

Red Bologna

Authors' Note

A journalistic mission brought us to Bologna. On 4 August 1974, a fascist bomb exploded aboard the express-train 'Italicus' near Bologna. But, instead of the foreseen two days, we ended up spending a total of ten months there — and we wrote this book.

The explanation is simple enough. In seeking to sketch in the purely documentary political background surrounding the 'Italicus' outrage, we found to our surprise that no general survey of modern Bologna existed — a city governed for the last thirty years by a communist-socialist alliance. So we resolved to fill this gap — with hundreds of fact-finding interviews, on-the-spot research, extensive study of civic documents, and photographs.

We take this opportunity to thank all the Bolognese who gave generously of their help, patience, criticism and support.

RED

**Max Jäggi, Roger Müller
and Sil Schmid**

BOLOGNA

**with an introduction by Donald Sassoon
and photographs by Otmar Schmid**

Writers and Readers

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Contents

Donald Sassoon

Introduction: Italy Today: A Society in Transition
7

Sil Schmit

The Preconditions: A Hundred Year Fight for Alternatives
29

Sil Schmit

Urban Planning: An Old Town for a New Society
43

Max Jäggi

Traffic Policy: Free Fares were Only the Beginning
61

Max Jäggi

Work: United against Profiteers
77

Max Jäggi

Consumer Policy: An Economy Planned for the Customers
95

Roger Müller

Education: A School that has still to be Invented
111

Roger Müller

Social Policy: Away with Charity, Away with Ghettos
133

Sil Schmit

The Politics of Health: Prevention is Revolutionary
159

Roger Müller

The Old: Independence not Institutions
175

**Interview with Mayor Renato Zangheri:
Red Bologna, Example or Exception?**
187

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Note:

All lira figures in this book have been given to the nearest round-figure £ sterling and dollar equivalent, calculated at the present rate of 1500 lire to the pound.

Publisher's Note:

Unfortunately, the vast bulk of relevant documentary literature on Bologna remains untranslated; and hence, since a list of such sources would be of no service to the general non-Italian reader, we have decided to mention only the several main publishers who provide this literature, should the reader so wish to seek additional material. Documenti del Comune, Bologna; Editore Riuniti, Rome; Il Mulino, Bologna; Edizioni APE, Bologna; Edizioni SUNIA, Bologna.

Introduction

Italy Today: A Society in Transition



Donald Sassoon

The achievements of the Italian Communists are nowhere more evident than in the city of Bologna. Yet as the Communists themselves insist, 'Bologna is not a red island' — an oasis of 'socialism with a human face' in a capitalist desert. Nor is the city separated from the economic, political and social life of Italy as a whole. Bologna is constrained within and conditioned by a system with profound internal contradictions: a disequilibrium between North and South, country and town, seldom equalled in Europe. The malfunctioning of the Italian economy, its anarchic growth throughout the fifties and early sixties, its deteriorating economy since then, have all inevitably influenced Bologna.

The Communists in Bologna have not solved the crisis of capitalism in one area; nor have they developed a conception of socialism in one city. Rather they have offered a perspective on what it is possible to achieve within a determinate social system. They have provided the basis for introducing norms of conduct and public management different from those which have prevailed in Italy over the last thirty years. Most significantly, they have harnessed popular energies through an extensive system of democratic participation. It is this element of wide

popular participation — well-documented by the authors of this book — which makes Bologna's achievements not only the result of Communist endeavour but also the consequence of the democratic spirit of its citizenry.

To understand the phenomenon of Bologna, it is necessary to look at its economic and political context — that is, at Italy as a whole.

The Economic Context

Two elements are central to Italy's development in the post-war years:

- 1 . the transformation of the economy from one based mainly on agriculture to one predominantly industrial
- 2 . state domination of the industrial and financial sectors, through nationalization or through participation in private companies in a complex system of partial state ownership.

The industrial transformation of the Italian economy began in the early fifties with the upturn in world trade following the outbreak of the Korean War. Later to be known as the 'Italian economic miracle', this development was geographically located in the North-West, that is, in the triangle formed by Turin, Milan and Genoa. It was led by particular sectors of industry: automobile (Fiat) and later textiles and light-industrial electrical goods. The boom undoubtedly benefited a wide section of the Italian population, but it exacted a heavy price. In a massive internal migration — a demographic convulsion unprecedented in Italian history — millions of southerners left their fields and homes for northern cities ill-equipped to receive them.

This abandonment of the lands signalled a major downturn in Italian agriculture — already sacrificed to industrial interests by successive governments throughout the hundred years of Italian national unity. Internal migration was the final coup-de-grace for the southern agricultural sector. Consequences, in terms of a massive balance of payments, are still being felt.

Moreover, this proletarianization of large masses of Italian peasantry resulted in great social stress. The new immigrants, absorbed in the rapidly developing industrial sector, were not provided with the basic infrastructures needed: schools, hospitals, housing, etc. Thus many northern cities and in particular Turin and Milan encountered social problems which hitherto they had known only to a limited extent: overcrowding, criminality, etc. The cities in central Italy including Bologna, though not untouched, did not experience the full extent of this

social transformation: emigration and immigration did not reach the dimensions they had elsewhere.

The final main consequence of the internal migration is that it contributed to maintaining average Italian wages at a fairly low level as compared to other European economies.

Throughout the fifties the constant growth of the Italian economy masked the rising number of problems. Neo-capitalist ideologies flowered. The 'end of ideology' – a definitive transcending of the roots of class antagonism and an integration of the working class in the dominant system of production and consumption – was, apparently, at hand. ◀ It took some time for unions and working-class political parties to take stock of the transformations which had occurred. Then, in the early sixties, a new period of labour unrest began. Wider sections of the working class became aware of the chaotic nature of capitalist economic development; of the tendency towards systematic destruction of skilled labour; of the increasingly hierarchic and oppressive aspect of factory organization. One of the determinant conditions for the spectacular growth of the Italian economy – a low wages system – was then demolished. In ten years (1960-1970) the Italian working class achieved wages which were roughly comparable to those of other European workers. Concurrently, an archaic system of public administration and economic management became less able to withstand the effects of rapid industrial development and mounting class struggle. The need for thorough reform of capitalist economic and political structures became manifest.

The reorganization necessitated by these developments resulted in a marked increase in state intervention in the economy. This 'solution' has deep roots in Italian economic history. Ever since national independence, the State has intervened in the economy with the apparent purpose of readjusting the disequilibrium created by economic development. The doctrine of the 'invisible hand' has never been a dominant one in Italy. Free-market ideology could not withstand the realities of an under-developed capitalism. The response of the Italian fascist regime to the Great Crisis of 1929-31 was the creation of a state holding company (IRI, the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale) which assumed control of the central credit institutions and promoted industrial projects in many areas. This economic instrument was not abolished in the post-war period. It adapted itself to changing situations and provided a model for subsequent extension of the public sector. Thus, in the early sixties, apart from the important nationalization of the electricity sector, state participation in industry through IRI and other newly-created state

holding companies was the prevailing form of state control. The result of this intervention is that today Italy is a capitalist country in which very few large enterprises are left in totally private hands. Moreover, the credit sector (savings banks, large banks, insurance companies) has been under some form of state control since the 1930s.

Political Reorganization

From 1947 until the early sixties, Italy was ruled by 'centrist' coalitions — governments formed by the leading Christian Democratic Party (DC) with the help of smaller centrist parties: the Italian Liberal Party (PLI), a conservative grouping representing mainly business interests; the Italian Republican Party (PRI), a technocratic party drawing its support from the more enlightened sectors of Italian business and from professional and middle class groups; and the Italian Social-Democratic Party (PSDI), which split in 1948 from the Italian Socialist Party, then considered too close to the Communists. This coalition — always highly unstable because of constant strife both within the leading party and among the coalition partners — had an insufficient social basis for carrying out the structural reforms necessary for solving major problems arising from the end of the 'economic miracle'.

In the early sixties, a political process called the 'opening to the left' began. This brought the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) into the area of government. Lengthy negotiations between the DC and the PSI took place. These were facilitated by the termination of the pact of unity between Socialists and Communists, following revelations of Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 and the subsequent invasion of Hungary. The new 'centre-left' government, which also included the PSDI and the PRI, was formally inaugurated in 1963. Its ideological basis was reformist and guided by the Socialists' belief that it was necessary to 'enter the control room' (Pietro Nenni, the veteran socialist leader's expression) in order to carry out their programme. Insofar as the DC was concerned, the centre-left coalition would achieve a double purpose: it would confine the Communists to an opposition ghetto, thus placing them on the margins of political life; and it would create the basis for expanding working class support for Christian-Democratic dominated governments.

Planning was as much part of the DC's ideological armour as of the Socialists'. If anything, Catholic economists contributed more in this field than socialist thinkers. Yet the structural and economic reforms which formed the foundation of the government programme were not

immediately tackled. Instead a two-stage thesis was devised whereby structural reforms could only be initiated under conditions of economic expansion. In the meantime, traditional short-term measures would be taken to solve the existing crisis.

What occurred was a somewhat indiscriminate attempt to salvage firms and sectors of industry — but not according to social and political criteria, or even purely economic ones. Rather, the DC set out to strengthen its own political stability. State holdings were extended through a patronage system. Using men faithful to the party rather than to the national collectivity, the DC managed in the sixties to penetrate all sectors of the economy.

This transformation of the Italian economy, dominated by and identified with a single political party, thus strangely coincided with a shift to the left of the entire political spectrum. In a sense, with the 'opening to the left', the DC had committed itself to a reformist solution and had closed the option of reconstituting centre or centre-right governments on a long-term basis. The failure of the coalition with the Liberal Party in 1972-73, led by Giulio Andreotti, confirms this assertion.

But the shift to the left cannot be reduced to the simple fact that the overwhelming majority of political parties accepted reformist principles. The shift coincided with a profound cultural and political upheaval which reached its climax in the years 1968-69: the beginning of a general radicalization of the Italian people. This radicalization took two related forms — increased working class militancy and student unrest.

The growth of trade union struggles, culminating in the so-called 'hot autumn' of 1969, manifested itself in closer cooperation among the three wings of the trade union movement and in the increase of demands which were no longer purely economic. The Italian working class was not only able to impose a wage system more in tune with aggregate wage levels in the rest of Europe. It also systematically challenged labour-divisions in the factory, demanding and frequently obtaining the end of artificial barriers between differing categories of workers and the abolition of overtime work. Control of life in the workplace — hitherto unthinkable in a factory system run alternately on repressive or paternalistic methods — was rapidly being achieved.

Capitalism's incessant separation of political and economic spheres had come under attack. The trade union movement was no longer willing or even able to restrict itself to purely economic demands, since these could not be met within the framework of the existing Italian

▲ An important concept developed by Antonio Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist Party. Defined simply, hegemony implies political, cultural and ideological leadership.

economy. It thus became necessary for vast sections of the working class to think and operate in terms of an alternative management of economic affairs. They began to realize that the deterioration of southern agriculture was a question of vital importance to the northern working class; that the public administration paralysis was not a matter foreign to the needs of the labour movement. The movement as a whole would have to recast society as a whole, impose its own hegemony on the production process – its direction and internal composition. The working class began to challenge the very purpose of accumulation and thus to examine which type of development was necessary for Italy. Few areas of collective life escaped its attention – as ‘Red Bologna’ makes so clear.

The radicalization of the Italian masses was part of an international phenomenon of middle class radicalization, particularly in education. The student unrest of 1968 signalled a massive shift: an entire generation of young intellectuals began systematically to reject the existing social order. The forms protest took were, of course, varied; but they had one thing in common. The rejection of ‘capitalism’ (however defined) was accompanied by a hostile attitude towards the political line of the Italian Communist Party.

Finding critical categories neither in the areas of establishment intellectuals nor of the PCI – which had not sufficiently rethought the theoretical presuppositions of its strategy – dissident youth turned to non-Italian sources. The ideological composition which came to be known as the ‘New Left’ was inspired by experiences elsewhere. The myth of China, of Che Guevara, of the Black Power movement in the USA, prevailed. These myths were often couched in the language of philosophical traditions which had not been ‘contaminated’ by orthodox communism, such as the Frankfurt School or the Reichian adaptation of Freud. Thus, in the late sixties, the roads of access to an anti-capitalist consciousness were not those mapped by the PCI.

The Italian Communists were able to recognize the significance of these events. They did not condemn the new processes in the abusive manner of other Communist parties, and they distinguished between the student movement and its ideologies. The PCI was even able to regain some lost ground and to attract many young intellectuals to its ranks. But it failed to guide the ever-growing number of students onto the terrain of realistic politics.

(The recent wave of student unrest has been qualitatively different. The original anti-capitalist impulse has lost its intellectual basis in certain sections of the student movement. These have become

entangled in an irrationalism at times reminiscent of the radicalism manifested by young fascist intellectuals in the early twenties. Overcrowding of Italian universities, the vast growth of graduate unemployment, has not resulted in the search for political alternatives but in the symbolic expression of an apolitical rage. This has created an anarchistic climate which in turn favours the intervention of terrorist squads directly or indirectly connected with right-wing groups which have recently made their anti-communist attacks mostly in the cities of Rome and Bologna.)

The coincidence of the 1968-69 wave of student unrest with a highly politicized and increasingly united trade union movement began to have an impact on Italian attitudes. The consumeristic aspects of the 'economic miracle' came under criticism — all the more remarkable in a country whose poverty is not a distant memory but a recent reality. A new democratic spirit began to grow — a fact exemplified in the coming pages on Bologna. Political debate became a matter of everyday life — and pluralism, a collective experience. In 1974, the referendum which approved the law abolishing divorce signalled that the great majority of the population had embraced a modern secular conception of the separation between Church and State. The prevailing assumptions of a society in which the subjugation of women played such a large role were thrown askew; and the woman question became one of the central aspects of political-cultural upheaval. It entailed a redefinition of the relationship between the public and private domains, which involved both State and the institutions of civil society. What resulted was an authentic crisis of hegemony.

The political direction of this crisis was revealed in the local elections of 15 June 1975. These elections marked a decisive turning-point in the relation of forces between Italy's two major political parties. But before looking at the significance of these elections, it is necessary at least to indicate the nature and history of the relationship between regional and central power in Italy.

The Regional System

The particular way in which Italy became a unitary state after a lengthy process of national unification generated a strongly centralist system. But the Savoy Dynasty ruled a society profoundly divided by local traditions, culture and even language. The famous words signalling the end of the Risorgimento, 'We have made Italy; now we have to make the Italians,' illuminate this and the attempt to impose political and

cultural unity from the top. The rise of fascism reinforced this trend. Yet the centralist tradition coexisted with a strong regionalist one, upheld in different ways by most of Italy's political parties.

As a centre of associated life, the municipality was particularly present in the thinking of the Italian Socialist Party, influenced by the Paris Commune and the vision of a multiplicity of centres of local power, loosely federated. The Italian left has always had a tradition favouring a certain amount of devolution. It was hence able to resist the excessively centralist conception of the State — Stalin's legacy to various national communist parties.

Ruggero Grieco, writing in the clandestine communist journal 'Stato operaio' in July 1933, rejected federalism as a 'reactionary trick' but admitted that elements of federalism would have to be introduced in the post-fascist state in order to 'enlarge the participation of the masses in the government of their own affairs.' Grieco's vision was still, however, imprisoned in the monolithic conception of the international communist movement. The Italian revolution would be substantially like the Soviet revolution of 1917 and the elements of federalism envisaged would be no greater than those existing in the USSR. By 1945, after the Popular Front strategy was established at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and after the united struggle of the Resistance, this view was somewhat modified. The new communist policy was to give a wide measure of regional autonomy to two regions: Sicily and Sardinia where separatist movements existed. It was also suggested that it would be necessary to examine which services, hitherto in the hands of the state, should be decentralized.

At the Fifth Congress of the PCI (December 1945 - January 1946), it was decided that while the Italian Communists still rejected a federal state, they were in favour of a certain measure of autonomy for the municipalities and of an extensive devolution of power to the regions — especially in the administrative field and in the organization of economic life. The relatively pro-regionalist position of the Italian Communist Party, which contradicted the strongly centralist tendencies of the international communist movement, had been reached thanks to the intellectual heritage of Gramsci put into practice by its then leader, Palmiro Togliatti. Gramsci, in his writings, envisaged that the question of the South, central to Italian life, would necessitate a devolution of power. This would present a realistic alternative to local peasantry protesting against the authority of a unitary state. Such devolution became increasingly urgent in 1944 - 46 in Sicily, where an independent movement, dominated by land-owning interests connected with the

Mafia, was growing.

The Christian Democratic Party also adopted a clearly pro-regionalist stance – possibly because the peasantry constituted its fundamental social basis. But this regionalism, as envisaged by the DC leader, Alcide De Gasperi, was still deeply embedded in a Christian form of corporativism and patriarchy. De Gasperi asserted that regional representation would rest on professional organizations and that the ‘vote of hands of families will be the determinant element’ in the government of municipalities.

The Socialist Party brought its own contribution to the debate on regionalism. It conceived of local autonomy as providing the basis for the constitution of ‘red islands’, that is, positions of strength from which it would be possible to negotiate with the central government.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the twenty years of fascist regime, with its bureaucratic centralism, had made decentralization a component of the struggle against fascism.

This multiplicity of forces contributed to the adoption of a regional system in the Constitution of the Italian Republic (1947). Article Five proclaimed:

The Republic, one and indivisible, recognizes and promotes local autonomy; it gives effect to the most ample administrative decentralization in the services which depend on the state; it adjusts the principles and the methods of its legislation to the requirements of autonomy and decentralization.

Subsequent articles of the Constitution (114 - 133) dealt with the details of the regional system distinguishing between five ‘special status’ regions with particular forms and conditions of autonomy (Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino Alto-Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Valle d’ Aosta) and fifteen remaining regions.

The adoption of the Constitution, and hence of the regional system, coincided with a fundamental turning-point in post-war Italian history. The first ‘historical compromise’ between Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats came to an end due to Cold War pressures. The DC adopted a policy of clear-cut capitalist stabilization and centralization. In the 1948 elections De Gasperi achieved a decisive victory and the DC obtained an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. Italian economy was spurred to capitalist development and integrated in the international market. Political centralization went hand in hand with the growth of monopolies such as Fiat. The regionalism of the Constitution remained a dead letter; and the left, excluded from the central levers of power, consolidated its opposition in what amounted to

red bases, of which Bologna was the principal.

But the process of capitalist concentration produced a variety of problems at all levels including the regional one. Some Italian regions derived few benefits from the economic miracle; while stark economic contrasts also existed within any given region. Thus, when the regionalist battle re-emerged in the sixties, it had acquired novel characteristics. It had become less of a peasant-based movement connected to pre-capitalist sentiments of local independence and more one based on the realities of capitalist development.

The new devolutionist movement derived its strength in part from large sections of a working class which were beginning to connect the conditions of exploitation inside the factory with questions of the 'quality of life', the schools, the health system, the environment; and to recognize the need for a level of government wider than the municipality and yet closer to local life than the central government. The demand for the implementation of the constitutional articles dealing with regions now acquired characteristics of a demand for reform of the state machinery. Concurrently, the peasantry's demands for increasing local autonomy were no longer solely based on a distaste for a central authority present in the community in the form of policeman, judge or prefect — all seen, usually with some justification, to be on the side of the landlord. The new regionalism of the peasantry was increasingly oriented towards problems of economic policy: i.e., the organization of the market for agricultural produce and the rationalization of agriculture. The demand for a devolution of power thus became a demand for democratic control.

Elections: 1970-1975

When in 1970 the Italians were called to elect regional councils at the same time as they elected municipal and provincial administrations, they were in fact voting for organs which had not yet been established by law. In other words, they were voting for regional councils whose powers had not been defined. The regional councils were able to exercise their functions only in April 1972. Nevertheless, these extraordinary elections were necessary to make the government act towards a full implementation of the constitutional articles without any further delays (after twenty-two years!).

The first regional elections in Italian history confirmed the high level of political participation in voting: the turn-out was 92.46 per cent.

The results were the following:

	per cent
DC	37.85
PCI	27.86
PSI	10.43
Social-Democrats (PSDI)	6.97
Neo-fascists (MSI)	5.23
Liberals (PLI)	4.74
Left-socialists (PSIUP)	3.22
Republicans (PRI)	2.88

These 1970 elections did not signal any noticeable shift in the electoral balance of forces between the two major parties (the PCI lost 0.17 per cent and the DC 0.93 per cent). A significant shift would take place only in the local elections of 1975.

The intervening period between the two elections was marked by a contradictory process: on the one hand there was a clear strengthening of the extreme right; on the other, a consolidation of the process which began in 1968-9. The increased strength of the neo-fascists became indisputable in the general elections of 1972 when they obtained 8.67 per cent of the votes, increasing their poll by 2.91 percentage points over 1968. But it was not just a question of increased electoral strength: a veritable campaign of terror and bombing was unleashed in Italy. Although for a long time anarchist groups were suspected (the anarchist Valpreda was arrested while his comrade Pinelli 'committed suicide' during police interrogation), it later became evident that neo-nazi groups were involved from the very beginning with the complicity of people in high places, including the Italian secret services. Behind these 'black plots' and this 'strategy of tension', as it came to be called, was the desire to create a climate of terror and anxiety which would favour the growth of demands for the restoration of law and order under some sort of authoritarian regime.

In these circumstances the PCI conducted an extremely able campaign. It was able to assert itself both as a party without whose support it would not be possible to clean up Italian society and establish an ordered environment, and as a force which, by contributing to the renewal of Italy would also work toward eliminating the causes of civil violence and terror. It was in 1973, on the morrow of the coup d'état in Chile — which violently interrupted an attempt to achieve a democratic transition to socialism — that the secretary-general of the PCI, Enrico

Berlinguer, launched the idea of a new 'historical compromise' among the principal political and ideological components of Italian society:

Catholics, Socialists and Communists. One of the central objectives of this strategy was precisely to isolate the neo-fascists and prevent the rise of a right-wing alternative which could strangle in a bloodbath an Italian transition towards socialism.

The Communist proposal for a historical compromise exacerbated the long-standing internal feud within the DC between its progressive and conservative factions. The latter saw an opportunity for a confrontation with the PCI when the Italian Parliament voted a law legalizing divorce. This was the first time that a major legislation was passed in Parliament against the wishes of the majority party. The then secretary of the DC, Amintore Fanfani, recognized as leader of the more conservative tendencies within the party, deliberately supported the call for a national referendum to abolish the pro-divorce law. The intention was to rally all Catholics against the left and to force progressives within the DC to interrupt their tentative dialogue with the PCI. The referendum on divorce took place in May 1974. The anti-divorce parties were the DC and the neo-fascists (total vote in 1972, 47.92 per cent); while all the other parties had totalled 52.08 per cent in 1972. Nevertheless, the anti-divorce lobby was confident of victory mainly because it believed that the deeply rooted catholicism of the Italian masses (including many Communist voters) would prevail over political considerations and party affiliations. Particular pressures were exerted on the female electorate by invoking a vision of the final dissolution of the family. The results of the referendum demonstrated the depth of Italy's commitment to a secular state. The law on divorce was supported by 59.26 per cent of the voters. This not only constituted a rejection of vulgar anti-communism but it also reaffirmed the belief on the part of a majority of the Italian population that religion was essentially a private affair and that the State could not legislate on matters of faith. Catholics could go on believing that divorce was a mortal sin and at the same time maintain the right of those who did not share this belief.

The defeat of the Christian Democratic party (and of its temporary ally, the neo-fascist party) led its leader, Fanfani, to see the local elections of 1975 as a second round in the battle against the PCI. These elections took place in the midst of a profound government crisis and threats of an early dissolution of Parliament which would have made it impossible to hold local elections (by law, a general election would take priority). When the Italians eventually arrived at the polling stations on 15 June 1975 they were to vote for fifteen regional councils, 86 provincial councils and 6,345

municipal councils. Yet these elections were of wider significance. The debate on the 'historical compromise' had made the 'communist question' the central one in Italian political life. Italy had been particularly badly hit by the oil crisis and this had generated a debate on economic policy. How was Italy to adapt its economic system to meet changing relations between the primary producing countries of the 'Third World' and the industrialized world. The grave urban crisis afflicting many cities, North and South (from Turin to Naples), made the exemplary administration of the red areas and of Bologna, in particular, of greater significance than usual.

The results of the elections stunned Italy. Never in Italian electoral history had such a significant shift taken place:

Parties	Results per cent	Difference to 1970 elections per cent
DC	35.29	- 2.55
PCI	33.45	+ 5.59
PSI	11.98	+ 1.56
Neo-fascists	6.43	+ 0.48
PSDI	5.60	- 1.36
PRI	3.17	- 0.28
Liberals (PLI)	2.47	- 2.17
Far-Left (PDUP-AO)	1.38	(no previous results)

In terms of the aggregate vote, the gap between the DC and the PCI which had been nearly 10 per cent in 1970 was now reduced to a mere 1.84 per cent. This single datum had remarkable political significance. In the not too distant future, the PCI might well become the largest Italian party. This put an end to the DC view of itself as the sole 'centre' of Italian political life armed with a permanent mandate to decide the direction of Italian society.

In 1975, the joint PCI-PSI vote obtained a majority in four regions with the communists obtaining an absolute majority in Emilia-Romagna. 'Red' administrations were also formed in Piedmont and eventually in Latium: the PSI systematically opted for the formation of a regional government with the Communists. Even in regions where the left did not have a majority, other parties presented too fragmented a front. (The political impossibility of the DC forming a majority with the neo-fascists meant that, in order to govern, the DC needed a majority without the help of the extreme right). Changes occurred in practically all other regions with the institution known as 'open' administration. This

entailed the participation of the Communist Party in the elaboration of the regional programme in return for Communist abstention or positive support. Politically, the 1975 local elections meant the end of anti-communist discrimination which had prevailed in Italy for nearly thirty years.

City administration was similarly affected. The left obtained an absolute majority in 29 cities (against 23 in the previous elections) including Genoa, Bologna, Pisa, Siena, Turin, Venice and Florence. A 'red' majority was also formed in eight other cities including Milan and Naples. Elections for the Rome municipality took place a year later, and here too a red administration was formed and an independent on the PCI list, Carlo Giulio Argan, became mayor of the Holy City).

The Communists obtained an absolute majority in eight cities, all in Emilia and Tuscany. When all the regional, provincial and city administrations had been formed, nearly sixty per cent of Italians were living in areas governed by administrations which included the Italian Communist Party. The era of centre-left government was truly dead. A period of transition had begun.

The Communists' success sparked an interest in the developments of the Italian political system throughout the world. Various interpretations were offered. The most common was that the increase in Communist votes was the result of anger and dismay at the poor state of the Italian economy and at the widespread corruption of the state machinery: the Communist vote was a 'protest' vote. This interpretation contains some truth. Had the Christian Democratic Party been able or willing to tackle the central problems of the Italian economy (the narrowness of its productive base, the deterioration of southern agriculture) or of the Italian political system (corruption in its own ranks and in the bureaucracy, the ineffective funding of local government) or of social life (criminal and political kidnappings, right-wing terrorism whether under left- or right-wing disguise, widespread fiscal evasion) or questions of civil life (divorce, abortion, etc.), then it would likely have increased its vote. But the real question remains: what impeded the Christian Democratic Party from attempting to implement these reforms? Answers have to be found in an analysis of the ways in which the DC has been able to establish and maintain its regime. These cannot be divorced from the fundamental interests the DC has had to protect and create in order to achieve the degree of consensus it has maintained for so long. The DC created a monster it could no longer control. Even the rise of forces for renewal within the majority party would not be able, on their own, to begin initiating the necessary structural reforms needed

for a transformation of Italian society. It is this element which renders credible the claims of the Italian Communists that 'without the PCI or against the PCI it is not possible to solve the crisis'. This knowledge must have influenced the Italian electorate. Moreover, to reduce everything to a 'protest vote' would still not explain why this vote did not go to the extreme right. Clearly, the strategy of the Italian Communist Party is not a marginal factor in its success.

Revolution as Process

The unifying concept which has guided the strategy of the Italian Communists is that of revolution 'as a process'.

This concept organizes other major elements which define this strategy:

1 . The absence of a pre-existing model, that is, the necessity to re-think all previous revolutionary categories in terms of a new reality.

2 . The mass party as the fundamental form of mediation between the masses and the state: a form of mediation which is 'in the state' and hence which rejects both the conception of the state as detached from civil society and its corollary — the revolutionary party as an advanced detachment of the working class leading the class 'from the outside'.

3 . The strategy of alliance in terms of the formation of a new social bloc whose constitution is itself a continuous process, not defined by the goal of the revolution, but by intermediate objectives (structural reforms), subject in turn to continuous change.

The conception of revolution as a process, and not as a moment of social rupture, destroys the classical alternative — 'revolutionary situation' versus 'non-revolutionary situation' — just as at the same time it destroys the other famous alternative, 'bourgeois democracy' versus 'socialist democracy'. The passage from the bourgeois state to the socialist state in fact is no longer considered as taking place through the intervention of the revolutionary party in a revolutionary situation. This passage or 'transition' is characterized by the political struggle of the masses and of their organizing instruments (the political party or political parties); a struggle in which the solution to existing problems is offered by the introduction of 'elements of socialism'. Such 'elements' (the formulation is Enrico Berlinguer's, 1974, although it is implicitly present throughout the post-war Togliattian direction of the PCI) are modifications introduced in the social organism which cannot be ascribed to usual capitalist logic (production or reproduction of the conditions on which surplus-value depends).

A significant example of the introduction of such 'elements of socialism' is the attempt on the part of the working class, through its organizations, to control the direction of investments. For this attempt to be effective at least two conditions are needed: the state must have the means by which it can control the direction of new investment; and the working class must have the power to exercise its 'hegemony', that is, to dominate the political and social processes by which those decisions are made.

Very briefly, an examination of the first condition will give us some of the elements for the analysis of the 'new reality' mentioned above. In practically every capitalist country the state has become the chief instrument for attempting to regulate the accumulation of capital. This potentially regulating function is exercised through the use of a complex machinery of controls involving a variety of instruments (e.g. nationalizations, fiscal and monetary control and, more importantly, control over the credit system). In advanced capitalist countries the rapid development of the economic functions of the state has taken place as a consequence of the international crisis of 1929-31. Reorganization of the form of existence of capitalism also involved the reorganization of forms of political domination with varied results: from Nazi economic policies in Germany, to the creation of a state holding company in Fascist Italy, to the New Deal in the USA. The formidable growth of the economic functions of the State dictates the necessity for the labour movement to develop a strategy beyond the Leninist position of 1917 where the State was essentially a repressive instrument to be 'smashed'. This strategy has also to take into account the fact that the ever-present diversity existing among various capitalist countries conceals an increasing homogeneity of economic structures and of forms of state intervention. This tendency, which also corresponds to a long term trend towards the unification of the world market, has been operating throughout the years following the Second World War.

These developments have also encountered the challenge represented by the existence of a different form of social and economic organization in the countries of Eastern Europe and, more recently, the growth of de-colonized 'Third World' countries questioning the existing relations of force within the world market.

Objective tendencies towards the unification of the world market, growth of the state capitalist sector, economic de-colonization, act as structural parameters which define a new reality and puts in question the old 'orthodoxy' of the world Communist movement. The monolithic character of that organization survived the changing world until the

turning-point of 1956. The development of national roads to socialism was the necessary mechanism for the overcoming of a massive 'lag' in strategic development. What is now called 'Eurocommunism' is the main answer which the Communist movement in the advanced capitalist world, and the PCI in particular, has produced. 'Eurocommunism' entails the establishment of certain definitive common principles, all of them concerning the relation between socialism and democracy and the rejection of the general applicability of Lenin's October model of revolution. Here too the conception of revolution as a process plays a leading role.

The conception of a revolutionary process during and through which elements of socialism are introduced, means comprehending the entire structure of society. Such a comprehension or understanding — the most appropriate expression would be 'intellectual appropriation' — requires theoretical and practical activity. Theoretical, in the sense of categories produced with which reality can be analysed; and practical, in the sense of actual analysis of such reality. It is precisely in the 'production' of such understanding that the revolutionary movement must establish its hegemony on the level of ideas. However, this can only take place under conditions of free debate, both within the revolutionary party and in society at large. It would be ludicrous to imagine that new categories are produced by the mere possession of a party card.

The practical purpose of this 'intellectual appropriation' necessitates the intervention of working class organizations in all facets of political life. In other words, the political party must be able to present solutions to the varied problems which the political and economic development of the country engenders. Once the concept of 'revolution as a rupture' is rejected, the forms in which these solutions are presented cannot be in terms of the (capitalist) reality which exists, nor of a utopian (socialist) future, but must contain elements for a passage to socialism. For instance, if the problem in question is one dealing with transport, the solution cannot be formulated in the following traditional terms: 'this problem can only be solved under socialism'; nor in terms of the traditional reformist dichotomy between a 'minimum' and 'maximum' programme. The reforms proposed must already contain, if the situation is favourable, elements of socialism. This is what Renato Zangheri, Mayor of Bologna, emphasizes in his interview in the last part of this book.

In order for any concrete proposals to succeed, it is crucial to produce new analytical categories, extend internal debate and diffuse the maximum amount of knowledge. Given the need for creating and mobilizing consent, such activity is an essential prerequisite for a modern

democracy. Furthermore, the production of new analytical categories entails a new relationship with Marxist theory as embodied in the classical texts of Marx and Lenin. Obviously the traditional assumption that all or most of the categories which can be used for analytical purposes are to be found in these writings is not viable. A critical relationship as a consequence of the end of the dogmatic approach, in turn demands dialogue with modern culture as a whole. During the 1968-69 events, the PCI was already beginning to question and rethink its position. It was able to take into account the changes resulting from the situation and channel them in a political direction.

The PCI leadership was able to make explicit the system of alliances which had been implicit all along. This system of alliances, or the 'historical compromise', was based on the conviction that a new model of development for Italian society could not be achieved on the basis of support which would be reducible to a simple arithmetical majority in parliament. The majority needed had to involve a 'compromise' among the fundamental political traditions of the Italian people; thus including not only the Communist and the Socialist masses, already gained to the cause of a new social order, but also the Catholic masses whose allegiance to the Christian Democratic Party had to be considered a long-term feature of the Italian political system. This 'compromise', in spite of the novelty of the formula, was not a new idea. Its strategic roots were deep in the Italian Resistance. The realism of the strategy depended on the fact that the search for a new pattern of development was not in contradiction to Catholic ideology.

The time has clearly not yet come for a definitive assessment of this strategy. So far, however, the results of the 'historical compromise' have been remarkable. Not only has the Italian Communist Party scored a major success in the local elections of 1975 but this was confirmed in the general election of 1976:

Parties	1976 percent	Difference with 1972 in percentage points
PCI	34.4	+ 7.21
PSI	9.6	+ 0.06
Far Left (Democrazia Proletaria)	1.5	did not contest
Radicals	1.1	did not contest
Social Democrats	3.4	- 1.77
Republicans	3.1	+ 0.23
DC	38.7	+ 0.02
Liberals	1.3	- 2.59
Neofascists	6.1	- 2.56

It became clear that the size of the poll achieved by the PCI in 1975 was not a freak result and that, after only one year it was able to improve by a couple of percentage points. The dimension of this advance can be comprehended if one thinks that while it took twenty-six years for the PCI to increase its percentage by eight points (19 per cent in 1946 to 27 per cent in 1972) it took only another four years to jump by another seven points.

