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THE DARTINGTON HALL TRUST

NORTH-WEST SICILY PROJECT

D. DRUCKER

JULY - OCTOBER 1973

"Sicilians are an intensely secretive people,  
and at the end of my third year I was still,  
to most of my acquaintances a stranger, to be  
trusted with only a little of the truth either  
about themselves or anyone else."

Gavin Maxwell  
The Ten Pains of Death

LONGMANS 1959



## Table of Contents

	Page
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Scopello</u>	6
<u>Dartington Group - Scopello Relationships</u>	9
<u>An Interpretation</u>	13
<u>Scopello as a base</u>	14
1 Pottery	15
2 Agriculture	16
Castel de Baida	18
Vulganerea	21
3 Clubs for young people	22
4 Teaching of Arts and Crafts	27
<u>The Earthquake Disaster Area</u>	32
<u>Sutera</u>	37
<u>Additional Staff Resources</u>	37
Bruno Pallotta	38
Adam Zyw	39
<u>Training and Feedback - an approach</u>	44
<u>A summary</u>	

## APPENDICES

1. Some Useful Resources
2. Proposal from Servizio Sociale per gli Emigrati Trapani
3. Correspondence regarding request from Danilo Dolci
4. Appeal from fishermen of Trapani and material from Centro di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali per il Meridione
5. Contribution from Dembeck Pallotta Associates
6. Terms of Reference (D. Drucker)

## INTRODUCTION

There is an Italian saying "Even Garibaldi would be disgusted." Why is Garibaldi evoked as the ultimate in deficiency of feelings of disgust? "Because", the saying continues, "he was not even disgusted by the Sicilians".

This kind of contempt comes easily to many Italians to whom one speaks about Sicily. Among those well motivated and relatively objective professional people who have worked in Sicily the response is more often one of despair.

"There is no idea of fair play"  
"Everyone suspects everyone."  
"You must keep your back against the wall."  
"There is no idea of a citizen's rights linked to law - it is linked to person."  
"The poor must have a friend, who is a friend of a friend ... you must give something back in return for favours."

The South it is said has "waited for Rome for centuries". Despite the hopes roused by the establishment of Sicily as a province with autonomy of its own, it has been usual for the province to be non-cooperative with Rome. Money from Rome stays in Palermo and is persistently not used for the projects financed by the Central Government. Oppression is traditional from outside, and internally the Mafia and the ruling class have insisted on being obeyed; there is no discussion.

"Trust, altruism and a democratic spirit are not to be found",  
"Politics and the social structure are such a controlling and intimidating force ... nothing gets done, nothing changes".

Yet to the observer arriving in Sicily there is an immediate vista of change. The powerful thrust of the new super-highways and the recent proliferation of cars contrasts starkly with the rocky,



barren, tree-denuded and eroded mountainscape. The social critics dismiss this spectacular growth as a monument to the northern-based motor car industry which dominates the Italian economy and <sup>as</sup> the opportunity that such determined tunnelling, levelling, bridge and viaduct building has provided for handsome 'pickings' by landowners, the construction and heavy equipment industry, and for those who have traditionally forcibly extracted their percentage. On the other side it is argued that social change follows economic growth based upon industrialisation and the highways are the infrastructure necessary to such change.

Another major feature of recent change in Sicily has been the coming of the oil industry. This too has an immediate impact for the visitor for the growth of the oil industry in southern Sicily has led to more than usual despoilation. For years it has been known that there were rich and commercially viable off-shore oil deposits. Finance and exploitation have been much delayed and have only been forthcoming lately. It is of some significance that despite this newly-tapped wealth, petroleum and oil prices in Italy remain among the most expensive in the world (certainly in Europe).

In their work written about the central town in the oil industry Eyvind Hytten\* and Marco Marchioni pointedly and ominously entitle their book GELA: INDUSTRIALISATION WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT. Such a thesis challenges the shibboleths which argue that social change and improvement in the quality of life necessarily follow upon economic development. Elsewhere in the developing world evidence is amassing which supports re-thinking of this view of what brings about desirable change. Hytten also questions, in relation to Sicily, the idea that developing countries are in need of creating social

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\* Hytten is currently Chief, European Social Development Programme, Division of Social Affairs, United Nations Palais des Nations, Geneva. Previously he worked with Dolci and later with the Swansea University Overseas Courses Study Tours in Calabria and Sicily.



institutions as both the means and end of bringing about social change. He argues that in Sicily there is a plethora of social institutions of an interlocking nature which are antithetical to change and provide a strong controlling force in maintaining the status quo. Rather than attempting to set up new institutions he regards it as necessary to work within the present structures. He thinks that working outside the present Governmental and administrative structures has limited value in a society where voluntary organisations as we know them, and grass-root participation and concepts of fair play are conspicuously absent. Such a view has implications for any group thinking of contributing to change in Sicily.

The work of Danilo Dolci and Lorenzo Barbera might be seen as examples of these organisational limitations. Certainly, the Jato Dam will stand as a monument to Dolci's initiative, courage and persistence. In the course of this struggle he has become an internationally-renowned figure. The fact that he is still there in Sicily is perhaps a cogent and sufficient answer to both his foes and the criticism of his friends. One does detect, however, an element of truth in the charge that support from Sicilians has been short-term and that there is no strong on-going 'constituency' from which power derives in delivering change.\* It is doubtful, so it is

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\* I was struck by two experiences which related to Dolci. My wife mentioned one morning to one of the villagers in Scopello that I had gone to see Dolci. The villager had seemed somewhat taken aback and then said: "His name is only to be spoken in whispers around here". I spent a very long time driving around Partinico asking to be directed to Dolci's centre; an extraordinary number of people responded blankly and would or could not tell me where he could be found.

Later I was interested to find in Gavin Maxwell's book "... because of this intense repression most Sicilian peasants are afraid to have anything to do with Dolci, even to admitting that they know anything of his work or that they think it praiseworthy. The nearer one comes to Dolci's chosen town of Partinico the more noticeable is the silence, so that his reputation is much greater abroad than in the island to which he has given his life..."



argued that Dolci has an on-going popular movement with him. Support comes very much from outside and inevitably shapes style and programme. The current building programme to which Dolci is committed on the outskirts of Partinico which includes the Free School bears something of the signs of this kind of external imposition, though in his recently-published book\* he tells me that he seeks to show the local sources and range of support he has drawn upon in launching this particular project.

Barbera is a former colleague of Dolci and now works in the earthquake disaster area. He seems early on to have gained some popular momentum in his campaign to exempt young men from the army. It was maintained that they were desperately needed to re-build the flattened towns of the Belice valley. He has, however, run into difficulties with his cooperative initiatives. He argues powerfully regarding the need to build from the grass-roots, with political 'awareness' highly placed as part of his educational campaign. Opinion has it that his local support has fallen away except for a small group who for various reasons feel they have nothing to lose.

The view from many sources certainly reinforces one's picture of the extreme economic poverty and social ossification in Sicily compared not only to Western Europe but to Northern Italy itself. The island is seen to continue its historical role as a source of plunder from outside, and internally, is beset with profound distrust of one's neighbour, with power wielded by closed groups relying upon much patronage, intimidation and violence.

Such a background undoubtedly colours expectations when one visits Sicily. However, the sense of Sicily as a people beleaguered and responding to forces beyond the control of the ordinary people

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\* DOLCI Danilo: "CHISSA SE I PESCI PIANGONO" ("DO FISHES CRY?")  
published by EINAUDI 1973.

is pervasive. Life seems to happen to the Sicilian rather than there being a possibility for them to make things happen - a fatalism and superstitious quality (which can be detected in the Sicilian style of religious observances) which are much less marked in other parts of Italy. The kindness and hospitality afforded to one is guarded, gaiety is a quality hard to find, and there is more often an air of watchfulness rather than participation in action. The feeling is that the 'action' is elsewhere.

Part of this is undoubtedly inherent in the high incidence of migration. Opportunity, wealth and power are elsewhere. The people of the impoverished and population-drained mountain villages are treated to the sight of relatively luxurious building being financed by the absent migrants. (Meanwhile many houses within the village are abandoned and fall into disuse and disrepair.) Donations by the migrants to the village feast days are conspicuously announced in the churches and the charter plane and super-highway travellers return to exhibit their gleaming cars, fine clothes, manners and worldly ways. Often too, they set up stores and small businesses in their home towns, which is commonly to the detriment of those who have stayed at home. Even those who most fiercely cling to their Sicilian-based lives seem to feel a profound inferiority, however much dignified display and arrogant behaviour may be exhibited. Appearance is certainly exaggerated in relation to actualities.

Overall, the situation makes Sicily a very difficult place for outsiders to play a part in bringing about change, but by the same token makes it most challenging. Against this rather gloomy background must be offset the impact, excitement, enchantment and commitment that Sicily has set up in people like the Davids and others.



# SCOPELLO

Scopello stands on the lip of a small rocky promontory between the poor, water-scarce land sloping from the mountain, and the road that thrusts along the narrow coastal shelf broken by the sea. The road ends abruptly at the end of a tunnel a mile or so beyond Scopello but it is intended that the road will continue and open up the last of the still wild and unscathed coastline of Sicily on to St. Vito's point.

