of CAOs in the early stages of AMGOT, in spite of criticism from some British MPs, and Rennell, although he may have had a few private reservations, had robustly defended CAOs' work in his report to the House of Commons. (35) CAOs in the field still continued to carry out their normal duties with dedication in Catania province, but they were aware that the early arrival of ACC staff was the cause of confusion among the population, most of whom were reluctant to accept the impending rule of the Badoglio Government.

A gradual withdrawal of a number of CAOs from their communes began, well in advance of the hand-over date, their areas being transferred to the jurisdiction of the nearest remaining CAO, thus doubling his work. This resulted in many local authorities being forced to contact provincial HQ if a problem arose, and the nearest CAO was not available. This happened in Caltagirone in January 1944 when the bread riot took place. Since there was now no

AMG presence in the town, the SCAO was sent for. As related in the previous chapter, he dismissed the Sindaco and arranged the transfer of a replacement CAO to the town.

CAOs who remained in post appear to have done their best to maintain morale in a situation of diminishing supplies of food and warm clothing, essential for the harsh winter conditions. The shortage of fuel made life difficult for everyone, citizens and CAOs alike. Many of the latter were uncertain as to their future, not knowing if they would remain as ACC officers, be posted to the mainland as AMG in the forward areas, or return to the UK to be trained for the occupation of Western Europe. It was only in areas where AMG staff were retained as ACC that the close association forged between AMG officers and the local population was able to continue. This happened in Catania town even though it was only for a short while. The SCAO and a few of his staff remained as ACC representatives until April 1944, when they were posted to a similar position on the mainland.

In his message of farewell to his former AMG officers on 18 December 1943, Lord Rennell referred to AMG as having been 'the subject of some praise and the object of some attack' but accepted that he was responsible for the principles of administration which his officers had put into practice. These were preservation of law, order and justice, prevention of disease and distress, removal of fear, and creation of economic wellbeing. He pointed out that this last principle must of necessity take second place since it could only occur within the limits of transport and of military requirements. If these stated principles or their application were wrong, then he accepted that the fault was his, and no personnel who had followed these principles need be in fear of attack. (36) The fact that the conditions for economic wellbeing could not be achieved under the circumstances which prevailed at the time was not the fault of the administrators in the field.

It was a rather inglorious end to AMGOT's administration in Caltagirone, where the CAOs had accomplished much in spite of circumstances for which they were in no way responsible. In Catania the continuing presence of the SCAO and a number of his provincial HQ staff helped a smooth transition to ACC administration. D'Este's negative judgement on military government, cited earlier, was tempered somewhat by his statement that AMGOT in Sicily 'was a sincere attempt to restore order in countries devastated by war'.(37) Rennell summed up the achievement of AMGOT officers in his introduction to Gayre's account of his own experiences in Sicily: 'The lands which they helped to administer retain the memory of men who did their best in all honesty and disinterestedness for the populations committed to their charge.' (38) My impression of the CAOs in Catania and Caltagirone is that they were 'honest' and 'disinterested' and worked very hard in extremely difficult circumstances. Whether this would be the memory kept by the Catanesi and Calatini is hard to say. They would be more likely to remember that the hardships of war continued long after war had finished and the promised fruits of liberation did not materialise. Nicolosi described the farewell gathering of the SCAO and staff on 11 February in Catania: 'Gli addii sono sempre tristi, ma poich  quello era l'addio al vincitore, nessuno appariva troppo addolorato. In cuor suo ognuno anzi gioiva'(39)

A War Office document referring to the state of mind of the Italians in 1944, comments that 'Italy began to tire of her liberators, who had turned out on better acquaintance not to be demigods after all.' The document also cites a well known comedian, Macario, who, in a 1944 revue "Febbre Azzurra", sang about the Allies:

' Son qui gi  pi  di un anno
Ma ancor non se ne vanno ' (40)

This probably summed up the feelings of most Italians. In conclusion to this account of AMGOT's role in Sicily, a

brief reference will be made to the position of civil Affairs in today's army. Donnison pointed out the lack of preparation for Military Government in World War II, revealed when an urgent need arose for staff to administer occupied Italian territory in North and East Africa in 1940. He emphasised the importance of providing instruction to the Services in peace-time to prepare them for the tasks which might face an occupying army in future conflicts.(41) Educating the Army to understand the role of AMGOT had been a serious problem, and since an Army might find itself in a future conflict having to undertake the conduct of military government, or having to resolve problems affecting the indigenous population as a result of the war, it should be prepared to take on immediate responsibility for securing law and order and dealing with the problems which follow a state of conflict.(42) This happened on more than one occasion in Sicily but only lasted a short time, and was attributable to poor planning.