The significance of the Communist advance cannot obscure the fact that the Christian Democratic Party was able to make good its losses of 1975 and to return to the percentage obtained in the previous general elections. This recovery was made at the expense of its potential junior partners in coalition: the Social Democrats and the Liberals as well as at the expense of the neo-fascists. Most commentators also agree that the new Communist votes came mainly from the ranks of the DC.

The significance of the results in parliamentary terms meant that it was no longer possible for the DC to form a stable governing coalition without the left. Only two options were left open: either the reconstitution of the Centre-Left, or a government with all democratic parties (i.e. including the PCI and excluding the neo-fascists). The PSI was not alone in refusing to enter any government which rejected the contribution of the PCI. The Republicans and the Social Democrats took a similar stand. Yet the DC was not yet ready for the 'historical compromise' in its governmental form. A transitional solution was agreed upon. The DC would form a government on its own relying on the abstentions of the other parties and negotiating with them the measures to be undertaken to face the crisis.

In July 1976, for the first time since the break-up of the tripartite coalition in 1947 (the first 'historical compromise'), a Christian Democratic Prime Minister has had to appeal to the PCI in order to guarantee the survival of his government. Furthermore, at the local level, cooperation and agreement between the Communists and Christian Democrats is becoming commonplace; and by June 1977 a wide ranging government programme had been agreed. Though not 'in' the government, the PCI has certainly achieved its aim of becoming a party of government.

The New State

The revolutionary process in Italy has thus entered a new transitional phase; but one which cannot be reduced to a simple matter of governmental formula. The transformation of Italian society necessarily

involves the transformation of institutional apparatuses, and hence the State. The form this transformation is taking in Italy combines changes occurring at the central level and new forms of participation at the local level.

This combination offers the possibility for overcoming the separation of political society from civil society which has been the keystone of the bourgeois state. Separation between economic and political spheres has allowed the capitalist system to build its hegemonic consensus in the area of civil society through the organization of representative democracy at the political level. The real inequality existing between the worker at Fiat and the boss of Fiat is masked by a process of abstracting both from their real social relations and reconstituting them as 'citizens' formally equal at the level of politics. But the development of the capitalist economy — with the new role of the State as the main reorganizer of the relation between economy and politics through the development of state monopoly capital — calls into question this separation without being able to transcend it. ◀

In this context, the question of new organizations of democracy must be posed. The traditional answer given by the Communist movement is no longer adequate. It envisaged the formation of popular and localized forms of democracy ('the Soviets'); but its practice saw the dominion of a single party over the rest of society. This did not occur simply because of mistaken ideological positions (as many opponents of Stalinism have asserted); or because of the role of a single personality (as both the leadership group of the Communist Party of the USSR in 1956 and liberal scholars have asserted); or as some devotee of the importance of national characteristics still maintain, because of the 'natural barbarism' of the Slav soul. Central planning, as the chief form of regulating the economy in the transitional period, and which coexists only with simple forms of direct democracy, reduces the entire mode of popular participation to a localized and corporative process. In the absence of a democratically responsive centralizing power, the only force which can offer an overall synthesis is the revolutionary party. This then becomes the sole guarantor of the revolution, paradoxically demoting the soviets to a mere semblance of popular power. ▶

The political forms of the transition to socialism require the combination of direct and central (representative) forms of democracy. This, at least as the PCI sees it, is not a purely political necessity. It must also be an economic one in order to avoid the negative effects of a central plan imposed from above which requires either blind obedience or dictatorial compulsion. The democratic management of the economy

cannot be the exclusive preserve of government and parliament, but must necessarily involve forms of locally devolved power.

The question of the transition to socialism thus assumes its full Gramscian colours: it becomes the question of founding a new state. Herein lies the importance of Bologna's municipal and neighbourhood committees, factory councils, school councils, etc. These form one of the essential elements for the ordering of the 'new state'; the point of connection between direct democracy and representative democracy.

Thus it becomes clear that as this book amply demonstrates, the true importance of Bologna does not rest in the efficiency of its administration, in its lack of corruption, in the equality and breadth of its social services, in its ability to tackle in a forward-looking manner the urban problems of our age (inner city decay, environmental factors, etc.) However desirable and worthy of credit these achievements are, on their own they would not depart from a reformist view of society. As Armando Cossutta of the Regional and Local Government section of the PCI pointed out:

In the government of regions and cities we must struggle against a tendency which though never prevalent in our ranks could well develop. This is the belief, for instance, that it would be possible to give a definite solution to the problems facing the local communities, without taking into account the national context. This would be plain reformism (38).

Bologna's significance rests in the fact that its achievements have not been the results of technocratic-Fabian decisions from the top, but of a framework of local democracy which has involved wider and wider strata of the population. In this network of frequent consultation, of debates, of dialogue among differing political forces — some of which have been and are opposed to socialism — a learning process has been under way wherein solutions to problems of the present have been reached in a participatory climate. Here the dichotomy between leaders and led has begun to be broken. Thus, in a context of unity-oriented struggle, in an attempt to re-unite classes and strata which are kept divided by the anarchic growth of monopoly capitalism, by the constant reproduction of separation between manual and mental labour, between economics and politics, the working population has begun its long struggle towards the assertion of itself as the new directing class of society.

In the transition to socialism of the entire Italian collectivity, Bologna has more than the force of an example of 'things to come in the distant future'. Its very existence as a locus of popular power shows what

can be achieved in the present. Bologna makes manifest the possibility of introducing elements of socialism here and now.

It is no accident that the Bolognese phenomenon, this 'enigma', as foreign observers have called it — probably expecting that Communist rule must necessarily entail grey conformity and bureaucratic inefficiency — should have arisen in the heart of Emilia. The peasants and workers of this region won the right to strike and to organize themselves politically at the beginning of the century. It was also in Emilia — with its flourishing network of cooperatives and trades councils — that the fascist offensive was launched to destroy the peasants' leagues, to terrorize the workers, to burn socialist municipalities. Again, it was in Emilia and Bologna that the resistance against fascism was particularly strong. And when, at the end of the victorious insurrection which liberated the city, a sea of red flags welcomed the return of freedom, this marked only the beginning of the long and arduous struggle which still continues: the struggle for the birth of a new state.

The Preconditions:



A Hundred Year Struggle for Alternatives

Sil Schmid

'Efficient, democratic and relatively uncorrupt,' read a headline in the 'New York Times' in September 1974. It was referring to the city of Bologna. A month later, 'Newsweek' enlarged on the theme: 'Bologna is by far the best governed state in Europe.' The German 'Spiegel' joined in the praise. 'Bologna-reformers' dream come true'. While the French 'Vie Publique' marvelled, 'Bologna just goes on making itself a talking-point.'

There is no doubt that the red city is making headlines. Despite reservations about the communist-socialist regime, bourgeois writers cannot disguise their admiration. Bologna, everyone agrees, is a faultlessly administered city.

The achievements of Bologna's left-wing administrators cannot be overlooked. They stand out against the nationwide administrative emergency — the 'malgoverno' or mismanagement of the Christian Democrats — like the school report of a model pupil.

● In historic Naples and Genoa, unscrupulous property speculators have demolished row after row of historic houses in the last few years. Meanwhile, Bologna's 'Centro Storico' remains intact, architecturally and socially.

● While the pedestrians of Turin or Palermo choke on rush-hour fumes, the Bolognese are gradually changing the approach to the traffic problem. Public transport — which operates at zero fare in rush hours — is part of the answer.

● While in cities like Rome, community services are near breakdown, the public life of the Bolognese runs along relatively well-ordered lines. The Emilian capital remains untouched by the endless corruption scandals which shake the rest of the country.

● On a national plane, thirty years of unbroken Christian Democratic rule and bureaucratic restraints have numbed Italian democracy. In Bologna's eighteen neighbourhoods, citizens of all party affiliations are experimenting with new participatory models.

Is Red Bologna a socialist idyll in the jungle of the late capitalist crisis? The Bolognese themselves deny it. 'Bologna isn't simply a happy island,' their experienced Mayor, economics professor Renato Zangheri, likes to emphasize. And his words are echoed by many others. The Bolognese are reluctant to be regarded as Italy's model school-children. They reject the idealistic perspective which tries to portray the Bolognese experiment as a lucky exception. As Marxists, they maintain that progressive Emilia-Romagna is as much part of the Italian reality, as the backward Mezzogiorno or the

highly industrialised Milan-Genoa-Turin triangle. They stress that unevenly developed regions must be understood as parts of a capitalist, fundamentally Catholic Italy, shaken by severe economic and social crises.

The Bolognese achievement is best measured if one looks at the factors which have worked against change in the area.

Money:

However much Bologna's Communist Party (PCI) and Socialist Party (PSI) politicians want to think and act in a socialist manner, they are dependent on national financial policies. These, in turn, are determined by Italy's Christian-Democratic bank and industrial managers. Even local taxes flow into the coffers of the Rome treasury — to be redivided among the provinces later on. To show how this flow-back works, one need only take the example of Bologna itself. In autumn 1975, the Italian state was £87 million (\$147,000,000) in debt to the Emilian capital.

The Law:

However progressive the ideas of the Bolognese are, in implementing them they are tied to national law. Education, economic policy, attitude to property, the penal code and the health service are governed by national law, which on closer inspection often emerges as a direct legacy of the Mussolini era. Centrally organised Italy does not leave much room for regional or, indeed, communist initiatives.

The Individuals:

The Bolognese may be politically conscious and fired by the desire to test new forms of communal life. But subconsciously, in their daily life, they betray the same authoritarian and patriarchal attitudes which have stamped their countrymen in Venice or Florence. For instance, many Bolognese would rather watch television than go to political meetings. Others repress their wives rather than help them with housework. They may soft-pedal conflicts rather than face them; consume passively rather than agitate actively.

If despite these difficulties a process of democratisation unmatched in Western industrial society has arisen in red Emilia, this is because crucial historical factors have been at work. One important

prerequisite for Bologna's present condition is the persistence of the socialist-communist coalition in the area. Whereas attempts in Florence and Venice to form a local left-wing government have in the past foundered after only a few weeks because of Christian Democratic resistance, Bologna's People's Front has a thirty-year administrative tradition not dependent on the DC. In these three decades, the left's share of the vote has risen constantly (from 38 per cent in 1946, to 51 per cent in 1975); and Bologna has had a Communist mayor since 1945.

When asked about the recipe for Bologna's success, a long-standing member of the government answered: 'We have had time to make mistakes — and to correct them.' But time alone does not work miracles. For that favourable economic preconditions are needed and Emilia-Romagna has these. Developed agriculture, a well-balanced production structure and modern diversified industry — without all-powerful giants — coexist here. The biggest factories in the area employ less than 2000 workers.

Another plus for the red region is the old tradition of co-operatives — one alternative to the capitalist economic structure. The Emilian Co-operative Movement contains both agricultural and manufacturing co-ops, and others in the consumer foods, construction and service industries. There are 140 co-operatives in operation in the Bologna area with 125,000 members.



In addition, Bologna's favourable position at the intersection of the Venice-Florence and Milan-Ravenna highways marked it as an important place of exchange (for ideas as well as material goods) as long as a thousand years ago. The first material result of this key intellectual position came in 1119 when the Bolognese founded the studio — the first university of the western world — and proudly

named their town, 'the learned one' (la dotta). Here the seminal ideas of the renaissance, liberalism and anti-clericalism, anarchism and socialism were sown on fertile ground.

That these ideas would bear fruit in Emilia-Romagna is explained by the Bolognese historian, Luigi Arbizzani, in economic terms. 'In the second half of the last century, the dispossessed agricultural workers of the region formed a strong agricultural proletariat. The 'braccianti' and 'scariolanti' helped in the fields and in the building of drainage systems in the huge marshes. Their pathetic wages and long unemployment in the winter months plunged them into deep material need. Under the influence of socialist and anarchist currents of thought, they joined together in associations — the 'leghe' — around the year 1860 in order to share their misery. One of their leaders was the revolutionary, Andrea Costa, who was influenced by Mikhail Bakunin and Karl Marx. He became Italy's first socialist member of parliament in 1892.'

The ideas always came from outside, says Arbizzani, but they were put into practice in Emilia-Romagna. As a result, there has been a persistent intensive contact between the people and the ideas.

Economic and political stability and a long-standing tradition of class struggle are good preconditions for a socialist policy. When the communist partisan, Giuseppe Dozza, was appointed mayor by the National Liberation Committee on 7th May 1945, its introduction was not long delayed.

Twenty-five years of fascism, the bombs of the allies and the brutal repression of the Nazis had turned Bologna into a heap of rubble. But even in the first official actions of the administration, Dozza showed that he had the will not only to solve the problems of the war-damaged town, but also to press on towards the democratisation of the whole countryside. Seven months after his appointment, a Bolognese Council convened for the first time since 1920, and Mayor Dozza set out the goals of his administration: democracy and decentralisation.

These concepts still guide the Bolognese administration; though methods have of course developed over thirty years. Civic planning requires specific expertise, and under communist administration, Bologna has become one of the best researched towns in the West. The many instruments of empirical sociology — from simple questionnaires to expensive local computer installations — have been set up to obtain information on the present and to project what ought to be.

Bologna's most important plans:

● The four year plan for economic development (Piano Programma) governs municipal and regional economic initiatives, from the trade-fair to the vegetable market and from traffic consortium to culture palace.

● The Retail Supply Plan ('Piano di Sviluppo e di Adeguamento della Rete Distributiva') fights and gradually hopes to remove inequalities in the consumer structure.

● The Development Plan for the town and its surroundings ('Piano Regolatore Generale') aims to bring building development under control.

● The Traffic Reform Plan ('Piano del Traffico') aims at limiting private traffic in the city and giving absolute priority to public transport.

● The Old Town Plan ('Piano Centro Storico') by which every single house in this, the largest old town after Venice, will be catalogued and treated according to the methods of scientific restoration.

Because Bologna's politicians are largely united with regard to socialist goals, such plans have a greater chance of success than in many other cities. For many Bolognese, Communism is identical to Democracy; and for many Italians, Democracy is synonymous with anti-fascism. This is, of course, due to Italy's long history of anti-fascist struggle, a struggle which was particularly strong in the Bolognese area.

note - Fascist
Fascism, the black-shirted movement of opposition to Marxism, spread like the plague through the poor, traditionally red, agricultural areas of Emilia. Its founder, Benito Mussolini, came from Forli, a town in Romagna. In 1920, two years before his march on Rome, Mussolini's followers occupied the Bolognese government buildings after a bloody battle. This event began the twenty-five year rule of the Fascists, which ended with the expulsion of the Nazis and their Italian allies at the end of April 1945.

Forty-nine thousand partisans took part in the struggle against the Nazis and the Fascists. Over 6,000 of them met their death. Thousands of men and women were shot, mutilated or hung on wall-hooks and barbed wire by the German occupiers and their Fascist allies because of their support for guerilla action. In April 1945, the underground fighters rose for their final blow against the weakened Nazi troops. Inside two weeks, Bologna, Modena, Ferrara, Reggio-Emilia, Parma and Piacenza were liberated from the Germans. From

there, the liberation movement spread over the whole of northern Italy. Everywhere the partisans came down from their hiding places in the mountains to the cities and put the Nazi troops to flight. By the end of April, a few days before the entry of the allies, the liberation committee had all the large centres of the north under control.

Even today Bologna's left has good grounds for continuing to see fascism as the main enemy. Mussolini's heirs, the neo-fascists of the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) have in recent years made increasing attacks on the communists. Legal investigations of fascist machinations continually reveal close connections between high Christian Democratic functionaries, economic magnates and the followers of fascist chief, Giorgio Almirante. This is not surprising. Many pillars of the present Italian establishment were faithful followers of Mussolini. The violent strategies of the neo-fascists ensure that the memory of fascist terror does not fade. Their outrages have caused over a hundred deaths in Italy since the end of the war, while the recent black terror in northern Italy has been responsible for some forty deaths and several hundred injuries. In August 1974, a fascist bomb in the express train 'Italicus' mangled twelve passengers as the train was about to enter Bologna's central station. The Bolognese reacted against this, and the threat from the right in general, with a powerful battle-cry. Over 100,000 people demonstrated in Bologna's main square, and a sea of raised fists and red flags greeted Mayor Zangheri's cry, 'Long live anti-fascist Italy!'

Bologna's city chiefs battle daily against the legacy of fascism. Nothing makes their work of governing and reform more difficult than the limits placed on regional and local efforts by Rome's claim to omnipotence. For years the PCI has been fighting on a national plane for greater decentralisation.

Bologna's 'decentramento' is proof that smaller units make for more democracy and more effective government. Decentralisation, the division of the city into administrative units, is not exclusive to the communist programme. In the 1956 'Libro Bianco' (manifesto of the Christian Democrats during Provincial Assembly elections), the leader of the Bolognese Christian Democrats, Giuseppe Dossetti, promised 'a new form of co-operation between government and governed.' Dossetti's goal was better integration of the residents — and as a result, better control.

The 'decentramento' took concrete form in 1960. The Christian Democrats as well as the Socialists (PSI) and the PCI wrote the concept into their programme. However, the Communists were not concerned with better integration of residents but with their activation. They

wanted to make direct participation possible for an increasing number of citizens, without any form of discrimination. The people would, in fact, according to the Party manifesto, have several different functions 'in the working out of plans, their control, in giving advice, co-operation and constructive criticism, as well as in helping determine needs and decisions.'

What was only a vague project in the sixties is now reality in Bologna. All important plans, whether to do with retail or traffic, urban development or preservation, have been examined, analysed, discussed and ratified in hundreds of neighbourhood assemblies by tens of thousands of citizens. Neighbourhood committees number some 2550 citizens and without their approval, no street or school is built; no bus-line extended, no shop opened, no nursery set up and no house demolished.



Direct democracy in Bologna's neighbourhoods means the right of all interested citizens to take part in the most important administrative decisions — and this extends beyond saying yes or no to laws hatched behind closed Party or office doors. People participate from the start with a declaration of their needs. By means of continual stocktaking, questionnaires and discussions, the Bolognese have produced a list of demands from which the city administration develops

its programme, whether it be for clinics, kindergartens, sports fields or public transport.

The 'decentramento', Bologna's politicians stress, was not created in a day. The process began over fifteen years ago and still has a long way to go before it is complete. The most important stages so far are as follows:

● In September 1960, the City Council divided Bologna into fifteen neighbourhoods (fourteen outlying ones plus the Old Town). At the same time, the Council set up an all-party Decentralisation Committee.

● In April 1962, the Council finalised the boundaries of the fifteen neighbourhoods and gave them their names: Borgo Panigale, Santa Viola, Saffi, Lame, Bolognina, Corticella, San Donato, San Vitale, Mazzini, Murri, San Ruffillo, Colli, A. Costa Saragozza, Barca and Centro.

● In March 1963, the Council passed a regulation requiring the setting up of two democratic bodies in every neighbourhood: A twenty-person Neighbourhood Council, whose members are resident in the area and are elected by second-degree votes by the City Council (that is, on the recommendation of the Parties and in proportion to their representation on the City Council); a Neighbourhood Council President, an assistant to the mayor ('Aggiunto del Sindaco') nominated by the mayor on the recommendation of the Decentralisation Committee.

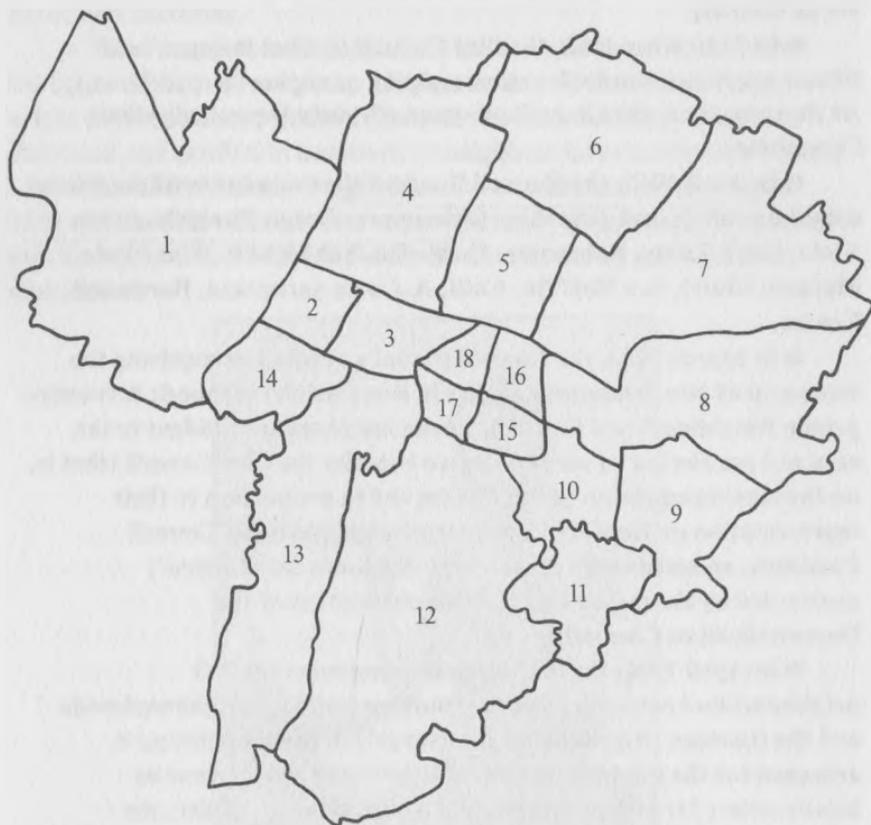
● In April 1966, the City Council nominated the 280 neighbourhood councillors of the fourteen outlying neighbourhoods and the fourteen 'Assistants to the Mayor'. In the same sitting it arranged for the establishment of offices which would serve as headquarters for population control, social services, police, the secretariat of the neighbourhood office, itself, and the mayor's assistants.

● In June 1964, the 280 councillors and their presidents assembled in the great hall of the Palazzo del Podesta for their official appointment. To the sound of the 'campanazzo', Bologna's bells for historic moments, Mayor Dozza read out greetings from dignitaries of church and state. Dozza stated: 'We have come a long way. We have talked of decentralisation since 1956; and we still have a long way to go before establishing local democracy with constantly increasing powers for residents.'

● In December 1966, the City Council divided the centre of the city into four neighbourhoods. They were named Galvani, Irnerio,

Malpighi and Marconi. This raised the number of neighbourhoods to eighteen.

The 18 Districts of Bologna



- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 Borgo Panigale | 7 San Donato | 13 Costa Saragozza |
| 2 Santa Viola | 8 San Vitale | 14 Barca |
| 3 Saffi | 9 Mazzini | 15 Galvani |
| 4 Lama | 10 Murri | 16 Irnerio |
| 5 Bolognina | 11 San Ruffillo | 17 Malpighi |
| 6 Corticella | 12 Colli | 18 Marconi |

Each new Bolognese administration (elected every five years) has taken upon itself the task of extending the 'decentramento'. In 1967, Dozza's successor as mayor, the popular Communist, Guido Fanti, announced the second phase of the decentralisation process. In this new phase, the neighbourhoods were to be equipped with specifically

detailed powers which would enable them to move towards self-administration.

New legislation was thus necessary. The City Council devoted five large-scale debates between 1968 and 1974 to its preparation, while the neighbourhoods themselves worked out guidelines. In 1973 alone, there were seventy neighbourhood meetings and ninety committee meetings to discuss the matter. By the beginning of 1974, the legislation was finally ready. In March, the Council passed the new 'Ordinamento del Quartiere' which gave the neighbourhoods the following rights:

- to formulate guidelines for the city budget, for urban and economic development, for the local supply and organisation of traffic and economic technology; to grant appropriate licences, building permits and economic patents.
- to take every initiative possible towards the improved supervision of education, health and leisure-time institutions.
- to elect the mayor's assistant by a two-thirds majority.

The new legislation also demanded that every neighbourhood set up Work Committees. Committees on education, local planning, traffic, sport and tourism, social security, trade and culture were obligatory.

Although the new legislation brought more autonomy to the neighbourhoods, it was still not enough to satisfy the City Councillors. At the same time, as the new law was being passed, they pledged themselves to extend decentralisation even further. In this they could rely on the approval of the Council as a whole. For with the exception of two small parties, the Liberals (PLI) and the Neo-Fascists (MSI), all Bologna's parties are agreed that the city would not be the same without its neighbourhoods. The Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Party of Proletarian Unity all voted for the new law.

Such unity between right and left is the exception rather than the rule. Opinions on both ideological and practical matters in the City Council are usually bitterly opposed. Argument between the benches, hard-hitting attacks, abstention and nay votes by the bourgeois parties, form the daily course of events. Communists and Christian Democrats are generally the bitterest of opponents, and here as everywhere in Italy they form the two biggest blocks. Though in the last national election (1976), the PCI gained ground on the Christian Democrats (PCI 34.4 per cent to DC 38.8 per cent compared to the 1972 figures, PCI 27.2 per cent to DC 38.8 per cent), the Communists in Bologna have long had a majority vote (PCI 50.3 per cent to DC 26.4 per cent in 1976). In the

City Council, the Communists have an absolute majority of all seats.

The majority relationships in local elections determine the Party proportions in the executive. Thus, in Bologna's City Council, Communists and Socialists share the portfolios between themselves. The executive for 1975 to 1980 is composed as follows:

Mayor: **Renato Zangheri** / PCI

Councillors:

Economic Planning and Local participation:

Paolo Babbini, Deputy Mayor / PSI

Taxation: **Elio Bragaglia** / PCI

Decentralisation: **Federico Castellucci** / PCI

Technical Services (Planning): **Pier Luigi Cervellati** / PCI

Technical Services (Projection and Implementation):

Luigi Omicini / PCI

Technical Services (Maintenance) and Inter-City Planning:

Giuseppe Mazzetti / PCI *consumer policy*

Culture: **Luigi Colombari** / PSI

Information and Women's Questions: **Diana Franceschi** / PCI

Hygiene and Health: **Eustachio Loperfido** / PCI

Personnel and Population Control: **Venanzio Palmi** / PCI

Finance and Justice: **Armando Sarti** / PCI

Education (1): **Ermanno Tondi** / PCI

Education (2): **Aureliana Alberici** / PCI

Social Problems and Labour: **Mauro Formaglini** / PSI *transportation*

Sport and Tourism: **Sergio Montanari** / PCI

The City Council reappointed as Mayor the former professor of economic history at Bologna University, **Renato Zangheri**. Zangheri, who is a member of the Central Committee of the PCI began his second term of office with favourable indications. The left-wing landslide in the city and region had strengthened the resolve of the Bolognese administration. Zangheri stated: 'The election results mean substantial success for our desire to invigorate and clean up public life.' This desire has been demonstrated in abundance by Bologna's councillors. On being asked what distinguished them from councillors in other Italian cities, a civil servant joked, 'They work'.

Participatory democracy depends on the spread of information about government activities and, in the Bologna region, publications which do this are several. The 'Notizie del Comune' is distributed to all households every two weeks; while the 'Documenti del Comune'

monthly chronicles the most important debates of the City Council. In it, Bologna's citizens can read what is being discussed by their representatives in the two or three weekly council meetings. Such verbatim reports from the town hall are often in stark contrast to council reporting done by other newspapers — for example, the ultra-conservative local paper, 'Il Resto del Carlino', owned by the petrol millionaire, Attilio Monti. Thorough information on local issues can also be obtained from the four regional pages of the communist paper, 'L'Unità.' However, only 100,000 Bolognese read this as compared to the 160,000 who read the 'Carlino' daily. When asked why the Bolognese seem to be so addicted to the notoriously conservative 'Carlino', a 'Unità' reporter answered: 'If we reported crime and accidents as sensationally as the 'Carlino' does, we would have twice their readership'. But the serious 'Unità' refuses to use gutter tactics. It sees itself as an instrument for the education of the working class and manages to interest a large number of its readers in its long and detailed leading articles.

Before the campaign for the 1975 local elections, two new newspapers were founded in Bologna: the left-wing Catholic 'Il Foglio' and the right-wing Christian Democrat 'Il Quotidiano di Bologna', which in its daily inflammatory tirades against the administration outdoes even the 'Carlino'. Paradoxically then, the right-wing press is dominant in the red city. Neither 'Carlino' nor 'Quotidiano' have, however, had any success in their constant attempts to pin 'clientelismo', the typical Italian form of bureaucratic corruption, on the local government. Even confirmed opponents concede that Bologna's administration still has its fingers clean after thirty years in office. The opposition newspapers must therefore be satisfied with variations on the most common complaint: wastage of public money. This, of course, is an inexhaustible theme. For no one denies that Bologna's coffers are empty and its mountain of debt, high.

This sort of bankruptcy is not an exclusively Bolognese phenomenon. It applies to the whole of Italy. Since 1973, a national law has demanded that all taxes, apart from dog, taxi and bus taxes, be requisitioned by Rome and then redistributed to the provinces later, in accordance with guidelines established at the time. Rome's interference in the cities has, therefore, been consistently high since 1973.

The result is that the devaluation of the lira by almost one-third since 1973 is passed on by the state treasury to the provinces. The situation is typical of centralised state structure, a blow against the autonomy the provinces are trying to achieve. For Italy's local

politicians, it is good cause for vigorous protest. In April 1974, a few thousand mayors and dignitaries of all parties assembled in Rome to demonstrate against this, a protest which was vigorously applauded by the unions.

It is not only the decrease in the value of money which gnaws at the finances of the cities. To inflation can be added the catastrophic inefficiency of Rome's bureaucrats. In August 1975, the treasury debt to Bologna amounted to £87 million (\$150,000,000). Bologna had no alternative but to amass debts of her own and to come up smack against the normal Italian lending rate of about 20 per cent. 'If the Christian Democrats accuse us of mismanagement,' protests Mayor Zangheri, 'then they are pretending they don't know that it is the government — and that means the Christian Democrats — who are responsible for our unbalanced budget.'

One thing that Bologna's administrators do not, of course, deny is that their social and community policies do cost money. Major items of the budget in 1974, according to Finance Councillor, Armando Sarti, were 'education, housing, youth and old people's policies, new buses and the struggle against pollution.' In figures, this breaks down as £13 million (\$22,000,000) for the schools (almost a quarter of the total budget); around £8 million (\$14,000,000) for social policy, and a further £5 million for anti-pollution measures. Interestingly, the second highest expenditure in Bologna's budget is the servicing of bank loans.

No one can accuse Bologna's Finance Department of acting against the interests of the people. Even when the opposition and the bourgeois press lament the wasting of public money, the accusation sounds hollow to the man in the street. For the majority of workers, who have to get by on an average wage of between £135 to £200 a month (\$230 to \$340) and contend with constantly rising rents and inflated living costs, the extent to which the city budget is in the red is not a luxury, but rather a proof that the government is in earnest when it makes its basic declaration: — 'The democratic city is the expression of the needs of the people who remain outside the traditional power groupings. Our intention is to support their struggle with increasing openness.'

Urban Planning:



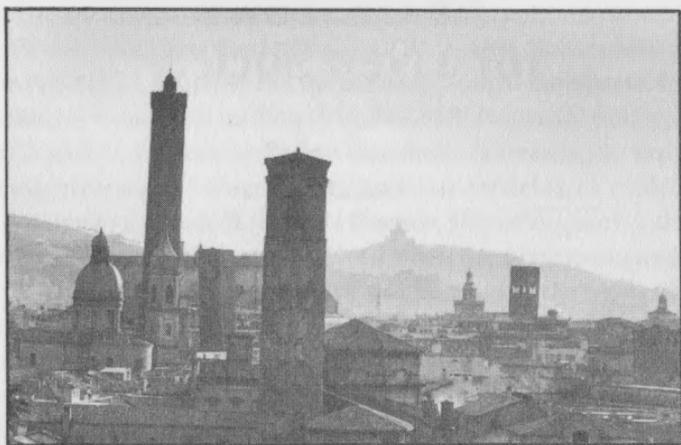
2

An Old Town for a New Society

Sil Schmid

'In Bologna I feel secure. When I'm in another city, I feel naked.' This statement is typical of many cited in a sociological investigation of attitudes to Bologna's historic city centre. The researchers set out to learn how Bologna's residents regarded their Old Town, and which of its architectural aspects made the greatest impression on them. The most frequent answers were: the arcades, the narrow streets, the rust-red plaster. Antique windows, sculpted pillars, pavements, turrets, doors, gates, portals and churches were also named as important characteristics of the Old Town.

The Bolognese chronicler, Guido Zucchini's description of his city is not significantly different. In 1930, he complained that Bologna did not arouse the same rapture in visitors as did Florence, for example. 'The City of Bologna is not as famous as it deserves. Its austere beauty, its severe streets and facades, the endless straight lines of its arcades, the play of shadows in its winding streets and light-filled squares, the delicate terracotta detail, the calm baroque aspects do not give the hasty visitor ready enjoyment and do not make him exclaim in delight.'



Even in a time of collective travel-fever, Bologna has not become a mecca for tourists. While Venice, Florence or Siena are mobbed by tourists every summer, the Bolognese have their alleys and arcades largely to themselves. Possibly this contributes to the feeling of security of which all residents speak. However, it is more probable that they have this feeling of well-being for quite other reasons. The host at one of Bologna's many restaurants names it Bologna's special 'quality of life'.

What quality of life actually means can best be measured where it is missing. Urban-planners summarise the crisis of Italian cities with such concepts as monotony, superannuation, and depopulation. They

speak of the isolation of the remaining inner-city residents, the grass-widow syndrome, and of commuters who have been forced into the suburbs. The general malaise of city life acts as a constant irritant to residents who complain of a multitude of problems; among them, housing shortages, noise and air pollution. Sociologists further point to the inadequate social integration of city inhabitants and thus explain their alienation and depoliticisation. Meanwhile, people nostalgically lament the destruction of whole areas of cities and the intrusion of concrete and glass facades in once familiar skylines.

Broadly speaking, Bologna has been spared all these crisis symptoms:

- In Bologna demolition men are seldom seen at work. In the last five years not a single house has been demolished in the 'Centro Storico', the historic centre. Rows of houses stand unmolested on tree-lined streets without a gap. Only one multi-storey block juts out against the familiar skyline — an accident of planning in the sixties. Today the Bolognese mock it as an ugly intruder.

- While in other towns whole rows of houses have disappeared Bologna's medieval network of streets and alleys has been maintained. Only a few streets are congested by traffic. The majority of them are open only to taxis, buses and delivery vehicles. Instead of adapting the street network to the traffic, the Bolognese have adapted traffic to the streets.

This is a good start; but it is not enough for Bolognese administrators. On being asked in Spring 1975 what were the achievements of his department in the area of urban planning, the Building Councillor Pier Luigi Cervellati laconically replied 'None'. What was the basis for such a reply? 'Without public ownership of land there can be no socialist land policy.'

In 1877 Friedrich Engels described the mechanics of capitalist land policies in his essay 'The Housing Question'.

'The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value, instead of increasing it, because they no longer correspond to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers' houses which are situated centrally and whose rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses, and

public buildings are erected.... The result is that the workers are forced out of the centre of the towns towards the outskirts; that workers' dwellings in general, become rare and expensive and often altogether unobtainable, for under these circumstances the building industry, which is offered a much better field for speculation by more expensive houses, builds workers' dwellings only by way of exception.'

The last hundred years have confirmed Engels' thesis. To the history of the modern western metropolis, there is now a common postscript. Hardly a city exists which does not lament a major loss of its architectural heritage. The same fate threatens Bologna. The power of capitalist development does not simply fade away in a red region. Migration from the country and the transformation of the cities into service centres cannot simply be wished away in a capitalist economy. As elsewhere, specialization, ground rents and speculation are part of Bologna's structure. But the goal of the Bolognese administration is at the very least to neutralise their negative effect.