From Palermo to Castellamare del Golfo (a few miles east of Scopello) one can see the almost universally ugly sprawl of speculative tourist development. Scopello itself is already experiencing a minor invasion in summertime by the Palermitan and (through Palermo as a gateway to Italy proper) the flood of tourists from the North and the rest of Europe. The coastal strip below the village is already designated 'New Scopello' and expensive summer houses and tourist villas are being built and promise to proliferate. Scopello seems to lie directly on the fault line of the pressures upon its isolated mountainside agrarian past and the crushing flow of the sprawling urban-based demand on its immediate future. These forces seem likely to obliterate the village as a discrete community.

Already Scopello's winter population is reduced to some nine families (about 60 persons). The withdrawal of the three David children from the village school helped to precipitate the discontinuation of the school, serving the six children left. Of young people there are no more than a dozen. Marriage ceremonies are performed in the churches of Castellamare and not in Scopello. There is no sign of active artisan occupations such as carpenter, stone-cutter or metal-worker. There is no market and not even a real shop which might meet at least the summer trade. Neither of the two tavernas which do serve the summer trade (though not very skilfully)

seem to provide a meeting-place for the people of Scopello. Apart from the exchanges that take place at the fontana, the impression is of rather disparate groups sitting at their own front doors where the women can sometimes be seen crocheting.

There is evidence of division between the families of the village and although the setting up of a cooperative is a very real achievement, the village was apparently hard pressed to get the necessary nine signatures to establish the co-op statutorily. At the last moment someone from outside the village was pressed into being a founding signatory.

Two firm friends of the Dartington group who play active parts in the life of the village are Andrea Tranchina and Angelo Bertucci. Andrea is a vigorous advocate of cooperation who is occasionally moved to anger and despair at what he feels is the pessimism of his fellows regarding the possibilities of change in general and the cooperation in particular. He expresses the view that the owners of the land which should provide the foundation of the co-op and village development are against committing themselves to anything that will stand in the way of selling out as the land values soar in response to the speculation which eagerly anticipates the tourist boom. Andrea earns some income as handy-man to the wealthy newcomers; such work offends his sense of dignity and he feels that the co-op is his last chance of maintaining himself and his family in the Scopello area; it is said that he has depressive bouts of thinking about migration as the inevitable alternative.

Angelo, an active young priest involved in many social projects in the area, is also a vigorous advocate of the cooperative. He is to some of the villagers' taste too radical and unconventional. This seems to be the view also of his Bishop and his long-term formal relationship as a priest in the church must be in some doubt. It is



said that he has some contingency plans for involving himself in a social commune elsewhere where he can continue to express his pastoral energy with less restriction, should his tie with the church become ruptured. His future as a long-term resident with continuing influence on Scopello must be considered uncertain.

The Davids came to Scopello five years ago, were captivated and have since established a strong personal attachment to the village. The village people describe Julian as 'a good man', and he and his family are obviously well received. It is through the connection of Julian to Dartington that, largely fortuitously, the Foxhole group came to be located in Scopello. Given these circumstances it is understandable that the programme has developed on somewhat of an empirical basis, depending a great deal on Julian's interest, initiative and skills. The contribution that the Davids have made must be appreciated in the full realisation of the great demands made on one man and his wife to set up projects, sustain momentum and consolidate the effort at the field level.

Julian has over the three-year period come to think that the group is generally too large for him to handle, given the age and general level of maturity of the students. He feels that the present conditions can accommodate at the most 6 or 7 students, well-selected and prepared, and bringing a full measure of practical idealism and sensitivity. This is not to belittle the efforts and possibilities explored and opened up by the group - on the contrary. Julian sees the need, however, for a larger staff input to the project, which will relieve him from being of necessity a one-man-band in relation to the programme. Undoubtedly the uncertainties that seem to have been involved regarding the overall on-going intentions of the north-west Sicily project have made planning difficult from year to year. One of the most apparent results is the curtailment of solid



continuity of the field programme. However, a great deal of ground-work and getting to know each other has taken place; some of the people in Scopello look to Dartington with expectation; and a mutual sense of commitment has grown. These are assets not to be discarded lightly.

Coming as an outsider for a few weeks in the summer and not having observed the Dartington group first hand, I nevertheless think that it can be generally concluded that as a social and economic community, standing alone, Scopello provides very limited opportunities for fulfilling all that is implied by Dartington's aspirations for it as a 'social-work base'. Julian David also recognises these limitations\* but sees Scopello as a geographic base with the group extending into projects elsewhere. This has been the pattern and an extension of this is a way to make the Scopello programme a viable proposition. Julian emphatically welcomes the idea of a broader commitment by the Dartington Trust, which would bring in a wider range of ages, talents and personnel. Alternatively Scopello could become a small group programme with its contribution to the community muted and on a small scale.

#### DARTINGTON GROUP - SCOPELLO RELATIONSHIPS

In an endeavour such as this north-west Sicily project all will depend on the quality and nature of the working and personal relationships established between the incoming group and the local people. The growth of such relationships will be the fundamental foundation and climate for all activities. The relationship of the Foxhole group to the Sicilians has rested much upon the good standing and goodwill earned by the Davids.

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\* During my visit, we followed up a request to look at the possibilities in Torretta. Julian was stimulated by the vivaciousness of this larger town and although the circumstances were such as to discourage giving it further consideration at this time this exploration did make the point that a larger and more varied base than Scopello provides would have many advantages. Related to this the possibilities in Sutera have been given a strong emphasis in this report.



In 1971 it was reported:

"relations are very good, and all tensions due to cultural mores have gone."

And in 1972:

"The students have done what perhaps no foreign group in Sicily have done before them; become accepted by a peasant village as part of its own social structure." \*

Because this matter of establishing positive relationships is so basic and important in Scopello or anywhere else, it is necessary to err on the cautious side and to emphasise rather than minimise the other side of the picture. Social work is the constructive and conscious use of relationships, and modern social work insists on the handling of these relationships in such a way as to leave as much as possible of the exploration of conditions, solution-finding, decision-making and implementation in the hands of the "client group". The differences between "us and them" are not to be denied but used in the agreed mutual interests of both, with the social workers needs and problems always remaining secondary to the purposes of the group. The social workers must take the responsibility for finding satisfactions and dealing with their own difficulties in ways which do not interfere with their social work task.\*\* For these reasons I raise here some of the problems which have been voiced in this regard. They merit attention in order that active approaches may be worked out to deal with them effectively.

It is not clear to me what is the extent, full nature and quality of the way the individuals in the group have related to the villagers and the village life, or the degree to which the students

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\* Dartington Hall News 4th June 1971  
24th March 1972

\*\* A highly contracted statement of a very complex process!

have tended to remain (as has been said to me) an in-group, somewhat outside of village life. There are many signs of good friendship but I think it would be true to say that the group has been equivocally received.

As a group of youngsters they have certainly provided something of great interest to talk about in the village and they have been a source of curiosity. The village being familiar with tourists, the immediate differences in dress and manner are accepted, but probably provisionally, pending further observation and understanding of the group's behaviour. Paul Oliver\* has commented on the lack of cleanliness and orderliness of the group's living quarters, which he pointedly contrasts with the condition of the poor but spotless homes of the village people themselves. He indicates that this is a factor in the degree of acceptance of the group. Such surface appearances are not necessarily important if the underlying processes are clear and well received but there is some doubt about this, and certainly in the Sicilian context appearances are of tremendous importance. A rejection or adoption of certain standards and styles of dress and behaviour within one's own cultural context is one thing, but has entirely different meanings when one moves across cultures.

Some of the young people of Scopello have involved themselves with the group but it does not seem that they are involved continuously on the more serious projects. One Scopello youth has courted a Dartington girl and a marriage is expected, apparently not without some consternation.

Among the more dramatic problems has been the occasional influx

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\* OLIVER, Paul: "THE DARTINGTON SICILY PROJECT" mimeographed observations and suggestions. May 1973.



from Palermo and Trapani of youngsters eager to join 'the commune'. These 'with-it' youngsters have projected all kinds of exotic fantasies upon what was going on in Scopello. Sexual adventure and drug-taking are some of the elements involved here. Apparently Julian has tried to be of help to these Sicilian youngsters, being reluctant to abruptly warn them off. Nevertheless he feels that it has been particularly difficult in these circumstances to be responsible for the Dartington youngsters, some of whom have been particularly immature and have had more than the ordinary share of difficulty in growing up. He has been concerned to be of pastoral help to them. Equally, he has been determined to minimise the sexual relationships within the group, to the extent that Angelo, the priest, surprisingly commented 'He expects them to live like monks'.

In this culture girls unchaperoned are seen as fair game and a challenge to manhood. In addition the relationship of the members of the group to each other is to the Sicilians a puzzle and allows for much speculation ... a friendly elderly goat-herd semi-seriously considers that at least one of the girls might be glad to be wifed by him and in the meantime has happily named his goats after the girls in the group.