Donnison indicated that to the best of his knowledge no instruction in civil affairs and military government was provided at any military establishment in Britain at the time of writing. (His book was published in 1966). He put forward some reasons for this, such as the lack of time in a crowded and technical modern curriculum, and the need for financial economy in defence expenditure in time of peace.(43) At the end of World War II Britain was in a state of financial crisis and far more concerned with putting the nation back on a sound economic basis than in formulating new plans for the armed services. As far as can be ascertained, no provision for civil affairs courses had been made in the curricula of any Army establishments in Britain, including the Staff College, Camberley, and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, for over fifty years. During this time mechanisation and modernisation of the three armed forces became the main objective of the Ministry of Defence.

It was only in 1997, when a fledgling Civil Affairs Group

was formed at Gibraltar Barracks, Camberley, under the name of CIMIC. that a start was made in training personnel to study the impact on civilians in a country occupied by a military force. The impetus for forming this group probably came from the growing involvement of British forces in NATO peacekeeping operations and the fact that other countries, in particular the United States, had well-established civil affairs organisations. CIMIC stands for Civil-Military Co-operation and the group in the UK is essentially military in that its members are initially fully trained Regular military personnel or Reservists, who have all undertaken specialist courses in the means and methods of dealing with the impact of military operations on civilians.

CIMIC is totally integrated in the Army chain of command, its functions being to allow the commander to have effective interaction with the civil environment in which he is deploying his forces and to establish and influence relations between the military and civilian population so that the latter do not hinder operations. In this there is a reflection of the role of CAOs in AMGOT, whose primary responsibility was to enable combat forces to prosecute their military operations more efficiently. The similarity stops there in that the CIMIC group is an integral part of the planning process of a military operation, unlike AMGOT.

CIMIC is not a humanitarian organisation but where needed CIMIC groups actively carry out projects to aid the local people both during and after hostilities. These may include distribution of food, water and medical supplies, help in re-establishing the local administration and civil policing, and the re-opening of schools, activities which have been taking place in areas such as southern Iraq and Afghanistan, and which were part of a CAO's duties in Sicily. Where no military action is involved but a large-scale disaster has taken place, a CIMIC team may be deployed. One took part in the relief operations after the tsunami in December 2004, working in close contact with an Australian CIMIC group, and providing a liaison link with

the Indonesian military. Members of the Joint Cimic Group (JCG), as they are now called, are often supported by army volunteers from locally based regiments. In Afghanistan a school has been built with volunteer help from British soldiers of the Kabul Patrol Company, who also constructed play facilities for the Setara kindergarden in central Kabul. (44) Reservists play an essential part in general CIMIC operations, bringing their special skills from civilian life, as did AMGOT personnel of the Specialist Divisions. They are thoroughly trained in military matters and although not in the same state of readiness for operations as Regulars, once called up they assimilate quickly into the group. This contrasts with the situation in 1943, when future CAOs were recruited from civilian occupations and, in spite of a brief induction course, many found great difficulty in understanding, and adapting to, a military way of life.

As military operations are now frequently of a multi-national nature, UK units cross-train with other allied units, in a similar way to the final training course at Tizi Ouzou, which sought to integrate US and UK CAOs, after separate courses in Charlottesville and Wimbledon. NATO CIMIC exercises take place on a regular basis in Europe.

The role and purpose of CIMIC now forms part of the curriculum at RMA Sandhurst. Officer cadets take part in a Peace Support Exercise, BROADSWORD, which introduces them to the functions of CIMIC. The equivalent of CIMIC in the United States is known as CA, Civil Affairs, and depends heavily on its specially trained Reservists. The US Marine Corps has its own units and one edition of the US Naval Journal was headed 'Civil Affairs is the Invisible Force', pointing out that the work of civil affairs officers in the Corps 'was unknown to most Marines'.(45) Sixty years after AMGOT's tenure in Sicily this statement recalls Harris's reference to the complete ignorance of most of the military commanders of tactical units of the functions, or even the existence, of CAOs.' It appears that little has changed.

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Prime Minister's Office: PREM/3/328A Report on AMGOT.

The Imperial War Museum Photograph Archives

The archives contain a large number of photographs of the SCAO and CAOs taken in Catania town and the province by No.2. Army Film and Photograph Section, showing AMGOT staff with local civilians and at work with municipal employees.

Archivio comunale di Caltagirone

This archive contains many documents relating to AMGOT but only those from direct AMGOT sources have a reference number. Most of the others are dated but are not in an organised filing system. They are 'in attesa di sistemazione'.