This has not always been the case. A desire for expansion also characterised the vision of the future during the post-war years here. In 1958 the 'Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG) foresaw the doubling of the population to a million. And as late as 1970 a plan by the famous Japanese architect, Kenzo Tange, attracted attention in the international architectural press. It was called 'Bologna 1984'. Kenzo Tange had been commissioned in 1967 'to open up new dimensions'. He planned a huge industrial estate to the north-east of the city which would house 95,000 residents and have jobs for 54,000 people. Local authorities and architects praised the project. But the scheme was gradually seen to be quite unfitting, and its planners quietly shelved this embarrassing testimony to the megalomania of the sixties. They had good reason to do so. The boom which had begun in the fifties had made the catastrophic results of growth-orientated planning increasingly clear. Speculation was rife. Businesses and small industries had been forced out into surrounding areas. Personnel-intensive service industries took their place. Workers' flats had to give way to office blocks or expensive luxury flats. Their former occupiers had to make do with the modern estates on the city limits. This, in turn, gave rise to the need to commute from home to work.

The consequences: noise, air pollution, traffic jams.

Speculation began to affect the character of the city. Even the 'Centro Storico' was threatened with destruction.

- One area within the medieval walls already bears the mark of

this speculation: three-quarters of the Marconi neighbourhood was flattened by allied bombs in 1944 and 1945. Here was the opportunity for an architecturally and socially viable reconstruction programme. But Bologna failed. With its unattractive facades, grim office-buildings and barrack-like blocks of flats, this district is a blemish on the 'Centro Storico'.

● In the very heart of the medieval centre, another block of buildings fell to demolition men. The same thing happened in the Piazza Galileo Galilei immediately behind the main square. And on two of the most beautiful streets in the area, both bordered by arcades, a row of sixteenth century buildings with their romantic annexe courtyards had to give way to a new building complex, the Trade and Traffic College.

● Similarly, at the end of the fifties, powerless authorities stood by as the monastery gardens of San Domenico and San Mattia were cleared out and built on.

It was at this point that the city's left wing administrators remembered their mentors — Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 'The crisis of the cities does not only spring from the failure of capital to discover in itself sufficient strength and means for implementing the tasks formulated by architects. The crisis is the logical consequence of a conscious decision made by the capitalist system concerning its own development. A development which sees human beings as mere instruments for the production of profit and not as masters of their own destiny.' This quote from Building Councillor Cervellati, reveals the Bolognese Council's desire to stop a disastrous trend. By means of careful planning it intends to assume control of the city's development.

Stimulus for the formulation of such new guidelines came from the urban-planning debate, which began among the Italian public generally. The unions incorporated this in their campaign for more humane living conditions; and in 1969 millions of Italian workers laid down their tools in a general strike which had as its aim the reform of housing and planning policies. Planning measures produced between 1960 and 1970 reflect the growth of awareness in the Italian labour movement and in the planning offices responsible for Bologna. This growth found material expression in the battle for the preservation of the two-hundred-year-old church of San Giorgio which was to be sold and replaced by a supermarket. The Council fought this battle together with the building protection organisation 'Italia nostra'.

For Bologna's urban planning department, it is now a question of working out new legal principles. Their goal is a new 'Piano

Regolatore Generale' (PRG); and a series of short-term measures should prevent further damage to the city.

● An important step towards limiting speculation was taken by reducing the permissible density of construction. In 1968 the city issued a decree concerning the extent of land-use. The new ruling allowed only three cubic metres to be built on lots of one square metre of ground area. With this rule one basic incentive for the demolition of old houses disappears. A new building will now bring considerably less useful space than the original building — and that means smaller returns.

● In 1969 the new plan for the hill zone placed another limit on property speculation. Bologna's hills form the natural boundary of the city to the south. Just as they do everywhere else, rich citizens here prefer the hilly parts of the city. Pompous villas and churches adorn the romantic 'Collina', crowned by the eighteenth-century church of the Madonna di San Luca. This is connected to the town by a three-kilometre-long arcade. At the foot of the hill spreads the villa quarter and in the valleys between the hills (basically used for farming), the post-war residences of the nouveau-riche. The City Council put an end to building activity on the hills by means of the 'Piano della Zona Collinare'. This plan declared the whole area a green belt and contained strict conservation orders for monasteries, feudal villages and farmhouses.

● In 1969 Cervellati's doctrine of the conservation of the city was put into operation with the 'Piano Centro Storico', the Plan for the Old Town. It declared the whole of the town inside the walls to be a monument worthy of preservation. By monument Bologna's planners do not mean simply an impressive building, but a complex of buildings, residents and environmental conditions which are worth maintaining both physically and socially.

Preservation requires specific knowledge. Thus, a catalogue of all the buildings in the 'Centro Storico' has been compiled listing the type of building, its structural aspects and so on. Six categories govern renovation or 'conservative restoration' as Cervellati calls it:

1. Culturally valuable buildings which may not be changed in any respect — unless it is to restore their former condition. Here the principle of scientific restoration is applied.

2. Culturally valuable buildings which, unlike the first category, can be subjected to a change in use. Small alterations are allowed in adapting the building to its new purpose. But here too the principle remains 'scientific restoration'.

3. All other Old Town houses (mostly simple blocks of flats)

must be preserved or restored; and this applies to their inner structures as well, so that changes in use are scarcely possible.

4. More recent buildings, of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries whose facades are to be preserved. Internal alterations are allowed but these must match the facade.

5. Modern speculative buildings, for example in the district of Marconi. These may be demolished. New buildings can be put up, but these must comply with the strict building-density regulations as well as rules regarding their eventual use.

6. Thirteen areas to be dealt with by the Council. These contain very dilapidated building-complexes which urgently require renewal. Special provisions apply to them.

The Plan further calls for an analysis of all buildings according to functional criteria. This proceeds from the assumption that solutions can be found in the existing framework of buildings to meet the needs of those wishing to erect new buildings — without in fact building new ones at all. The people who run the 'Ufficio Tecnico' make a list of all representative buildings from earlier centuries — monasteries, churches, palaces, towers — buildings especially suitable for administrative purposes, but also fitted to cultural and educational needs. Historic stately buildings may also be adapted to tourism and the commercial needs of private citizens, insofar as these serve the city and its people.



Thus, the plan rigorously protects the entire historic centre of Bologna, the biggest in Italy after Venice and, therefore, probably the second largest in Europe.

● In April 1970 the council ratified the Variation on the 1958 'Piano Regolatore' which they had been preparing for years. Actually

this is a completely new plan which supersedes all earlier ones and finally ends the growth-orientated vision so dear to the fifties and sixties. The plan sets a population ceiling of 600,000.

The goal of the new PRG consists, in the words of Mayor Renato Zangheri, in re-establishing 'the balance between town and country, between places of work and homes, between houses and public buildings.'

The legal basis for this massive involvement of the Council in the private disposal of property and land is provided by a national law, the 'decreto ministeriale' of 2 April 1968 known as 'standards urbanistici'. By means of this skeleton law, the state grants every Italian citizen the right to a minimum of public land. The city councils are, therefore, obliged to allocate at least eighteen square metres per resident to space for education and leisure.

Italy's citizens owe this allocation to the 1963/64 move to the left — the entry of the socialists in the national government. Bologna's urban-planners have used this gift from Rome better than any other City Council in the country. With the new plan, they raised the 'standards urbanistici' to 64 square metres of public land: ten square metres for schools for the under fives, twenty square metres for schools and green areas within the districts, and 26 square metres for recreation outside the city — on the hills or by the banks of the river Reno.

'That means we have taken 7067 acres away from the speculators,' states Mayor Zangheri. He points to another significant feature of the new plan. 'It isn't a novelty in Italian planning merely because of its goals. The way it was worked out is also new.'

This is certainly true. Literally thousands of Bolognese participated directly in the making of this plan, since all basic provisions were discussed, approved or altered in part, in the neighbourhoods. In hundreds of meetings over two years, work groups, neighbourhood councils and assemblies dealt with the theoretical aspects of the plan and took part in concrete research. All eighteen neighbourhoods drew up a list of existing arrangements for nursery schools, secondary schools and recreation and gave it to the planning offices. In addition they investigated the need for new arrangements and looked round their own territory for suitable properties and areas.

This active participation of individual citizens in the planning process cannot fail to have important results. As Mayor Zangheri says: 'The new plan expresses the will of the masses. Men and women of all party affiliations support it at the base, in neighbourhoods and factories. Just try to change a single item on the list of goals decreed by

the neighbourhood — and there will be a rebellion.’ There is, however, another provision for the democratic control of land-use. This comes from the Decentralisation Department and stipulates that approval for new building plans should come from the neighbourhood as well as the ‘technical office’ — and this office is asked to consider social aspects as well as purely structural ones.

What this means in practice was made clear in January 1975 by a well-known contractor who can depend on favourable treatment in most places — Fiat.

The Turin car giant runs a small subsidiary, the Fiat Trattori in Bologna. The building is on a favourable site in Saffi, an area immediately outside the city walls. The Fiat management drew up plans to transfer Fiat Trattori to the province of Modena and to replace the building by flats — in accordance with the principles of the PRG.

The Saffi neighbourhood council received the plan for consideration according to normal procedure, and investigated its social aspects. They discovered that sixty-two Bolognese workers would lose their jobs as a result of the transfer. The verdict of the council was therefore ‘no’. First they said, Fiat would have to negotiate with the unions about the transfer. ‘Only then,’ claimed the written decision, ‘will building permission be granted.’ This decision was reached not only by the left-wingers in Saffi, but also by Christian Democrats, Liberals and Social Democrats.

Private building contractors have quickly learned what examination of building projects from a social standpoint entails. In many cases permission for alterations has been refused because the problem of accommodating residents of the building concerned was not solved. ‘We send neighbourhood representatives into the building. They speak with all the tenants. If there are problems, we look for a solution together. Only when all the tenants have been accommodated elsewhere do we grant permission,’ explains a Councillor from Irnerio.

The example of Bologna shows that an energetic planning policy on the part of the authorities together with local participation can set goals and channel developments. It can help move a city towards a sensible life-style. But it cannot cure deeply-rooted problems such as those caused by land rent — revenue from property without any output of labour or capital expenditure by the owner.

Cervellati spoke to the City Council about this in January 1973: ‘The profit margins from ground rent are considerably higher than profits produced by building.’ This gap between the yield from production and that from parasitical land rents has repeatedly been

attacked by Cervellati. 'It forces the building industry into an ominous dependence on property speculators. Even technological innovations are sacrificed to this dependence. It allows long obsolete forms of enterprise to survive; it prevents experiments with new types of building. In short it forces building capital to ally with land capital to defend existing production relations — and thus existing profit margins.'



Customary housing grievances abound in Bologna, as elsewhere. National regulations for the protection of tenants are often circumvented by house-owners here. The tenants' union, Sunia, produced a Black Book with thirty reproductions of illegal eviction notices and rent increases. 'The majority of the 90,000 Bolognese tenants have had an average rent increase of £10 (\$17) in recent months,' the tenants' organisation reported with indignation. 'Flats at less than £40 or £50 (\$68-\$80) are almost impossible to find in Bologna. But there are more than 10,000 unlet premises.' Such a shortage of economical housing while luxury accommodation remains empty is the normal state of affairs in Europe. Bologna is trying to find alternatives to this situation and the most important instrument for this is the PEEP ('Piano di Edifizia Economica e Popolare'), a plan for the construction of public housing.

In April 1962 a national law came into force which required local councils to work out a ten-year plan for public housing. In addition the law controlled the expropriation of the necessary building land — at 1961 market prices.

The Bolognese Council passed the requested plan as early as 1963. And in 1971 after the expiry of the first phase of the PEEP, 74,000 housing units (rooms) had been built in the Emilian capital.

In the interval, a new housing law the 'leggo 865' made Rome's 'opening to the left' noticeable. Land expropriated for public housing was no longer to be compensated at market prices but at a rate corresponding to its agricultural value.

On the basis of this law, the Bolognese produced a new plan, the 'PEEP Second Phase.' It envisages the provision of 16,000 housing units on the outskirts of the town and 6,000 in the centre — by the renovation of existing old buildings. The formula for the provision of housing in the middle of the town is called, the 'PEEP Centro Storico.'

This is Cervellati's masterstroke. It will help thousands of Bolognese citizens to obtain decent homes in the heart of the city. And it makes the Building Councillor's favourite ideal practical: conservation of the city to the benefit of otherwise under-privileged classes, through preservation of blocks of flats in their original form, with their original tenants and at the original rent. This would not happen entirely at the cost of the already overstretched budget of the city but would come in part out of private speculative profits. The procedure which Cervellati's Department worked out in the framework of the 'PEEP Centro Storico' is relatively simple and could be applied, assuming the necessary political will, in other Italian cities.

● The 'PEEP Centro Storico' selects five especially run-down areas for public housing out of the thirteen areas already picked out for renovation in the Old Town plan of 1969: Santa Caterina, Solferino, Fondazza, San Leonardo, San Carlo. They contain houses exclusively from the third category of the 'Piano Centro Storico', that is, simple workers' houses.

● In these five zones the private owners are obliged to take over the renovation plans from the building department and carry them out with rigorous accuracy.

● In return the Council gives support to the building contractors — for example by obtaining building credits for them from the banks and taking over the payment of interest — which is extremely high in Italy.

● For their part, the houseowners are compelled to take in the

same tenants and not raise the rent when the alterations are completed.

Architect Stefano Pompei, member of an architectural co-operative, gave an interview in Spring 1975 on the consequences of the PEEP Centro Storico for Bologna's architects.

Sil Schmid: Mr. Pompei how do you proceed when you are commissioned to alter a house in Bologna's Old Town?

Pompei: First of all I check whether it is in one of the five PEEP zones.

Schmid: And if it is there?

Pompei: In that case I must adopt the plans that the City Council has worked out for all these houses. I must complete it within two years. In addition the building contractor cannot evict any of the tenants nor increase rents. In return, he can claim financial help from the Council.

Schmid: How can the Council force the houseowner to accept these conditions?

Pompei: That is quite simple – if he doesn't accept, the property is expropriated.

Schmid: At what price?

Pompei: At a price between the expropriation price and the market price. The expropriation price is very low, it corresponds to the agricultural value of the land. When the national law which allowed expropriation at this price was forced through, there was a massive outcry. It became apparent then, that many houseowners in Bologna are not in fact capitalists, but small citizens or even workers or pensioners. For that reason the Council agreed on a compromise price with them, which is, however, far below the market price.

Schmid: And if the house is not in one of these five zones?

Pompei: Then it must only conform to the rules of restoration. Here some small alterations may be undertaken, but the rules are very strict: traditional materials and technology must be used. In addition, the level of use must not be changed.

Schmid: What does that mean in concrete terms?

Pompei: The same total area may be used for accommodation, but no more. For example if someone wants to extend an attic, he may do so only if it was inhabited before. If not, it may only be used as compensation for other rooms which because of alterations have been lost as 'living space'. In addition, the contractor must, in this case, pay a high tax to the Council.

Schmid: What do you mean by high?

Pompei: £600 (\$1100) has been known to be paid to the

Council for the approval of one extra bath.

Schmid: What happens to this money?

Pompei: It is put in a fund for such things as kindergartens, schools, parks.

Schmid: Have these measures been successful in preventing speculation?

Pompei: Only in part. There are new forms of speculation. If someone pays £67 (\$110) per square metre to buy a house and another twice that much per square metre to renovate it, then he sells the flat for £300 (\$510) per square metre.

Schmid: Who grants building permission?

Pompei: The neighbourhood committees.

Schmid: What is your opinion of their work?

Pompei: They take it seriously. They send people into the building to see whether the problems which the alteration will create for the tenants are taken care of. If not, they withhold permission. They are very stringent – sometimes overly so.

Schmid: Doesn't that disproportionately drag out the process of granting permission?

Pompei: The local committees might sit on a project for three months; but one cannot say that the examination of the plan is being delayed for bureaucratic reasons – as happens all the time in other cities.

Schmid: Doesn't this approval procedure cut down your opportunities for work and your earnings?

Pompei: No, the planning process has merely grown longer. There is now more work for each individual building.

Schmid: Does that mean you approve of these regulations?

Pompei: Of course! At first most of the architects of Bologna were against them, but now very few architects think of opposing the regulations – even if they are anti-communist.

Schmid: Don't the rules mean a limitation of your creative activity?

Pompei: No. The use of traditional techniques is very stimulating. In addition, there are areas in which the regulations actually specify and support contemporary, modern solutions: for example, in areas where no building worthy of preservation is threatened with demolition.

The 'PEEP Centro Storico' which has developed into the most important instrument for the preservation of the Old Town, did initially meet with bitter resistance in the City Council. The Christian Democrat, Giuseppe Coccoloni, compared Cervellati's city preservation policy with the 'normalisation of Czechoslovakia by the

Soviet Union.' However, in the final vote the project was passed with only one vote against, that of the neo-fascist Alessandro Mazzanti. Liberals and Christian Democrats abstained.

Bologna's conservation methods were what first attracted international attention to the city. The European council showed its admiration as did the international press.

But there was, of course, criticism from the political opposition. The Christian Democrat, Nino Andreatta, stated: 'The plan is good on paper, but it will never be carried out.' On the occasion of an urban planning congress in 1974, the local Christian Democrats managed to gain the attention of foreign delegates by a polemical press-communiqué: 'Under the communist administration irreparable harm has been done to the city,' it stated and continued to attack 'planning megalomania and property speculation.'



However, Cervellati and his colleagues stuck to their guns. 'We don't operate outside the system even in Bologna,' the Councillor reminds his critics. 'Even here, speculation and despotic landlords still exist. And here too, the effort to develop socialist alternatives to capitalist laws costs a great deal of time, money and courage.' However, the Building Department is doggedly adhering to its policy of small steps.

● In April 1975 Cervellati submitted to the City Council the skeleton contract which would in the future govern the relations between houseowners and the community in the Centro Storico. It had already been passed by all five Old Town areas with Yes votes from all parties.

● In May 1975 the first tenants moved into the Casa Parcheggio, a building which accommodates residents of the area while their own

flats are being modernised. When these latter are ready, they will move back into them, at the old rent.

In Bologna, pensioners and workers — and not architects, artists and intellectuals — live in carefully restored Old Town flats. 'That is admittedly not the revolution, but it is revolutionary,' comments a colleague of Cervellati.



Despite these noteworthy attempts at the preservation of the Old Town as an area of workers' housing, most of Bologna's workers still live in the outskirts of the city. These areas, in contrast to many other Italian suburbs, have not become chaotic concrete jungles thanks to the housing co-operatives, the close allies of the local authorities. Next to the national fund for public housing 'Gescal', the co-ops are the main instrument of PEEP. They produced 30,523 housing units (rooms) in 1973 against 7,126 privately-built units.

This pact between Council and co-operatives, has led to massive reductions in the cost of public housing. Savings do not come from the city treasury in the form of subsidies, but from private profits: the speculative profits deriving from the purchase of land and the entrepreneurial profits deriving from the production process. This procedure has contributed to the establishment of flats within the PEEP for tens of thousands of co-operative members in the last ten years.

● Under the aegis of the PEEP, the Council has programmed 1178 acres on the outskirts and about 12 acres in the centre for public housing. In 1975, 482 acres were already under community control.

● The community has allocated this land to carry out public housing policy at rates as low as 10 per cent of the market price.

● The co-operatives have their own planning offices which elaborate plans for the PEEP estates. Their guiding principle here is, 'the co-operative refuses to regard public housing as housing for the poor.' In concrete terms this means: imaginative design, spacious and very comfortable if not luxurious finish. Average size is 32 square metres per resident.

● Building projects are not offered for public tender but pass directly to the production co-operatives. So cost-pricing is regulated not by competition but by an open policy. It is determined by the co-operatives in conjunction with building contractors.

● Neither the housing co-operatives nor the building co-operatives are profit-orientated. The result is reductions in costs, as compared to private builders, of 30 per cent to 40 per cent.

● Every citizen over the age of 21 can become a member of a housing co-operative. Over 15,000 Bolognese already are and flats are allocated according to the date of joining.

The housing co-operatives have, until now, operated in line with the Italian tradition. The flats are bought, not rented, by the co-operative members at a price of about a quarter of the building cost.

The co-operatives now reject this ownership policy, not just because they consider it anti-social, but also for political reasons. 'Property integrates,' explains a functionary of the 'Cooperazione'. 'Whoever owns a flat has a privilege to defend.' They are now striving for a socially and politically acceptable solution. According to the new principle of 'proprietà indivisa' (joint property), a member would gain the right to occupy a flat by paying a monthly rent over thirty to thirty-five years. This total price corresponds to the building costs of the flat plus a supplement for administration and maintenance.

There is, however, another reason for the 'proprietà indivisa': co-operative property should be administrated co-operatively. 'Self-administration' is the motto of the co-operatives — in many PEEP buildings it is already a reality.

'In our block, a great number of people were interested in helping the building,' says Romano Rizzo, a street sweeper and resident of Barca. 'We have held meetings and considered what the maintenance

involves. Then, responsible people were elected to every office. For instance the 'caposcala' (staircase chief) supervises the cleanliness of the staircase.'

The principle of self-management also applies to public services in each estate. There are regular community meetings of men, women and youths to discuss playgrounds and sports fields, the running of houses and existing playgrounds; care of the library and organising sporting or cultural events. And these committees link up with the next biggest unit, the neighbourhood. Education, transport and social problems frequently find their way from the estate-residents committee to the neighbourhood assembly and from there to the City Council.

The elevation of estate residents to active community members, from passive housing consumers is an important point of departure for a socialist housing policy. Co-operative spokeswoman Noemi Zunarelli defines it thus: 'We don't want merely to build houses, but to create living organisms in which the isolation and alienation of the city resident is overcome.'



The city fathers are the first to lament the fact that despite all these efforts Bologna still has a housing shortage and poor conditions for tenants. 'The national government is to blame,' declared Mayor Zangheri when he gave an account of his period of office on 1st May 1975. 'The plans are ready. The land is available. Only lack of money is hindering our housing efforts.'

His colleague in the City Council, Pier Luigi Cervellati, prophesied years ago that the ten-year plan for public housing would not be fulfilled for lack of finances. The council had demanded £6,700,000 (\$11,000,000) to fulfil the commitments laid out in the

PEEP. The national treasury allowed the Bolognese a pathetic £500,000 (\$850,000) – out of their own taxes!

However, compared with the rest of the country, Bologna is a shining example. In 1973 the community was responsible through PEEP for 57 per cent of all new housing. Nationally, in the same period, the proportion of new public housing was 3 per cent.

Bologna's planners do not see shortage of money and resistance from Rome as their only enemy. Luigi Colombari, the former socialist Councillor for Urban Planning has called attention to other dangers:

'The town is increasingly becoming a place where workers are forced into a way of life which subordinates them to the complexities of modern consumption mechanisms, to the pressures of hire purchase and advertising.' Thereby, according to Colombari, the ruling classes can pick the workers' pockets for the share of the profits unions have struggled to win in recent years. 'Even planning,' warned the Councillor 'can become a means of manipulation if it is hypocritically regarded as value-free and is not adapted to the needs of the working class.'

Bologna's urban-planners work to adapt their plans to the needs of the working class. In 1973 Colombari announced a new PRG whose most important goals and regulations were once again worked out in the neighbourhoods. For Bologna, it is not just a question of more planning, but of more democracy. As Colombari puts it, 'What we want is to push on from democratic participation to the socialisation of power.'

Traffic Policy:



‘Free Fares were Only the Beginning’

Max Jäggi

‘Once we regarded traffic as a purely technical problem,’ recalls **Mauro Formaglini**, Bologna’s Traffic Councillor until 1975. Bologna, like every Western city of its size, used to have its daily traffic breakdown. Beautiful streets and squares were congested. A motorized iron avalanche poured daily into the city. Residents, especially in the narrow streets of the Old Town, where exhaust fumes are worse and noise reverberates more than in the open, were forced to realise that Bologna had more cars in proportion to population than any city in Italy except Turin — with a car for every 2.6 residents (1972).

This was in the car-mad sixties when the historic **Piazza Maggiore** was being used as a car park. During this epoch of motorised chaos, Bologna’s pedestrians were relegated to second-class road-users; and public buses, caught in traffic jams, used up most of their petrol in standing still. As late as 1972, no fewer than 200,000 cars a day poured into the **Centro Storico** and created an almost permanent haze over the area, causing the leaves in parks to turn grey.



Now Bologna’s street scene has changed. Children play basketball and old people rest on benches in the **Piazza del Unità** — in the workers’ district of Bologna — where before endless queues of cars idled at traffic lights. Similarly on the **Via Libia** in San Donato the schoolchildren can run onto the street without danger; this street, like ten others, which endangered schoolchildren, has been closed to traffic.

Again, the elegant **Via d’Azeglio** in the middle of the Old Town where the drivers once hurtled impatiently towards the shops, has now been made into a pedestrian zone where the Bolognese can stroll leisurely when doing their shopping.

The **Piazza Maggiore**, **Piazza Nettuno** and **Piazza Rè Enzo** still

reverberate to the sound of engines. However, these are no longer the countless private cars which once crawled nose-to-tail over the antique cobbles, but the red, yellow or dark green public buses which run at regular intervals to the outskirts of the city.

Bologna has, of course, not solved all its traffic problems at a stroke. Nor has it suddenly become a pedestrian paradise.

But decisive changes have taken place. City Council and traffic planners are developing a traffic concept directly aimed at the well-being and quality of life of the people. This decision is not a mere technical one. Mauro Formaglini says: 'We have now realised that every traffic question has a political side too.'

The best reform plan is not one which promises to increase private profit for a privileged minority, but one which benefits the majority of people. Multi-storey city-centre car-parks which would bring more customers to a few businessmen and bankers, but which would make all the citizens suffer from increased levels of carbon monoxide are rejected. Instead emphasis is on an efficient public transport system which can get workers to work quickly.

The Bolognese do not only travel more quickly. Since April 1973, they also travel during rush-hour free of charge. Workers do not need loose change or expensive season tickets. Bus transport every working day till 9am and from 4.30pm to 8pm, costs nothing. The rest of the time, including Sundays and holidays, it costs only three pence (5c).

Bologna's traffic-planners envisage abolishing even this low, almost nominal, charge. While elsewhere in Europe escalating fares hit directly at the low wage-earner, Bologna is in the process of abolishing fares altogether. As a step in this direction, schoolchildren and students (at specific times) and pensioners (all the time) can travel free outside rush hours. In Bologna, public transport is not seen as a profit-making undertaking.

'We must gradually achieve completely free transport,' declares Formaglini. 'Only then can public transport be what it ought to be, a genuine social service.' Politicians have the support of the majority in this matter. Since the introduction of the rush-hour free-fare, the buses have been experiencing a real passenger boom. At the beginning of the 70s there were 320,000 passenger journeys a day; there are now 480,000 — a respectable 50 per cent increase.

Workers who previously struggled through rush-hour traffic by car, motor-bike or moped; children who went to school on foot or bicycle now use the free-fare buses. Bologna has successfully initiated a

radical change in travelling habits, something that traffic technocrats have been vainly striving for in most European cities for years. In some of these cities, there have been experiments with free fares or cheap tickets as attempts to make public transport more attractive to the people. However, these have been complete failures, apparently proving how unsuitable and unrealistic a free or almost free public transport system is. In Rome, for instance, there was a temporary free scheme in 1972, but the streets were still crammed with private traffic. In Hanover, demonstrations forced a 9 per cent reduction in fares, but the increase in the use of public transport was not even 1 per cent.

The Bolognese success in achieving what only a few, ridiculed traffic-experts believed possible, is not due simply to the fact that bus travel is free. 'Of course I would think twice about using a bus if I had to pay for it,' says an electro-mechanic from Mazzini, who works in Bologna and travels six kilometres each way every day. 'But if the bus were always caught up in heavy traffic, even the free-fare wouldn't help.' In other words, free-fare alone would not be enough to change the travelling habits of a car-happy town. For that, one needs an efficient public service.

In Bologna, the free-fare policy is part of a socially-conceived financing policy which protects lower income groups and ensures that a badly paid labourer does not pay as much for a public service as his managing director. The drop in transport takings is compensated for by the deduction from the employers of a sum equivalent to .8 per cent of the total wage bill which goes to the city treasury. This, together with astute planning which sees free-fares as only part of a comprehensive traffic policy, has made bus service in Bologna quick, frequent and therefore a viable alternative to private transport.

In November 1971, in an interview with the communist daily newspaper, 'L'Unità', Mayor Zangheri announced 'co-ordinated measures' to improve traffic conditions within Bologna. 'Apart from the introduction of the free-fare,' he explained, 'we must assure the efficiency of public transport — and that means greater speed and frequency.' When asked when the co-ordinated measures would become reality, the Mayor answered, 'Not before we have discussed the subject thoroughly with the workers and citizens of the city. To achieve positive results we must avoid purely administrative or directive decision-making.'

This answer is indicative of the political understanding of the Bolognese administration. It fits in perfectly with their radical decentralisation efforts which move decision-making away from the

town-hall to the eighteen neighbourhoods — to the citizens directly affected by every political decision. Preparing the traffic plan which was to bring 'mobility and ambience' (the motto) to the city, meant holding hundreds of meetings between autumn 1971 and summer 1972 in which politicians, planners and technicians sat down with the traffic committees of the individual neighbourhoods to work out goals and advise on possible measures. When the theme of city traffic was on the agenda, visitors thronged to the regular assemblies. In spring 1972, hardly an evening passed without debates in some assembly hall somewhere between workers and students, shop-owners and housewives, on Bologna's traffic future.

Everything in any way connected with city traffic was discussed — from the future effect of the car on noise levels in an Old Town alley to the creation of an additional one-way street. The consequences of banning parking in the city centre and of special bus-lanes were considered and ordinary citizens criticised the suggestions of traffic experts. They formulated demands, argued about priorities, and above all drew up without compromise a list of their needs.

Bologna's administrators are convinced that this is the only way to democratic, political decision-making. Only if information flows from 'below to above' — from the working people to the authorities — can elected politicians be certain about the concrete political consequences of any change in policy direction.

In contrast with cities ruled by bourgeois parties, a well-developed system of participation and self-determination is open to the Bolognese with their neighbourhood assemblies, committees, and councils. As a member of the Mazzini Council points out, this 'is still not socialism, but at least it involves more democracy.'

Bologna did not arrive at a traffic solution merely by encouraging a direct formulation of the will of the people. Scientific surveys of the volume of traffic in the city and of the behaviour of the people involved in traffic, measuring of noise levels and air-pollution played an equal part in the process. Analyses of the medieval street and alley structure were considered together with latest accident statistics. Representative opinion polls on the habits and desires of pedestrians; computer-directed investigations of shuttle services all played their part.

Figures specifically applying to Bologna, extracted from the Italian census of 1971, show that about one third of the Bolognese make their journey to school or work on foot. This means that a great number of city homes and places of work are close together (the poll

also showed that people on average only choose to walk if the journey does not take longer than eleven minutes).

However, the study also brings out some less pleasant aspects of the Bolognese traffic situation. Only about 29 per cent of the people made their journey by public transport; but from four to ten thousand Bolognese sat at the wheel of their Fiat or Alfa Romeo every day to travel to work apparently 'autonomously', but in fact gripped by traffic stress.

Moreover, 75 per cent of Bolognese residents whose work was based outside the city (in 1971 - 18,000) preferred the private car for their daily journey, whether there were traffic jams or not.

One further survey provided information significant to the new traffic-planners. This survey left no doubt that the Bolognese preferred their cars to the uncertain charm of the public bus system. It took the form of a large-scale census of traffic in the historical centre during several weeks in the winter of 1972.

One of the most impressive figures in the census showed that in 24 hours along 36 streets, 200,000 vehicles of all categories made their tortuous way into the city centre. Compared with a 1964 figure, this implies an increase in traffic volume in the Old Town of about 35 per cent.

The results of such investigations and the detailed debates among the residents created a broad spectrum of ideas and suggestions, for an effective traffic reform plan. These encouraged the administration to lay before the City Council a comprehensive catalogue of radical measures to save Bologna from being choked to death by traffic. 9 June 1972 was an historic date. It was then that Mayor Zangheri and Traffic Councillor Formaglini presented the democratically-formulated plan to the City Council, the neighbourhood councils and representatives of political, union, economic and cultural organisations.

- The most important goals of the plan were as follows:
- Limitation of uneconomic use of the private car, especially for the daily journey to work.
- Preference for public transport and introduction of the partial free-fare.
- Investment policy in the public transport sector.
- Merger of the public transport companies of city and province in one consortium.
- Creation of decentralised car parks near the bus termini on the outskirts of the town.

● **Creation of new pedestrian zones in the centre and in the outlying neighbourhoods.**

Many meetings of the City Council were necessary before the go-ahead was given. The bourgeois opposition was highly critical and antagonistic. Christian Democrats, Republicans and neo-fascists attacked the proposed free-fare, in particular, for five whole sessions.

Finally at the City Council session of 7 July 1972, the programme crossed the last hurdle, as the left-wing parties (Communists, Socialists, and Party of Proletarian Unity) pooled their votes.

It is understandable that the bourgeois opposition should not be enamoured of the new traffic plan. It was not only that the social service, free-fare bus idea fitted in badly with their political credo. Nor was it only that they wanted nothing to do with the proposed policy of massive investment in public transport — since they were committed to savings in public expenditure to improve the critical position of the city's finances. What the bourgeois opposition had to be convinced of, step by step, was the extent to which capitalist urban development was destroying the citizen.

'The roots of modern city misery,' Formaglini told the bourgeois minority 'are to be found in the rape of our society — which has been going on now for almost a hundred years; and in the urban disorder which the post-war development process has created through property and capital speculation, undisturbed by any serious urban planning at all. The deepening crisis and imbalance which can be observed, on the urban as well as national plane have obvious roots in an economic development mechanism which rests firmly on motor-car consumption.'

City-dwellers everywhere are learning where this mass consumption must lead. It is a long proven fact that a single car travelling 40 kilometres uses up as much oxygen as four trees can produce in a day. Many newspapers recently carried reports showing that motorised street warfare causes 50,000 traffic deaths each year in Europe alone. Day after day city-dwellers in Milan, Naples, Turin, Paris, Frankfurt and London learn that car-crammed streets do not bring much-prized mobility to the city but rather cause polluted immobility.

However, not even the Arab oil crisis has succeeded in forcing a really effective change in traffic policy. After all, even if a car cannot move any more because of traffic, it still guarantees the private economy more profits than all other alternatives.

Traffic ideology usually expresses itself in demands for motorways and expressways. These – as economy-conscious planners know – will provide profitable control of a continually increasing flow of traffic. Experience has, of course, shown an increase in thruways and motorways simply means more traffic which then piles up in congested wide streets instead of narrow ones. The fact that whole cities, or at least areas, of cities thus lose their original human dimensions – without their inhabitants profiting in any way from the car boom – seems to be at best a second-rate problem for planners and politicians in most urban centres.

Things are different in Bologna. Instead of extending the inner-city network of streets – which would not have been possible except by destruction of the delicate city structure – the Bolognese decided to deprive the car of its primary place. Instead of degrading the status of townspeople to that of slaves of the internal combustion engine and its financial profiteers, they took note of the fact that cities had once been considered as homes for people. Formaglini explained this alternative aim: 'Our goal above all is the restoration of the human dimension of our city.'