More serious has been the reputation of the group as a possible source of drugs. It seems that the police did descend on Scopello and much effort had to be extended by the village to persuade the police to call off their investigations. It is said that the village people are resentful that the group (even if there was not the slightest reason to suspect them of smoking or taking drugs) had brought the police down upon their village. Meanwhile, I'm told Scopellians toy with such thoughts as

'Are they on holiday?'

'Where does their money come from?'

'Why do they live like they do if they do have money?'

'What is their work?'  
 'Why don't they do regular work?'  
 'How can pottery and making things be real work?'  
 'Why don't they keep themselves clean? - even poor people are clean.'

Scopello being such a small place the Dartington group are particularly very visible. It was also said that the people of the village felt keenly that they rarely received any letters, greetings or Christmas cards, etc. from the Dartington youngsters after they went home. They added that apart from the thank-you's and parties at Scopello, no formal thanks had been expressed by the Trust. 'It would be useful to read out a letter of thanks in the church' I was told.

#### AN INTERPRETATION

What is required of Dartington students is fairly straightforward but beyond this the basis of these kinds of problems and the underlying attitudes which they betray seems to me to be related to the puzzlement of the people in Scopello regarding what the Dartington Group is about. Beginning as it has, based on the David's lives in Scopello which originally did not have a "social work base" project in mind, the project has apparently never really openly, explicitly and continually declared itself to the populace in the sense of explaining who and why the group is there, what it would like to do, how it would like to set about it, what are the problems which have arisen and how the <sup>group</sup> might fruitfully fit in <sup>with</sup> the life and aspirations of Scopello itself. Of course this is not easy to do in this situation and would need to be thought about in terms of how best to present and convey the project, and the basis of co-operation, between Dartington and Scopello. However, in terms of establishing working relationships and strengthening these, I think it would be useful to work these problems through. My view is that there would



be real advantages if it could be arranged for a group of the people of Scopello to be involved, to a degree, formally in establishing the goals and working out the detailed implementation of local efforts by the Dartington Group. Generally the more explicit and viable the intentions, targets, skills and methods can become, the less opportunity for misunderstanding by the Sicilians, and the more rooted in the reality, the efforts of the Dartington Group should become. Such an approach would also require detailed planning of the work of each member of the group, and could act as a monitoring element of the work done. Such an open style of operation would impose a degree of limitation upon the more opportunistically inclined, and demand a degree of discipline from any "as-the-mood-and-inspiration-takes me" type. However, the open sharing of the planning, implementation and evaluation of tasks would provide a <sup>constructive</sup> a/working relationship with the villagers and perhaps, although setting an unfamiliar pattern, might provide an example for creating change in the running of their own affairs, including such organisations as the co-operative. Such a structure could and should also provide an opportunity for any misunderstandings and misinterpretations to be voiced early and dealt with before this created unspoken deterioration in the working partnership.

#### SCOPELLO AS A BASE

Thinking of Scopello as a base from which a variety of projects can emanate, Julian has suggested a number of 'areas of endeavour.

- 1) Pottery
- 2) Agriculture
- 3) Clubs for young people
- 4) Assisting with the Teaching of Art and Crafts, either in private or the public school system.

## Pottery

A major focus of interest at Scopello has been the development of pottery. A kiln has been built and a fair amount of work has been produced. Problems have arisen in the selling of the work. Apparently a licence is required and the obtaining of such a licence depends on the kind of visa one has. In any event the necessary acceptance for selling what has been produced has not been forthcoming.

However, Julian thinks a major breakthrough may have been made with the exhibiting of the work of the students in Castellamare early this summer. As I understand it, to date it has been the Dartington group doing the pottery and no one from outside has been drawn in as a serious worker. Whatever the selling aspects and the commercial potential of this field of endeavour, there would seem to be a number of ways of strengthening the programme.

- 1) A skilled potter (The efforts to date have produced by all accounts some well-made and beautiful pieces, but according to one viewer, "as one would expect, somewhat amateurish and tending to the whimsical and unrelated to the traditions of Sicily in design - understandably the students have not seen enough pottery - they seem to rely very much on the doing-their-own-thing idea of creativity") A skilled potter would need to extend progressively the talents of the students, teach skills and develop understanding of the art and the tradition.
- 2) An electric kiln would make a great difference. (Apparently there are problems with fluctuating current which makes such kilns difficult to control. However, I am told such problems have been surmounted elsewhere in Sicily).
- 3) A regular routine of work would need to be established by at least one or two members of the group to create the ambience of a professional endeavour. (In this cultural context it is extremely important for work to be seen as work, and persistence over time is a major factor.)
- 4) Participation Some Sicilians would need to be drawn into active and continuing participation in the work. (It is of course possible to think in terms of an artist colony which does not necessarily aim at being a Sicilian effort. This might simplify matters of organisation but limits the objective of the project largely to experience for members of the Dartington group and does not therefore provide much for the Sicilians.)



## Agriculture

Commendably the people of Scopello have managed to launch a co-operative. Typically this has begun with the raising of money to purchase a tractor. The Government grants cover 80% of the cost of such vehicles. The time between the purchase and the arrival of the money is ordinarily an extended and anxious period for members of a co-operative, but in fact the money arrived and led to rejoicing at the time of my visit to Scopello. Julian estimates that (again typically) the tractor is underused and perhaps is in action 40% of the time.

The real problems, however, are both the quantity and quality of land available for the co-operative to work. Mention has already been made of the unwillingness of many of the landowning families in and around Scopello to join such a co-operative in that it might stand in the way of them selling their land when high prices are offered by the building speculators. Nevertheless, during a meeting at the time of my visit, the members of the co-operative agreed to rent pieces of land to the co-operative as an experiment for the coming year.

Those who are eager for the co-operative to succeed were much encouraged by this agreement. The co-operative too has been interested by the suggestions of Julian, Paul Oliver and others that the cultivation of vegetables and other cash crops might be possible with improvement in irrigation and also with the possible development of greenhouse cultivation. Another technology mentioned is the development of dry compost.

In order to obtain some advice about the potential and development of this co-operative, a consultation was arranged with a Professor Simeti, an agriculturist from the University of Palermo.\*

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\* see footnote on p.17

His opinion of the possibilities was rather discouraging although he did his best not to sound that way in discussing matters with the co-operative members. He thought that as there was no continuous land running from the mountain, the difficulties of rationalising the water supply were insuperable and this would rule out the possibility of growing vegetables or adequately supplying any greenhouse construction. He did say that it could be tried but I thought that was more in the way of giving encouragement than his professional assessment of the possibilities of success. His views were that possibly the development of bee-keeping and raising of turkeys might most suit the conditions of the Scopello situation. I understand that the president of the co-operative was somewhat enthusiastic about this idea of bee-keeping and said that he had suggested such a thing himself.

Encouragement and assistance might certainly continue to be given to the Scopello co-operative, and indeed I think this is an important dimension for the morale of that co-operative. However, it would seem that such inputs would have a limited scope. To enlarge upon this, Dartington might wish to consider obtaining some land of their own by way of experimentation and demonstration. The land around Scopello is of course already in short supply and to enter the market for such land, no matter that one may be co-operating with the local people, is nevertheless to enter into an area where there is much competition and at the time when land prices would reflect the upsurge that the possibility of selling it for other

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\* (footnote for p.16) By chance it turns out that Professor Simeti is the husband of Mary Simeti, an American-born woman who assisted in the Swansea University Study Tour in and around Gela with Eyvind Hytten some years ago. She has lived in Sicily for many years and is familiar with the community development movement. She is certainly someone whom one could draw upon for help and guidance in Sicily. The Simetis can be reached at Piazza Europea 13, Palermo. Tel: 51.47.06 or in the summer at Alcamo Marina Tel: 21.0.21



than agricultural purposes brings about. One would also be competing with those co-operative members who are already wanting agricultural land for themselves. Such an endeavour therefore seems impractical. Two possibilities of land away from Scopello have been suggested:

#### Castel di Baida

A few miles east of Scopello and back higher against the mountain face is a most attractive baglio. It has an atmosphere of remoteness considering its relative proximity to the coastland below, and houses a small number of families. There is a church in one corner of the courtyard and in another a tumble-down house with another tumble-down building, formerly a wine-press, below. Outside the baglio is a group of farm buildings which seem to be actively operating, with cattle and other livestock. There is a strip of land for sale and a small spring which waters it. The house in the baglio apparently could be bought for £800.00. The restoration would require major structural work but the building, the old wine-press and the strip of land might just be a viable proposition - its closeness to Scopello and its romantic setting being the main attraction to offset a multitude of limitations.

#### Vulganerea

An alternative agricultural base would be provided if the possibility of centering activity upon Vulganerea was considered. Vulganerea is quite far from Scopello and cannot really be seen as a practical link with it. However, there are about 5 hectares of land. This would offer and call for a major agricultural input.