Archivio di Catania

No AMGOT files in the town archives, but information was obtained from *Il Corriere di Sicilia* which published all AMGOT notices and information daily in a dedicated section of the paper. The archives contain the Prefect's files, which record events connected with the war and their effect on civilians. For example, in Busta G.3, Casella 383 lists the number of air raids, 412 announces release of local POWs, 421-425 lists food shortages. Casella 1508's report of a 200-strong protest in Caltagirone in 1946 reflects the high level of post-war unemployment in the province.

Oral Sources

Professor Mario D'Allura, of Taormina, Principal of the Centro Professionale San Pangrazio, Giardini Naxos, interviewed in Giardini, March 2001.

Professor Sebastiano Di Fazio, of Militello, former lecturer in Agrarian Studies at Catania University and student there in 1943, interviewed at the Catania Archives Office, March 2001.

Dr Ezio Costanzo, of Ragalno, military historian and publisher, interviewed in his publishing firm in Catania, March 2001, 2003 and 2005.

Dr Alfio Caruso, of Caltagirone, historian and University lecturer, interviewed in Catania in March 2003, and Caltagirone and Catania in 2005.

John Publicover, a Sergeant in the Canadian Army, interviewed in Giardini Naxos, October 2000.

Major Alan Edwards, External Training Officer, CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation), interviewed in Camberley, October 2005.

Informal conversations over many years at the libraries of RMA Sandhurst and the Staff College, Camberley, with military historians and service personnel from World War II. Also with members of the Italy Star Association in Giardini Naxos.

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APPENDIX I

In Proclamation No.1 General Eisenhower announced to the people of Sicily the occupation of the island and the establishment of an Allied Military Government.

TO THE PEOPLE OF SICILY:

WHEREAS in prosecuting their war against the Axis Powers, it has become necessary for the armed forces of Great Britain and the United States under my command to occupy Sicily.

WHEREAS it is the policy of the Allied Forces not to make war upon the civilian inhabitants of the occupied territory but to protect them in the peaceful exercise of the legitimate pursuits in so far as the exigencies of war and their own behaviour will permit, and

WHEREAS in order to preserve law and order and provide for the safety and welfare of my troops and of yourselves, it is necessary to establish Military Government in the occupied territory,

NOW, therefore, I, Harold R.L.G. Alexander, GCB, CSI, DSO, MC, General, General Officer Commanding the Allied Forces in Sicily and Military Governor of the Territories Occupied, by virtue of the Authority vested in me by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander in Chief of the Allied forces in the North African Theatre of Operations do hereby proclaim as follows:

I. All powers of government and jurisdiction in the occupied territory and over its inhabitants and final administrative responsibility are vested in me as General Officer Commanding and Military Governor, and the Allied Military Government of Occupied Territory is established to exercise these powers under my direction.

II. All persons in the occupied territory will promptly obey all orders given by me or under my authority and must refrain from all acts hostile to the troops under my command or helpful to our enemies, from all acts of violence, and from any act calculated to disturb public order in any way.

III. Your existing personal and property rights will be fully respected and your existing laws will remain in force and effect, except in so far as it may be necessary for me in the discharge of my duties as General Officer Commanding the Allied Forces and as Military Governor to change or supersede them by proclamation or order issued by me or under my direction.

IV. All Italian civil and criminal courts and all universities, schools and educational establishments will be closed until further order of the Allied Military Government.

V. All administrative and judicial officials of the province and communes, and all other government and municipal functionaries and employees, and all officers and employees of state, municipal or other public services, except such officials and political leaders as are removed by me, are required to continue in the performance of their duties, subject to my direction or the direction of such of my officers of the Allied Forces as may be deputed for that purpose.

VI. Further proclamations, orders and regulations issued by me or under my authority from time to time will specify what is further required of you, and what you are forbidden to do, and these will be displayed in court houses, police stations and other public places.

VII. So long as you remain peaceable and comply with my orders, you will be subject to no greater interference than

may be inevitable in view of military exigencies and may go about your normal vocations without fear.

Dated: 10 July 1943.

Later Proclamations

2. War Crimes - punishable offences against Allied Forces
3. Currency and Exchange
4. Establishment of Allied Courts
5. Closure of Financial Institutions
6. Control of Allied and Enemy Property
7. Dissolution of Fascist Organisations
8. Wages and Agricultural Regulations
9. Publication of the Sicily Gazette
10. Financial Regulations
11. General Police and Security Regulations
12. Allied Military Lire as Legal Currency
13. Legal Rights of the Italian People