What is this human scale? In Bologna, it is a narrow branching network of streets, alleys and squares which Bologna of the twentieth century inherited from the Bononia of Roman times and the Etruscan Felsina (as the city was then called). It includes the countless narrow connecting alleys and short-cuts between the Palazzi. These allow the pedestrian to move about the Old Town comfortably and relatively quickly. It means the traditional Bolognese arcades, called 'portici', along which people walk and stand, meet friends, talk, drink coffee. And it means the kinds of manageable distances, widths of streets, and distances between buildings which do not resign people into apathy.

The fact that such a street system was conceived not for cars, but for human needs, some thousand years ago does not constitute a reason for nostalgia for the Bolognese planners. Looking back to a time when all traffic – from horse-drawn carriages to pedestrians – moved under the arcades, only makes the people more aware that a city does not necessarily have to end up as a soul-less, concrete jungle. However, in a community where people are extremely aware of economic and social problems, such a degree of awareness about the quality of life must necessarily be transferred into a still more radical, political consciousness.

'The crisis of the cities is a political crisis, a crisis of the system', explained Formaglini. 'By starting a large-scale discussion about the

catastrophic traffic situation, we wanted to provoke a psychological and emotional reaction on the part of the people of the city. And I believe we have succeeded in this. Reaction is followed by reflection. The people consider the causes of the traffic chaos and soon discover that there are clear political reasons for it.' For example, the more quickly a city develops a shopping and administrative centre, the more quickly it sinks into a flood of traffic.

Conclusion: as time goes by such private business as produces traffic, should not be permitted to spread into the already saturated areas of the city, and in particular the Centro Storico and adjacent neighbourhoods. The possibilities of intervention are, however, fairly slim for the present because Bologna is still only one town in a capitalist state. Yet something can be achieved by the careful screening of building projects. For example in Saffi, a neighbourhood immediately adjacent to the Old Town, a responsible committee categorically rejected an application for building permission from the Italian Automobile Club. The reason: the proposed office block would attract too many cars to the district. At its previous location, the club could easily be reached by bus.

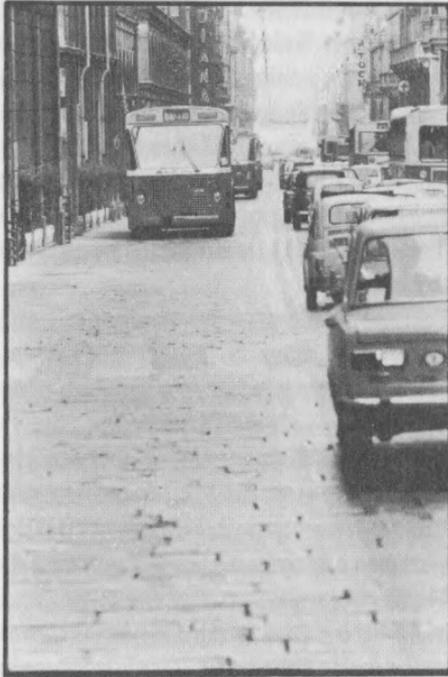
The City Council also makes its own contribution towards unravelling the traffic knot. Population control offices, building offices and other much-frequented administrative offices which were previously concentrated in the Town Hall in the City Centre and attracted countless motorized visitors have now largely been decentralised. The basic commitment to 'decentramento' — the delegation of extensive democratic decision-making powers to the neighbourhoods — does not only affect the political participation of the citizens. It also affects city transport and the entire process of creating a more humane city. Mauro Formaglini: 'We must proceed with urban decentralisation at the same time as political decentralisation.'

The achievements of the 1972 traffic plan as well as the plan itself, are a direct result of a policy of decentralisation which allows the people themselves to share and implement their opinions: Bologna's street network signals one such achievement of the plan.

Until 1972 Bologna's city streets (with the exception of a few already designated pedestrian zones) were open to private motorists for unlimited use. Admittedly, the council had already created some one-way systems and prohibited turns in certain areas. These few restrictions did not help much. They were, in most cases, a direct outcome of the city's basic structure, and seldom the expression of a conscious traffic policy. And so, drivers continued to go where they

wished in their pollution machines.

All this has now changed. Of a total of 580 kilometres of streets in the city, not quite one-quarter (i.e. 140 kilometres) remain open to motorists for unrestricted use. The use of the rest of the streets has been subjected to various restrictions by the traffic department. Categories include streets which only residents of that district may drive in; access streets which are open only to firms located there and their delivery services; streets or parts of streets reserved for taxis and buses; connecting streets which can only be used at certain times of day; pedestrian-zones which are closed to all forms of transport.



The point of departure for this ambitious project was a conclusion reached in extensive local debates: only a radical reduction of the number of streets available to cars can bring about a radical reduction in traffic volume. This temptingly simple conclusion took months of debate to formulate. Its implementation, however, was not at all simple. While clear majorities in favour of radical traffic reform crystallised in the various neighbourhoods, the proposed car control also aroused violent opposition.

Shop-owners and hotel-keepers, entrepreneurs, garage-owners and the majority of the businessmen who feared dwindling turn-over because of reduced traffic levels, raised an outcry against restricted and

partially-restricted zones. 'Most of them,' recalls a bus-driver who regularly followed his neighbourhood's debates, 'were not against limitations of private traffic in principle. But when it came to the street that ran past their door, they found a thousand reasons against restrictions.' Despite this, the will of the majority prevailed. This underlines the major difference between Bologna's planning democracy and the planning demagogy of other cities.

'Of course we don't want to crucify the car,' emphasizes Formaglini, 'but we do want to create a situation where it is only used when its use is rational. It seems to us irrational, for example, if someone goes to work by car. Then it stands around most of the time only to block the streets.'

The nucleus of the street reform is the creation of different classes of streets. Since the completion of the first phase of the plan, every street belongs to one of two main categories: The 'Rete Primaria' (primary networks) in which private traffic is permitted; or to the much longer 'Rete Secondaria' (secondary or subsidiary network) in which private traffic is restricted or completely forbidden.

● The primary network (1974: 140 kilometres) controls the traffic which is going through, to, or away from Bologna. Within this network there are three main street categories:

1. The 'tangenziale': a dual-carriageway by-pass which forms a northern semi-circle with a radius of three to five and one-half kilometres from the city centre and joins the Autostrada del Sole (Milan-Florence) with the motorways to Ferrara, Padua and Rimini.

2. The City Ring: a tree-lined boulevard which circles the Centro Storico along the lines of the Old City walls.

3. The star-shaped streets which act as spokes moving into the centre and join the Northern By-pass and the City-Ring. These streets allow access to certain entrances and exits of the Old Town.

● The secondary network (1974: 440 kilometres) serves internal traffic within the city. It is composed basically of access streets and so-called no-through roads, which formerly connected the present main-traffic areas. The signposting of these streets plays a decisive role in keeping them exclusive to internal traffic. No-entry signs and compulsory direction signs, one-way streets and diversions are arranged in such a way that the streets of the secondary network no longer connect the main traffic arteries. A driver who tries to take a short-cut to the main road on the other side of the town will fail in his aim. Signs will lead him back to the beginning and force him again on to the primary network. In addition, some of the internal traffic streets in the

Centro Storico are closed, even for access, at certain times of day.

Clearly, with such a policy, car-parks in the centre become undesirable intrusions. Therefore part of the local reform plan envisages the building of efficient car parks on the outskirts. At five locations near the by-pass, big park-and-ride zones are being set up to absorb motorized visitors to Bologna and allow them to change to public transport. Car-parks, petrol stations, services and a snack bar are planned inside these zones. A unanimously agreed-on regulation states that every new car-park is to have between 30 and 50 square metres of oxygen-generating greenery, for every 100 square metres of parking-space.

Every year the City Traffic department declares a few streets and parts of streets as pedestrian zones. In 1974, 47,000 square metres of public ground in the centre were given over to pedestrian use alone. (In 1970 it had been only a little over 20,000 square metres). Moreover, approximately 25,000 square metres of old city streets — which the Council partially closed to traffic in 1973 and 1974 — are now no longer available as car parks.

Such restrictions to private transport have already produced noticeable improvements in the city centre. Traffic censuses have shown that the motorized invasion of the city has lessened in intensity. In 1972 the number of cars which undertook the doubtful pleasure of a daily journey into the city was 200,000. Two years later it was under 160,000. That means a reduction of 25 per cent, in spite of the fact that the number of cars in Bologna continued to rise over the same period.

The Bolognese planners see the coeval fifty per cent increase in public transport use as being a logical consequence of their policy.

It was clear to them from the beginning that a change in traffic trends away from private to public transport would come about only if measures were introduced in both areas. The free-fare alone achieves nothing, if buses are caught in traffic jams and cannot keep to the time-table. Restrictions on car use do not help either, if citizens who are prevented from using their cars cannot find a place on a bus.

The first World Conference on City Transport took place in Bologna in June 1974. It was attended by 450 traffic specialists from eighty cities in twenty countries. Its aim was to work out concepts for the future of traffic. (See Declaration of Bologna). Traffic Councillor Formaglini formulated the city's concept of reform as follows: 'Without expecting miracles, we have tried to intervene effectively and to provide alternative solutions to traffic and public transport problems ... It is not enough just to talk about priority for public transport. It is

necessary to do something to ensure that the leading role does actually fall to public transport.'

What the Bolognese did includes raising the buses to a position of genuine preference on city roads. Streets, such as the Via Archigannasio or the Via de Carbonesi in the Centro Storico, were completely closed to private traffic and are now the exclusive domain of buses and taxis. Even where public vehicles have to share the streets with private ones, there are many bus-lanes on critical stretches. In 1974 on the 140 kilometre long primary network there were more than 30 kilometres of yellow marked lanes reserved for buses and taxis, most of them going the opposite way in one-way streets.



The Bologna Declaration

450 traffic specialists from 80 cities in 20 countries produced this document on the occasion of the First World Conference on City Traffic in 1974.

'The concentration in cities has attained monstrous proportions in our time and produced symptoms of collapse which threaten to destroy the achievements of economic progress and to do irreparable damage to the quality of life.

In certain countries, the lack of suitable restrictions and prohibitions concerning building in the cities has had the effect of letting an over-concentration of buildings, infra-structures and services develop in the centres. This has led to increased density of buildings and increased property rents.

This process has spread in accordance with the 'oil-stain principle' — the cities have spread and the suburbs degenerated.

The social effects of an expansion of this kind are obvious to everybody. The imbalance in the distribution of public services and the lack of co-ordination between production plans and housing estates have the effect of an unhealthy increase in demand for means of transport.

The less this demand is met, the greater are the inroads into the free time of the people and the decrease in the rational use of this free time (rest, relaxation, cultural, social and political activities).

The boom in private motoring contributes to an unbearable deterioration of the situation. This is, in many cases, precipitated by the increased road-building with the aim of furthering the ancillary industries (car, tyre, petrol, concrete), at the cost of indispensable investment in public transport. The illusions of those who believe that problems of mobility can be solved in the cities by means of private motorization are exploded when individual motorization becomes a mass phenomenon and causes traffic congestion.

This is already the case in the cities and will apply soon even outside them.

It is clear that congestion, which hinders the transport of people, also quite obviously represents a severe hindrance to the transport of goods and, therefore, to the economy as a whole. The economic crisis in certain countries has shown, on the other hand, that unlimited use of cars causes damage to the environment which is not compatible with a balanced development perspective.

A clear perspective is, therefore, indispensable for planning and traffic policy if the survival of our cities and the maintenance of the quality of life for their residents is to be assured.

For all these reasons the participants in the conference of Bologna regard as essential the formulation of some principles which should be decisive for the organisation of urban life and the search for a harmonious development of the cities.

1. The city must not throttle the people but be built and organised according to their needs.
2. Mobility is one of the basic needs of a person. It must be fulfilled in a way which provides safety, comfort and speed, because it is also an expression of the right of every person to freedom and the free exchange of thoughts and experiences.
3. The interests of the community as a whole must be held

superior to those of the individual if these are contradictory. In consequence, collective transport and such forms of transport as are in the public interest, must be given real preference over individual means of transport.

4. The public streets belong to the community and must not be monopolised by individuals.

5. Transport is a public service: it must not be managed and organised with profits as its aim, but for social benefit and must therefore, also serve the special needs of the handicapped, the elderly and children.

6. The citizen is primarily a pedestrian and as such has the right to freedom of movement and to full use of the city. In this sense the rights of the pedestrian are a part of human rights.

7. Traffic policy and urban planning policy are indivisibly united and must aid common goals. Traffic policy must, therefore, be formulated in the framework of comprehensive planning.

8. All planning concerning the utilisation of space and the organisation of traffic must have the conscious, voiced approval of the people and presupposes a preceding phase of information and discussion among the general public.

For the bus companies it was a new era both in the offices and on the streets. To rationalise the administration of the public transport firms in view of the need for additional buses, higher frequency, and freedom from bureaucratic suffocation, the provincial and municipal bus companies were merged into one consortium.

The politicians of city and province felt that this merger was the only way to make possible the planned development of efficiency and the co-ordination of the bus networks. They were correct in their view. As commuters had already discovered, connections between the two bus companies depended too much on chance. The politicians also believed that considerable duplication between the two was overburdening the already half-empty coffers of city and province. 'The merger of the companies,' wrote Augusto Boschetti, the president of the consortium, 'will prevent waste of public money in the future.'

Local politicians are convinced that this forecast will become reality. If it does not, the people in charge will have to slow their impressive pace in developing the public transport sector. Costs are high and Bologna moves further and further into debt.

To adapt bus capacity to increased demand, the community ordered more than 200 new buses in one two-year period — an order

that the local coachwork factory was hardly equal to. The price was four million pounds (\$6,800,000). Moreover, to run the buses in 1974, the year of the foundation of the consortium, the city treasury had to put in more than £12 million (\$20,000,000) — the second highest item in the city budget. It is hardly surprising then that the deficit for the traffic sector reached over £10 million pounds (\$18,000,000) in 1974, covered for the most part by high-interest loans.

As a result, the bourgeois City Councillors do not hold back in their violent attacks on left-wing administrators, when the debates to sanction the deficit take place. During the 1974 budget debate, the Christian Democrat Giuseppe Coccoloni complained eloquently about the lack of 'the will to save' and rejected the budget on behalf of his party, 'because the accumulated deficits of the transport companies have become insupportable.' Amatore Battaglia, Liberal party spokesman stated that public transport was the real villain in city traffic. 'Our streets are invaded by a great number of buses which hinder private transport.'

The opposition politicians did not, however, mention the fact that the precarious financial situation of Bologna and all the Italian cities has little to do with lack of the will to save, and a great deal to do with the catastrophic tax system of the Italian state.

The fact is that the Rome government did away with local taxes from 1 January 1974 and is now trying to reduce the compensatory state-to-city payments which replaced them. Quite apart from that the national government is already years behind in the payment of the once customary city allocation from national taxes.

However, despite this, politicians and civil servants do not believe that the expensive Bolognese traffic reform is in serious danger on financial grounds. They emphasize instead that the demands formulated in an eight-point programme 'The Union of the Cities of Italy', will finally be met by community participation in tax affairs.

Floriano Degli Esposti, a clerk in the Traffic Department commented on the annual bus company deficit:

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'We have always had deficits with the bus companies. If a solution to this deficit is unobtainable then let us at least have a deficit that serves the people.' And Mayor Zangheri declared to a mass meeting in February 1975: 'We can tell our critics that the budget deficit in Florence is twice as big as Bologna's, though Florence does not have free fare on public transport.'

Work:



4

**United
Against Profiteers**

Max Jäggi

The class struggle is waged more vigorously in Bologna than in virtually any other Italian city. Hardly a week goes by without a report on the local page of 'L'Unità' about a dispute between workers and employers. Week-ends without a demonstration staged by dissatisfied workers are rare.

Warning strikes, before and during new wage negotiations, occur regularly. Employers who turn a deaf ear to the demands of workers, must put up with disputes lasting weeks or even months. Workers, whether employed in small or larger firms, are not afraid to fight energetically for the demands of their colleagues in other firms, thereby demonstrating the unity of workers' interests. This readiness for battle is not limited to urban industrial workers. Comrades in agricultural areas are often even more relentless in the struggle for their demands.

The belligerent self-awareness of Emilia-Romagna's agricultural, craft and industrial workers is not new. They recognised a hundred years ago that unity is strength; and it was then that an organised workers' movement came into being. The 'braccianti', agricultural day-labourers, who worked the fertile fields of Emilia-Romagna, were the first to signal the benefits of unity. Under the leadership of socialists, at first influenced by anarchists, these mercilessly exploited labourers joined together in leagues, the 'leghe'. At the turn of the century the 'leghe' were already so powerful that they were able to dictate to employers the number of workers to be employed.

Encouraged by the 'braccianti', some of the industrial wage-earners began to rise regularly in solidarity against factory-owners. In the last years of the nineteenth century, the workers filled the Piazza Maggiore in Bologna again and again during the great strikes for shorter working hours. During the second world war, anti-fascist workers in the most important firms in Bologna went on strike (in 1942 and 1943); even though Mussolini had already abolished unions and the right to strike and had ordered the formation of fascist 'corporations' of employers and employees in their place.

The militant attitude of present day workers can only be understood against this historical background. The People's Houses (Case del Popolo) — halls in which the first socialist meetings took place — belong to this tradition. So does the Communist and Socialist Trade Union Association (CGIL), which has played an outstanding role in the workers' struggle for decades. One significant aspect of Emilia-Romagna's history is that Communists or Socialists have won every

free election up to the present. This is not only true of the post-war period, but also applies as early as 1914 and in 1920, just before Italy sank into fascism.

For years the City Council of Bologna has intervened in labour disputes on the side of the workers. This is something local dignitaries in many other Italian cities have had to come to terms with only since the left-wing local election landslide of June 1975. 'For a left-wing Giunta, this is nothing but the logical consequence of its programme,' says Ermanno Tondi who was Bologna's City Councillor for Social and Labour Problems until 1975. And the CGIL secretary confirms it. 'In Bologna solidarity between the civic authorities and the unions is a given.'

The actions of the City Council have long since stilled any suspicion that this solidarity was confined to words. When strikers demonstrate on the Piazza Maggiore they can usually rely on a declaration of solidarity from Mayor Renato Zangheri. But it seldom rests at that. Official clarification of the causes of the dispute and official criticism of obstinate employers are normally the minimum action that the administration will undertake. Often, involvement goes much further. The officials throw the whole weight of their Council majority on the side of the workers, to fulfil their demands or to take local disputes as high as the State Ministry of Labour. Such solidarity from City Hall means significant and sometimes crucial reinforcement for the mass of workers.

A quick look at average salaries shows that Emilia-Romagna's workers do not wage their numerous disputes only as a matter of course. In Spring 1975, the contractually guaranteed minimum income of an Italian industrial worker of whatever industry was about £85 (\$145) a month. The actual average wage of a worker in Bologna at the same time varied between £107 and £135 (\$182 and \$230). In comparison: a kilo of beef cost £2 (\$3.40). In March 1975, a pair of shoes cost £10 (\$18), a man's overcoat £40 (\$68). Although Bologna's price index is consistently lower than the national average, the fact is such a wage-price relationship does not allow for much luxury! Obviously, Italy's inflation has weakened purchasing power even in Bologna; and rapid increases in prices eat up the housekeeping money of workers' families more and more rapidly.

There is not much left over for expensive consumer goods if a third of an already low wage goes on rent every month. As a factory worker says, 'We have no alternative but to fight for better conditions.'

Despite the agrarian base of the area, the proportion of

employees involved in industrial and craftwork enterprises is constantly increasing. There is a total of about 700,000 employees in the small and middle-sized firms typical of the region (there are approximately 100,000 such firms). This amounts to 42 per cent of all labour in Emilio-Romagna. In contrast the numbers employed in agriculture fall every year. In 1975, the number was about 270,000 or 17 per cent of the labour force. On the other hand, the service sector is employing more and more workers as time goes on.

However much the employment structure in the Bolognese area has changed, workers have never forgotten their dependence on wages. In almost all branches of industry there is near-complete union membership. The fact that the jobs are spread over so many, mostly small firms is seen by the unions as an undoubted advantage. According to Union Secretary, Andrea Amaro, 'Our experience is that solidarity is easier to achieve in smaller firms than in really big firms. At the same time, small businessmen are usually more flexible when it comes to recognising specific demands.'

- More than 72,000 people were employed in Bologna in 1971 in just less than 11,000 industrial and crafts firms. Of these 11,000, 9850 had less than ten employees. Only four Bolognese enterprises employ more than 1000 workers (but still less than 2000). These are **Ducati Eletrotecnica Microfarad S.p.A.** which makes electrical goods and has been controlled by the French **S.p.A Edoardo Weber**, a branch of the Fiat Organisation of Turin which produces exhaust pipes and other parts for cars; **A.M.F. S.A.S.I.B. — Società per azioni Scipione Innocenti Bologna**, which produces signal systems for railways and cigarette production systems; **S.A.B.I.E.M. — Società per azioni Bolognese industrie elettromeccaniche** a factory which specialises in the production of lifts and escalators.

Apart from the metal manufacturing sector in which over 40 per cent of industrial workers earn their living, the next most important sector is clothing. The vast majority of industrial and craft firms (84 per cent) are owned by individual entrepreneurs — though they sometimes take the form of joint-stock companies.

Higher wages are by no means the only goals of the Bolognese workers. Growing consciousness — spurred by active unions — has led workers to realise that better working conditions are not synonymous with linear wage increases. Of course, most disputes between unions and employers still revolve round wage demands. But these demands

are spreading increasingly into the sphere of social policy. In this sphere the policies of city and the provincial administration correspond almost completely with the wishes of the workers.

Bologna's 'Three Union Federation' CGIL (Communist), CISL (Christian) and UIL (Social-Democrat) took a decisive step in 1974, when it drew up a programme which bluntly demanded a direct contribution to social services from private employers. The Federation argued that those who make these services necessary are primarily employers. Thus, they should at least help to finance the expensive services provided by the provincial authorities.

This line of argument though unusual, is illuminating. A significant number of the comprehensive social services which Bologna offers its citizens reflect employer-employee relationships.

■ For example, free fares on buses: the city administration and the unions see the rush-hour free transport primarily as a social service to the working population. Because their work is often miles away from home, the workers need an efficient means of transport for which, in the opinion of the City Council, they should not be penalised by heavy taxes. So, an important reason for zero fare is the 'location' of the places of work.

■ For example, the nurseries: Bologna is in the process of setting up an elaborate network of 'asilo nido', or nurseries, in order to allow women to work without discrimination. Crèches and nurseries need to be established where babies may safely be left and at a reasonable cost. So, an important reason for nurseries is that a mother in a worker's family has to work — plus the employer's desire that she should.

The unions set out to tackle precisely these two areas. They formulated their demand on 14 December 1973: 'The costs necessary to provide and run these services, apart from the considerable amount which the City Council raises must in future be met by the employers.' The unions consider this demand would be met 'most fairly and effectively' by a 'social deduction from the highest incomes and from profits.' However, there is no law in Italy which permits the levy of such a basic tax; and so the CGIL-CISL-UIL representatives had to find a solution which could be effected by union measures.

They did — by suggesting that the unions incorporate the employer's contribution in their negotiations for work contracts: an additional clause would bind the employers to pay a percentage of the wage into a fund for financing social services. Of course, the unions had already discussed the matter with city and provincial authorities who agreed with the suggestion. On 17 April 1974, the Provincial

Council agreed to administer the planned fund and to ensure that the employers' contribution was actually used for public transport and nurseries.

This was only the beginning. The financing clause would only be operative when employers had signed the labour contract as a whole. Very few of them were prepared to sign voluntarily, but now every major employer has agreed to the contracts. In 1976 a sum of between £1400 and £1600 (\$2380-\$2700) is destined for the social-services fund. 'That is still a modest contribution,' says a CGIL member 'but we had to fight hard to get even that.'

Disputes in almost all firms lasted weeks or months. Main disagreement was over the percentage contribution. Other points of contention were demands for higher wages and the abolition of piece-work. For instance in the Bolognese shoe factory, 'Magli', workers fought for a new contract over four months. They went on strike for a total of 80 hours and were successful in having piece-work abolished and the social contribution paid. They also forced the directors to reinstate a union member who had been sacked during the struggle.



The struggle in Bologna's biggest firm, Ducati Elettrotecnica Microfarad was even more difficult and controversial. The contract negotiations in the factory turned into a bitter but exemplary class-struggle. Ducati director Antonio Guglielmi stubbornly played the strong man for no less than eight months; and his personnel director boasted to the Turin daily 'La Stampa': 'Even in the reality of Bologna, Ducati permits itself to be of a different opinion and resists workers' demands.' The 'reality of Bologna' meant in fact that the nearly 2000-

strong labour-force of Ducati stuck to its demands as resolutely as the management did to its 'No!'

The City Council and the majority in the Provincial Council supported the Ducato workers. Solidarity extended to workers in other firms and reached the proportions of a province-wide general strike. The Minister of Labour himself had to intervene in the Ducati case; and the workers were satisfied only when Managing Director Guglielmi signed the hotly contested contract.

What was this most bitter labour conflict in recent years about? On 1st February 1974, the Bolognese Engineering Workers' Union (FLM) sent a registered letter to the Ducati management in which they laid down their requirements for the new labour contract. The Union demanded massive increases in salary (unskilled workers at Ducati earned the absolute national minimum) — and new rules for promotion into higher-earnings brackets. To guarantee the 42 hour week for all workers, the FLM demanded the introduction of a fourth shift. In the social policy sector, the Union demanded a freeze on prices in the factory canteen and payment of the employer's contribution for public transport and nurseries.

The Directors wanted nothing to do with the last point. They emphatically refused to discuss any of the other demands until the employer's contribution was struck off the list. They justified their stubbornness by pointing to the firm's own nursery on the factory site. This, they said, was completely adequate for the care of workers' children. Why should they contribute further to the building and upkeep of the Council's nurseries?

The workers saw things quite differently. They did not dispute the fact that Ducati ran a nursery, but they did have grave doubts about its adequacy — with good reason. The factory nursery was situated in an inadequate, and unhealthy site. It had no qualified staff to look after the children properly, since the management put female workers who were no longer of use in the production-process to work there. The result was that the Ducati nursery became a loveless child-parking site, in which toddlers risked falling from high staircases or breathing harmful industrial fumes. 'If the overworked supervisors did not know what to do, they simply tied the children to the beds,' reported one mother who works at Ducati. A colleague of hers added, 'I was worried all day whether something might happen to my child. Things could not continue like that, even if the management stuck stubbornly to its senseless position.'

The Ducati employees fought all the more vehemently because

their demands did not involve the firm in any additional expenditure. The Union wanted Ducati to pay exactly the same amount of money into the social fund as it spent on the firm's nursery — and not a lira more. The only difference was that the money would be used to help finance the local nurseries which really would conform to the most modern standards in equipment and personnel, and had been planned long before by the City Council and approved by the appropriate commissions.

But the company would not yield even after 60 hours of strikes — after more than 200 similar contracts were signed in the province; and even after the Bolognese City Council strongly condemned the master-of-the-house attitude of the Ducati management. Even a solidarity strike by engineers in the four most industrialised of Bologna's areas and in three neighbouring cities — which brought 2500 workers to a demonstration in front of the Ducati building on 11 June — did not move the management. A week later they hit back with an attempted lock-out. It failed. When the strike reached the 150 hour mark in August 1974, Mayor Renato Zangheri and Labour Councillor, Ermanno Tondi, applied for a personal interview with the Ducati chief. This intervention too proved a failure. When Zangheri returned to the town hall he informed the City and Provincial Councils, party leaders, and the Ducati workers' council that Guglielmi had 'reserved a definite answer' to his suggestions concerning the nursery affair. Workers and union functionaries, as well as local and provincial politicians, saw this as one provocation too many. Workers' representatives and authorities agreed on a final all-out common effort.

The Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici, which include, CGIL, CISL, and UIL engineering workers, proclaimed a three-hour general strike of all engineers in Bologna province. The provincial head-offices of the trade unions CGIL and CISL, as well as a minority of the UIL, called on all workers in the province whether in industry, agriculture, trade, services or publicly-owned firms to come out on a half-hour general strike. Municipal and Provincial Councils decided to petition Gino Bertoldi, the Italian Minister of Labour, to resolve the apparently endless labour dispute at the national level.

Even in the face of this huge challenge, the Ducati management did not move with undue haste. Eventually on 9 October Guglielmi condescended to sign a document which acceded to the demands of the workers concerning the nursery. This was the result of pressure from Labour Minister Bertoldi. The document was, however, much more costly than would have been the case had he given in earlier. By it,

Ducati committed itself to a contribution of no less than £100,000 (\$170,000) towards the construction of three local nurseries; and, in addition, agreed to give a monthly allowance for every child of a Ducati employee who attended a public nursery.

This, however, met only one of the workers' demands. It needed more meetings in the Rome Ministry of Labour before the Ducati management was prepared to increase wages — which had been rendered pathetic since employees had suffered a reduction in purchasing power of 30 per cent over the course of the struggle. When the dispute was settled towards the end of October, and the firm acceded to practically all the workers' demands, the workers had been on strike for a total of over 200 hours spread over a dispute which had persisted for nine months.

'It was always clear to us that we had to continue the struggle to the finish,' said a Ducati worker later at a union meeting. 'This was the only way to make the management realise that we workers do not make demands simply to pass the time; but because we urgently require their fulfilment.'

The common struggle against obstinate management led to an unusual degree of solidarity among Bologna's workers. 'We came much closer together in a human sense,' said a 35-year-old packer at Ducati. 'We were really forced to come to terms with the problems of our colleagues, and that was extremely instructive for us.' It was also instructive outside the Ducati gates: a fact proven by the various sympathy strikes and the increased militancy in other Bolognese firms. 'The Ducati case has once again shown one thing quite clearly,' said a worker from a shirt factory. 'For exploiters, Bologna is a trouble-spot.'

In Bologna, employers in disputes with their workers have to reckon with a more assured and self-aware adversary than in other places. The Bolognese are seldom satisfied with apparent concessions. They are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the finish for their rights and even to make considerable financial sacrifices in the process (Italian unions collect no strike funds, in order to keep members' contributions down). The lengthy struggle at Ducati is just one noteworthy example among many.

It is equally true, however, that Bologna is still a city in capitalist Italy. Workers here, as elsewhere, must co-exist with their bosses; and a severe economic crisis makes things very difficult for them. 'We must take care,' stresses CGIL Secretary, Andrea Amaro, 'not to confuse our successes with the victory of the working class. What we, as workers in a capitalist country can achieve is an alleviation of

exploitative conditions. But we cannot abolish the exploitation until the socio-political system changes.'

This is equally clear to the unions and to the Communist and Socialist administrators of the city. Without basic changes in the economic structure, without radical changes in property relations, all efforts at achieving a socialist society must necessarily be limited. But Bologna's politicians do not see in this any excuse for folding their arms and waiting till a kind left-wing God sends them a revolution. On the contrary, they continue in their search for ways to control the economic development of at least their own city and influence it to serve the interests of the workers in the long-term.

This applies equally to the job-planning sector. The Bolognese Council has decided that the number of jobs available shall not, in future, be determined by the profit moods of private businessmen. Rather, it shall depend on the actual needs of the wage-earners. They do not want employers' desire for expansion to entice a large number of workers into the city and endanger the carefully planned population ceiling of 600,000. Similarly, they want to avoid so-called shrinkage processes (mostly the recessionary result of previous unchecked expansion), and as far as possible, to protect workers from sackings and financial need.

In addition, administrators want to prevent factories from spreading haphazardly through the whole area. Instead, industrial estates are to be set up which do not affect residential areas with their pollution, but can still be reached comfortably (in terms of the transport available). The service sector (mainly banks and insurance firms) which until now occupied the city centre is gradually to be spread throughout the whole locality, so that sites are in more convenient reach of workers who mostly live in outlying districts.

To achieve these ambitious goals, the socialist Urban Planning Councillor, Luigi Colombari, published a 'Plan for Production Areas' in April 1974. This envisaged a clearly defined Trade and Industry Zone in the north east of the city. Three months later, in June 1974, the Bolognese Council — with for once, the support of the bourgeois opposition — approved the plan which gave the Council extensive powers in setting up new factories and in transferring existing ones. These powers are mainly based on the expropriation-of-property right, as allowed by national law 865, which is interpreted broadly by the Bolognese. Article 27 of this law allows Italian local governments to expropriate (on the basis of the Piano Regolatore Generale) property which lies in the industrial, trade or tourist zones of the region, and yet

pays a purely agricultural rent. According to the Bolognese plan around 6 per cent of the whole city is in this category. That means wherever the plan allows building at all, the Council can take advantage of its right to expropriate and buy property without having to pay inflated market prices.

The city administration therefore has at its disposal an effective instrument for determining the location and size of new firms from the start, since it, itself, distributes the land to interested entrepreneurs.

The Bolognese were the first in Italy to use Law 865 in this way, as the basis of extensive economic and work place planning. The industrial estate Roveri was erected in an area of about 160 acres in the district of San Vitale as a result of the Productive Establishment Plan. 98 different firms will move their small factories and workshops there and will employ a total of 2630 workers. However, in order to prevent the number of workers from rising too quickly, the Council lays down a series of conditions which must be fulfilled by an employer if he wants to obtain a site in the Roveri zone. (Bologna is reckoning on an 'organic' growth of the numbers employed in industry from about 75,000 in 1973 to about 80,000 in 1981.)

The zone is reserved for:

- existing enterprises whose previous location is no longer in an industrial zone as a result of the new plan.
- existing enterprises whose space is no longer adequate and which cannot make extensions at their existing locations.
- existing enterprises which for reasons of health or pollution control must change their location by order of the city administration.
- existing or new enterprises which undertake pure craft or industrial production operations, without simultaneously taking part in wholesale or retail trade.
- existing or new enterprises whose activities cause unavoidable, heavy traffic.

Other similar estates are to be built following the example of Roveri. Envisaged as future locations are the northern zone and the western zone. According to the calculation of the Urban Planning Office, when all three industrial centres are developed, Bologna will have available an optimum number of work places. In addition, it is only through such planning intervention in which the unions and the Neighbourhood Committees have, of course, shared the determining that the city will attain the economic balance it is striving for.

The planners are, nevertheless, agreed that those who want to remove economic imbalances must not limit their efforts to their own

community, but must also focus on its surrounding. This is especially true in Italy where the town-country differences are so striking. The largely undeveloped hinterland is in the greatest need of economic development, if its inhabitants are to cease being disadvantaged in terms of purchasing power and standard of living. 'Without such an extension of planning,' emphasizes Deputy Mayor, Paolo Babbini, 'we would be running the risk of formulating narrow-minded parochial policies.' A first significant step away from a parochial outlook has been taken by Babbini's Economic Planning Department in conjunction with the administration of Bologna Province. While remaining in the sphere of workplace co-ordination, its goal is an industrial development process which transcends city and even provincial boundaries.

In November 1973 Babbini presented the project to the City Council. In 1974 the structure was perfected. The Bolognese formed a joint-stock company in conjunction with the administrations of the neighbouring province of Ferrara and its capital, 50 kilometres from Bologna. Its task is to buy and prepare industrial land in the two provinces.

To ensure that the decision-making power over this company, (SAIA) actually remains with the public, the share capital is controlled exclusively by the local and provincial administrations (with the exception of a 5 per cent block in Bologna's Chamber of Commerce). The cities of Bologna and Ferrara hold 30 per cent and 25 per cent of SAIA's capital; the two provinces each hold 15 per cent; the town Imola (Bologna province) and Ostellato (Ferrara province), each 5 per cent. The first to benefit from the inter-provincial planning are the Ferrara towns of Ostellato, Poggio Renatico, and Locando di Savoia; the planning procedure is based on the Bolognese Roveri model.