Attached to the land is a deserted palazzo, with a fine fountain fallen into disrepair and originally fed by a stone viaduct which arches across the garden but which also has fallen into disuse. The water now runs (asply it would seem) in a stream instead. Although I was not able to see the interior of the palazzo it seems to be in not too bad a condition. The asking price is said to be

about £14,000 which includes the land.

Vulganerea is close to Partinicao and the Jato Dam, and links with Dolci's work might be facilitated. The palazzo would also seem to offer room for workshops. However, Vulganerea as a community has been deserted and is therefore currently socially isolated.

The question arises: To what degree can and does the Dartington project wish to involve itself in a major agricultural orientation?

An appraisal of the group's agricultural work to date in Scopello\* might offer some indicators.

As I understand it, some land was rented and some initial enthusiasm expressed. There was some irrigation and an attempt was made to grow vegetables both for self-sufficiency and by way of demonstration. However, this effort has not been sustained in later years. The familiar back-breaking daily effort on the land has not been the style of the Dartington Group and the Scopellians were expecting to observe this. Nor did the result, according to the village, appear to justify the utilisation of the soil in a land-hungry village. Irritation regarding this has been voiced in the village despite the rental that was received for the use of the land. It should be expected that the direct working of the land as a demonstration by a Dartington Group would require a greater degree of expertise and a disciplined work programme.

As far as I could discover there seems to be no agricultural extension service, as we know it, operating in Italy. It does seem strange with the government's investment in co-operation that there is no such service, but certainly if provision does exist this is not apparent at the grass-roots level. However, in the north-west

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\* see the Dartington Newsletters.



Sicily area there are a number of resources. As mentioned above, Scopello has had a professional consultation with Professor Sineti from the University of Palermo. The Dolci Trust have an agricultural expertise which can be called upon\*. In addition, an ex-Dolci collaborator\*\* is in the process of calling upon a voluntary effort from the University of Palermo and others to set up a consortium to come to grips especially with the possible agricultural development deriving from the irrigation opportunities provided by the Jato Dam. I was unable to explore this lead further, as efforts to make contact failed. However, this could be followed up through Mary Sineti.

Specialised work with greenhouse cultivation might be the basis of a Vulganerea project. In the eastern end of Sicily apparently, there has been development of such a technology, and the Dolci Trust have also shown interest.

Greenhouses especially need to tackle the problems of a controlled water supply. In addition, capital investment and marketing will need to be carefully explored. For example, it is said that year-round strawberry cultivation might be possible. The demand in northern Italy and Europe is said to exist; the cost of packaging and transportation might, however, prove prohibitive. Unlike countries such as Israel with its citrus crop, hardly any work has been done in Sicily on off-season crop strains.

Afforestation projects are also worth considering.

The conclusion would seem to be that involvement in the agricultural areas of development require a heavy commitment of resources in expertise, experimentation and capital, and a somewhat back-breaking task from any Dartington Group. What it is that Dartington can and wishes to contribute specifically to what kind of agriculture and where would need to be answered. If such an area of concern does

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\* Franco PAPERATTI (?)

\*\* I think this is a man named Ugo MINICHINI, an ex-General Secretary of the Camera del Lavoro.

interest Dartington, then a special study by a qualified team of agriculturalists and horticulturalists should be mounted.

### 3. Clubs for Young People

Julian has expressed interest in the development of some youth club work and, possibly for younger children, unstructured play-groups of the junk playground kind.\* Both of these would have an arts and craft orientation. These clubs and playgrounds are seen as having an introduction value for a Dartington group, to involve the community in various self-help and community action processes. Apparently, some work has already been attempted in the Piazza Marina area of Palermo and in a squatters take-over of apartment blocks area in Trapani.

The simplest current suggestion seems to be to work out of a harbour-front building in Castellamare, offering craft materials and skills. Another possibility is to work out of the migration centre in Trapani with which Angelo Bertucci has connections.\*\*

On the outskirts of Palermo we visited a large and socially bleak-looking housing development, and noted close by a broken down palazzo which is not being used. It apparently belongs to an orphanage.\*\*\* We wondered whether the orphanage organisation might be interested in using this building for setting up the kind of base that the Dartington group might help develop for the purposes we have in mind.

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\* Although the objects and materials which are discarded and used for Adventure Playground purposes in affluent societies have probably still, a commercial use in poor ones.

\*\* This organisation has requested a more formal contribution from Dartington. See the section concerning work in the school system.

\*\*\* Istituto di Benificenza Sede a Roma ("Bosco Grande", Villa al Quartiere Zen, Palermo (?))



Work of this kind is urban-based, and unless the effort is seen as merely a small-scale recreational programme, penetration into the complexities of local social problems would most certainly require a residential commitment in the area of operation. A local support organisation, perhaps along the lines of the early settlement house movement, would also seem to be a necessity if continuity, energy and resources are to be made available as the emerging problems and conditions require. The responsibility for carrying much of this work would best be carried by the Sicilians themselves with outsiders initially perhaps stimulating the growth of such a programme, contributing resources and special skills. Community organisation and programming would be high on a list of such skills, and a team with proven experience in this field of work is what one would need to aim at providing.

That a need exists in the towns is certain. Whether the tortured social and political system would make it possible for a Dartington group to succeed in this work is problematical.

It is very difficult to assess the practicalities of such a contribution. My guess is that an undertaking of this kind ought to be considered a major project in its own right, rather than one of a number of Scopello-supervised sub-projects.

#### Teaching of Arts and Crafts

The Dartington group have been involved over the years in a number of efforts to teach arts and crafts in various schools, \*

\* Such as:

- (1) State Secondary School, Alcamo
- (2) Dolci Trust, Borgo Centre, Trappeto (Teacher Training)
- (3) Gioventù Nuova (Evening School) Palermo (Sig. Thea Gallo (?))
- (4) Dr. Burruso's School, Palermo
- (5) Trapani Evening School for illiterate children
- (6) Valderice residential establishment for maladjusted boys

though there has been little continuity from year to year or in most cases throughout a year. Apart from at Alcamo, the schools worked in have been in the main outside of the formal school system.

Generally the Dartington students have found the children unruly, with limited attention spans, and there have been problems in keeping order and sustaining momentum. Those of the Dartington group who have worked in the schools have commented upon the absence of spontaneity and creativity in the children's work and the general lack of interest and enthusiasm as well as skills of the teachers.

The rigidity and illiberal quality of the Italian school system is generally acknowledged. Teacher-training has changed little from the arrangements made during the Fascist period and according to one observer 'it was and is encouraged by the very worst sides of Catholicism'. Teaching emphasises 'The country, the flag and the church' and 'makes no links between local, national and international situations'.

Two teaching opportunities present themselves currently:

A) Servizio Sociale per gli Emigrati have produced a formal request to the Dartington Hall Trust for help with teachers\* in the Centro Addestramento Artiginale (Centre for Artisan Training). They are asking particularly for help in launching a pottery course and possibly work in jewellery-making, painting, macramé, ironwork and the history of art. The idea is "to give strength to local artisan traditions" in the Trapani area where, although it is mediocre in quality, some work continues in coral, woodwork, silver, pottery and weaving. They see this as a fairly formal programme for youths aged between 14-20, and spreading across the school year from October to June. The programme, which is largely financed by the German Protestant Church, operates in one of the areas with the highest rates

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\* see Appendix



of emigration. The foundation would undertake to provide scholarships for students; find accommodation; deal with accounts and advertising and manage the exhibiting and selling of crafts.

B) Both Orazio del Guillmo of the Dolci Trust at the Borgo in Trapetta and Dolci himself in Partinico spoke highly of the nursery school at Dartington in regard to its style of education and its architecture. It is expected that the Partinico Free School will be built and brought into service in the autumn of 1974. The free school will be designated an 'experimental school' and therefore will be able to choose its staff. Dolci is beginning to plan the training of these teachers but did not seem to have Dartington's experience with teaching training specifically in mind as a resource for this purpose. However, he does wish to send his daughter to Dartington Nursery School for experience\*. It might well be that although some differences of philosophy emerged between Dolci and Royston Lambert, there is ample basis for Dartington to consider the possibility of involving themselves 'organically', as Dolci puts it, in the development of this Partinico school.

Dartington's experience in education along with its teacher training programme and cultural endeavours provides a potentially important resource in the Sicilian context.

It is here especially that a mature and professional contribution might be made, within which the Foxhole youngsters might channel their idealism, energy and latent talents. It is to be expected that even the best of their trial and error efforts to date should show signs of their limited teaching skills and experience, on top of the problems posed by the unfamiliar cultural, social and organisational setting.

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\* see Appendix

Underlying such statements as

"attempts to attract Italian students...(to help teach)... have failed"

and

"the most discouraging thing was the non-co-operation of the other teachers"

one detects that the teaching efforts have been in the nature of superficial additions and peripheral to the forces at work in the school structures.

