

## ICASSI 1984, Siena, Italy

Impressions of ICASSI at Siena in 1984 bring back a flood of images of people, events, places, and emotions tumbling over each other in a jumble of remembered colour and sound. How to sort them out? Where to start?

One arrives in Siena by train. For some participants that meant in the middle of a very hot night with no taxi available and finding one's hotel only through the kindness of friendly Italians at the station. The city of Siena itself was a marvellous medieval town whose walls, gates, narrow winding alleyways and houses were huddled together irregularly in the way they had stood since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The citizens of this city hold a horse race annually that was already a 150 year old tradition when Christopher Columbus sighted the islands of the New World in 1492. It is a colourful and friendly city. After a few days one found oneself exchanging nods and smiles with people one met regularly in the streets on the way to and from classes. A woman alone or with another woman ICASSI participant could stroll back to the hotel after a late evening dinner through dark, almost deserted streets without feeling at all threatened or ill at ease.





How lively the registration was. One could watch people greeting people with obvious pleasure and affection and newcomers felt slightly out of it, but not for long. Hall McAbee, the Administrator, recognized names from correspondence and introduced new people to "old-timers". When Edna Nash arrived, some Canadians gave a hurrah for a familiar face. The kind and wise face of "Tee" Dreikurs gave joy to many "old-timers" as well as newcomers. Those who attended some of "Tee's" informal afternoon sessions were impressed by her humour and deep understanding as she reminisced about the doings and sayings of her late husband Rudolf Dreikurs, and described his efforts on behalf of Alfred Adler.

Part of ICASSI is classes. They were held in a technical high school near a park. A wide variety of topics and experiences were offered in Bloc 1 sessions that began promptly at 9 a.m. For example Oscar Christensen gave the historical and philosophical background of Adlerian Psychology. On another day participants shared tears and laughter when Mim Pew gave a group marriage counselling demonstration.

For those Italian participants who were not fluent in either of the official ICASSI languages (English and German), Massimo Borri, the host for the Siena ICASSI, arranged for a special translation into Italian of the Bloc 1 lectures and demonstrations.



As an innovation, two parallel sessions of Bloc 1 were held on alternate days at the start of the day, with one session for advanced students and one for those less familiar with Adlerian Psychology. Another innovation was a special program schedule for School for Families.

The “Social Times” in Bloc 1V were great fun – “Hi diddle diddle, The cat and the fiddle/Let’s hear a cheer/For the kid in the middle”. This was the cry of the team of middle children at the Birth Order Olympics. The middles were winning and one could hear a participant saying that never in her life had she been so proud of being a middle child.

The most lasting image was the marvellous collection of people with whom one could share the special time in Siena. People from all over Europe and North America, interesting people, encouraging people were not soon forgotten. Everyone hoped to meet again at some future ICASSI.