Work-Place Planning and Safety:

In Bologna, working people have become accustomed to the idea that in these two vital areas, they are not prey to the profit aims of bosses and that they can count on the support of local authorities.

Through regular contacts, union men and politicians have achieved close co-operation which has joined the administration and the workers' movement in a solid, united front. However, in the matter of safety in the place of work there is a third force which plays a very important part — the numerous production co-operatives.

Co-operatives as alternative work situations were to be found in

Emilia-Romagna as well as Piedmont, Liguria and Lombardy as early as the second half of the nineteenth century. Agricultural and factory workers joined together in leagues at that time. Other workers deposited their small savings in a collective savings account. From such modest starts, co-operative production enterprises were built up. From the beginning the prime aim of these workers' co-operatives was safety in the work-place, for which no private industrialist ever wanted to accept responsibility. The co-operatives were, of course, conceived as enterprises run by the workers themselves.



The co-operative movement, supported by modest financial resources, did not let itself be choked by wealthy capital-intensive competitors. On the contrary, such ventures developed into an increasingly important economic factor. Today co-operatives control the biggest underground and surface engineering firms in Bologna. The most important brickworks and building-material factories are run co-operatively. Workers in self-managed factories produce pipes and office furniture, deliver complete sets of hotel equipment, make dental drills and fruit-packing machines, install electrical systems and drive heavy goods vehicles.

In 1973, 9,000 people were employed in co-operative manufacturing and service industries. Not included in that number are approximately 4,000 agricultural workers and the several hundred strong factory squads in the Co-operative Alliance, who produce and process agricultural products. Earning their living does not mean — as it does in the private sector — selling their power for a job. Here, workers take responsibility in determining the policy of their firm.

Despite the fact that co-op groups are not directed towards

profits, they do not fare badly. Between 1970 and 1973 alone, Bologna's manufacturing co-operatives doubled their turnover. To these classical co-operatives, can be added the various building industry associations. About 30 such building firms, with a total of 3,500 employees, work throughout the province in housing and road-building projects. They construct schools, hospitals and factories, and specialise in the construction of large-scale gas and water supply systems, such as those commissioned in recent years by the City. Local councils and provincial authorities also figure high on the building co-operatives' lists of customers. There is hardly a public building site which does not bear the placard of a co-operative.

Building co-operatives occupy a central role in public-building schemes, in partnership with the housing co-operatives. These latter function co-jointly as important building-contractors with the city administration in a large proportion of the so-called PEEP estates. The housing co-operatives contract a great deal of work exclusively to the building co-operatives. The plans for this work come from the design-tables and drawing-boards of collectively-organised teams of architects and engineers.

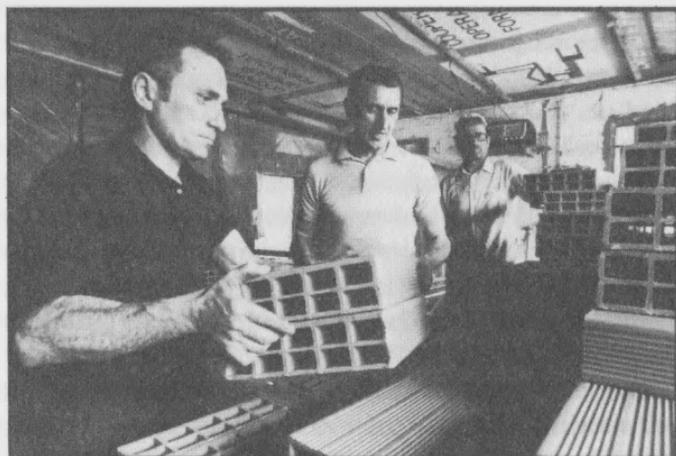
All this serves the goals of the co-operative in two main ways:

- thanks to the numerous large contracts in public housing, the co-operative workers make their jobs safe.
- Since this form of production is not aimed at profit, costs fall. This contributes to the fact that a co-operative flat costs an average of 30-35 per cent less than a flat from private builders who calculate in terms of the free-market economy.

This co-operative involvement in the building sector goes beyond the building sites themselves. There are numerous co-operative enterprises in the ancillary industries, for example glass and window factories, bulk cleaners and tin works, painting studios and plaster works. There are also a number of important co-operative building material factories which function mainly as suppliers to the building workers' co-operatives. Decades ago, for example, brickworkers took over furnaces which were being shut down and maintained production under their own co-operative management.

Example ■ The Cooperativa Operaia Fornaciai (Workers Co-operative of Brickworkers) has more than fifty years of experience and has developed into the most important producer of building materials in Bologna. The employees of the brickworks founded in co-operative in 1920 after the first owners had shut down the business and let the factory. By their first

meeting in July 1919 the workers had already authorised their union to issue share-certificates for the proposed co-operative. A share certificate for men cost five lire, one for women or children two-and-one half lire. That was the co-operative's capital base.



Today 250 men and women work in the co-operative at rates which are a little above those in the privately run firms in the industry. The obsolete furnaces were long ago replaced by modern, partly automated production-systems. The production process has long since ceased to be centred on bricks. The **Fornaciai** have also managed to win a significant share of the market as producers of pre-fabricated building materials. In addition, since August 1965 the co-operative has not been run by a single (albeit elected) managing director but by a board, in keeping with co-operative principles.

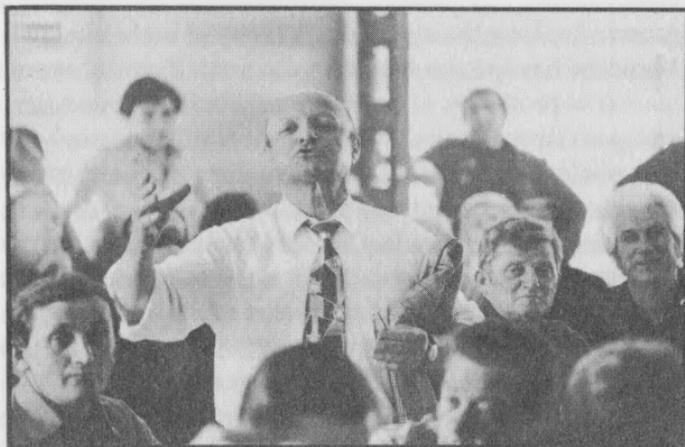
The brickworkers have had to fight hard for what they have achieved. The cost of emancipation at work, was by no means covered by the modest nominal value of the first share-certificates. The **Fornaciai** of the early years were so efficient that they were able in May 1922 to pay a year's rent, £400 (\$680), to set up a second manufacturing outlet in the Bolognese suburb of Rastignano.

By the end of 1929, they were forced to give up the Rastignano branch again. Things had gone rapidly downhill: in November 1926, the fascist governor of Bologna had deposed the elected management council by decree and had replaced it with an authoritarian deputy governor. To save their co-operative from

collapse despite the economic crisis and the fascist emergency laws, the workers accepted drastic wage reductions.

For example, in 1931, when the majority of private brickworks in Italy were forced to close down, the **Fornaciai** gave up half of their income and the co-operative was able to go on. A year later they used passive resistance and open confrontation to force the resignation of the first fascist director. This however only succeeded in provoking stronger fascist agitation against the firm. But they held on till the end of the Mussolini dictatorship: not one member of their co-operative was ever a member of the Italian Fascist Party.

Like many other co-operatives, the **Fornaciai** turned into a resistance nest during the years of the anti-fascist **Resistenza** 1943-1945. Even during the occupation of Bologna by the fascists and the nazis, the brickworkers went on strike in May 1944 for higher wages. Whole companies of anti-fascist resistance fighters found shelter on **Fornaciai** ground, and the partisan brigade **Irma Bandiera** finally set up its headquarters, munitions depot and supply centre there. A worker in the co-operative since the beginning of the 1940's says: 'Whoever knows the history of this time will understand us when we speak of the democratic struggle today.'



The workers often speak of the democratic struggle — but they don't just speak — they act as well. For example, they have managed to ensure that their organisation has remained a genuine co-operative and has not been corrupted by the post-war economic upswing into becoming a capitalist 'pseudo'

co-operative. Today it is still those who do the work who make decisions about the firm and its 'entrepreneurial policies' in the democratic plenary assemblies. They ensure that the original co-operative idea of the founders is strictly adhered to — to preserve existing jobs and create new ones by self-help, independently of entrepreneurs.

Workers in various other branches of manufacturing in Emilia-Romagna have discovered the co-operative as a socialist alternative to the private, capitalist economic system. For years, co-operatives have been producing tools and machines for extremely varied areas of industry. The Sacmi, for example, a middle-sized co-operative in Imola has specialised in packing-machines for the food sector, and also equips pottery factories with electro-mechanical apparatus. It exports its products to sixty countries.

A co-operative in the neighbouring municipality, Calderara di Reno, has made its name as a producer of turbine pumps. Another in Bologna equips sports stadiums with floodlighting equipment. Another has developed over the years into the most important printing firm in the provincial capital. All arose from workers' initiatives — and as a clearly defined weapon against the dominance of profiteering entrepreneurs. As one worker in a building co-operative put it: 'We don't see why we should work ourselves to death so that some boss can afford his Maserati or Lamborghini. We work instead so that each of us can have a decent flat. That's why we are co-operative workers.'

The word 'co-operative' will not change the working-class at a stroke from being exploited to citizens of utopia!

Bologna is not a workers' utopia whether united in co-operatives like the station porters or the taxi-drivers; or carrying on the struggle together with the unions and the City Councillors — as, for example, the Ducati workers did. 'Even as co-operative workers, we don't exist in a perfect society,' says Clodoaldo Mescheri of the provincial consortium of the Bolognese Housing Co-operatives. 'We exist in the Italian economy and that is clearly capitalist.'

Despite the truth of such observations, Bologna's co-operatives have thrown overboard at least a part of the capitalist deadweight. Significantly, they are becoming more numerous. Between 1973 and 1975 alone, there were five cases of Bolognese engineering workers following the example of the French watchmakers Lip. They occupied their factories — changing them into autonomous co-operatives, after the previous, private owners had gone bankrupt.

All five firms report increasing production and turnover.

Consumer Policy:



5

‘An Economy planned for the Customers’

Max Jäggi

The neighbourhood of Lame, Beverara housing-estate, Piazza Giovanni de Verrazzano. A modern, flat-roofed building with few windows. In front a bus-stop and car-parks. At the main entrance, a towering black signboard with white letters 'Centro Marco Polo'. Inside, a covered street of shops; brightly lit display windows and crowds of customers: butchers and bakers, fruit shops, clothes shops, hairdressers and chemists — in all, more than two dozen shops of various types, plus a post-office and a bank. At first glance, a shopping-centre like any other between Copenhagen and Palermo.

But — though it may look like any other consumers' paradise built to the American model, this is a shopping precinct run on lines which would scarcely fit in with capitalist marketing strategies. The Marco Polo Centre, opened in September 1974, is unique in that none of its shops are part of the usual retail chains. To build and run the Marco Polo Centre (sales area about 3,000 square metres), twenty seven local retailers supported by the City Council joined together in a co-operative. Branches of chain firms were not allowed entry.

The Council granted the shopowners' co-operative the right to use the site for 29 years. The traders' co-operative financed the building and equipping of the centre, but did not have to put up any funds for what would have been an expensive purchase of land. Total cost was a little over £670,000 (\$1,100,000), shared between 27 members of the co-operative. According to the contract, the city will become the sole owner of the building after 29 years elapse, by which time the investments of the shopowners will have been paid off. Nine of the 27 Marco Polo partners had already been shopkeepers in the area, but had been forced to give up their old corner shops for economic reasons.

Is it possible for a shopping centre to emerge from the principle of collective self-help — rather than as the product of share-capital? In the epoch of super consumption machines which back powerful retail concerns and their increasingly irresponsible monopoly positions, this may sound astonishing — even in Italy. But not in Bologna. Co-operative consumption alternatives, on the Marco Polo model, are now to become the rule. At least seven other similarly conceived centres are planned. Bologna's aim is decentralisation in the economic, no less than in the political sphere.

Decentralisation means putting the needs of local inhabitants in relief. In the sphere of consumer goods supply, this entails creating an efficient retail-sales network, about which the citizens themselves can have some say — as in the Marco Polo example. A metalworker from Saffi, after a meeting on the theme of retail, commented, 'If we don't

want to let ourselves be exploited forever when doing our daily shopping, then we must alter the situation radically. This will be a long and difficult process.'

The main obstacles to the economic renewal of Bologna's supply structure are the usual large private enterprises. These consist of networks of supermarkets across the country which attract customers away from resident small traders who cannot compete. Bolognese politicians want to put a stop to this familiar development — one paralleled throughout Europe. They are not doing so only to salvage many small shopowners from economic ruin; but to protect the great mass of consumers from the profiteering grip of a few large distribution giants.

Bologna's economic planners realise that the majority of large supermarkets, though they may appear attractive and friendly to the consumer, in no way spare the severely-strained purse of the housewife. Instead of putting a brake on prices, the over-sized consumer temples serve as price-pushers and accelerate the rate of increase in retail prices. As Giuseppe Maggetti, Councillor responsible for local economic planning, stresses: 'The invasion of highly-capitalized nationwide and multi-national companies into the retail sector has created no advantages for the consumers.'

The reasons are obvious. The same mammoth concerns occupying the retail sector in the form of chain stores also control a large part of the profitable 'middle-man' trade. Thereby they dictate retail prices. 'Today we can no longer overlook the fact,' explains Mazzetti, 'that the most important inflationary impulses come from strong middle-man networks, which monopolise imports and exports, which control agricultural products and distribute both to the urban manufacturing industries and wholesale markets, and dispose of products with the exclusive aim of maximising their own profits.'

Some of the country's largest distribution-organisations have settled within the walls of Red Bologna. The 'Upim' empire, for example, is represented in the city by three branches, and the supermarket chain 'Standa', which is controlled by the electrical concern Montecatini. Edison (Montedison) runs two stores. Of the Italian monolithic giants, the only one missing is Upim's mother's company 'Rinascente' which belongs to Gianni Agnelli's Fiat empire.

Despite the presence of these influential national giants, the Bolognese administrators are resolved not to limit themselves to a mere analysis of how things are in the retail sector. They want actively to change the situation and create what should be.

The profit returns of a few monopolist sales-organisations must not go on dictating the fate of the small trade network in Bologna. Nor must speculators determine where and when the supply of consumer goods is adequate and where deficient. Clearly, a lucrative middle-man business, organised by anonymous capitalist companies, must not go on using its high trade margins to exploit producers and consumers of food.

Bologna's administration is seeking an alternative supply structure in which people — that is, the consumers — make the decisions.

The structural base of the municipal shop network is formed by the small traders — the traditional retailers in the area — and the consumer collectives. Such an ambitious programme cannot be carried out overnight — as is clear to Mazzetti and his planning team. 'Of course, the large and powerful enterprises will not withdraw voluntarily from the position they have won in the so-called free market economy.'

If the authorities really want to reorganise the distribution network, then they must have recourse to laws which will allow them to take decisive action. These must come from the national government in Rome, but as one Bolognese shopkeeper complains: 'The crisis producing economic policy which has been followed in Rome for years isn't just pulling the national economy to the ground: it is also endangering regional and local efforts at progressive economic reform.'

All the same the Bolognese government can make use of a recent national skeleton-law which at least permits primary moves towards change. This is Law 426, passed in June 1971, which deals with the regulation of trade and has created an important condition for more or less autonomous reforms on a local and regional plane. The crucial section of Law 426 states that every Italian city is required to produce a supply-plan of goals and measures for realising a distribution-structure in tune with local conditions.

Naturally, Bologna's ministers made immediate use of this legally-approved opportunity — in contrast to the majority of Italian cities. Mazzetti submitted a list of ideas less than a year after the passing of the law. He announced these ideas to local councillors and numerous citizens at a public meeting in the Town Hall. A month and a half later the preparatory debate in the Bologna Assembly had taken place. Since then, in fact since July 1973, a definite 'development and adaptation plan for the distribution network' has been under discussion. This formulates in detail the planning measures necessary

for the attainment of basic political goals. This detailed work, which will re-direct Bologna's consumer system, fills seven heavy volumes. In scope it covers everything, from the analysis of national wholesale and retail trade to the stipulation of sales-area sizes; from the functioning of consumer and agricultural co-operatives to shop-hour regulations. Nothing of importance to the turnover of goods for daily consumption has been overlooked. The plan contains seven central points:

- The consumer sector will be viewed as a collective service. To reduce the severe financial burdens on the consumer and the retailers — which are the result of faults in the prevailing sales-network — the local authorities must be able to raise taxes.

- Present fragmentation of the supply-system will be gradually changed. The goal is a restructuring based on optimum retail locations (which correspond to consumer-mobility) and the introduction of modern sales-techniques.

- Reform process must not cause saturation of the retail trade, whether by the establishment of new organisations or by the expansion of existing sales areas.

- Every form of property and building speculation, constantly attempted in town and country by private finance capital, is to be prevented.

- The general relevance of Law 865 to expropriation possibilities and the drawing-up of particular expropriation plans for so-called productive areas (as envisaged in Article 27 of Law 865) provide indispensable means to aid the struggle against speculation.

- All forms of co-operative organisation are to be given preferential treatment in the reshaping of the distribution network. They are the most effective social and economical alternative to the big multi-branch firms.

- Undesirable overburdening of the city centre is to be stopped. This is possible only through a co-ordinated urban re-organisation process in the housing, public services, trade and traffic sectors.

These are severe and unusual politico-economic concepts for a capitalist state; but they have been carefully worked out to deal with hard facts and consequences. Clearly and deliberately, they are part of a programme which takes the side of the underprivileged: of the numerous small shopkeepers increasingly at risk; and above all, the consumers who can barely afford a place on the consumption carousel.

Inflation-hit workers' families hope that the reform will bring material improvements. 'If the new plan actually becomes reality,' explains a young housewife from Barca, 'it will inevitably have a

beneficial effect on prices — even if we can't expect such a change overnight.' And a 37-year-old mason, with a wife and four children, is convinced that 'the new development plan is a good thing, on condition that we all make sure it is put into practice.'

In politicized Bologna, so much public involvement in a highly-specialised economic plan is no surprise. For the people have realised that the local consumer policy directly affects their household budgets and therefore their standard of living. They actively worked together in outlining and developing the new regulations. They participated in countless neighbourhood assemblies and committee meetings devoted exclusively to the theme. They supplied the popular base for the City Council's decision. That necessarily affects the shaping of their consciousness.

At the public City Council meeting of 14 April 1972, Mazzetti urged that kind of participation rooted in the decentralisation statute: 'We can and must enliven the neighbourhood committees by the presence of all the people who take part in trade. We can and must decentralise discussion, formulation, implementation, and supervision of the plans. It is necessary to involve administrators, traders and consumers in the process — just as much in the preparatory as in the subsequent phases of the planning.'

There is a reason for the pains Mazzetti and his colleagues take to emphasize participation and shared responsibility in the retail reforms. In addition to the welcome Law 426 which supplies the juridical basis of the reforms, the Italian Parliament also issued some unwelcome regulations for their implementation. Bologna's planners think little of these regulations which 'contradict the democratic intentions of the law.' Mazzetti: 'We regard these regulations as a concession by the government to the pressures of the big distributors. They spill over in direct contradiction to the spirit of the law.'

As they see it, certain articles of the supplementary rules make it more difficult for local authorities and traditional retailers to plan and implement an organic supply-policy — despite the intention of Law 426. The City Council accuses the government of wanting to make the economic pre-eminence of the big concern permanent. By introducing these subsidiary regulations, the government has used backhand tactics in order to thwart the local struggle against the all-powerful market monopolies. Bologna's proof for such a statement lies in the fact that too much power has been attributed to the Chamber of Commerce in the regulations.

Because it is not an exception but the rule, the direct

participation of the working population in the planning and implementation of the reforms provides a guaranteed counterweight to the private interests of the trade giants; a counterweight that is not the expression of an intellectual-left minority but clearly stems from a mass movement. Only ten months after the passing of Law 426 the 'commissioni per il commercio' in seventeen of the eighteen neighbourhoods were already involved in consultations and residents had already introduced their most basic concerns to the discussions. These concerns exactly matched the political goals of the city department.

In the Old City neighbourhood of Galvani, residents and shop-owners debated the preservation of ancient market alleys to be used as an 'antique shopping centre'. Result — this picturesque consumer area functions today as it always has. Thousands of shoppers frequent the attractive shops where old-established dealers offer fish, fruit, meat and poultry. The whole area has become a pedestrian zone. Motor vehicles are only allowed as suppliers and then only at certain times of day. History is not a matter here of keeping up monuments. The human scale of an inner-city market place has outlasted the speculation normal in other places.



Much the same has occurred in the Marconi area, also a part of the Centro Storico, and barely 500 feet away. In 1910 a covered vegetable market was erected there. The market women from the country, having been moved out of the Piazza Maggiore and the Piazza San Francesco set up their stalls there. Now, some 65 years later the market hall is intact. Daily, some 140 traders sell their goods. No one speaks of demolishing the market. Its use is supported by the City

Council and the area's inhabitants.

Bologna's love of traditional market places has meant that in the centre of the city itself, every Friday and Saturday, some 360 traders from Bologna and its surroundings set up their stalls and sell cheap clothing and household goods. And in various parts of the city outside the walls, new locations for street-dealers have been created as a consequence of decentralised consumption planning. There too the neighbourhood controls the running of the markets. But the supply problem is not solved simply by the preservation of traditional forms of retail trade. In Bologna, as in other cities, the greater part of the classic store-network is concentrated in the city centre. Other areas of Bologna are without doubt at a disadvantage in terms of shops. If the city wants to make retailing into a social service which favours the working population — as Mazzetti says — then it is obvious that these differences between 'surplus' and 'scarcity' areas must disappear.

Bologna's 'development and adaptation plan for the distribution network' is to attain precisely this goal. It will ensure that new shops are actually set up in places where the consumers need them most. And it will prevent already well-served areas from becoming profit-grabbing consumer monopolies. Bologna's councillors have little doubt that the plan actually can fulfil this ambitious task, since it is based on painstaking investigations carried out in close co-operation with residents.

The Council commissioned a scientific workers' group headed by the architect Felicia Bottino and the economist, Rita Vella, to organise a survey of all the retail businesses in the city. Precise information was obtained on the location, type of shop and sales technique, ownership and type of management, surface area and number of employees of every Bolognese retail outlet. In addition, the customer-frequency and sales volume of every single shop was ascertained. It was, of course, found that densely populated areas of the city contain a large number of — on the whole — small shops; whereas lower density areas are less well served in terms both of the number and variety of shops.

The attitude of the customers made up a further part of the survey. By means of a representative poll of 4,200 families in Bologna and seventeen small neighbouring towns the researchers were able to describe the purchasing habits and requirements of the population. They learned that a majority of the residents of the outlying areas normally did their main shopping in the Old Town because they wanted to take advantage of the greater variety of shops in the city centre.

These two comprehensive investigations supplied crucial information for formulating the economic plan. In conjunction with the clear political goals of the councillors, they ensured that provisions would be adopted which would actually promote planning towards a fair re-structuring of the supply system. These provisions, however, could not match what Mazzetti and his progressive planning-team had originally envisaged. Difficulty arose because the national government curtly restrained the Bolognese Council in their attempt to reform the retail trade radically. The point at issue was the definition of the concept 'broad and general consumption', to which the financial side of the planning was limited.

The Bolognese took the view that effective planning was possible only if the maximum number of trades were subject to regulations. To them it was clear that shoes, dry goods, furniture and cosmetics were part of 'general consumption.' Such an interpretation of the local planning jurisdiction went too far for the Rome government.

By decree the Italian Minister for Trade and Industry ordered the Bolognese to retreat. By 'broad and general consumption,' dictated the central government, 'we mean only food and clothes. For the other branches of the retail trade, the development-plan has only limited relevance.'

'It is clear that this situation makes the planning work of local authorities significantly more difficult,' objected Mazzetti. But he was forced to adhere to the decree from Rome and reduce his ambitious plans ... in such a way, however, that it must have seemed the work of the devil himself to any inveterate champion of the free-market economy used to submissive authorities. Mazzetti's 25 article consumption order prescribes how large a sales area (down to the last square metre) can be added to existing shops in any of the eighteen neighbourhoods — the area of 'general consumption' — and what new shops are permitted.

In effect, this means the authorities will not allow a single new food or clothing business in the Old City. However, in a workers' area, such as Mazzini, where the need to catch up is greatest, the four-year plan (1973-1977) envisages the maximum growth in sales area: exactly 3093 square metres. Under the order, it is not only new shops which must obtain permission. A shop may only move if it is clear that its new location is in an under-supplied zone.

The planning goes into great detail. It regulates not only the number, surface area, and location of sales outlets but also fixes the consumer function of every new shop. For this, the Bolognese

development plan distinguishes between so-called 'local shops' which 'satisfy daily needs' and the so-called 'district shops' which must also stock 'less frequently used goods.' Every future shop must according to the plan, fit into one of these categories. In addition and this is compulsory, it must go into either an 'area commerciale' or a 'centro commerciale'.

'Area commerciale' is a group of adjacent local shops which mutually complement each other in their range of goods. 'Centro commerciale' is a roofed-over shopping centre consisting of retail outlets of various trades.

There is an official licence for any business of 'general consumption' which wants to enter this clearly delineated framework. There are four possibilities for the merchant who wants to open a shop in a permissible area. His business will become an already planned constituent part of:

- an 'area commerciale' for the locality
 - an 'area commerciale' for the district
 - a 'centro commerciale' for the locality
- or
- a 'centro commerciale' for the district.

Problems nevertheless arose. Counter to the declared wishes of the Bolognese, the Trade and Industry Minister insisted that 'retail outlets with sales area of more than 400 square metres' (the official term for supermarkets, unpopular in Bologna) were essential to an efficient urban supply structure. The Bolognese economic planners had wanted to make short work of that category 'because otherwise capital floods the market with monopolistic sales-structures in an uncontrolled fashion, concerned only with its own profits.'

The Rome government remained firm, however, and enforced the retention of the challenged 'Category VII' which defines the huge stores in the official Trades Catalogue. Rome's enmity was clear. Even in the transition period between the first planning discussions and the final settling of the Bolognese consumer plan, the Trade and Industry Ministry permitted an appeal which a renowned big retailer had lodged against the refusal of a store-licence by the Bolognese authorities. This, despite the fact that all the neighbourhood councils which were either directly affected or were drawn into the approval proceedings, had rejected the application in order not to prejudice the economic plan, then still in the preparatory phase.

Naturally many bourgeois members of the Bolognese Council took the same view as the Rome authorities. The Christian Democrat

Mauro Bernardini, for example, was of the opinion that the large-scale dealers should be reserved a special place in the planning to allow unhindered expansion because 'in the end all trade is exclusively based on the initiative of private enterprise'. And the Republican, George Bonfiglioli said: 'For me, there is no room for argument; the Italian retail-trade network must be modernised by the propagation of supermarkets and department stores.' Despite these setbacks the Bolognese planners were not prepared to retreat without a struggle. They stood by the goals worked out with the neighbourhood assemblies and looked for ways of making the legally-achieved consumer reform at least partially effective in the supermarket sector. Thanks to the Council majority of Communists and Socialists, they produced two modifications to the plan which promised to slow the trend towards giant private concerns, which Rome encourages.



● The first rule goes against any new building of department stores in the Bologna area, because, as a footnote added to an article in the law states, Bologna's city-centre shops amply fulfil requirements of consumers.

● The second rule puts a stop to unimpeded expansion of huge distribution firms, which generally have their own large retail outlets.

Special licensing conditions were created for retail outlets with a sales area of more than 400 square metres. These put the large shops at a disadvantage. If there are several applications to open a shop of these dimensions in the same area then co-operative applicants are given preference over purely capitalist firms.

The Bolognese have said a clear 'No' to what Mazzetti calls the logic of profit and exploitation which makes the uneven economic development of the country a permanent feature. There is a clear priority in favour of the self-help co-operatives in the trade. Despite repeated obstacles created by the state, the Bolognese have succeeded with what Mazzetti had proposed to the first neighbourhood meeting on the retail-reform schemes. 'We are completely in favour of modern sales methods but are convinced that it is the small dealer associations and the traditional retail co-operatives which must introduce these methods.'

The first concrete results of this policy are already visible. The Marco Polo Centre is a traders co-operative which offers its goods for sale in self-service shops. In the outlying neighbourhood of Barca, the trade co-operative, 'Coop Bologna', runs a modern food market. Further shopping centres on the co-operative model are to be created in five out of ten neighbourhoods. The City Council will provide material help by permitting them to build on communal land and by sharing in the costs.

For this purpose the city has formed a joint-stock company for shopping centres, 'Società per Azioni Centri Commerciale', which purchases building-land for planned co-operative centres, helps with the actual building costs and lets existing locations cheaply. The share capital of £340,000 (\$580,000) is divided between the Council (75 per cent), The Coop Bologna (10 per cent), Traders Co-operative (10 per cent) and The Trade, Industry and Agricultural Chamber of Bologna (5 per cent).

It is not chance which has made these co-operatives important retailing alternatives — but a tradition dating back some one hundred years.

In 1865 many workers and craftsmen, already members of workers' co-operatives, formed Bologna's first Purchasing Co-operatives. These stocked basic essentials (without a detour via middlemen) and, in the event of unemployment, sold to affected members on credit and at cost price. Today the retail co-operative movement, which sees itself as an economic instrument of the working class, embraces nineteen co-operatives with a total of 60,000 members.

In 1973 Coop Bologna, the biggest, ran 107 shops in the capital and surrounding area and achieved a sales total of about £10,000,000 (\$17,000,000).

About 5 per cent of all retail purchases in the province take place in co-operative stores and the proportion is increasing from year to year. Yet, despite expansion, they have remained faithful to their original goals: still continuing the fight, together with the trade unions; still campaigning for the economic and political betterment of the working population. Their declared and binding goals are:

- Defence of the purchasing power of wage-earners.
- The fight against inflation and its causes.
- Protection of the health of the people and guarantee of high quality of the goods sold.
- Shutting out the parasitic middle-men who come between producers and consumers.
- Modernisation of the supply network and defence of the retail trade against the attacks of private capitalist monopolies.
- Struggle for a national agricultural and trade reform.

These goals are completely in tune with those of the Bologna Council. So too is the co-operatives' democratic administration structure. It has an elected committee accountable to the membership base; control councils in each co-op section, with elected delegates to the summit organisation. Most significantly, the co-operatives have already achieved tangible results which considerably simplify the struggle of the city authorities for progressive economic forms.

For example, the co-operatives have almost eliminated the middle-man trade in several sectors. Less and less of their stock comes from profit-orientated wholesalers. Instead, they conduct business directly with similar co-operatively organised producers and manufacturers. Avoiding middlemen's profit-margins allows them to offer products at lower retail prices to the consumer. Since the beginning of the seventies, 40 per cent of all goods sold in co-operatives in Bologna province came from co-operative production.

Obviously this is only possible because the Co-operative Movement has gained a strong position in and around Bologna in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Founded in the nineteenth century as a weapon of the ruthlessly exploited 'braccianti' (day labourers), the agricultural co-operatives today function as efficient suppliers to the co-operative industry and retail network. Some 4,000 labourers work almost 5,000 acres of arable land in sixteen agricultural areas in Bologna province. Fifty-six agricultural businesses with 2,600

employees have formed an agricultural machine-consortium, sharing combine-harvesters, tractors and specialised mechanical devices — a machine pool with a total of 383 units.

Italy's biggest dairy co-operative is situated in the Bolognese suburb, Granarolo. This modern milk-processing establishment owned by a consortium of agricultural co-operatives supplies milk daily to almost the whole of Bologna and a number of other towns in Emilia-Romagna. Every day Granarolo receives about 250,000 kilos of unprocessed milk from its members for pasteurising and packing in various forms (drinking milk, drinking chocolate, coffee milk). This high level of production ensures that the co-operatives have a 40-50 per cent share of milk production in Emilia-Romagna — and that co-op stores sell only co-op milk.



There is also an important direct supplier of flour products, bread, poultry and eggs. The Bolognese dough factory, Corticelli (100 per cent owned by small farmers and agricultural and retail co-operatives) runs a huge corn mill, produces 270,000 tons of corn and egg or flour products a year, bakes up to 20,000 kilos of bread every day and runs a poultry slaughter-house which processes 700 hens an hour. Moreover, specialised machines sort and pack fifteen million eggs a year for retail; and one annexe supplies the associated farms with quality animal food.

With direct co-operation of this type between producer groups and consumer organisations, the co-operative movement furthers the aims of the Bolognese councillors in two senses. First, it keeps retail prices down in the co-operatives' own shops and decisively contributes to a retail price index which is a few points below the national average. Second, it helps considerably in preserving the agricultural production and job structure in the region, and quite successfully protects it against influx of high-finance capital.

The crucial point is that the co-operatives have remained conscious of their task in the class-struggle. They have not missed any opportunity of using their strength to develop productivity and make themselves (in alliance with the retail co-operatives) the most important factor in regional food supply. This means agriculture in the region has increased its efficiency without coming under the exploitative control of capitalist factories and big distribution concerns — as is common in the southern Italian regions of Apulia and Calabria.

Instead of supplying agricultural products at prices largely determined by anonymous retail food industries, the co-operative farmers rely on distribution organisations to which they themselves belong. Instead of producing for the profit requirements of private industries, they plan their stock breeding and the acreage cultivation in accordance with the requirements of the consumers. And instead of being threatened by redundancy when and if competition from capitalist giants is strong, they secure their own jobs by collective self-determination.

Indeed, it becomes clear what the Bolognese union of agricultural co-operatives means when it maintains that, 'The co-operative is the future of our agriculture.' One can see why, during the retail-plan discussions, Mazzetti repeatedly emphasized that the co-operatives offer the only realistic alternative to the profiteering capitalist supply system.' Co-operative workers and responsible local politicians are agreed: only co-operation between the actual producers — in the fields and factories — makes possible a just economic balance.

Only the beginnings of such an economic balance exist in Bologna. Neither the politicians nor the planners contest that. In the final analysis, the Bolognese do not live in an isolated world where a socialist planned economy can be developed without problems. They live in a town governed by socialists and communists who daily confront the manifestations of crisis — of late capitalism in general and the Italian economy in particular.

If the struggle against the unproductive, price-pushing

middlemen is to be effective for all, then arrangements must be created to make possible direct commerce between manufacturers and retailers. In other words, middlemen will only be excluded when retailers can get their products directly and, therefore, more cheaply from the producers. For that, dealers and suppliers need a central meeting place to allow them direct contact.

Hence, the left-wing majority of the Bolognese Council decided in 1968, to set up a huge wholesale centre on a 520 acre site on the North East boundary of the city. A joint-stock company to run the proposed centre was set up in 1971 with an initial capital of £670,000 (\$1,100,000). The most important shareholder in this company is Bologna's City Council.

When built, the 'Centro Alimentare' is to become the central market for fruit and vegetables, meat and fish, poultry, eggs and dairy products. Various modern infra-structural arrangements are also planned for the actual trading sites — special rooms for the ripening of vegetables, huge store-rooms, systems of conservation and modern packing machines will be available for general use. Besides, the centre is to contain a communal book-keeping section, offices for producer and retail organisations, conference rooms and services. In the next stage the local fruit and vegetable market will be transferred to this site. 'With such projects,' said Mayor Zangheri when he opened the abattoir and cattlemarket in July 1974, 'we demonstrate the positive role of local authorities in promoting economic progress, and a new, more rational relationship between producer and retailer.'