Educational endeavours in Sicily would seem to require

1. Handling of the effort by someone with expertise in the training of teachers. He should be able to adapt this expertise for volunteers who may have no formal background but who can be helped to function effectively in teaching situations. The trainer must be inventive, flexible and responsive to the cultural and social situation in Sicily. Particularly he must help to work out simple curricula; pace work smoothly from simple to complex; adapt programmes to the special needs of different groups.
2. Working out and establishing adequate administrative responsibility for the teaching efforts; relating the particular input to the total programme; effectively involving the full-time teachers; playing a role in feeding the experience into the policy-making processes of the educational institutions concerned.
3. Creating a structure and a methodology for building up and transferring both the experience and the teaching materials from one teacher/volunteer or situation to another, so establishing a technical as well as an organisational continuity.\*

The careful building up of working relationships with the schools and the school system constitutes an important initial stage of any educational input in Sicily.

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\* Fiona Pomerand, in 1971 working at the Borgo, was thinking along the right lines when she reported "When I have time I am going to write a fairly detailed pamphlet on these and other suitable techniques for children in schools"

Did she, and how was it then used?



One way of opening up these relationships, which might help to identify the teachers and the schools who might be ready and able to welcome a Dartington input in teacher training and the art and craft skills, would be to offer some kind of prize or award. In mind is an award for the work of classes in contributing to a number of projects, which could be along the lines of those suggested by Paul Oliver\*. A member of the Dartington group could prepare himself to take steering responsibility for each project. Suggested projects lending themselves to a Dartington-sponsored competition include:-

A documentation of the wild flora of western Sicily, with paintings of the flowers, buds, fruit etc.

A study of motifs in Sicilian cart-painting, and interviews with any surviving artists who work or worked on them.

A record of Sicilian folk songs - how many exist of the 5000 collected by Vigo? What Canzuni now remain in the region, and what variants are there of the ciuri (flower couplets and triplets)? What shepherd songs?

Study of the architecture of the Bourbon baglios; studies of vernacular shelters, cave-dwellings, oven types.

The material culture of peasants and shepherds; local crafts, harnesses, wooden bell frames etc.\*\*

In addition:-

A collection of Sicilian children's games.

A collection of excerpts from emigrants' letters around problems of adaptation and description of conditions abroad.

Essays on: "My future in Sicily"

Drawings of deserted houses, etc. etc.

might provide interesting material.

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\* I think Paul Oliver saw these as projects undertaken by Dartington people themselves. Here we are changing the idea to Dartington performing the role of encouraging the Sicilian schools to do the work.

For an amusing (and exaggerated) example of this idea see Lionel Davidson's novel "Psmith's Gazelle"

\*\* OLIVER, Paul. The Dartington Sicily Project, page 7

Working out the terms of the competitions; presenting the competitions; advising schools on the projects; examining and judging the material; exhibiting and possibly publishing the collected material, are all processes in the course of which working relationships might be hammered out with Sicilian teachers and school administrators for future programmes and inputs that Dartington might wish to contribute.

#### THE EARTHQUAKE DISASTER AREA

Paul Oliver was impressed with the possibility of a technical contribution (with the co-operation of the Architectural Association) to the earthquake disaster area which has devastated the small towns of St. Ninfa, Gibelina, St. Margarita and Partanna, which stand above the Belice valley, and Salemi to the northeast. Certainly these towns dramatically fulfil everyone's imaginary view of what the result of an earthquake looks like. Though the earthquake struck years ago, the buildings have in the main not been cleared, they remain broken and sagging; the weathering paintings and interior decoration of churches can be seen staring above the petrified chaos. The wild grasses and spiked weeds push up through the cracked streets and walls, producing a surrealistic awesome beauty which contrasts appallingly with the ugly alien rows of Nissen huts which now house many of those who extracted themselves from the rubble of their homes.

The kind and degree of technical help in re-building; use of present housing stock; improvement of materials, design of housing in earthquake areas etc., I am not competent to comment upon. Although from a lay point of view such a technical contribution would be desirable, given Italy's reputation in dam and bridge building and highway construction, and the involvement of their technicians and companies in the third world (especially in Africa) one wonders why



such expertise does not already exist within the country itself.

The problem almost certainly is the political and social problem of getting the resources to where they are needed and actually put to the service of ordinary people. The history of this disaster area is probably as good an example as any of the difficulties.

THE ISTITUTO SVILUPPO EDILIZIA SOCIALE (I.S.E.S.) was especially appointed to deal with the reconstruction following the earthquake. This is a government organisation under the Minister of Public Works in Rome. At the time there was an effective Minister from the socialist-left in power and large sums of money and well-trained staff were made available.\* Study and research including social and anthropological studies\*\* with people participation were undertaken, and by 1966 full master plans were presented and approved. Since then 'One village has started rebuilding, the modernisation project has not begun, migration has speeded up, but beyond this virtually nothing has taken place.'

Attempts to get popular participation in planning for the reconstruction ran into insuperable difficulties. Meetings called for this purpose of drawing upon the ideas of the community were met with silence. At a later date people seemed to make prepared statements which clearly emanated from powerful vested interests. The people appeared to have no trust for each other nor any wish for communal facilities. For example, in rebuilding houses they insisted that they be separate. The sharing even of a party wall was rejected. They seemed to wish to be free from observation by others. It was as

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\* It is familiar in Italian politics that the concept of a "loyal opposition" is virtually unknown. Opposition opposes both in policy and implementation of programme. Provincial powers characteristically undermine the intentions of the central government. Resources are held up and diverted. At best bureaucratic ineptness holds up action intentionally, at worst deliberate sabotage and corruption sees to it that beneficiaries rarely see the results of legislation and budgeting...

\*\* One such study was contributed by AMALIA SIGNORELLI D'AYALA, Gruppo di Antropologia Culturale, Università di Urbino (Istituto di Sociologia - Facoltà di Magistero) 61029 Urbino, via Bramante. Tel: 0722.4573

though the forces of social control were so strong in public places that the people seek a secretive privacy where they can shut out such forces, and at least be master in their own homes.

Any attempt to play a part in this disaster area will have to take into account ways of finding an effective 'point of entry' into the tortured matrix of relationships. There is a strong argument for considering involvement with the government organisation I.S.E.S. In any case it would be essential to obtain and study the written material on the area and to discuss the possibilities with the people concerned.\*

An alternative "point of entry" to I.S.E.S. might be provided by the Centro di Ricerche Economiche Sociali per il Meridione (C.R.E.S.M.)\*\* headed by Lorenzo Barbera. Barbera is politically committed on the left and is eager to bring 'political awareness' through the C.R.E.S.M. He asks specifically if Dartington would help finance the building of a training centre. He is an ardent organiser of co-operative effort. He explains that after the war and with government initiative co-operation grew swiftly. Many of these co-ops subsequently collapsed through poor management and lack of experience. Money from the co-ops was invested outside the area;

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\* Istituto Sviluppo Edilizia Sociale  
Via Morgnogni 30H  
Roma. Tel: 84.10.61

Chairman of Project for Sicily:- Engineer GIORGIO GUGLIOR\_MELLA

Office of Chairman of Studies and Research Section  
Social Services Bureau  
DR. GUIDO CANTALAMESSA

Consultant with social workers for involving villagers in rebuilding the earthquake villages  
Architect NINO MILIA

\*\* LORENZO BARBERA

Organizzazione Popolare del Belice  
Baracca M. Luther King, Partanna 91028 TRAPANI  
C.R.E.S.M. Central Office - Via Baracche 19, 91100 Trapani



the cash crop agriculture was overwhelmingly a monoculture based on vines; the produce of the vines went to 'the northern monopoly merchants'. Wine, brandy and alcohol was not produced in Sicily itself. Apparently in his area, for the 200,000 population dependent upon 250,000 hectares of land, there is a need for 20,000 jobs. One problem towards establishing a wine industry in Sicily is the E.E.C. regulation regarding the use of sugar. Attempts have been made to change from the monoculture, stepping up the cultivation of olives, growing of salads and fruit. These possibilities are encouraged by the irrigation potential of the Memphis Dam. Work is required on launching an afforestation effort.

Meanwhile, 25,000 houses were destroyed in the earthquake area, within which there had already been 8,000 previously homeless families. In addition to the obstruction and misappropriation of government funds is the fact that inflation has and is eating into the value of the grants for new houses. With the aid of his supporters, including some young people from abroad, Barbera has helped to organise families to pool their resources and join together for the reconstruction of their homes; 500 workers have joined carpentry and transportation co-operatives but he has not been successful in getting stonemasons and metalworkers to come together in co-operative efforts. Barbera strikes one as an energetic, open and determined man. In addition to his request for hard cash he thinks he might be able to use "technical help to the co-operatives and assistance in design and engineering in the building work". He looks for a highly personal commitment from any helpers and insists on a thorough understanding and involvement with Sicily and Sicilians.

Barbera might well provide a 'point of entry', even bearing in mind the particular slant of his organisation. I would suggest that if the disaster area continues to be a serious focus for Dartington's

involvement, it would be worth having someone spend a few weeks with Barbera and the C.R.E.S.M.\* and have a close look at the co-operatives' activities and their relationship to the overall activity in the area. Barbera said he would welcome such a visit.