Bologna's success in the food sector is offset by a failure in another. Under the aegis of the Chamber of Commerce, 140 wholesalers have combined to build a trade centre without the financial participation of the City Council. Reform in the wholesale and retail world is still at the embryo stage.

Education:



‘A School that has Still to be Invented’

Roger Müller

'The type of young person we need is one who has learned to understand; who knows how to change things and who wants to change them. Whether it is considered seemly or not, that person is a young revolutionary.' Such is the result of an educational research-project and a year-long debate between parties and unions, parents and teachers, educationalists and politicians. The quote comes from an official publication of the Bolognese education department: *'The Reconstruction of the Primary Schools'* (1973).

Italian schools need total reconstruction. Left-wing educationalists are agreed that nothing more can be achieved by isolated reforms. State schools have not acted as schools for the people for years. According to official statistics, more than two-thirds of the working population have not completed the obligatory time at school. And about 30 per cent of young Italians who leave school every summer pass no final exams. The Italian school is no longer a people's school because an average of up to 14 per cent of pupils at all levels are left stranded every year.

Selection processes, in Italy as everywhere, work against the already disadvantaged child, most often from the working class. These children grow up in neighbourhoods with nowhere to play, nothing to explore but uniform architecture and pavements. Their parents, worn out by work, are relieved to have the children watch television three or more hours a day. Learning conditions for middle and upper class children are both more rewarding and more stimulating. Unfortunately, learning problems which grow out of social and cultural deprivation are aggravated by school-life, rather than bettered by it. The school career of such children consists in failing exams, being left behind and not even finishing compulsory schooling.

Progressive parties and groups in Italy have been protesting for years against the great educational sieve — the upper and middle class pupils staying up, the lower majority dropping through. The hardest-hitting and most popular protest against the discriminatory practice of schools was written in 1967 by eight 'failures' — youths from a Florentine mountain farming region. In their *'Letter to a Teacher'* ◀ they describe their experiences in state schools; how they run a school with their village priest, where outcasts help each other to learn. Those who administer this *'self-help school'* acknowledge that it is more difficult to work with *'poor people'* and that *'they are tempted to get them off their backs.'* But, a school which cannot help the poorer pupil is no longer a school. By the pupils' own definition, *'It's then a hospital which takes care of the healthy and rejects the sick. A tool for the*

creation of unbridgeable differences.'

Red Bologna has taken up the struggle against the class-discriminatory selection process. Statistics prove, beyond all doubt, to what extent present-day Italian schools are schools for the ruling classes. The social privileges gained by education remain with the well off, while the majority are segregated from any benefits. The communist educationalist Bruno Ciari, who has worked for years on Bologna's educational reform, concludes: 'As long as schools select and discriminate, there will be no democracy. As long as full development of capabilities and opportunities is open only to a minority, there will be privilege, injustice and inequality.'

Bologna's educational policies have as a primary aim, the abolition of privileges and inequalities. The pre-school nursery, a method much vaunted by educationalists as one which prevents later discrimination, is already a reality in Bologna. In 1975 such pre-schools took in 77 per cent of the children in their catchment area. Only in a few Swedish towns does one find such a high proportion of pre-school age children catered for.

Not only in the pre-school area — where legally it has a free hand — does Bologna's Council intervene against discrimination in education. The Bolognese have also been active in the area of compulsory schooling, which remains under the aegis of the state. This activity is supported by the city authorities, the unions and, with varying commitment, all parties except the fascist MSI.

One result of this active intervention has been the extension and improvement of the 'Doposcuola', or afternoon school, which functions in Bologna (and in many other Italian towns) as a school run by the municipality alongside the nationally-administered state school. In Bologna in 1974, 40 per cent of all elementary-school pupils took additional lessons in various disciplines from council teachers, after their obligatory lessons with state teachers.

The 'Doposcuola' is becoming an increasingly important complement to the state school. For state school time tables have for years not adequately taught pupils enough even for the yearly final exams. Proof that far too many pupils learn much too little is given by the notorious exam failure-rate. In 1972, for example, 400,000 children throughout Italy had to repeat failed end-of-the-year exams, in order to avoid an extra year in the same class. To pass this 're-sit' there is only one solution: private tuition. Parents have to pay for this, if they can. The Rome Education Ministry estimated that parents spent twenty million pounds (\$34,000,000) on private lessons in 1972. But there are

no estimates of spending to organise hundreds of thousands of re-sits year after year. A member of the Ministry himself took the view that the failure rate could be significantly reduced if a proportion of this money were used to improve the schools.

Schooling is, of course, free in Italy. But the principle of free education is pointless, if year after year hundreds of thousands of parents must pay for private lessons. Workers cannot afford this luxury. Italy's education system is anti-social, since it is not the stupid who fail but the poor. When Bologna's Education Department initiated the improvements to the 'Doposcuola' in 1967, it did not see itself as helping merely working-class parents, but also the middle-class parents who were habitually digging into their pockets for private lessons. Today in Bologna more than 500 local teachers give optional extra lessons to more than 12,000 pupils of all classes. And education statistics regularly show that the demand in workers' districts for extra lessons is somewhat higher than in well-off areas.

For the parents, teachers and politicians working on educational reform in Bologna, the extension of the Doposcuola is only a first step. The declared goal is the amalgamation of the state and the municipal schools, the merging of morning and afternoon classes. For a quarter of all elementary-school classes this full-time schedule is already reality.

Such services cost money. Expenditure on the schools is the biggest entry on the debit side of the community budget. With the agreement of the population, a quarter of total expenditure is pumped into schools. Every second city wage-packet goes to an education employee. More than half of local government employees work in education. To educate revolutionaries, however, one needs more than administrative measures; more than new pre-schools, high expenditure and an expansion in the number of school hours.

Throughout Italy, schools function as a closed system, which cannot be changed from the outside despite severe problems. In Bologna the role of the public in the shaping of education policy has been consciously promoted.

Listen and Obey:

School in our society is not democratic and critical. It is a school in which you listen and obey: the school of uncritical consent. It is not school made by everyone for everyone — administered, run and controlled by the community. It is still school of the hierarchical sort, authoritarian and selective. It grooms leaders for the state apparatus

and for key positions of power. The state needs these people to preserve the present kind of economic, political and social system.

(From a local Bolognese working paper on teacher training)

The foundation stone for citizen participation in education was laid at the beginning of the sixties when the City Council ceded part of its control to the neighbourhoods in the course of its decentralisation. It was then that local Education Commissions were first formed which quickly outgrew their new areas of competence. Education questions were problems in Bologna from the start; and it was in the solution of these that residents were most spontaneous in exercising their new participatory right.

Bologna's administration sharpened the citizens' appetite for participation. They institutionalised education debate by means of the 'Febbraio Pedagogico Bolognese' (Bolognese Education February). Named after the month in which it begins every year, the event lasts several months. The Febbrai have now taken place fourteen times. They are the pacemakers in left-wing education policy for the whole of Italy. Parents, teachers, students, politicians and unionists from the city and the rest of Italy, as well as from other countries, participate. The first two educational Februaries (1963-64) were devoted to the theme, 'The Child, the Family and the School.' The organisers wanted to carry contemporary scientific knowledge out of the orbit of education specialists and to the people.

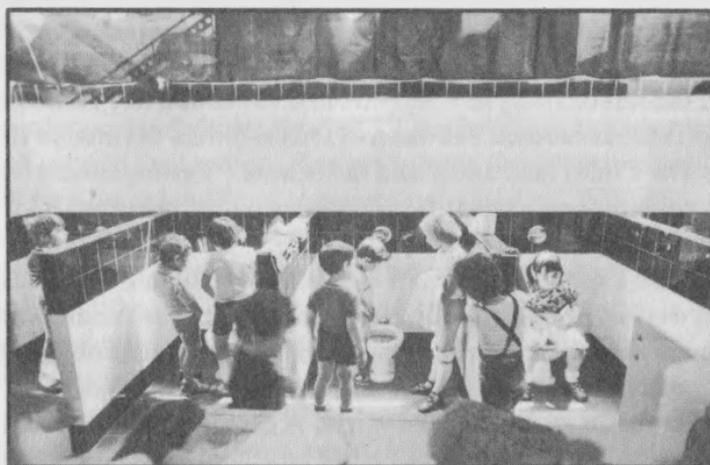
Bruno Ciari, one of Italy's best-known left-wing educationalists, who has worked in Bologna for years comments: 'The fundamental idea even in these first Februaries was that educational problems are not solved in closed institutions which regurgitate knowledge far removed from the realities of the world. A person's education is a problem which is society's as a whole. The school must be a centre of meetings, debates, and collective creative work.' As had been hoped, bus-drivers, mechanics, housewives and white-collar workers took part in the great education debate.

In 1964, Bologna's citizens moved from debate to action. They formed the first Parent-Teacher Association in the city and cleared the first hurdle on the way to a truly 'public' school-system. The authorities, together with the people, set to work on the creation of nursery schools — a 'first rank priority' of education policy for the next ten years.

Nursery schools were initially built in places where there was a proven demand for kindergarten places. Buildings were constructed

only in response to the concrete, clearly-expressed demand of the people. Such a policy meant that within a short time, people throughout the city were made to think about their own area's education requirements. Demand for nursery school places grew more quickly than the places themselves. Existing kindergartens had to be defended against overcrowding to avoid a drop in quality. Deterioration would, doubtless, have caused a decline in interest and many couples would have looked to the private sector.

Such dangers were fended off by democratic debate which raised political consciousness. Because they all had to struggle step by step — the parents for places for their children, the teachers for their own requirements, the Council for a share of the finances — the Bolognese nursery schools never became a simple item of social consumption in a modern urban society. They remained a community product and the large numbers of people who participated in their formation still actively take care of their running.



In 1975, 13,000 children, or 77 per cent of all children between three and six, attended the 'scuola dell' infanzia.' This is an increase of 150 per cent compared to 1962. The Bolognese Education Department draws this conclusion from the figures: 'The reason for the higher demand for nursery school places must be found in an increasing general consciousness of the role of the 'scuola dell' infanzia'. This is proved by the fact that in the same period the population of the city increased by only 10 per cent and the number of working mothers fell from 30 to 25 per cent.'

People became aware, during the ten year period of construction of the nursery schools, that access to nursery education for all children

is the basis for fighting class discrimination. Class-related inequalities in education opportunities can only be diminished if all children have access to the same schools.

The sort of nursery common in the rest of Italy has precisely the opposite effect. It increases the educational disadvantage of lower-class children. Critics call these nurseries 'child parking-places' — essentially lower-class ghettos. They are miserable places; so badly-equipped and short of staff that only those bring their children who have no choice — working-class mothers. The children already come from an 'anti-learning' atmosphere: houses in poor, monotonous suburbs where overworked parents have little time for their children already opiated by television. The child parking-places exacerbate the situation. They have nothing to offer to body or mind. Their aim is to teach a servile belief in life after death. 65 per cent of Italian child-parks are under no public control save that of God and his representatives — namely church and private religious organisations. To get away from the charitable, discriminatory nursery model, Bologna's solution was to expunge any social welfare connotations from its nurseries. The schools are not charitable organisations for the badly-off but are every child's right. They are so well-equipped, so rich in stimuli and possibilities, that they attract children from educationally favoured milieus, the middle and upper classes. Yet they remain open to all.

Bologna's nurseries are varied — depending on their ground area and the year of their building. Normally a kindergarten consists of three classrooms (one each for the three-year-olds, four- and five-year-olds) set up round a common room. The common room, reserved for activities which require a lot of space and tolerated noise, is freely accessible to all children. If a child feels the need to run round or practice head-stands, then it may do so in the common room at any time. The arrangement of the kindergartens is not uniform because parents and children are continually trying out new ideas. But a series of principles and aims has been implemented in most.

The basic equipment of a common room includes musical instruments, a puppet theatre, a model house, where children imitate the grown-ups. A great attraction in almost all nurseries is the fancy-dress corner. The classrooms are reserved for tasks which require concentration and peace. This is also the real work-place for the teacher and her assistant. There are several areas in these classes, sub-divided in different ways by movable furniture.

A conversation area where children, sitting on cushions, can speak to one another; a logic-mathematics area where the apparatus for

weights and measures is kept, including building bricks and jig-saw puzzles. A set of scales occupies a prominent position in all the kindergartens. Playing with this, the children learn the basic principles of mathematics. Bolognese children paint standing up, and in the Painting Corner they stand, hand on hip, at easels and discuss their creations with other pupils or their teachers.



In the whole room there is only one area where talking is forbidden. For the Bolognese educationalists, language is far too important for chatter to be inhibited. But if pupils want to work in peace, they can retreat to the SILENCE corner where no one may disturb them. The community brochure explains the use of various work areas in this way: 'By giving children more freedom in their choice of activities, we find they are quieter and do not need to get rid of all that excess energy accumulated over long hours of lessons in a single classroom.... The child who is allowed to work away from the teacher and to choose activities which interest him or her most will adapt with a higher degree of freedom.'

Adjoining the classrooms are the toilets, not divided by sex, and having child-sized closets and lavatory bowls. Thus even the three-year olds can manage a visit themselves, and helpers need intervene only in exceptional cases.

The progressive closing of old, unsuitable school buildings also contributes to the high standard of the Bolognese nursery schools. Before the end of 1972, more than twenty ancient school buildings had been replaced by new ones. It is taken as given that new school buildings should not be designed solely by architects, but with the collaboration of teachers, educationalists, doctors and administrative workers. Given too, that projects are submitted for the approval of the appropriate neighbourhood assembly. So, for instance, in June 1975 the Architect Fioretta Gualidi used slides in a lecture on her plans for a new middle-school to the assembly of the Borgo Panigale. That evening the architect and her team — no beginners in building schools — had to listen to reproaches concerning the pretty but ‘difficult-to-clean’ floor-covering they had used in a recently completed school. Lay people in the assembly also criticised the way the building was divided into rooms. The headmistress in charge of a school built by the Fioretta Gualidi team told of the difficulty of preparing these schoolrooms for a parents’ meeting. To avoid similar faults in the planned school, the architect was sent back to the drawing board to look for a better structural solution.

The first demand of Bolognese school architecture is simplicity. ‘Huge buildings, as unalterable as Greek temples, seem to say to the individual: ‘You yourself are nothing — the organisation is everything,’” says one builder. Basic demands are made concerning the environment within the new type of school. ‘Rooms are needed which differ from municipal surroundings; a structure in which a series of progressive educational hypotheses can be tested and verified by teachers and psychologists. The materials used must be left unrefined — visible cement, visible wood structures, visible piping — in contrast to the normal glossing over and concealment. Colours must be used in strong, decisive tones. All neutral and subdued colours are to be avoided.’ So writes one community architect.

To save money and to adapt the fittings to the needs of the nursery schools, practically all furniture was specially developed for the Bolognese and made mainly in the city’s own carpentry shop. Yet, though Bologna must save, the cheapest solution is not usually the best. Thus linoleum is used for table-coverings — although it is old-fashioned and appreciably dearer than modern materials — because it deadens sound and is pleasant to the touch.

The new school structures must be variable. Uniformity is rejected by Bologna’s teachers and architects. ‘There is no such thing as a made-to-measure school, because school-users change from district to

district and over time. The only possible system is one which keeps its attitude flexible and is always experimenting.' So a local newspaper sums up the problem.

Bolognese nursery schools are noteworthy not simply because of their large-scale development or their number of pupils. Schools are of optimum standard because of the progressive reduction since the 50's in the number of pupils per class. In a nursery in 1954, an average class contained 38 pre-school children. In the municipal nurseries of 1962 it was still 32. In 1975, 28 children were enrolled in each class. Taking into account absences, the number of children attending each class each day was from 20-25. Thus, teachers and helpers enjoy working-conditions which the staff of German or Swiss kindergartens can only dream of. A class of 25 children attended by a teacher and a helper — these are figures which compare very favourably with schools anywhere in Europe.

In Italy other school staff, such as cleaning women, work during school hours. These 'bidelle', affectionately called 'dada' by the children, perform a genuinely educational function by virtue of their constant presence in the school. The educationalists and politicians of Bologna consider it indispensable that they too be educated in teaching-techniques; and so, every winter term, about sixty dadas go to evening courses at the University. Development psychology and learning theory figure on their courses. Time spent on courses counts as working time and is paid. The educationalist Anna Scarari, of the Bolognese Education Department, reveals the reasoning behind this further education of the cleaning-women. 'We must realise that these workers have great influence on the children, for example — in the matter of cleanliness and especially with three- to six-year-olds. We must not leave this important aspect of education simply to chance. Our goal is not only to give the cleaning staff an idea of their educational role. It is to change the nature of the division of labour among the pre-school staff, so that the dadas attain equality in the collective of pre-school educators.'

Meanwhile, thousands of children outgrow the nursery schools and have to leave these exemplary 'institutions' for the wretched state ones administered by Rome. More and more parents are agreed that the school reform policy can no longer be limited to the kindergartens. The state schools too should be forced to submit to public co-determination. The notion that 'state schools must not be touched' has been adhered to for long enough. Now war must be declared on faceless, hierarchical state power. For the parents of the first generation

of nursery-school children, it has been difficult to accept the conditions in the compulsory state schools. In three years of bringing their children to the nurseries each morning and collecting them again each evening, most parents have grown accustomed to discussing educational problems with the teacher, to seeing the work their children have been doing and chatting with other parents. Such an exchange of ideas is not possible in the state schools. Hermetically sealed classrooms are the rule. As in most European countries, parents exist to sign reports and warn children to 'listen and obey'. Anything other is unwanted interference.

Extension and improvement of the 'doposcuola' which takes in 40 per cent of all elementary-school pupils has not been enough to alter this situation profoundly. The classes which the municipal teachers give in the afternoon (besides those of the state-teacher in the morning) might do away with the need for extra tutorials for some pupils ... but nothing more. In any case, this means that the school day is cleft in two: the child has to face two teachers who usually know nothing about each other but offer two opposed types of lesson — the ex-cathedra schoolmaster in the morning; the more understanding, less performance-conscious 'doposcuola' teacher in the afternoon. Learning as continuous competition in the morning; group-work in the afternoon.



The 'doposcuola' even in Bologna, is something utilised primarily by the lower-classes, to help compensate for their education deficit. The goal of the battle against these 'afternoon ghettos for lower-class children' is the merger of the state 'morning' schools with the community 'afternoon' schools. The education model of the future

is full-time or whole-day school. This merger has already begun in Bologna: 141 classes or more than 10 per cent of all elementary classes have functioned since 1975 as day schools.

This move to full-time does not merely mean an 'expansion of the timetable and a prolongation of the time the children spend locked up,' explained Bruno Ciari in a lecture at the University of Bologna in 1968. It is a goal of the 'full-time school' to give children a broader and more comprehensive education — but not in the usual sense. The eight- or nine-hour-day should make it possible to learn through personal experience and not just out of books. 'Every investigation and, therefore, every learning-step forward must proceed from a problem, from a state of doubt, or from an unfulfilled need,' writes Ciari in his book, 'I modi dell insegnare' ('Teaching Methods'). He asks, 'What importance can there be to learning by heart the population of Switzerland and its most important cities? Or to knowing whether an insect is of the Choleopterix species or not?'

Language teaching in the full-time school is practical. Teachers reject the ideal of a poetic high language and place great value on precise communication about everyday realities — or of the understanding of these realities in words — and the relations between thinking, speaking and acting. The full-time school looks on creative activities as being more than entertainment and distraction. 'Just as one speaks every day ... the child must express itself daily through colours, lines, and plastic forms; by means of gesture, mime and drama. In this way, the child adapts itself to a language that differs from the verbal. These creative and artistic activities are to be valued as highly as maths or other subjects.'

By insistence on group work, by rejection of standard lessons, given only from the front of the classroom; by means of optional subjects and lessons by projects (i.e. the treatment of particular material over a length of time without the restriction of a timetable), and by the intermingling of different ages and differing abilities, this full-time school would gradually develop into a 'total' school.

The path to this ambitious goal is enormously difficult in the Italian state-administered system. Uninterested state school teachers are loathe to co-operate with the city teachers or even with each other. A further problem is the shortage of space in the schools. In 1972, for example, the state was 80,000 classrooms short. Throughout Italy one classroom had to serve for two or three classes. In order for all children to attend school, two to three shifts per day are necessary.

Bologna's education policy-makers have declared war on this

sad state of affairs. After hard-hitting talks with the Rome Ministry of Education and its representatives in the region, and partly by the use of its own money, Bologna now has an above-average number of classrooms at its disposal. There is no 'triple shift' in Bologna any more and the 'double shift' only exists in a few schools.

The first real steps towards the development of the full-time school were taken in 1968. Parent-teacher Committees in the neighbourhoods provided the initiative for the first conference on 'Full-Time School', which took place in the Psychology Department of the University of Bologna. The 1968 'Educational February' also supported full-day schooling which was introduced in the autumn of the same year for thirteen classes in the city. Six years later, well over 3,000 pupils were attending full-day schools. After six years' experience of the new system, the 1974 'Educational February' took up the theme again. Dozens of debates, talks, reports from teachers' collectives, headmasters, and parents' committees debated the ironical theme 'Full-time schools — full of what?'. The ruthlessly self-critical answer: full of problems.

First of all — lack of money. To introduce the full-day for all elementary schoolchildren in the city, more than twice the present number of teachers would have to be recruited. This was impossible because education already takes up 25 per cent of Bologna's budget; more than in any other Italian city. There is no alternative to a confrontation with the State which, according to a 1971 law, is responsible for employing teachers for the local afternoon-schools. But the corrupt Rome budget has no money for the appointment of teachers; despite the fact that thousands of unemployed teachers are waiting for work.

The second bitter fact is the difficulty of encouraging the participation necessary to the very existence of full-time schools. Parents who might wish to participate are often overburdened by their jobs, and therefore only too happy to leave education completely to the teachers. On the other hand, teachers too, must take time outside normal hours to consult with their colleagues or with parents. They are not paid extra for this time. Even teachers with initiative often lack the will to make this extra contribution.

The third gloomy chapter in the plan's history concerns the teachers' lack of preparation for this new form of education. Time and again, Rome has appointed state teachers to Bologna's schools who know nothing about the demands of the progressive education experiment there. State teachers cannot be compelled either to

co-operate with their colleagues or take part in local further education courses — things which the city can easily demand of its own teachers. No wonder there is tension between the involved teachers and indifferent ones. Consequently, there is a rapid turnover in Bolognese teachers. The parent-participation model of the Emilian capital undermines their traditional authority.

Bologna's education policy provides a model as well as encouragement to left-wing educators throughout the country and, therefore, creates problems for the Rome Ministry. Rome tries to hinder Bologna's progressive policies by restricting the allocation of teachers. When state teachers for the afternoon schools are distributed throughout the Appenine peninsula, the red city is treated very badly. In 1972/73 the Province of Bologna was allocated 25 afternoon-teachers in all, and in 1976 it was a pathetic twelve. In contrast Milan received about 2,000 afternoon-teachers in 1974 alone.

With this artificially produced lack of teachers, the entire full-time system becomes problematic. With classes of 35 and more, the basic postulates of modern education cannot be put into practice. The Bolognese full-time teacher, F. Raparelli, summarises what the Rome personnel policy means for Bologna's schools. 'In many neighbourhoods we will see the failure of the full-time model. Our discussions, our commitment, will serve no one, and we will simply roll down our sleeves again and merely concentrate on how the demands of working mothers can be most easily met. That will be that!'

Return to the welfare model of education as a parking-place for workers' children? The Bolognese are ready to fight for the full-time model. They have discovered what a direct influence on the schools means.

Right-wing critics are mistaken if they read into the frank self-criticism of the reformers, the fact that the full-time model has been wrecked. The base for a continued school model, which extends to the streets, schoolrooms and local meetings, is broad and capable of standing the strain. In 1974, delegations from dozens of schools supported by unions, parties and other groupings made their way to the provincial representative of the Rome Ministry of Education to articulate their demands. At meetings, teachers challenged parents to help them defend the new schools — not merely for their own children but also with a view to the eventual reform of education policy throughout Italy. After all, Rome's policy undermines the establishment of the full-time model anywhere in Italy.

The Bolognese try to exert pressure and defend their concept of

education through demonstrations and petitions. The mobilisation of the residents of 'Pilastrò' has been exemplary. This is one of the poorest areas of Bologna, situated about four kilometres north east of the city and divided from it by a motorway. The ugly dormitory town is a sad example of the subsidized flat-building of 1962.

It mainly houses immigrants from the south. Children in this area are the most difficult. But the residents of Pilastrò are defending their full-time classes as nowhere else in Bologna. The basis of their unity is founded upon an extremely tough tenants' association, which was created years ago in the battle against the profit interests of the estate owners, an insurance firm. Education has given it a new purpose. Together with parents, teachers, and the representatives of the Communist Trade Union Association, the workers of the Pilastrò submitted their demands to the state education bureaucrats. These are minimum requirements for the continuance and expansion of the full-time school:

- the state may not forcibly transfer any teachers who wish to stay in Bologna.
- newly employed teachers must contract to stay for at least a year.
- the existing full-time sections are to be guaranteed as a minimum; as also the necessary finances 'which are used in the active participation of teachers and parents.'
- even if the population of the district increases there must not be more than twenty children to a class.

In support of these demands and as a warning, teachers went on a one-day strike and parents kept their children at home.

The residents of Pilastrò are not alone in demonstrating that Bologna's struggle for an equitable people's education goes deep and is not only the hobby of an educated élite. Even in the first 1968 delegates' council of the Parent-Teacher Committees, which began with a congress on full-time schooling, academics and students did not form the customary majority.

The council consisted of 135 parents, 130 teachers, 10 psychologists, doctors and psychiatrists, 9 students, 8 experts in various areas, 3 social workers and one priest.

With such figures, the Bolognese can claim to have taken the democratization of education seriously. After all, the whole population (they remind themselves), pays for the schools and is, therefore, entitled to participate and inform the authorities about majority needs.

The fact that democracy in education is not solely concerned with administration has been emphasised repeatedly by Bruno Ciari in

many articles in the periodical, 'Riforma della Scuola' ('School Reform'). Democracy must also relate to the content of education, what schools give to children — and to teaching techniques. In this sphere too, discussion and practice are more advanced in Bologna than in any other European country.

Ciari, who is both a theoretician and Education Councillor in the small Tuscan town of Certoldo, called the schools 'la grande disadattata' (the great unadaptable) unadapted to the development of Italy from an agricultural to an industrial state; unadapted to such social developments as the reduced size of the family; unadapted to the progress of the technical age. 'Generally the child loses contact with facts and living experience as soon as it crosses the threshold of the school.'

In Italy, as in other countries, children, to whom supermarkets and space travel are matters of everyday fact, are given text books of astounding irrelevance which stop short at the point where an understanding of the present ought to begin. Learning is not investigation of facts which are or will be important in the life of the pupils. It is submission to regurgitated encyclopaedic knowledge or senseless intellectual games.

Mathematics and Sadism

The Geometry problem in the exam brought to mind a sculpture in one of the modern-art exhibitions: 'a solid is formed by a hemisphere superimposed on a cylinder whose surface is three-sevenths of that ...'

There is no instrument that can measure surfaces. Thus, it never happens in life that we know the surface without knowing the dimensions. Such a problem can only be conceived by a sick mind.

Letter to a Teacher

by the School of Barbiana

Schoolchildren learn how to work out in percentages the various yields of a cornfield and nothing about the increase in bread prices nor the comparison between increases in wages and the rate of inflation. Learning schemes, regarded as having the most educational value, are those which have the least to do with the lives of the children. To build lessons on the interests of the pupils is taboo in the view of conservative educationalists. For interest 'clouds' clear thinking. What is necessary, they say, is discipline.

Bolognese parents are of a different opinion. There is only one way out of the selective, discriminatory education which alienates children from reality — and that is direct democracy in the classroom; the direct influence of the parents on the methods of the teacher. It sometimes seems as though Bolognese parents went to school ‘to Barbiana.’

The Parents’ Union

Who should have kept [such a teacher] in check?

The Principal might have been able to do it, or the Teachers’ Council. They did not.

The parents might have been able to do it. But as long as you have the handle of the knife completely in your grasp they will keep quiet. And so, either we have to wrest from your hands all the knives (marks, reports, exams) or we have to get the parents organized.

A wonderful Union of Fathers and Mothers able to remind you that we are the people who pay you; and we pay you to serve us, not throw us out of school.

It may turn into a good thing for you. People who get no criticism do not age well. They lose touch with life and the progression of events. They turn into poor creatures like yourselves.

Letter to a Teacher

by the School of Barbiana

Bologna’s pugnacious school reformers want to try out new ways to adapt the ‘great unadaptables’ to the life and needs of the whole population. Social administration is one of their most important demands in the struggle for a modern, democratic school system. Bologna’s teachers and education officers are agreed that no specialist can do without the help of the parents, the parties and the trade unions. Education, a task of the society, cannot simply be left in the hands of the experts. For specialists and technocrats only rarely know what the life of workers is like.

Order of priorities

If schooling has to be so brief, then it should be planned according to the most urgent needs.

Little Pierino, the doctor's son, has plenty of time to read fables. Not Gianni. He dropped out of your hands at fifteen. He is in a factory. He does not need to know whether it was Jupiter who gave birth to Minerva or vice versa. His Italian Literature course would have done better to include the contract of the Metalworkers' Union. Did you ever read it, Miss? Aren't you ashamed? It means the life of half a million families.

Letter to a Teacher
by the School of Barbiana

Even if the extent of public participation does not satisfy progressive educators and politicians, the class struggle has made its way substantially into Bologna's schools. Nowhere are the state-run schools attacked as frequently as here, denounced as the instruments of the ruling class, accused of being saturated in the report-card system and structured solely for their own benefit. This struggle has achieved some results:

In half the full-time classes, report cards are only a formality now. With the parents agreement, reports are filled out only to conform with the Education Law. A child's performance is no longer measured in terms of marks.

Quasi-fascist text books, which have provided huge returns for private publishing firms, are on the way out in Bologna. In 1974, about half the full-time schools possessed their own library and had integrated daily newspapers and magazines in lessons.

Opportunities for participation in the schools are taken up enthusiastically. In 1974 80 per cent of the teachers had regular contacts with neighbourhood representatives. And 60 per cent of teachers took part in meetings or discussions with parents.

In half the schools parents are even occasionally involved in lessons. Sports and creative subjects such as painting, drawing, sculpting have the highest parent participation rate, and English, too, since parents want to learn the language.

Integration of handicapped and emotionally-retarded children from special schools has been much more successful and offers fewer difficulties than under the usual state-school and afternoon-school arrangements.

Bolognese teachers are proud of their schools. That is clearly shown by the full-time school opinion polls. Two-thirds of the teachers feel that the traditional schools could never have attained the same

goals, and all believe that 'a genuine advance for socially and culturally disadvantaged children has been achieved' in the full-time model. Two-thirds of the teachers find 'greater and broader interest' in their pupils.

Social determination as a goal is no longer argued about in Bolognese educational circles. Only in the City Council is it attacked by conservative politicians: 'It is not true that there are no boundaries to democracy,' exclaimed the Social Democrat Councillor, Angelo Sabetti, trying to undermine the co-determination rights of the parents. 'I would never allow myself, for example, to go into a nuclear-station to teach the technicians what they have to do; I wouldn't even do that in a factory.'

The Bolognese will leave the nuclear stations to the technicians for the time being — but not the schools. They have no faith in specialists in that area. Education as a social problem must be solved by society, they believe. For no individual can recognise on his or her own the educational necessities of an entire society.

That the 'autonomous' ideas of education specialists only cause confusion and dissatisfaction is shown in the case of sex-education. The correct views of progressive pedagogues are in conflict with those of prudish parents. On his or her own, no teacher can solve this problem. In Germany and Switzerland, dozens of well-intentioned schoolmasters have been sacked for allegedly 'over-extensive' sex education. In Bologna parents and teachers work out together what will be useful for the children. The parents' mandate to the teacher is recognised as only part of their responsibility. They too must participate as educators of their children.

Sex-education is only one example of how social determination links parental education values with those of the schools. However progressive a school may be, it cannot simply override the values and concerns of the parents. Good education is undivided, consistent, understandable. Without the co-operation of the parents even the most skilful specialists cannot achieve that. They will ensure only that children's lives are cut into two different, unconnected and mutually confusing parts: school claims versus home claims.

□ In school there is something for everyone to do:

Pin up drawings, speak to the children, tell the children of one's own experiences ... it is important for our children to see us in the schools. That permits an exchange of ideas between parents and children, of things which they both know or which they have undertaken together. Thus, the long hours which the children

spend here are no longer separated from the experience of parents.

To spend one day in the school means a first step by parents towards continually-developing participation.

Plaque written by parents and teachers at the entrance to a Bologna school.

Success of the 'social determination scheme' is central to success of the total Bolognese education plans. As Emilian education reformers say to anyone who will listen — the best educational theorists are worthless if their new schools do not enlighten the people any more than the old ones.

An education model which is to suit, not only a tolerant educated élite, but the majority of people, must stem from the needs of this majority. In the pre-school sphere it was the wretched conditions in the nurseries on which the policies of the councillors, parties, and trade unions converged. Criticism of the status quo remains the driving force of the Bolognese nursery-schools and, therefore, of the whole education programme.

Even today, some fifteen years after the beginning of reform, Bolognese teachers will not allow themselves to present a rigidly formulated programme for their schools. Utopian goals make self-criticism constant; and flexibility a necessary part of system and practice. Despite their many and varied achievements, Bologna's teachers still say: 'Above all we know what we don't want.'

The Bolognese do not want to shroud their system in new regulations after years spent chipping away at ossified rules, and side-stepping or changing many unjust legal restraints. No signs are yet to be seen of a new, proliferating bureaucracy. 'We are trying to make rooms which are, so far as possible, suitable for a multitude of needs and we want to avoid any uniformity or centralisation,' says the Bolognese Education Office on the subject of nursery schools. Education Councillor, Ettore Tarozzi, describes the envisaged education system in a succinct phrase: 'A school which is still to be invented.' Even within a single city, schools cannot all be treated alike, is a fact as clear to practitioners as to administrators. Thus the School Councillor himself warns of the danger of uniformity which could bring deceptive security: The parents' committees will differ from school to school, because the realities from zone to zone are themselves different. In the open structure of our schools, there is room for imagination, for the creative abilities of the population, for everything that a parents' committee can develop.'

Bologna's schools are among the few to have effectively moved beyond the 'anti-authoritarian' education debate. While educationalists everywhere are still unsure of themselves after the shock of Summerhill, Italy's left-wing teachers, and primarily the Bolognese have learned how to come to terms again with the ideas of freedom and authority. 'Authority and freedom should not be viewed as separate and absolutely contradictory, but as mutually dependent or dialectically linked,' writes the Bolognese education Professor Piero Bertolini in the left-wing education review, 'Infanzia'.

The two concepts 'authority' and 'freedom' should not be viewed as separate and absolutely contradictory, but as mutually dependent or dialectically linked.... Freedom is never absolute, it is always limited. Limited by the natural and social environment and by the economic and political structures in which it is always integrated. Consequently it cannot be judged as a fact or essence which belongs to a person from birth onward and characterizes him. Freedom must be understood as something that must be continuously won; a perspective, or an unattainable goal.

The concept of 'authority' can be interpreted as the totality of restrictions which characterize the life of a person. Or ... as the existent reality in which all people live and by which all people are more or less formed — even if they are not totally dependent on it. It is a reality without which one cannot make calculations.

The concept 'freedom' then, is interpreted as the ability of a person to overcome existing reality.

The whole educational process must be a progressive liberation process in which the children, alone or in groups, must be stimulated to become aware of their restrictions and conditioning. At the same time, they are to be urged never to accept these restrictions and this conditioning passively. They should be helped in a genuine search to discover, to invent, to be creative in overcoming this reality ... which should no longer be understood as something incontestably definitive.

Piero Bertolini, **Infanzia**

No.5, Bologna, June 1974

Bologna's schools are not based on the patent remedies of educationalists. They do not pretend to a certainty which is, in any case, not to be found in modern educational theory. 'Since 1935,'

writes Bertolini, 'no great educational theorist has had a decisive influence on the schools.' And with a side-thrust at the anti-authoritarian British theorist, A.S. Neill, he continues, 'the new education has not succeeded in generalising some of its most important achievements.' Although it has had a tangible influence, this is often limited to isolated initiatives or rather special people who were perhaps more sensitive, than the usual run of teachers.

The educators available in the Emilian capital are mass-processed by the same low quality, conservative, over-crowded teacher-training institutions as others in the rest of Italy — and are not particularly special. Bologna does not need to call on exceptional educational intellects; for in the red city, people's representatives, parents and teachers are themselves seeking the way to create schools in which children learn something other than pre-digested facts.

In Bologna, the attempt to create more humane schools has not been postponed till some day after the revolution. Ettore Tarozzi, Education Councillor of Bologna from 1959 to 1975: 'We say it is possible to develop a school for the masses today, not in some vague future to be created by political precedence. In the primary schools, above all, we can count on a broad base of teachers, parents, workers — in short, people — who agree that the school organisation must be founded on a mixture of intuition, theory and personal hope.'

Social Policy:



‘Away with Charity, Away with Ghettos’

Roger Müller

‘We are convinced that the problems of social security must be tackled in a unified fashion and not piecemeal.’ In this way Ermanno Tondi, then Councillor for Social Problems, began his introductory talk at a City Council debate in May 1973 on local socio-political initiatives. Not only in Bologna but all over Italy critical observers are convinced that only a unified programme can make their totally fragmented welfare system effective and more just.

Currently, needy Italians are served by myriads of private, semi-private, public, semi-public, church and non-church organisations, foundations and associations. The state gave over its welfare obligations to such bodies in the last century and now supports them either directly or through tax concessions — if not complete tax exemption. Control of the activities of such organisations is practically impossible because of their heterogeneous structure. Their charitable measures are haphazard, totally unco-ordinated and duplicate one another.

Whether and how someone who needs support is helped is largely a matter of luck. In contrast, three things are certain in the present system — inefficiency, high costs and inequality in the rights of the recipients.

Bologna's social policy is underlined by a rejection of the isolated, charitable means of support given by bourgeois welfare policy. Bologna's social workers are not there just to spread help among the needy as justly as possible. They also want to discover how social need arises and to bring their findings into the political arena.

Bologna's social policy does not see its task as being to disregard right and wrong and quietly stop up those holes which are created by — among other things — present anti-social economic policies. Social policy here is part of a political struggle which seeks to promote socially equitable decisions in all areas. In the red city not only social policy is social:

- in its economic policy the Bolognese municipal government supports the co-operatives which are democratically organised and can be influenced by their members (unlike private enterprises which remain hierarchical and uncontrolled by the public).

- one sign of a social traffic-policy is the clearly preferential treatment of public transport and free rush hour travel.

- in urban planning the social commitment of the administration reveals a definite development policy. Renovated housing kept for the original occupants is basic here.

- schools-committees and parents-associations have been working for years in Bologna's districts in an effort to make essentially class-based schools into people's schools by developing direct administration by the people.

However, all these policies do not make a social policy in the narrow sense superfluous. In Bologna too there are orphans, abandoned babies and neglected children for whom shelter must be

found. Bologna's pensioners receive the same inadequate pension from the state as retired Italians elsewhere. Bolognese injured at work are given neither preferential treatment, nor more generous insurance payments than their counterparts in Rome or Palermo. The shortage of housing for large families with small incomes is no less serious than in the rest of Italy. Indeed, the laws which govern the treatment of the needy are mostly national ones.

For example, the law on public welfare dates from the year 1889: 'Individuals regarded by the local authority as being incapable of any work, with no means of keeping themselves, will, insofar as there is no alternative, be taken into the care of this authority in a poor-house or similar institution.' Whoever resists being taken there or 'attempts to escape from the institution, will be brought there forcibly.'

This law is still in force today. In 1969 the Italian Home Office insisted on calling up once again the spirit of the law. 'The public care of the needy comprises an important general interest, insofar as welfare measures and services combine to protect the social fabric against passive and parasitic elements.' It is clear what 'protect' means: care in homes, internment, deprivation of rights, isolation from society and marginalisation. It is also clear who belong to the category of 'passive and parasitic elements' — those who cannot be used in the production process. The half million Italians kept in homes of all types in 1973 were mostly people who for understandable reasons had little or nothing to live on: people who cannot produce anything yet — i.e. children; people who can produce only with difficulty — i.e. the physically or mentally handicapped or invalids; and people who can no longer produce — i.e. old-age pensioners.

These unproductive 'excess' people are taken into homes of the 44,500 individual welfare-foundations and organisations (including municipalities and provinces), which spend around £700 million (\$1,200 million) every year. To make these victims of unjust social conditions powerless politically, today's specialised industrial society sends each type of unwanted dependent individual into a particular depot — the old to the old people's home; the poor to poorhouses; the mad to asylums; orphans to orphanages, the educationally-backward to special centres; the invalids to nursing homes; the 'stupid' to special classes; the handicapped to special schools. The good people visible in the flower bed of healthy society; the bad invisible in the undergrowth of state or private ghettos.

As psychiatry professor and Bologna's Health Councillor Eustachio Loperfido states: 'The specialisation, which began in the

production processes of the so-called Industrial Revolution, still determines the treatment of human problems and the functioning of the human organism.' People needing help are in fact given it, but at the price of freedom. Meanwhile, no research is done on what forces impel people to give up their independent existence.

The characterisation of the Italian welfare system which the Councillor for Social Problems supplied in 1973 is still applicable: 'In general, we in Italy are still at the stage of charitable do-gooding welfare measures in the worst sense; far from a social-welfare policy which could guarantee all the inhabitants of the republic equality of rights and dignity.' This equality of rights and dignity is not a mere pipedream of utopians, but a stipulation of the Italian constitution.

Whoever loses independent consumer-status through illness or old-age, for example, or never attains it, possibly as the result of a physical handicap or a deprived childhood, can give up all hope of rights and dignity. Compulsory internment and loss of rights await such a person. The sequestration and neutralisation of such people outside society, and the fragmented structure of the welfare institutions do not permit the pursuit of a just social policy. Vital information concerning the needs of people on the periphery of the society is lacking. Such information cannot be gathered so long as they are separated from the social community. Bolognese politicians want to overcome this state of ignorance by gradually putting an end to all segregated institutions. 'The fundamental alternative is to take the problems, the contradictions, back into the society in which they arose, so that their origins can be discovered and the reasons for them combated; and so that the society itself becomes aware of them and made capable of taking control of its own development'. Professor Loperfido has so formulated his attitude at a Child Psychiatry Congress.

Bolognese social policy-makers prefer the collective term 'handicapped' for all weak or outcast members of society. These people are to be integrated into the society by a process of de-institutionalisation. The Bolognese make no distinction between those wrecked in full possession of their mental and physical faculties (for example: children from poor or broken families) and others inherently handicapped, unable to lead an independent life. Locking them up or delegating them to specialists are equally objectionable alternatives. Society, in the opinion of Bolognese social-workers, should come to terms with what it produces. Isolation of the handicapped is inhuman for those put in care and for those taking care. Only the integration of peripheral figures can lead to a whole awareness of social problems and thus pave the way for

preventive measures.

Preventing dangerous pregnancies is no mere medical problem. It is the political one of making ante-natal examinations routine. But so long as the results of the absence of preventive measures are hidden away, society will not feel compelled to demand an analysis of the reasons — let alone demand that measures be taken to solve the problem. Birth damaged children seem, if at all, the problem of the parents. The usual political solution for this kind of social problem is: out of sight out of mind. So it's down into the ghetto with the sub-humans.

Bologna's social policy-makers want to do away with bourgeois welfare for the ghettos, because they are convinced that the readiness of the population to solve problems increases when the problems are made visible.

- The Bolognese have closed five homes in which young people had become outsiders because of inadequate contact with the world and had later, frequently, turned into criminals.

- They are gradually abolishing special classes for so-called slow-learners who usually have problems of adaptation and, therefore, socially-based difficulties in learning.

- Special schools in which mentally or physically handicapped children vegetate because they are kept away from 'normal' peers are being closed down.

- Bolognese social-workers are using all means at their disposal to end the practice of dumping old people into virtual graveyards.

The Bolognese are convinced that the de-institutionalisation, begun in 1971, is the only way to free social policy from its usual role of white-washing social contradictions. Admittedly, the closure of the first children's home in 1971 was preceded by years of discussions, plans and testing of alternatives. The critique of peripheral institutions which segregated people reached its height in 1968. Franco Basaglia gave the impetus to this search for alternatives by his experiment in the Gorizia psychiatric clinic, described in his book, 'The Negated Institution' ('L'istituzione negata').

The 'Basaglia-boom' which followed the publication of this book involved not only the people who worked in psychiatric clinics, but also a score of professionals working in children's homes, special schools, old people's homes, and of course, students.

The municipal homes for disturbed children were the primary 'negated' institutions in Bologna. In 1969 the city council appointed a young psychiatrist as the new director of the Casaglia home for

disturbed children. His mission was to change the traditionally run home with the co-operation of the staff into a democratic institution suited to the needs of the children in it. 'It's true that we started on the task without a precise hypothesis,' remembers Simonetta Andreoli who worked at that time as a teacher in Casaglia. 'But we did have a concrete conception of an internal liberalisation of the home.' However, the Casaglia-workers were never completely happy with their task of reform. 'We soon became aware that our plan was insolubly contradictory,' reports Ms Andreoli. Because, 'to create a 'golden island' for the children would still mean keeping them separated from society and its contradictions. They were stuck out there in the hills beyond the city, without access to public transport — cut off from the reality of the world.'

In that respect, nothing could be changed by the many reform discussions which took place in Casaglia (with the participation of all the staff, including cooks and cleaning-staff.) On the contrary, the experiment clearly showed the limits to liberalising an institution.

The reformers wanted the lives of the children limited as little as possible by the educationally senseless and rigid restrictions of an organisation. The children should, ideally, be able to choose their free-time activity. But the basic logic of institutional life constrained this free-choice at all points. If some children decided to go to the pictures with their teachers, the organisational aspects of the 'home' put a series of obstacles in their path which had no basis in educational theory. Such obstacles could only be surmounted with the help of grown-ups — and then only if they were willing. How were the children to organise a coach and driver or get the money for tickets or have the evening meal put back an hour or two — probably the most difficult thing in an organisation in which the employees, too, have a right to fixed working hours.

Institutional logic balked the reforming efforts of the Casaglia employees in other spheres. The hope that they could break down internal hierarchies, end division of labour and separation of responsibility, remained unfulfilled. They were not successful in making it possible for children to choose the person on staff who would take care of them: in comparison to other staff-members, instructors had clear privileges. Even if a child formed an affectionate relationship with a cleaning-woman, she would not, because of her position in the home, be able to continue and sustain the relationship. A former cook in Casaglia: 'If I had to go and cook thirty evening meals, I couldn't be with Giovanni, even if I knew that he really needed me at that particular

time.' Instead, teachers have as their only function to devote themselves to the children — including those who perhaps do not especially like them.

The needs of the children, which were at least being brought into the open through liberation, were constantly in conflict with the demands of the institution. Democratisation was wrecked by the varied functions which, by definition, have to be maintained in an institution. Simonetta Andreoli: 'Our whole effort was directed at creating in the institution an organisation of social life which suited the children. In fact, we could not be successful because the institution must organise itself according to its own needs, for its own continuance, and not according to the needs of its guests.'

During their two years of reform work, the Casaglia staff learned that they could neither produce conditions which suited the children in the institution, nor simulate even a half-realistic picture of the social conditions outside. Thus, despite all efforts to the contrary, the children necessarily become outsiders. Whatever reforms are made, the institution continues the social segregation mechanism instead of stopping it. In view of their experience, the Casaglia reformers worked for the dissolution of the children's home. They set out the reasons for this step in a working report and hoped to convince the authorities of its soundness. 'Society as it is structured today creates problems of marginalisation and lack of adaptation. The institution as a solution to these problems manages only to whitewash a whole series of unsolved problems.'

In the same document, the Casaglias explained why their work of reform had to fail. 'The attempt to run a home by non-authoritarian methods in order to make the experience of democratic social life possible for the children is doomed to failure, because the contradictions between individual and institution, between freedom or personal autonomy and the logic of the institution, cannot be objectively solved. Even if it were possible to produce a non-repressive situation in the institution, this would create a 'happy island' with the function of hiding social violence and isolating the children, and then later sending them out defenceless into reality.'

The people running Casaglia drew the obvious conclusions. Contradictions which could not be surmounted in the institution should in their opinion 'be taken back into the context in which they arose.' Children shut out from society on social grounds should go back to their neighbourhoods and later to their families: back to the place from which they had been shut out. The goal of the Casaglia staff: 'that

political and social forces must accept their problems and look for new solutions.' Inside a year, the children's home was closed.

The first step in the dissolution of the children's home was the closure of the school and the enrolment of all the Casaglia children in the state schools of their own districts. The second step was the setting up of two 'flat-groups' in the city, each with five children and two educators. While 35 children went on living in the institute, the main test of this alternative began in these two 'gruppi appartamento'. 'It seems to us necessary to proceed in a way which prevents possible mistakes from signifying the failure of the whole initiative.'

Some of the Casaglia staff had now moved from the closed zone of the institute into the public domain. They had to make the education and social security authorities in the various neighbourhoods aware of their views in order to gain their indispensable support. Indispensable, because first the children had to be enrolled by ordinary state-run schools. Teachers and school directors were completely opposed to the integration. Even in Bologna, schoolmasters find it easier to put 'unsuitable' children into care, instead of coming to terms with them.

The Casaglia teachers succeeded in mobilising the local authorities. Their pressure was successful. From September 1971 onwards, all the Casaglia children went to ordinary schools. The search for new solutions for children with 'difficult' social backgrounds had begun. Parent-committees, school-commissions, parents and school directors were forced to come to terms with the socially-deprived and take responsibility for them.

Incorporated in the various schools, the children come into contact with a wider range of economic and socio-cultural realities. Therefore the socialisation of their modes of behaviour proceeds on the basis of their own experience, and not on the plane of a given external reality which has to be accepted or disapproved of on an intellectual plane.

'If in a ghetto situation, the misbehaviour of individual highly-disturbed children can easily be copied by other children, then an ordinary school probably has the effect of letting the children adapt to "normal behaviour."'

From the working-report of the Casaglia staff,
11 May 1971.

The most radical change emerged from the instructors' sphere of work in the experimental flat-groups. While division of labour had had to be largely maintained in the home, staff in the flat-groups could practise equal rights. The three 'instructors' in each apartment flat-group, including also former auxiliary staff, shared equally in all the household tasks of the group. Apart from supervising the children when they were not at school, shopping, cooking and cleaning were among their duties. The children contributed to these tasks in varying measures as they would in a family.



The goal of a flat-group is to pave the way for re-integration of the children into their families. For this reason instructors are not allowed to become replacement father or mother figures; nor the flat-group a surrogate family. Thus the instructors do not live in the group's apartment. They only spend their fixed working-hours there.

Higher value is placed on the relation of the children to their parents, as well as their school contacts. In co-operation with the district authorities the instructors seek ways of aiding distressed families to perceive their parental responsibilities again. Help given to achieve this end extends from financial support to psychological advice or temporary assistance in running the disorganised household of a woman overburdened by her job.

Education of flat-group children is directed towards preparing them to understand the difficulties of their parental homes, 'without coming out of them with broken bones,' as Simonetta Andreoli says. To ease the way, most children spend holidays and weekends in the parental home. Family contact is also made easier by the fact that flat-groups are set up, if at all possible, in the home areas of the children. These are usually workers' neighbourhoods — a fact which substantiates the theory that there is an economic base to social problems.

Six instructors drew up their first balance-sheet after only five months in the flat-groups. The most important finding in their twelve-page report was: 'It seems to us impossible to maintain an educational function without taking into account the realities of the environment.' They had overcome the limits of the closed institution, not only theoretically, but in practice as well.

Despite the many difficulties which continually make new discussion and new efforts necessary, the balance on the most essential points was positive. In the same year, three other flat-groups were set up, and took in all those Casaglia children who could not be re-integrated directly in the parental home. The 'Colonia profilattica di Casaglia' on Bologna's hills was permanently closed. The future of the flat-group as an alternative to the institution was guaranteed.

From then on the instructors no longer concerned themselves exclusively with ex-Casaglia children. Their work was to be 'preventive' as well. Children from endangered families were also cared for, to avoid the necessity of new internments in homes. In 1972, all five flat-groups were allocated an extra ex-Casaglia worker as a fourth instructor whose function was to evolve a strategy for helping families in need, in conjunction with child-psychologists, social workers and school doctors in each district. 'The aim of our work was not only to support families in need but also to make clear the need for new flat-groups,' summarises Simonetta Andreoli, who, as a member of the Council for Social Problems, is now responsible for co-ordination of work in the flat-groups. 'Of course, a social worker doesn't change social conditions; but he sees his work, apart from concrete assistance, as something which involves helping people to recognise the how and why of their needs and their situation.'

In 1973, the city set up two more flat-groups; one for eight youths from a home that the Council had just closed and changed into an ordinary school; the other as the result of a request from a neighbourhood which would otherwise have had to find places in homes for five children. In the same year, several other social workers were distributed in the neighbourhoods — with the task of preventing situations of need and the beginnings of youth problems in families. In 1974, the first flat-group from 1971 ceased to exist because all five children were able to return to their homes. The instructors released by this, transferred their work to the area as a whole. The Council left the flat unoccupied so that a new group might enter immediately, if necessary.



At the end of 1975, there were six flat-groups, and two complete flats ready to take in children temporarily, as an alternative to their being put into homes. No more children are being put into homes in Bologna. The problems of distressed families can be fully solved at the very place where they naturally arise.

This area of social policy absorbs sums of money which are not easily available in a time of economic crisis. But the Bolognese are against short-sighted calculations. 'We have always maintained that in the final analysis it is more costly to neglect reform,' says one publication of the city administration. In fact, the social costs incurred by insufficient prevention measures are anything but low. Experts are convinced that a bill which included the resulting costs of inadequate prevention would be less favourable than one for a well-developed preventive structure.

Concerning expenditure on personnel, the lesson of the Casaglia

home is highly instructive. After closure of the home almost the same number of people worked in the districts to look after ex-Casaglia children in flat-groups or in their families. Expenditure on personnel did not increase significantly. Simonetta Andreoli reminds us, however, that it is not just money that counts in this sphere: 'One must also surely realise what it means to a child to live in a flat-group instead of a home.'

The Bolognese City Council is not alone in its flat-group initiative. The province, which is responsible for the care of orphans in its catchment area, is dissolving orphanages and setting up flat-groups. Provincial and City authorities are setting up a 'youth court' so that children put up by their mothers for adoption do not have to sit for years in homes waiting for adoptive parents. After a number of interventions, adoption authorities now work so fast that children pass to their adoptive parents immediately after birth, without having to stay in a home at all.

Bologna's social-workers are having some difficulties with the only flat-group in which eight youths of between 16 and 20 years of age live. First the group is too big. Enrico Giusti, one adult supervisor in the Parco dei Cedri group, says: 'With this number one runs the risk of making the flat-group a little institution— with division of labour and all the consequent disadvantages.' Secondly, some of the eight youths have been in homes nearly the whole of their lives; and, for obvious reasons, do not have the most positive attitude to the society in which they are meant to integrate themselves. 'It is one thing to re-introduce a six or seven-year-old child into its family,' explains Simonetta Andreoli, who is friendly with eight boys in this group. 'It is quite a different thing to help in the re-socialisation of a 16-year-old boy, who already has 16 years of institution life under his belt.'

In Bologna, as in other cities, there is no active youth policy which makes work with adolescents easier. There are no places where the young can meet; nor measures aimed against youth-unemployment, sexual problems, drugs or criminality; nor aid in deciding how to make good use of free-time. Bologna has not yet asked employers to treat under-privileged difficult youths in the same way as 'ordinary' ones — as the schools have concerning handicapped children. While psychologists in the clinics have a series of measures ready to help children with development problems, there is no comparable support for problem-burdened adolescents. The flat-group workers in the neighbourhoods are not satisfied with this situation. The future of their work depends on their being able to introduce adolescent problems into

community political discussions. 'At the moment,' complains a social worker, 'we can only watch these problems break out.'

A generally disadvantaged youth-policy naturally affects the Parco dei Cedri flat-group. For all that, the boys have made progress in the last two and a half years that would not have been possible in an institution. In the beginning, they remember, the 'Rule of the Strongest' applied just as it had in the institution. The weaker ones were ordered about and the grown-ups frequently had to sort out quarrels between the youths over the position of leader. Today their life together is more democratic. Progress is not, however, confined to the adaptation of the individuals within their own community. It extends to socialisation towards the outside world. Two of the youths are passionate footballers and train regularly with a proper team; a third is active in a political theatre-group. Two of the eight have fixed jobs: one as a messenger-boy, the other in the main garage of the city bus-company. One attends the School for Surveyors, another an art school; and another a further-education school. Only three of the eight have not succeeded in fitting into school or a job; but, as supervisor Enrico Giusti stresses, 'all of them have tried.' These three youths, with the greatest problems, are ones who suffered most from emotional and intellectual starvation in various institutions.

The comparison between flat-groups composed of children and those composed of youths shows that social re-integration is all the more difficult the longer institutional internment has lasted. For the Bolognese, one reason more for laying great stress on keeping children out of institutions; for making effective the principle of non-marginalisation.

Besides closure of children's homes, the struggle against expulsion and segregation is being waged in another (and in terms of the numbers affected) even more important way. This is the struggle against 'special' educational institutions: such as the special schools for the physically and mentally handicapped, classes for low-ability children and those with learning problems.

Bologna is gradually doing away with special schools for the handicapped — and with special classes. These children are being transferred to classes in ordinary schools where teachers, experts from local clinics and parents help with their integration into the new environment. In especially bad cases of handicap, where enrolment in a normal class is not possible, Bologna sets up individual small classes of handicapped children within ordinary schools

'L'inserimento degli handicappati', the technical expression for

this integration process, is only slowly gathering momentum against the resistance of parents, teachers and school authorities and is a long way from being complete. A programme for the prevention of 'shutting-out' handicapped people is only now being developed in many neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, by the beginning of 1976, seven special schools for the mentally and physically handicapped and all special classes had been abolished. Several hundred children have now come into a normal non-segregated school reality.



The search for alternatives in the treatment of handicapped children was stepped up at the end of the 60s. At this time the Italian educational statistics revealed an extremely disquieting fact. The proportion of children excluded from ordinary schools and taken into special schools or special classes was increasing steadily.

Anxious observers came to the same conclusion in Italy as in other industrial countries: the number of mentally disturbed and 'low-ability' children — terms which cover numerous kinds of problems — seemed to be continually growing disproportionately.

The expansion in the number of 'special-class' children (with environmental rather than hereditary handicaps — such as concentration or socialisation problems, or learning difficulties such as

hyperkinesis etc.) is even more marked. In the five years from 1963 to 1968, their number quadrupled and reached a proportion of 1.23 per cent of all elementary-school children.

Professor Eustachio Loperfido describes the high-degree policy of marginalisation in the educational system: 'At the end of the sixties, the attempt to formalise this tendency in legal terms manifested itself; and numerous government bills thought it necessary to have special schooling in a more or less marginal environment for about 35 per cent of all Italian children.' However, by 1968 came the protest against this form of expulsion from society. 'Now we see attempts to renounce such a procedure, the slowing up of the trend and the growth of alternative attempts.'

The rapid growth in the percentage of mentally-handicapped and low-ability children has had two basic reasons. Italy's Marxist social-analysts consider that the first involves changing production conditions. Development from an agricultural to an industrial state caused massive internal migration in Italy. The population moved in two directions — from the under-developed South into the industrial North where industrial capitalism provided jobs. The effect of this internal migration was urban growth. In 1951, 46 per cent of all Italians lived in small towns with a population of less than 10,000. In 1971 it was 35 per cent. In 1951 only 19 per cent of Italians lived in cities with a population of 100,000 or more. In 1971 it was 30 per cent. The entire population growth in these twenty years (around 7 million) is concentrated in the North because of the flight from the under-developed South. The Italian education system is not capable of training the children of a growing, urban sub-proletariat. It gives up in the face of the task of educating the children of the uprooted, impoverished immigrants and begins to separate off the trouble-makers into special schools or classes. In view of the importance of environment on learning ability and adaptation, it is not surprising that the numbers of 'disturbed' and 'lower-ability' children is increasing.

The second reason for the increasing number of children in special schools is to be found in the method of selection. For want of its own experts, the Rome Department of Education organises and maintains special schools with the aid of doctors, psychologists and educationalists from private welfare-organisations or from city councils. At the beginning of the 50's, so-called 'medical-education teams' were commissioned to examine the problems of the subnormally intelligent and the mentally handicapped in the state schools. The criteria for the remuneration of these teams is the number of special

schools or classes set up by their intervention, or their help within already existing institutions. A team which does its work only in normal state schools and sets up no special classes or schools has no claim for remuneration from the state for its work. The decision to refer a child to special schooling is taken by the team and by the headmaster. Both are interested in the segregation of handicapped children or those who have trouble adapting. The headmaster wants to be rid of problem children and the team needs money. The parents can say nothing about this decision; at best they are talked round. The measure of the child's 'normality' is based only on ability to adapt to the school — even if this fact is veiled by all sorts of learned diagnoses. The school itself is never questioned.

The role of the specialists in the team is thus dictated along strictly defined lines. They are free to employ all their medical, psychological, and educational knowledge — as long as the result of their work is the segregation of the handicapped and low-ability children. The development of alternative methods of treatment is said to be impossible for financial reasons.

The sort of intervention which assumes the degree of a child's adaptation to the school system is the measure of 'normality' appeared extremely unsatisfactory. The struggles of the students and workers between 1967 and 1969, the simultaneous analysis of institutional segregation and repression mechanisms, explain one reason for our dissatisfaction. On the other hand, they opened the way for radical alternative measures. It was then that the clear realisation dawned, that we, as specialists, were providing respectability to social and cultural segregation from the educational system. And it also became clear that to bring about change we had to shift the focus of our work from the diagnostic-curative aspect to the preventive.

From a report of the work-group 'Servizio di Igiene Mentale (Mental Health Service)' of Barca, August 1975

But the critique of left-wing educationalists, psychologists and doctors was not limited to attacks on the methods of selection for special schools and classes which incidentally were still functioning largely unchanged in 1975. It further condemned the techniques employed in special schools for the physically and mentally handicapped. The analysis demonstrated that 'specialisation' in such institutions had failed.

All such schools must be centres for the application of specialised procedures of a didactic and rehabilitative nature. At least, this was the reason for which they were set up ... the reality seems far different. Specialisation of the procedures has been realised for only a few categories of handicapped people — for spastics and the physically handicapped. But even here, years of experience of segregating the handicapped into special educational institutions does not seem to be justified. For the other categories, and above all for the largest one, the mentally retarded, there is not a trace of didactic specialisation. It is generally recognised that the same programmes and methods are used as in any so-called 'normal' schools — with the qualification that time is shorter and classes smaller. In any case, the price which the children have to pay for their segregation and isolation from their social context is too high. This is in no way justified by the eventual advantages which special schooling is supposed to provide.

From a Lecture by the psychiatrists Alessandro Ancona, Antonio Faggioli and Eustachio Loperfido to the International Symposium on Mental Retardation at the University of Bologna, 18 March 1974

This criticism of technical qualification is followed by a political and moral one:- Special schools are instruments for the suppression of minorities unable to adapt to competitive schools, or later to the production process.

Insofar as they imply separation and segregation, the centralised special schools, particularly in the cities, confirm the clear tendency to remove whatever is disagreeable and unproductive from the social-context. That is, a method of freeing the community from social contradictions in an age of technological progress.

From the lecture given by Eustachio Loperfido to the Regional Congress in Emilia-Romagna on Special Schools and Classes, Bologna, 11 December 1970

The inability of the special schools to develop teaching methods adapted uniquely to the handicapped, is not the only argument in favour of their dissolution. The fact that they underline and reinforce the 'outsider' role of the handicapped person by creating ghettos is

much more significant.

But developing alternatives for treatment of the handicapped is certainly more difficult than for the occupants of children's homes. Those attending special schools have an objective illness, in some cases, visible handicaps. They are not only victims of an unjust social order as are orphaned or neglected children from broken families. Even in Bologna it is not easy to have a socio-critical debate about those visibly handicapped not by society, but by nature. The debate has, however, gradually got under way and progress is being made in the development of alternatives.

Bolognese Health Councillor, Eustachio Loperfido, is in the vanguard of those seeking alternative solutions to the problems of handicapped children. Being both a psychiatrist and politician, he is one of the most respected critics of social segregation. His criticism saw its way into action when he closed down the child-psychiatry clinic of which he was head. For years, Loperfido has repeatedly emphasized the social aspects of physical and mental handicaps and demonstrated that the social consequences of a handicap are the same whether it is inborn or happens later.

'We must realise,' Loperfido recalls, 'that the identity of the handicapped person in society (no matter what handicap it may be) is determined by two factors. The first factor is the handicap itself with its objective but not unchangeable peculiarities. The second is the way in which the person is perceived, regarded and accepted by the people about him.'

Loperfido, and many other left-wing critics, accuse normal psychiatric research of being concerned only with diagnostic subtleties and with testing the effect of new drugs. In the opinion of progressive psychologists, the investigation of the effects on the handicapped of non-socialisation, their exclusion from society, has been completely neglected. Even someone who is mentally handicapped is capable of learning — though probably to a lesser extent than usual — and develops reactions to the surroundings. If his or her area of experience (or that of any type of handicapped person) is drastically restricted by internment, then possibilities of development are restricted just as drastically. This damage cannot be made good again, no matter how well meant or ingenious the rehabilitation policy may be.

'Genuine' subnormality is defined not only by biological, neuro-physiological and general psychological characteristics, but also by social ones. That is, by the extent to which the handicapped

person is the object of a social expulsion process. Expulsion processes are undoubtedly of a social nature and have extremely far-reaching dimensions: they affect socialisation and education. They continue when the person is grown-up, on the plane of socialisation and employment. They reflect the contradictions of the society and its development mechanisms. The problem is, therefore, of a general socio-political order.... Since the social component has always been present and has contributed to the definition of a mentally-retarded person in this society, we emphasize that one cannot avoid looking at society. The stress on the social component as a characteristic of 'genuine' subnormality makes us see the central question as the problem of socialisation.

We are a long way from regarding functional rehabilitation as superfluous. In fact, we see it as being indispensable. But it is worthwhile only in conjunction with socialisation. The success of the rehabilitation process is measurable only on the plane of socialisation. But the expulsion of the individual from the social context has the effect of making rehabilitation and socialisation irreconcilable alternatives instead of complementary elements.

Lecture by the psychiatrists Allesandro Ancona,
Eustachio Loperfido and Antonio Faggioli at the
International Symposium on Mental Retardation,
18 March 1974

The Bolognese would like to include even children with severe handicaps in their integration policy. 'The incapability of the special schools to deal with their problems and the pseudo-scientific concept of incurability, offer the handicapped and their families only one choice — whether to vegetate in the domestic or institutional environment. So the institutions, whether asylums or so-called specialised institutes, become mere human rubbish dumps.'

While in cases of birth-handicapped children, the motive for exclusion is more or less clear, the motives for which 'less-gifted' children are expelled from society reveal a mixture of the subjective and the ideological. It has actually been proved that pupils in special classes come, for the most part, from deprived homes. They are only 'retarded' in the sense that few crumbs or nothing at all has fallen to them from the table of official culture. Therefore, they cannot fulfil the demands of the school

as quickly as others — the school being still the most important representative, to them, of official culture.

From the lecture by Eustachio Loperfido at the Emilia-Romagna Congress on Special Schools and Classes, Bologna, 11 December 1970

To launch the abolition of special schools and classes, the Bolognese and other progressives in Italy turn to the single word — ‘socialisation’ — and from this word derive their socio-political strategy. ‘The basic principle of our work is to struggle against exclusion on all levels; and a parallel effort for the human and cultural progress of all citizens, especially those most disadvantaged by their socio-economic and cultural situation.’ To make the socialisation of the deprived children less difficult, the educationally and politically active Bolognese take every opportunity to demand the employment of extra teachers so that more rational class sizes will be gradually achieved.

The abolition of the special schools and classes does not mean the relinquishing of specialisation. In Bologna, special therapeutic services are employed more than anywhere else in Italy. However, therapy and rehabilitative means are confined to special centralised institutions only in a very small minority of cases, and wherever possible are decentralised to local clinics or schools.

In 1975, by the reorganisation of rehabilitation services on the local plane, it became possible to integrate 140 spastic children into ordinary schools and to let them have a programme of special treatment by specialists. The ‘Centro Beltrame’, a school for spastics, was closed and a city nursery school set up in the buildings thus made available. Also closed were Villa Torchi and Villa Serena which housed 146 children in 1969. In the Villa Torchi there were still 10 mentally-handicapped children; but they had been integrated into open classes in a new school. They undertook some activities separately, and others with normal children. The same is true of the Villa Serena in which 17 mentally handicapped children remained in 1975. The others had all found places in various schools throughout the city.

The special school, Villa Amati, a former centre for diagnosis which housed 12 children in 1969, has also been closed. In 1975 only 4 children were still being taught in the central Bolognese special school for children with severe eye complaints, compared with 14 in 1969. Similarly, ‘De Amicis’, a special school for deaf and dumb children had only 25 children in 1975 instead of 75 as in 1969. The special school for mongoloids, ‘Villa Ghetsemani’ which had 58 pupils in 1969 has also been shut.

These are the statistics for the integration of physically handicapped children; but no figures have been kept regarding children with psychological handicaps in the broadest sense. In this sector, the Bolognese think statistics are unnecessary, and indeed damaging. Eustachio Loperfido: 'Statistics here would mean a labelling, a codification of the affected children and would be the first step to their exclusion from society again. Besides, such psychological labels would necessarily be open to dispute.'

The greatest significance of the integration policy lies in its effect on the handicapped themselves. But it also has broader implications. Schools are, naturally, not left unaffected by the dissolution of special institutions. The psychology student, Marta Nerozzi, who took part in an investigation of the integration process, summarised it: 'Clearly, because of the presence of handicapped children in a class, the compulsion to competition diminishes. Likewise, the humane qualities of the school increase when so-called normal children live and work with handicapped ones.'

Eustachio Loperfido believes that because of the extraordinary effect of integration, most resistance to it arises. 'Integration questions the very organisation of the schools.' Undoubtedly, teachers are more comfortable with the usual process whereby, 'the child alone is always and exclusively the object of diagnosis and discussion. The school is left out of the game and never subjected to examination. According to preconceived notions it is always the pupil who is unadaptable or maladjusted, never the school.'

For children, handicapped school-friends are usually no problems. They usually succeed very quickly in making contact with them. Grown-ups pose a problem. The parents of handicapped children, according to one teacher, often try to hide the problems of their children out of a sense of shame. The parents of normal children fear the integration of the handicapped because they believe that teachers will have to pay them more attention, to the detriment of their children. Further, many parents must be de-schooled of the naive belief that a spastic or mongol child might 'infect' their children.