It will be appreciated that I.S.E.S. and C.R.E.S.M. represent two very different bases from which to work, but something of this kind is obviously necessary in the earthquake area. Especially in this situation it would not be advisable, I think, to consider setting up some kind of independent base, and to an even greater degree than in the previously discussed projects, very specific statements of commitment would need to be spelled out.

What has been discussed up to this point is the outcropping of work, commenced by the Scopello-based group, which could become more solid sub-projects or even projects in their own right. Generally speaking, however, Scopello is envisaged as the parent base from which overall supervision of projects would flow, and to and from which a number of itinerant workers would travel (in Sicily an expensive occupation).

One matter to be faced if Scopello is to remain the geographic centre of Dartington's efforts is that of accommodation. The house in which the group has been living is no longer available for rent\*\*, but it could be bought for around £5000, which would include a small strip of very stony land at the rear which might be suitable for the erection of a workshop or extra living facilities. Accepting the Scopello goodwill and familiarity and the wrench that a move

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\* see Appendix for some C.R.E.S.M. literature and an appeal circulated on behalf of the fishermen at Trapani.

\*\* The rental during 1972-3 was £200 p.a.



would precipitate, might not another base be considered? Sutera (Caltanissetta) suggests itself.

### SUTERA

Sutera lies some 13 miles inland north of Agrigento, which is on the south coast of western Sicily. It is spectacularly clustered around an upsurge of rock which crowns the mountain top on which Sutera stands. Its winter population is about 2,000 people and its migrants double that population during the Saints' Days, during which with great celebration the relics are carried down from the church on the peak through the narrow streets of the town. There is no hotel, pensione or taverna, so the 2,000 influx of population are all homecomers, and tourism with its accompanying parasitic development and arguable local benefits remain non-existent.

Intriguingly, unlike the Scopello/Castellamare area where the immigrants centre on Brooklyn, Sutera's migration is to Britain ("S uh-rai" - Surrey, Walton-on-Thames, Waltham Cross in Hertfordshire) and I'm told that in one school in the Hertfordshire Education Authority 10% of the children are Italian immigrants.

In Sutera there seems to be a reasonable water supply both for domestic use and agriculture, and artisans in carpentry, woodwork, building, metalwork and mechanics can be seen at work. Baking, cheese-making, knitting, flourish and there are many shops, stores and a bank. There is a school, many young people, a building which serves as a youth centre, a local pop-music group, a number of political clubs and a continuing admiration for Mussolini, though it is said, no Mafia activity.

With at least half of Sutera having migrated to work elsewhere, there are many houses available. (A good modernised house, running water, electricity, kitchen, up-to-date bathroom, toilet etc. just

off the central piazza has been rented (including the usual high rent to foreigners) for about £100.00 a year).

I examined a very attractive and spacious palazzo in the town. On the ground floor are ample areas with high-arched ceilings, which could serve as workshops and there are literally dozens of rooms of all shapes and sizes. There is a small garden and a barn, and various large outhouses. It is in a wretched state of neglect and some structural work would undoubtedly be required. However, the price which is said to be around £3,000 certainly stimulates interest.

Relations with this community seem to have been very successfully established by an English family, Ken and Yvonne Jones and their two children (age 9 and 10 years). They came to Sutera (on their way to re-establishing their lives outside Britain) originally as temporary visitors at the suggestion of one of their students in Hertfordshire whose home was in Sutera. The impact of Sutera upon them seems to have been immediate and profound, and they quickly decided they would make their permanent home in the town. Both are artists with teaching qualifications and experience with young people and with adults through the W.E.A. Ken Jones strikes one as an exceptionally practical person with a broad interest in the arts and education. He was head of the Art department in a comprehensive school. His painting is vigorous and striking, with a penetrating feeling for the savage landscape and harsh light that gives Sicily such dramatic impact. Technically his work shows great skill, though he had not painted for some years prior to his arrival in Sutera. He has a keen interest in the cinema and in methods of communication, has taught pottery, involved himself in community action and already the Joneses seem to have a wide circle of friends and working relationships with young people in Sutera.

Yvonne is thought by her husband to be more competent as an



artist. Her Sicilian work is subtle, perhaps more romantic and poetic than the subject matter commands, but is obviously searching and competent. She writes and has had work published. At present the Joneses are commissioned to do some work for a well-known British wine merchant on the produce of Sicily, especially the wine co-operatives stimulated by Danilo Dolci.

Sutera has two fiestas a year. Arriving during one of these I found that the Joneses, with initiative and tact, had obtained permission to display their work on the wall of the main church\*. The church fronts upon the main mountain-perched piazza, and up the steps at the side where the Joneses exhibition was displayed is a permanently busy coffee and granita café with sidewalk benches. The pictures were obviously well received by the Suteresi, who pointed out to each other the familiar landscapes (although most of the paintings were as much abstract as representational) and the few portraits of local persons. The paintings were priced on a professional scale but nevertheless there were some ready sales. The Joneses have exhibited their work in a number of galleries in Sicily, have carried off a number of prizes and have a wide range of contacts with artists, gallery owners and patrons. They are familiar, too, with much of the pottery that is being turned out on the island and the kind of market that exists for arts and crafts generally.

Sutera strikes me as having many advantages which are well worth considering, if it is decided to continue providing a similar range of possibilities as those pioneered in Scopello.

The town is large enough to provide a single centre in which to concentrate all the activities which would need to be geographically

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\* The church possesses a riot of bells, ordinarily idiosyncratically belting out the passing of the quarter hours and flooding the mornings with ethereal piped choral music.

exploring the possibility of work, say, with the Hertfordshire Education Authority for the Dartington group(s) to do some training and preparatory work among those alongside whose families they will subsequently live. Perhaps teacher training might prepare teachers and others in Sutura for subsequent work in the immigrant reception areas. Such an effort could have a far-reaching two-way impact.

In Sicily, as in similar areas, we hear the oft-repeated appeal for job opportunities to halt and reverse emigration. However sound such a goal, realistically there is also a need to facilitate migration where in the intermediate term migration is inevitable, as is the case in Sicily. A programme would be developed to help prepare the migrants for the social, cultural and economic realities of the receiving community.

If a Dartington group had come to know the Suteresi in Britain and had worked with them, the group would be in an excellent position to mount a useful service in Sutura. This could include teaching English (support from the British Council?), providing information on the way to use and contribute to British community resources, work regulations, social security provision, health services, etc; the role of trade unions, foreign workers' organisations, evening classes, British customs and ways, and so on.... The Suteresi, returning to Sicily at fiesta time, could be organised to give formal accounts of their experience, etc.

In a very real way it can be argued that the positive changes that take place in the experience of the migrants might in the long run be just the factor which will feed back into profound and positive social change in Sicily itself. Sutura could admirably provide Dartington with just such an opportunity in this field.

The Joneses have established hard-won relationships with this community, which as we have seen with the Davids in Scopello, is an



essential basis for any project. The Joneses and the Davids could probably constitute an excellent team. Between them they could overcome the problems which arose in Scopello regarding the need to spread the responsibility and to extend the range of skills available to the group. Naturally no kind of expectation has been given to the Joneses but I have established that they would be ready to play an important part in a Dartington project if the Trust so wished, and would be pleased to have their relationship with the community traded upon in the ways discussed here. They are interested in the purchase of the palazzo for themselves, but currently have problems in raising the necessary money. Some financial arrangement might well be worked out to the mutual satisfaction of Dartington and the Joneses.

#### Additional Staff Resources

Paul Oliver has recommended Bruno Palotta and Adam Zyw as potential staff resources for the Sicily project. I visited Adam Zyw in Italy and spoke with Bruno in London. Subsequently I have spoken to Mrs Claudia Dembeck of Dembeck Palotta Associates, 25 Stewarts Grove, London SW3 6PH, Tel: 01-351 1781

#### Bruno Palotta

Home: 65 St. Helens Gardens, London W10 Tel: 01-960 1491

Bruno must be in his 30's, is married to an Irish girl and has an infant child. He is Italian born, studies at the Architectural Association and is interested in planning in development of the backward regions. He is left wing in his politics. Bruno is in professional partnership with a Mrs. Claudia Dembeck, also Italian born, of mixed European parentage, and who went to the States at the age of eight. They are in practice in London under the name of

Dembeck Palotta Associates. Following my discussions with Bruno and Mrs. Dembeck they sent me a "report of our interests" in the Dartington Sicilian Project. Bruno and Mrs. Dembeck see themselves as associated on short-term, highly professional assignment basis and relate themselves largely to work which includes urban based projects and pressure group processes. They might certainly be drawn in on specific undertakings of the technical kind that Paul Oliver envisages in his report and especially in the earthquake disaster area.

Adam Zyw

Home: The Cottage, 80 Killyon Road, London SW8 Tel: 01-622 9102  
Abroad: Poggio Lamuntanlo Castagneto Carducci 57011, Livorno, Italy.

Adam must be in his late 20's, is married to a lively young woman who teaches cookery and would certainly be an asset to any group functioning in Sicily. Adam's family have owned a house and land in Tuscany for many years just inland from the coast below Livorno. Adam's father is a professional artist who has spent much time in Italy since his student days in the 1930s. The family cultivate olives, vines, fruits and vegetables and aim to be at least self-sufficient. Adam takes much of the responsibility for this work and is obviously useful with his hands.

Adam will be completing his work at the Architectural Association in the second half of 1974 and is not sure what he wants to do thereafter, other than involve himself in socially worthwhile work which will make use of and develop his technical interests. He is less interested in the responsibility for group living which has been one of Julian's major contributions.

He and his wife, along with two friends, visited Sicily after my discussion with them and arrived back in London in mid-September. At my suggestion they visited Scopello and Sutera and had a look at



the earthquake area. Adam was not able to visit I.S.E.S. in Rome and pick up their documentation.

In a brief telephone conversation his views of the Sicilian situation seem much in harmony with my own. He intends visiting Paul Oliver and Dartington shortly and will no doubt give his impressions for himself. He met the Joneses in Sutura, was not able to gain access to the palazzo, but his general views of its physical possibilities should be of some value and if this does come to figure in Dartington's plans he would be a valuable member of a restoration team.

#### TRAINING AND FEEDBACK - AN APPROACH

I have not been able to learn much about the training programmes that have been mounted at Dartington for the Scopello group.

Feedback to the Dartington programme has, I am told, not been satisfactory. There are some reports written by students, and excerpts from these have been printed. Photographs and articles have appeared in various publications and have been made use of for publicity purposes. Certainly such a project should provide a two-way enrichment and it was intended that Dartington's activities should not just be giving, but receiving and sharing the Sicilian experience.

One impediment to this is that the participants in Sicily have exclusively been youngsters from the Foxhole school who have completed their Dartington-based education, and do not return to the School so that their experience can be drawn upon in the Dartington programme. However, the group's experience would stand a better chance of being collected and used if an organisational structure were created for this very purpose.

One way of achieving this would be to assign the responsibility

formally to someone at the Dartington end to do the substantive work for the project.

Mention has been made of training "in the techniques of reporting back"<sup>\*</sup>. This needs to be re-emphasized and extended, with a sharp focus on what exactly is to be reported back, to whom, when and how often, for what purposes, and finally what to expect having done so.

Inherent in such an approach is the necessity to work out with each member of the group a clear and specific job description. This job description must be based on the actual work to be done, which has been prepared for in Sicily and tailored to the individual's talents, skills and potential.

Each member of the project group should be expected to keep a record of his work; of the questions that have occurred to him; comments; problems; technical difficulties and discoveries; possible alternative solutions to problems. They should collect and present such materials as appropriate, and included in their job description should be the task of reporting such matters regularly<sup>\*\*</sup>.

The staff member at the Dartington end would be expected to perform a 'tutorial' function and also to be responsible for distributing the reports to appropriate persons throughout the Trust and its contacts for comment and response. Tutorial work of this kind should be the basis for a regular correspondence with each member of the Sicily group and reading materials and the like should be sent where this is practical. The Dartington-based staff member should in consultation with his colleagues help to select and build up material

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\* In the prospectus of the North West Sicily Project

\*\* In addition to these and specific "technical" tasks to be reported, it strikes me that some mini-literary pieces might be encouraged. Models drawn from Mayhew's "London", Makal's "Village in Anatolia", Maxwell's "interviews" in "The Ten Pains of Death" and Dolci's discussions reported in his books come to mind.



from the reports for defined purposes especially related to the various Dartington activities, programmes and curricula. The staff member would also aim to stimulate and initiate special Dartington-based Sicilian events and activities along the lines suggested by Paul Oliver in his report.

The working out of job descriptions would serve a number of interlocking purposes. It would increasingly firm up thinking about job realities and the capacities of the member of the group who is to be matched to the job. The worker would be geared to the idea of an explicit day-to-day task-oriented job of work\*. Some kind of targeting could be formulated, not as fixed unmodifiable objectives, but as a way of providing an overall baseline from which method, skills and progress can be assessed.

The job descriptions, naturally, must be the components of the overall project intent and plan. All the possibilities, of course, cannot be anticipated and prepared for in this way; new opportunities and tasks are likely to open up unexpectedly, and must be responded to sensitively and creatively. However, the more clearly the jobs and the plan can be stated, the more easily can perspective be maintained and the more sound the argument for and the organising of modifications will become. (As this happens it will in turn lead to improved job descriptions which will improve planning and feed into better and increasingly relevant training.) Job descriptions can also be broken down into a job analysis and this process will indicate the specific skills, knowledge and value-orientations

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\* As I have listened to accounts of the group's functioning I get the impression that there has crept in a general looseness of basic purpose and activity. Selection of members is also related here. I am sure it is true that many students have "found themselves" during their Sicilian experience. A "therapeutic" element has been mentioned as one rationale for the project. Such a factor must always be secondary in selection to "what can this person contribute to the project?".

needed for the job; it is these that should determine the training programme.\* This emphasis on training, specifics, and structure points towards a framework for operating in the particularly difficult context that a Sicily project entails. It is expected that the more explicit the framework, the freer the individual members of the group may become in using effectively the creative and self-directed elements of education and personality which Dartington values.

One of the ways in which these talents are to be used is in dealing with the fascinating and puzzling problems posed in working across cultural frontiers, where what each observes and the significance of what each observes in another's behaviour can lead to so much mutual misunderstanding.\*\*

For those joining a project in Sicily this knowing-oneself-in-relation-to-an-alien-other is particularly important, especially for young people with limited life experience even within their own culture. This area of knowledge and social skill merits some special attention in a preparation programme. Much interesting work has been done in this field of training by the United States Peace Corps.\*\*\* Training materials and manuals have been produced which are well

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\* Training must be based on answers to the question: Training to do what? and the more specific and detailed the active verbs describing what is to be done, the more relevant training can become.

\*\* You may be interested to read DRUCKER, David "On putting one's foot through it" International Social Work Vol. XIII No. 4, 1970

\*\*\* Inez Artico; Publications and Graphic Division  
Office of International Operations  
United States Peace Corps  
Washington DC 20525  
U.S.A.



worth using and emulating. Much of the material is drawn from creative literature and from first-hand accounts of experiences of the Peace Corps volunteers themselves.\* If Dartington could produce this kind of material for itself, derived from its interest in the creative arts and the reporting of its project members, it would not only provide a tremendously rich resource to draw upon for training subsequent project members, but would also offer an admirable contribution towards one of the project's declared aims (as yet not far forward to realisation) to "provide a model for social service overseas which other schools and colleges could follow and develop".

The members of the project would of course rely upon day-to-day discussion with the project leader in Sicily, and regular arrangements should be made for individual and group discussion of problems and the reports.

It might serve to reinforce this side of the project also to match each student with a Sicilian "mentor" with whom arrangements could be made for on-going regular discussions of the progress of their work from an Italian point of view.\*\*

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\* Some of the readings have been developed for the Peace Corps by the American Foundation for Continuing Education. ASPEN, Colorado.

\*\* Such "mentors" might be enlisted from some of the people mentioned in this report and in the Appendix of "Useful Resources"

### A summary

This report begins with an acknowledgement of the complexities of Sicily and the high rate of failure of attempts to bring about positive change in Sicilian society.

Looking at Scopello it is concluded that as a base in its own right it had many limitations. This is not to deny either some of its attractiveness or the work of the Davids and the many valuable experiences and efforts that have emerged over the three years. Not the least of the commendable endeavours has been the exploration and setting up of involvements with a wide range of agencies and persons.

The first consideration for Dartington is to decide clearly (as it obviously intends to) whether the general aims and aspirations of the project are to remain the same or whether modifications are required. There is a choice. At one end of the scale it is possible to provide a small group-living experience in a foreign country with facilities for art and craft work which will in the style of good fellowship and active good neighbourliness contribute as much as possible to the community. Anything more than this requires a greater sophistication of organisation, staff and material resources than has prevailed to date.

Especially as the Davids are wishing to lay down some of their commitments, the second consideration is whether Scopello should remain the location where the main activity takes place; or as the base from which a number of activities and sub-projects are serviced; or as a sister base for a number of discrete projects in their own right; or whether a concentration of activities in a new base such as Sutera is worth pursuing; or even whether Sicily need be the



location at all.\*

The report raises questions regarding the general life style of the Dartington group in Scopello and its meaning to the host community, and suggestions have been made regarding the need to convey openly to the community the purposes and processes of the group and to involve the people of the community in greater day to day 'management' of the project. Such considerations of course are relevant in Scopello or elsewhere.

The suggestion is made to provide volunteers with Sicilian "mentors". In addition to the influence that the "mentor" role might have for individual members of the group,<sup>a</sup> selected panel of such mentors and other professionals might be frequently and systematically consulted by the staff member of the group on policy matters and for help in dealing with problems as they arise. The advantages or otherwise of having a Sicilian advisory group and its

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\* For an art and craft centre emphasis with social contributions to the surrounding community Paul Oliver has mentioned some alternatives to Sicily. There is a colony of artists in Ahmedabad in India who are to open a second colony on the outskirts of the city. The richness of the culture is an obvious attraction and living costs would be cheap. Ahmedabad incidentally has a first-class school of social work known to me through Sugata Das Gupta, Director of the Gandhian Institute of Social Studies in Benares, who is a visiting lecturer and external examiner. I believe too that E. F. Schumacher of the "Intermediate Technology Development Group Ltd.", Parnell House, 25 Wilton Road, London SW1V J2 has taken an interest in that School.

Paul Oliver has also been involved in the Martel region of France where an old cloister (?) is at his disposal and might be used for similar purposes.

Italian colleagues have said "Why Sicily - there is as much need in areas such as the Abruzzi?".

structure might be considered.

The tenor of all this is to make the project much more of a Sicilian affair, and is in the spirit of one of the original statements of aim:

"Anything we do must be in support of initiatives which have already been taken by the local people themselves. This point is crucial."

Immediately preceding these sentences, the prospectus reads:

"It cannot be the role of our volunteers to go to Sicily with programmes of reform or change in mind; such a philanthropic invasion of values and initiative would be only another in the long series of alien impositions that Sicilians have endured."

My view is that although the implied humility, the attitude to self-generated help and the sense of proportion are sound, influences from outside, properly utilised, are not necessarily an "invasion" but often awaken the capacity for self-examination and can lead to discrimination in asking which Sicilians? in favour of what Sicilian aspirations? against what Sicilian impediments? etc. Sicily does not present a picture of a people satisfied with its condition, and the idea of change and the tools for change are themselves part of a wider cultural heritage of which Sicilians should be able to command a fair share and use in harmony with all they find of value in their own traditions....

In any event the programmes and projects that Dartington undertakes must consciously consider the full implications of what degree of change they are, or are not, attempting to bring about. In addition the conditions for setting up projects or sub-projects, the operation, and the impact of the project will differ according to whether one has in mind an organisation which is:-

- 1) Dartington's own project
- 2) A joint project between Dartington and Sicilians



- 3) Stimulating others to create projects
- 4) Supporting existing projects (to different degrees)
- 5) Linking volunteers to Sicilian projects which are established going concerns.

The report examines the pottery, agriculture, youth club and teaching of arts and crafts activities of the group, and considers something of the future and the requirements for improving such activities.

These requirements bear in mind Dartington's expressed wish to involve more of their own programme, personnel and financial resources, and the report emphasises the need and value of involving more specially skilled staff for the various projects.

Opportunity would seem to lie especially in the educational field and ways of making a more solid entry into this area and the need for a more orderly and professional input are suggested.

An appraisal of the earthquake disaster area is attempted, and point-of-entry considerations are raised which lead to suggestions for possible links with a government or privately sponsored organisation.

The question of the physical accommodation for the Dartington group is raised and some possibilities are recounted.

The possibility and advantages of relocating specifically in Sutera are discussed. The possible involvement of Ken and Yvonne Jones, Adam and Marigold Zyw and Bruno Pallotta and Mrs. Claudia Dembeck is explored.

Suggestions are made for the establishment of an ongoing responsibility at Dartington for creating an effective feedback into and from the full range of Dartington programmes (some of which should provide the possibility of short-term projects in which are closely firmly related to the ongoing long-term programme, which

will ensure continuity and balance, and in addition should provide opportunity for Dartington-located Sicilian "events" and projects).

The prospect of strengthening the whole programme is raised by a proposal for making explicit, formalising and creating operational links between policy, plans, programming, job descriptions, job analysis, training, reporting, feedback and so on.

Finally, specific requests to Dartington from

- 1) Servizio Sociale per gli Emigrati in Trapani
  - 2) Danilo Dolci, Centro Studi e Iniziative in Partinico
  - 3) Lorenzo Barbera, Organizzazione Popolare del Belice in Partanna
- are conveyed.

A list of useful resources and the interests of Dembeck-Pallotta Associates are appended.

It is hoped that this report will provide a sound and stimulating basis for the Dartington Trust to begin discussions of the future of this most interesting undertaking.



AppendixSome Useful Resources

In addition to the persons and organisations referred to in the body of this report, the following may be found to be of value:-

Personalia

Guiliana Bertolini RIVAS  
Via Giotto 64, Palermo 566294

Trained social worker in child guidance field, married to a psychiatrist. Introduced her to Julian. She would be willing to call upon some community workers to assist any Dartington project. Has worked closely with Sig. Thea Gallo and Dr. V. Borruso.

Carlo CORSI  
Via Macchivelli 30, Milano. Tel: (02) 49.47.93

Teacher trained in U.S.A. Regular summer visitor to Scopello, where he lives in the Baglio. Strong supporter of the co-operative and willing to be of help. Knows the Simetis well.

Dott. FAILLA  
Organiser of the Bienalle della Ceramica Siciliana,  
Biblioteca Comunale, Calagirone, Catania.

Rev. Tulio VINAY  
Swiss (?) Community Worker  
Servizio Cristiano  
93016 REISI

Marco MARCHIONI  
Collaborator of Eyvind Hytten, can be reached  
Tel: Roma 5779178 or at his office in Bologna 551511 Ext. 439

CIPAS (Centro di Educazione Professionale per Assistenti Sociali)  
Piazza Dei Cavalieri Di Malta 2, Roma  
Tel: 573 455

This is a major school of social work from which much useful information and help might be requested. Mrs. Ernesta Vacca Ropers is located here and is one of the editors of the "International Review of Community Development", and is in touch with relevant professionals in Italy and all over the world. She would be happy to be consulted as required.

There are three recognised schools of social work in Sicily. In Palermo the schools are somewhat old-fashioned but the Messina school has a good reputation. It might be of value to search out good graduates from the schools for help as 'mentors'; members of an 'advisory group' or for specific tasks as they arise.

1. Scuola "Santa Silvia"  
Corso Victoria Emmanuelo 463  
Palermo (Miss Sciortino)
2. Scuola "Cesare Vittorelli"  
Via Gilbertà 62  
Palermo
3. School of Social Work  
Via S. Giovanni Bosco 30  
Messina.

UNLA (L'Unione Nazionale per la Lotta contro l'Analfabetismo)  
Palazzo della Cività del Lavoro  
ROMA EUR

This organisation is known to me especially for its work in technical education for youth and its work with co-operatives in Calabria where Professor Zanfini operates at a centre in Roggiano Gravina. UNLA has a small centre in Partinico (Corso dei Mille 245 - Dirigente: Cinquemani). A centre at Olivarella (Messina) is engaged in elementary school courses for adults.



RESOURCES IN TRAPANI ITSELF:

1. Circolo di Cultura  
Via S. Francesco d'Assisi; Tel: 26672
2. Circolo Provinciale Culturale dei Maestri  
Via Barone Pepoli; Tel: 28391

Società Dante Alighieri  
c/o Provveditorato agli studi

Social agencies

Ente Nazionale Democratico di Azione Sociale  
Via S. Agostino 11  
Rag. Francesco Valenti ??

ENALI (orphaned children)  
Via Sorba

ONMY (Mother and Child Welfare)  
Via Garibaldi 23

Unione Italiana Ciechi (blind people)  
Via Livio Bassi 40

UNICEF (Offices of AAI)  
Piazza Scarlatti; Tel: 27-282  
Dott. Antonio Buscaino

Agencies advocating rights of social security for workers

ENAS (CISNAIL)  
Piazza Umberto I

INAS (CISL)  
Piazza Matteotti 1-2  
Dr. Vito Noto

INCA (CGIL)  
Corso Vittorio Emanuele 87  
Dr. Salvatore Caizza

Health Centres linked with social security

Centro Sanitario INPS  
Casa di Cura "Rocco La Russa"  
Strada Statale Trapani-Valderice 187  
Dott. Sebastiano Scrofani

Centro Sanitario INAIL  
Via Marino Torre

Agencies dealing with workers' leisure time

ENAL  
Via Gatti 9

ARCI (also interested in adult education)  
Via Mariano Stabile 261, Palermo; Tel: 243563

Neighbourhood Centres (or agencies running same)

GESCAL  
Via Garibaldi 31, Trapani; Tel: 21366  
Dott. G. Piccione

ISES

Santa Ninfa (Trapani)

Via Alighieri - Caltagirone; Tel: 22-201

Centro Culturale ENAIP

Viale della Vittoria - Agrigento; Tel: 26687

Libraries

USIS

Via Parisi 4, Palermo

British College

Via Giusti 24, Palermo

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Sicilian Institute for the Training of Development Workers

Casella Postale 90

Palermo



Suggestions for a bibliography

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Mediterranean Europe      N.Y., Random House, 1965
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Italian Town      Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1966
- M. PANTALEONE: Mafia and Politics      London, 1966
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- \_\_\_\_\_ A History of Modern Sicily      London, 1968

APPENDIX 2

Proposal from Servizio Sociale per gli Emigrati Trapani



APPENDIX 3

Correspondence regarding request from Danilo Dolci

APPENDIX 4

Appeal from fishermen of Trapani and material from  
Centro di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali per il Meridione