Integration has evolved with varying degrees of success. The will of the teacher and the understanding of parents are basic factors; as is the type of support offered to teachers by the clinics and their staff. In this respect, Bolognese reality still varies from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. The reason is simple. By a decree of the Rome Ministry of Education, access to schools is granted to specialists only by special permission from Rome. Up to 1976, despite massive pressure from

local citizens and politicians, the local specialist staff had still not gained access to all the schools. However, such organisational problems, and those posed by the handicapped children themselves, only inspire the Bolognese to fight for prevention instead of the segregation of abnormal children. Problems they are now having with children marked by exclusion will disappear when wide-ranging measures ensure that disadvantaged children are integrated in existing structures and receive rehabilitative treatment from the very first.

The most important Bolognese 'prevention' project is thus the building of nurseries for children of up to three. One of the main goals in building these 'asili nido' is the integration of children at a very early age and the pre-emption of any need for expulsion mechanisms. But there are other reasons for encouraging unrestricted development of the nurseries.

Progressive educators and politicians believe that it is becoming increasingly necessary to take part of the education of small children away from the family and make it a collective responsibility. The anti-social isolation of parents and children in small families is constantly increasing. Moreover, the Italian Women's Union has long been urging that the burden of educating children should be taken from the woman, as a step towards equal rights. Finally, extension of the nurseries is necessary because many mothers, and not just unmarried ones or widows, find it economically essential to work.

The 1971 Bolognese plan envisaged nursery places for 15 per cent of all children from 0 to 3 years of age by 1975. Financial bottlenecks have made cuts in this plan necessary. At the end of 1975 there were 26 nurseries in Bologna for a total of 1122 children — 11 per cent of the total population in that age-group. The building of eight planned nurseries has had to be postponed. Nevertheless, even in 1975, Bologna appeared well ahead of other cities. For the 170,000 children under 4 in Rome there were 23 nurseries. Bologna had the same number — but the number of children in that age-group was ten times smaller (17,000).

Even more impressive than the numerical superiority of the Bolognese nurseries to the national average is their quality. For, although 11 per cent does not come anywhere near covering the demand for places, Bologna's policy-makers have done everything in their power to ensure that the nurseries do not become low-class ghettos. Like the children's schools, the nurseries must not be a simple parking-place for children of working-class parents.

There is only one way to ensure that nurseries do not merely

paper over the needs of society but attempt to exercise active influence on them. The Bolognese are already attempting this in pre-schools and primary schools: comprehensive democratisation — the administration of the nurseries by the people ('gestione sociale'). The first decision to be made by the nursery personnel, by the commissions for education and social security, by the neighbourhood council and parents involves selecting which children will be granted one of the scarce places in a nursery. It is not some 'office' which decides this, but the parents themselves in co-operation with local authorities. Those who have applied for a place are invited to meet and discuss who is most entitled to a place and who must withdraw. Unmarried mothers, children from families whose income falls below a certain level after paying the rent, have priority in the allocation of places.

As in the case of schools, parents should participate as much as possible in the formation of nurseries. The only criterion on which personnel and politicians insist is that the nursery must be an alternative to family education. So, no attempt is made to imitate family education processes. This concern is already clear in the architecture and arrangement of the nursery. While the family idea is the rule in educational institutions for little children and rooms tend to be modelled on the 'living-room' of a family house, the Bolognese set out their nurseries as alternatives. Large areas, bright colours and furniture make various room arrangements possible. Another important characteristic is a great deal of clear floor-space where the children can crawl around without meeting obstacles. To make the change to infant schools easier, the nurseries are housed in the same school-building. Visits from the little children to the older ones and vice-versa are encouraged and made simple by the architectural arrangements of the two types of school.

Interview with the nursery-teacher Emilia Sancini at the 'Asilo Nido Salvador Allende' in the Barca neighbourhood.

Roger Muller: Ms Sancini, what role do the nurseries play in the education of the children?

Emilia Sancini: We believe the 'asilo nido' must be an alternative to education within the family. But that doesn't mean competition must arise between the family and the nido. We are trying to do things that are completely impossible in the modern small family. Most important, we complement the family through socialisation. In the nido, we integrate children in groups of the same age; and thus, the family experience becomes relative and less important in the child's development process.

RM: Does this show in the children?

ES: The advantages of socialisation are beyond doubt. This isn't just because children can relate to other children, but also because they experience other adults apart from their parents; adults for whom they are no longer the centre of the universe; adults who have other people to care for. The nido helps children to accept the needs of others as well as their own. We find that children open out and become more spontaneous, and that they are not afraid of other children or grown-ups. The parents obviously notice this too; so the nido affects not only the child's development but also the attitude of the parents to educational questions.

RM: According to the Bolognese concept, the parents should involve themselves as much as possible in the nido. Do they do that?

ES: Parents try to participate and help in making decisions as much as possible. As teachers we try to ensure that whatever decisions have to be made are really made by both teachers and parents. We would like to develop this now, and have suggested to the parents that they come along one day a week to the nursery. Parents' meetings have shown that we are always being forced by them into the role of the 'super-efficient' teachers who already know how it's all done. For them to become active themselves and to recognise their own abilities, they must get to know the life in the nido better. We would like to achieve a situation where parents can have a say in the education of their children outside the house — and that they really do say!

RM: Does the co-operation of the parents in the nido not go beyond the assemblies?

ES: Yes it does. Parents have done a great deal for the nido. For instance, a little house in which children play, jig-saw puzzles, Punch and Judy puppets. They also come regularly to make small repairs to furniture.

RM: How many children and staff are there in the Salvador Allende nido?

ES: 36 children and 12 employees. Of course, the 12 adults are not at work the whole time between 7 in the morning and 7 in the evening. Each has his or her working-hours.

RM: Aren't the children overtaxed by having so many adults about them?

ES: In our daily experience, we find that even small children are able to make a choice between adults. I don't believe that the children are overtaxed by the number of adults in the nido. Perhaps I should point out that any person the child chooses in the nido doesn't have the

same importance as the mother, since the nursery-teacher is not as central to the child as the mother is — and remains.

RM: Is the relationship of the child to its mother not limited to an undesirable degree by the nursery?

ES: I don't believe so. In my experience, relation to the mother remains the same. It is just made relative. There are problems only when parents don't bother about the education of the children in the 'asilo nido'. In that case, the child leads a real double life, acting one way at home and another in the nido. Parents must then ask themselves this question: 'Are we ready to take note of the educational goals being pursued outside our family and to come to terms with them?' Either they are ready to discuss things with the staff of the nido or they prefer egoism. In extreme cases, I admit, a child may have a lot to put up with. For example, if its mother is jealous of the nursery-school teacher and scolds the child because she's afraid of losing its affection.

RM: What do you do in such a case?

ES: We try to discuss the problem with the parents, and if possible, with other parents. If things are talked over, such problems don't arise. Incidentally, the first children have already left our nido for the infant schools. We've been very satisfied with their development, and see it as a great endorsement of the direction we are working in.

RM: Who decided what materials would be used in this nido?!

ES: Before the nido was opened, we got together with the parents of enrolled children and studied the brochures of various factories and special firms. A delegation was also sent to the factories to make enquiries about several things. Finally we ordered what we thought best for the money we had at our disposal. Of course, there are things which we would not buy again, because they have not worked out.

The first mothers or fathers come into the nursery with their children at seven in the morning. The majority of the children arrive about eight, some even later. The parents do not have to be punctual to enable the nursery staff to organise their work, because the first meal of the day is given to the children by the parents themselves. The first nappy or dress change is also the parents' affair. So the children still experience their parents in the environment in which they will be without them for some time.

Every 'asilo nido' has a special kitchen for the smallest babies; while older children are catered for from a big, co-operative kitchen. Mothers collect their children between noon and seven in the evening;

but most of them spend another hour or so in the nursery with their child, giving it a bath, changing its nappy and playing with it and others. Everything they need is there — as if at home: nappies, panties and whatever else is needed. The nursery staff obviously do not view this as interference in their business, but accept it as help. The ‘asili nidi’ make an attempt to relieve mothers from the work of caring for and bringing up their children without diminishing their influence on the child’s development. In addition, the partial socialisation of the education work gives many children the chance to experience, at a very early age, an environment which offers stimuli and opportunities impossible even in optimal education within the family. Bologna’s long-term plan is to make places available in the ‘asilo nidi’ for as many as possible, if not all of the children.

This collectivised education of young children is, of course, attacked in Italy as elsewhere, by developmental psychologists. They warn that children may be made neurotic if their relation with the mother is disturbed; and this can prevent children from developing a natural trust of their environment.

The affective need for love and security which the child feels in its first years of life has often been misused to portray an inseparable emotional and instructive relationship between mother and child as the only possibility for the healthy development of the child. The logical consequence is that the mother bears the sole responsibility for matters which are really the affair of all society: respect, care, and appreciation of the worth of a person, right from the beginning of life.

Mara Mereghetti, Italian Women’s Union (UDI).

Augusto Zappi, co-ordinator of nurseries in Bologna, does not believe that nurseries have negative consequences for infants; but he does make qualifications. ‘Of course, it would be preferable if the infant were not in the nido from morning till evening; but it will happen if mothers have to work.’ Zappi recalls that Italian law allows the mother three months leave after the birth of her child. But the Bolognese believe it is more than an ‘emergency solution’ that brings babies to the nido. Zappi: ‘We are convinced that children need their first experience of the outside world and their first socialisation during the first year of life.’

The Politics of Health:



Prevention is Revolutionary

Sil Schmid

A cold April day in Bologna. In a gloomy ground floor office at Via Gambrotti, a well-groomed man in a grey suit sits at a narrow desk. Beside him, an ancient heater fights in vain against the damp cold. The man rubs his stiffening fingers together and says with an ironical smile: 'Every place of work is unhealthy.'

Mauro Mariotti knows what he is saying. He is a chemistry graduate and an industrial doctor for the city of Bologna. As a member of the Bologna Preventive Medicine Collective he and his colleagues have in the last four years undertaken a painstaking investigation of noxious conditions in 150 factories, workshops and offices. The conclusions of their investigation are contained in a 1973 work report. ('Rapporto dalle Fabbriche'). 'Results show that both quantitatively and qualitatively health has been much more seriously damaged than we expected... Work accidents and illnesses caused by inadequate organisation at the place of work reached approximately one million, eight-hundred-thousand in 1971. Of these, more than 500 in the agricultural and industrial sectors were fatal. These figures both in terms of number and seriousness of accidents are the highest in the EEC and in the highly developed industrial countries as a whole.'

That the threat of accidents and illness to working people is taking on world-wide dimensions is shown by the World Health Organisation. In a statement to the press, in 1974, it gave details: 'There are ten million accidents at work throughout the world every year and more than 100,000 workers are killed.' The same communiqué demands of scientists a 'total work medicine' and appeals to 'those responsible to recognise harmful materials first of all, and then neutralise them.'

Those 'responsible' for the health of workers are, of course, employers. But the Italian worker does not share WHO's trust in the potential paternalism of bosses. In the last few years they have learned that such expectations are hopelessly idealistic, a legacy of feudal times, and have rejected them. The Workers Charter of May 1970 is one expression of this growing consciousness among workers and all unions. Paragraph 9 of this Charter states: 'Workers have the right to ensure the application of the norms for the prevention of accidents at work and illnesses caused by the work itself and to urge the investigation, elaboration and implementation of all measures which will help protect their health and physical safety.'

Bologna's authorities usually take such paragraphs literally. To them, this one means that workers must run the health campaign themselves. But they need allies: doctors, chemists, biologists,

sociologists and psychologists who can examine production-processes and work-places, and analyse their harmful elements; and do this in the service of the people affected, not the employers. Bologna's Department of Health and the Unions institutionalised such technical assistance with the formation of preventive-medicine groups in the summer of 1971.

Since then, Bolognese workers have known whom to turn to if a colleague starts to vomit because he has absorbed too many poisonous fumes; if they cannot sleep at night because the hectic rhythm of the conveyor belt allows them no rest; or if whole departments have chronic coughs and colds because they sit day in, day out in a draught. Mariotti explains: 'As a rule, it is the union leaders who consult us. First we pay a visit to the factory, to get to know the place and means of production and the work-climate there. Then the Union and the preventive group convene a meeting.'

Now it is up to the workers to formulate their symptoms, to trace the connection between damage to health and conditions at the place of work and to draw up a list of demands for the management. Specialists from the preventive group help them in this, and are practised in picking out damaging elements — poisonous fumes, dust, heat or cold. They are accustomed to seeing the connection between poorly arranged work-conditions, oppressively hierarchical structures and the physical and mental condition of the workers. As the factory report states: 'it is not a question of supplying the "ignorant workers" with technical information in an abstract form, but of a mutual exchange of experiences aimed at forming a richer, more concrete culture.'

What happens when scientists and workers join together? Mariotti himself was surprised at the results: 'Almost every one of our interventions has led to a labour dispute.' In 1972 the team of scientists looked at three of the biggest show factories in the region. In the modern, at first sight exemplary factory, 'Magli', almost all the workers complained of nervous breakdown, character changes, depressions and extreme irritability, headaches, nausea and skin troubles. The reasons were 'inadequate working-areas, badly organised working-conditions with a fragmented production-process which forced the workers into a high-speed rhythm and unhealthy repetition.' In addition, there were poisonous fumes, high noise levels, draughts from open windows. In order to implement the list of demands they had helped compose, the workers had to resort to belligerent methods: they achieved their goal by means of more than a hundred hours of strike.

● In April 1972 the collective inspected the 400 acres of agricultural land of the 'Gandazzolo', a big maize, corn and vegetable producer in the region, at the request of the labourers' union. The workers suffered from acute and chronic poisoning symptoms; stomach-ache, intestinal problems, infected eyes, pains in joints and the back, arthritis and general exhaustion. These were caused by extremely unhealthy working positions, high poisonous content in the insecticides used, too few and too short breaks and the need to work even when not physically fit for want of adequate sickness-benefit. Their demands were longer breaks, strict regulations controlling fumes, contributions from the employers to the local clinic to enable it to buy suitable equipment for the treatment of the Gandazzolo workers. The struggle for the implementation of these demands turned, over the years, into the struggle for the self-management of the land by the men who worked it. The Unions, the city, regional and provincial governments were unanimous in their support of this aim.

● In 1972, the employees of the motorway service-station 'Mottagrill Cantagallo' just outside Bologna lodged a complaint. The high proportion of absenteeism (over 20 per cent) gave an indication of the stress to which the staff were subjected. The reasons were found to be: 'completely inadequate working areas, air-conditioning only for the clients — for the kitchen staff a temperature range of 30 or 40 degrees centigrade between the fridges and the ovens.' Furthermore, 'the excessive prices of the food on sale aroused aggression in the customers, who took it out on the service personnel.' Nervous complaints were actually the main cause of high absenteeism. The employees derived a list of demands from these complaints and yet again the consequence was a long dispute. The fact that their demands almost always gave rise to bitter resistance from employers fearful of smaller profit margins gave the workers food for thought. Mariotti: 'the more the employers opposed our activities, the more we became aware that the fight for health is a fight against the bosses.'

In 1867, Karl Marx described and analysed the fatal connection between production-conditions and the state of workers' health:

At the same time that factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity. The lightening of the labour, even, becomes a sort of torture, since the machine does not free the labourer from work, but deprives the work of all interest. Every kind of capitalist production, in so far as it is not only a labour-

process, but also a process of creating surplus-value, has this in common, that it is not the workman that employs the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour that employ the workman.

‘Capital’, Vol. 1, ‘The Factory’.

The massive loss of productive workers through accident and illness also creates problems for the bosses. Their view that the workers can protect themselves from harm by ‘correct’ behaviour has, however, been refuted absolutely by Marx. It is not the nervous or muscular strength of the worker, or his physical or psychological efficiency, which dictate the conditions under which he earns his daily bread. Rather the dictating is done by the calculation of maximum profits. Health necessarily comes second to profits.

Awareness and analysis of this sort have now moved from the debating halls of the student movement to the trade unions. Good health as a reward for high skill is a fast disappearing notion. Its place has been taken by the conviction that illness is caused by environmental factors and is, therefore, avoidable — once the work environment is altered. Health discussions are now political discussions; and the trade unions ensure that questions of class form part of the discussion.

In October 1967, a questionnaire about health in the factories was filled in by 300,000 workers in 366 firms — about 5 per cent of all Italian industrial workers. In the same year the ‘Istituto Gramsci’ — named after the Marxist philosopher and P.C.I. founder — convened a national congress on the theme, ‘Medicine and Society’. Here an intellectual élite debated differences between positivist and Marxist perspectives on medicine. New discoveries in biology and psychology were discussed side by side with socio-economic developments. Surprisingly, perhaps, the ideas of this intellectual avant-garde could be handed on to the masses: not by indoctrination from above, but by active participation of all those affected, in a process of mutual information giving. Professor Giovanni Berlinguer describes the process in his book ‘Medicina e Politica’ (‘Medicine and Politics’):

The cultural effect (of this process) finds its expression in the rise of a form of literature which is new in Italy and I believe not found in many other countries.

It involves thousands of leaflets and hundreds of pamphlets, brochures, essays and documents which are circulated in printed form or as photocopies and duplications of all sorts, different from traditional health pamphlets in that they are actually read

by workers. These are factual reports written by the workers themselves. They report on a factory or a department, and have as their subject the theme, 'work- health-exploitation'. This literature is composed and financed by countless union organisations, spontaneously formed groups, students, city and provincial councils in conjunction with workers. It bears witness to an exchange of ideas and experiences between workers and doctors, biologists, chemists, psychologists, engineers and students. An unusual process is at work here. Two deep divides which, according to Gramsci, are typical to the history of Italian intellectuals — the division between culture and people, and the isolation of both the natural and exact scientist from the world of culture — are now being bridged.

Public discussion about health policy does not only focus on exploding traditional views in the sphere of industrial medicine. It also questions the whole Italian health system which traditionally rests on three pillars:

- **a rigid system of sickness-insurance schemes ('Mutue') numbed by bureaucratic restraints and completely uncontrollable.**

- **A hierarchically structured hospital-system which, because of the cost-explosion, oscillates between backward and progressive technology.**

- **doctors who jealously guard their privileges.**

Reform is inevitable. And, as usual, Bologna's politicians anticipate efforts on a national plane. Health Councillor Eustachio Loperfido, one of Bologna's best known politicians, gave his views in an interview:

Sil Schmid: Councillor, you are a tough critic of the Italian health system. What do you see as its faults?

Eustachio Loperfido: The Italian health system is not supported by the state. The Parliament has no control over it. It is controlled completely by the 'Mutue'. Premiums are paid in part by employers, in part by employees. Every category of employment has its own insurance schemes; and each scheme is different — a fact which produces great inequalities and injustices.

S.S.: What do you regard as the main disadvantages for the citizen?

E.L.: He can only exercise his right to medical care when he is already ill. Only then does the 'Mutue' function, and even then on three different planes: home visits by the doctor, the specialist, and hospital care. Not all the 'Mutue' offer financial aid on these three levels. Reform is being demanded by the Unions.

S.S.: What sort of reforms?

E.L.: A unified system controlled by parliament, that is health-service on a national plane. The basic units of this national health service would be local. The goals of such a system would be to combine prevention, diagnosis, therapy and rehabilitation.

S.S.: Do concrete ideas about the structure of such a system already exist?

E.L.: The health service must be set up regionally. That is, each unit must be formed by the residents of a particular area, and not by members of this or that insurance scheme. Thus, all citizens would be made equal within the system, and all could claim its services in the same way — and, of course, free.

S.S.: And how do the reformers envisage paying for the scheme?

E.L.: Through the treasury. Everyone pays according to his means, his income. A proportion of this money is put into a national fund, then distributed from this fund to the regions. Then, every region in turn distributes money according to population and needs, to the Health Units of the various Councils. For example, mountain regions where the individual residents live a long way from each other would get more money per inhabitant than towns where clinics can be reached very cheaply on foot or by public transport. The equality of all citizens within a health system is a revolutionary factor.

S.S.: But would such a system not lead once again to bureaucracy, paper mountains and red tape?

E.L.: The project would ensure that the health service would be run democratically not bureaucratically. In fact, the administrative councils of the local health units would be elected by the city council, which is in turn elected by the people. In addition, various forms of public participation are foreseen both in the working out of the programme and in the community administration of the health service. The system today is bureaucratic because bureaucrats within insurance firms decide whether medical assistance is paid for or not. The doctors themselves become bureaucrats by subordinating themselves to these firms.

S.S.: What do you see as the consequences for Bologna of this health reform?

E.L.: The policy of Emilia-Romagna is already directed towards such reform. We have already divided the whole area into local units. In Bologna we have six health sectors — with between two and five neighbourhoods in each sector.

S.S.: How does this relate to the present national health policy?

E.L.: Since we do not have the necessary legal basis for circumventing the 'Mutue', we have decided to administer those functions which are permitted to the regional and city councils. Thus the local health associations are above all concerned with preventive medicine.

S.S.: What is the concrete role of these associations?

E.L.: They are to become the instrument with which people will force health reform from the base upwards. They will take over the neighbourhood clinics. In April the local city and provincial councils elected 120 representatives of the city population to the six civic health associations. They are now working at defining their role and taking control of the clinics with the residents of the neighbourhoods.

Bologna's establishment of local health associations which control the running of local clinics has anticipated a wide social-reform policy which is still being debated at the national level. 'Use the clinic in your neighbourhood and take part in its administration,' urges the city 'Notizie del Comune' in a special issue on social services. The fact that this appeal to co-determination is not just an empty slogan, is demonstrated by the history of the Mazzini clinic.

In the 'social security' work-group of the Mazzini council, it was suggested that a questionnaire be circulated which would give all residents of the area the opportunity to state their own views on the clinic that was shortly to be opened. In September 1973 this plan was passed and the council went ahead with it. The questionnaire and an accompanying letter were drawn up, and overtures were made to all the political, union and religious institutions in the area for support. Results were good: 36 organisations responded, including political parties and church groups. 5,711 heads of families (representing 17,000 Mazzini residents) filled in the questionnaire. The results were made known and discussed in public meetings; and 650 residents came to the final debate which drew conclusions from the poll. From this well of information, suggestions and criticisms, the area formulated its plans for the new clinic. The weaknesses of the present health-system were evident:

- residents missed personal contact between doctor and patient —
- criticised the over-complicated procedures of the sickness insurance schemes; the fact that their outlets were often difficult to reach; and that the services provided varied greatly and were often inadequate —
- attacked the class character of the Italian health system which guaranteed the better-off more intensive care and higher qualified staff

than those from lower-income groups —

● condemned a health policy which left people to care for health only when already ill.

The provisions which the Bolognese health authorities derived from the suggestions of the Mazzini residents largely coincided with the programme of already established neighbourhood clinics. The difference was that the several hundred residents who attended the opening of the Mazzini clinic in May 1974 knew that thanks to their co-operation they now had a clinic which was made to measure for their needs. They also realised that their continued participation was necessary to maintain such a state of affairs.

Loperfido and his colleagues are continually urging the Bolognese towards such co-operation. In keeping with the policy of public co-determination, they ran the following appeal in the local Mazzini paper, after the opening of the clinic; 'Whoever wishes to take part in the administration of the clinic should sign in at reception.... The elected council will organise, in conjunction with residents, frequent investigations and debates to check on the correct functioning of the clinic. Furthermore, three working parties composed of children, women and the elderly are needed.'

Although most of Bologna's local clinics are now open, the grounds for dissatisfaction cited by the Mazzini residents still exist to a degree. Now, as before, men and women must endure crowded waiting-rooms in order to see a doctor for five minutes — just as in Rome, Zurich or Frankfurt. Now, as before, they have to contend with the bureaucrats of the 'Mutue' who often point to the 'small print' in those situations where help is most urgently needed. And having to go to hospital can still mean a near financial catastrophe even for an average wage-earner. All this, because Emilia's left-wing politicians are almost powerless against the evils of the national health system as a whole.

Preventive medicine is within their domain; although limited financial resources make this less widespread than desired. Loperfido and his colleagues have had to set limits. 'The choice went to the weakest members of the society, those who have been deprived most up to now — the children, women, the elderly.'

Children, pregnant women, young mothers with babies, and elderly people are the main users of the local clinics. They come for inoculations and check-ups, have the injections prescribed by their G.P., or have a bandage changed. Or they can put their worries and needs to socially committed doctors during a specially set aside consulting hour.

Clinic-staff — doctors, psychologists and social-workers — employ the most modern discoveries of the social sciences in their work. They attempt not only to recognise illnesses early but also to look for their causes in the family or social situation:

Pregnant women can have themselves examined regularly and free of cost. In progressive countries, like Sweden and the Netherlands, such examinations have led to a radical drop in infant mortality and manifestations of birth-damage (spastics, cerebral palsy).

Children have periodic examinations and inoculations; the twelve free check-ups between 0 and 3 years of age aid in the early discovery of hearing difficulties which often cause speech-defects if not noticed in time. Such speech-defects often lead — especially for children from working-class backgrounds — to the vicious circle of social discrimination. A major concern of the Bolognese clinics is, therefore, the early diagnosis and treatment of such problems.

There are numerous services ranging from home-care to chiropody appointments for the benefit of the elderly. The aim here is to avoid alienation from society by isolating them in homes. The many old people's centres already in operation are not mere places of treatment, but equally meeting-places where they can talk with other residents.

Bologna's Department of Health contributes £28,000 (\$48,000) every year to each of the clinics. 'For precisely that reason,' says Loperfido, 'they belong to all citizens and are open to everyone. They pay for them, after all.' And, continues the Health Councillor, 'they should be controlled and operated by the citizens so that their needs will be better considered.' Such public control, the Bolognese authorities believe, is the answer to the widespread fear of state medicine. 'Incompetent and unsympathetic doctors would soon be corrected by patients or forced to resign, since patients would also be running the clinic.'

Even the best local clinic is no use to people if they do not know it exists. A film made by a team of sociology students in the very poor Pilastro housing estate shows that even in Bologna not every person is a committed, model citizen who regularly attends neighbourhood assemblies. When housewives, O.A.P.s and workers here were asked what they thought of the clinics which had been functioning for a few months, it became clear that many had never seen the inside of one and had strange misconceptions about them. 'You've got to fill in too many forms'; or 'You've got to wait too long', is how some Pilastro residents — obviously affected by their bad experiences with the 'Mutue' schemes

— justified their aversion to the clinics. But the film was successful. Many of those interviewed watched the film when it was shown locally just to see themselves; and they revised their opinion after watching the investigation of the clinic which followed.

The clinics have not merely filled a gap in the medical care of the people of Bologna. They play an important role for doctors, social-workers and nurses who find work here which corresponds to their social commitment. There is a whole new generation of medical specialists, here as elsewhere, who are not content to sell their expertise for good money only to work in poor conditions. They are as tired of continuous pressures of time, inadequate human contact and routine prescription of pills, as are patients. And they distrust the specialisation and technicalisation of medicine which turns them into clever health managers instead of humane healers.

In Bologna, progressive doctors find support in a population which is gradually changing its way of thinking, as well as from health authorities. The step from passive consumption to active co-operation in one's own health is a smaller step for a Bolognese who has learned to take part in discussions in housing-estates or neighbourhood councils than it is for most Europeans — East or West. It makes sense to such a person if a medical group in Barca urges residents to 'become active protagonists in the struggle for their own health and to look for physical, psychological and social factors in their daily lives which put their health at risk.'

The principle of 'non-delega dello salute' (non-delegation of your own health) has become a maxim of Bolognese health policy. The health of the people should be administered by the people and not by doctors who want to make capital out of their knowledge; nor by the hierarchy of hospitals and universities who calculate their standing in the currency of social prestige and huge fees. The businessmen who make profits by sapping the strength of workers must not be the ones who control safety at work — it must be the workers themselves.

'Self-administration of one's own well-being' is an exhortation which is made everywhere by concerned observers of the western health situation. For example, Ivan Illich states: 'The whole world is changing into a hospital populated by people who are forced to spend their lives obeying rules of hygiene and doctor's instructions.' The Bolognese Department of Health has accepted the consequence of such critiques. It sees its task as being to activate people and to place at their disposal the structures and institutions they need to conduct their own health

The principle of 'activating' the sick person necessarily led to

revolutionary experiments in the sphere where the bureaucratic health policy is at its strongest — psychiatry. Behind the bolted doors and barred windows of asylums, the doctor-patient relationship often moves beyond the usual paternalism to near brute repression. The perfect patient here is the one who is completely cowed by medical authority.

The doctors, nurses and patients of the Bolognese clinic, 'Piero Ottonello', have undertaken to find an alternative to this humiliating reality. Their view is that traditional therapy-methods do not lead to curing the mentally ill, but merely to disciplining them. The symptomatology of so-called 'mad' people, epileptic attacks or violent aggression against oneself and others is nothing but a reaction to repressive practices. The Ottonello team searched for and found its alternative in Bologna's entire political climate: the excision of authority and repression, the opening out and democratisation of the clinic and its administration.

'At the end of 1973 we began to do away with medication,' recalls Ottonello psychologist, Dr Alberto Merini. 'The next step was to end the doctor's daily round from patient to patient, and to replace these by a daily meeting of patients, nurses and doctors.'

The clinic gradually did away with other traditional requisites of psychiatry: the straightjackets which rob unruly patients of their freedom of movement; the electric-shock apparatus which puts excited patients into a state of exhausted apathy; the bars on the windows and bolts on the doors which turn the occupants of asylums into prisoners.

The instruments of institutionalised repression were replaced by alternative treatment techniques, by individual psychotherapy, by occupational, group, and family therapy. The basic element of these therapies and of all Bolognese psychiatric experiments is the same that gives meaning to the whole health policy of Emilia-Romagna — the activation of patients and their resistance to the circumstances which made them ill.

Old forms of treatment are replaced, above all, by a new relationship between doctors, nurses and patients. Instead of medical father-figures and suppressed sick people; instead of knowledgeable medicine-men and irresponsible madmen; instead of active doctors and passively suffering patients, there is now a community of people with equal rights. In place of hierarchical clinic — therapeutic community.

The radical psychiatrist, Franco Basaglia, describes the reasons for such changes in traditional structures in an essay, 'The Institution of Authority' written in 1968. At that time he was director of an asylum

in Gorizia where a therapeutic community had been created.

The therapeutic community (and this is important) unites its members — sick people, nurses and doctors in a total involvement. All the contradictions of reality here form the humus in which mutual therapy grows and grows. Differences between doctors and nurses, nurses and the sick, the sick and the doctors and even among doctors themselves, are brought out in the open. Rigidity in roles can thus be permanently avoided. To live the contradictions of reality dialectically — that is the therapeutic aspect of our work. If one comes to terms dialectically with these contradictions and does not ignore them or systematically push them aside in order to create an ideal world; if one discusses the neglect of duties of one person in relation to another, the convenient device of the scapegoat in a dialectic manner, and does not view them as inevitable, then the community will be playing a therapeutic role. Dialectics presume, however, that there is more than one possibility, i.e. that there is an alternative. If the sick person has no alternative, if his life appears to be determined and organised for him, if his personal contribution is confined to compliance with commands and there is no other choice, then he is a prisoner of psychiatry just as he was a prisoner in the outside world where he was also not able to come to terms dialectically with contradictions. The institution which he cannot oppose, like the reality which he had not been able to question, leaves him only one way out — flight into psychosis, the retreat into delirium, where there are no contradictions or dialectics.

Progressive scientists throughout the world are urging more and more vigorously that psychosis must be cured by psychic methods, since, with few exceptions, it has psychic causes. Progressive doctors in England, France and Italy believe they have learnt what to do to make psychic influences effective in specific cases: 'Every moment of the day, every stimulus from the members of the community, should contribute to the re-creation of the personal initiative of the patients, and of the spontaneity and creativity which were first diminished by the illness, then completely destroyed by the institutions.' (Basaglia).

The Ottonello reformers proceeded according to this basic reasoning when they went about changing the way their clinic was run.

● In most places, welfare authorities, the family doctor or even the family itself determine whether a mentally ill person should be put into an institution. In Ottonello, patients, relatives, representatives of the nursing staff and doctors, all take part in a group meeting which might last several hours in which reasons for or against internment in the clinic are discussed.

● In other places, the institutional day revolves round the fixed points of meals and sleeping. The patients — mostly in a state of semi-consciousness induced by medication — just let the rest of the time go by. Ottonello patients must participate in determining the course of the day. They are obliged to take part in several hours of meetings daily to discuss their problems and to carry conflicts through; or read newspapers together in order not to lose contact with political reality.

● In other places, bolted doors and windows, key-carrying warders and well-developed means of depriving freedom make for peace and order within the walls of the institution. In Ottonello, doors and windows remain open. A schedule worked out by all the people concerned, and constantly revised, controls the social life of the inmates — including the doctors. 'People are allowed out four times a week. Inside the institution there are no drugs, no alcohol. In addition, patients and doctors may not run away, kill themselves or go to bed together. Infringements are discussed, not punished.'

Obviously, this unaccustomed method of running an institution meets with distrust and rejection. Even the Bolognese would rather see their mentally-ill citizens behind lock-and-key so as not to be bothered by them. However, the reformers in Ottonello have things easier in one respect than their colleagues in other places. Their work is not limited to their institution. Through the clinics and neighbourhood committees, they can bring their aims and knowledge to the people. The medical teams from Ottonello make extensive use of this opportunity, not merely by working in the psychiatric section of the local clinic, but also by regularly putting reports of their work before residents. Thus, the residents of Barca and Costa-Saragozza have got used to discussing psychiatric problems at assemblies. They do this without inhibition because they know that the specialists want their participation. 'It is only the existence of such a process,' declares Alberto Merini to his local audience, 'that enables us to overcome a technical perspective and so conduct the process of changing psychiatry. Change in this domain also means prevention of psychiatric illness.'

'The psychiatrist attempts to prevent the confinement of the patient because the asylum is only an apparent solution to the

problem,' explained the medical collective to the assembly. But the prevention of confinement means that problems in family or social situations must be recognised before they come to a crisis-point — to nervous breakdowns, attacks of hysteria or suicide. For this, the neighbourhood is an ideal instrument; provided it offers a well-developed psychiatric service. This is already the case in the health area Barca /Costa-Saragozza.

122 residents were treated by the clinic psychiatric team here between May and October 1974. Of the 363 consultations with these people, 247 took place in the clinic, 116 in the patient's home. The conclusion of the psychologists was: 'The overwhelming majority of patients are people who flee from objectively difficult situations into illness — housewives, immigrants from the South, pensioners.'

In Bologna it is not only the dialectically educated left-wing intellectuals who can draw the logical political conclusion from this. The man in the street can do so too. Thus, at a district assembly on psychiatric problems in Barca, a worker of about 59 reacted with this observation: 'When I come home tired and irritable from the factory in the evening, I lash out at my family — and so perhaps make patients out of my children.' He concludes from that, 'We must not struggle for better psychiatric care but for working conditions which do not make us animals by the time we go home.'



Something which medical technocrats angrily dispute is clear to this worker: when medicine no longer consists in repairing damaged health, but in preventing that damage, it has become politics. Or, as Bologna's health policy-makers put it: 'Prevention is revolutionary.'

The beginnings of the health revolution are visible when:

● the struggle for more humane working-conditions begins to change production-processes.

● the solidarity of doctors, patients and nursing staff bring about the undermining of traditional hierarchies.

● the resistance of repressed women, sons and daughters begins to destroy patriarchal family structures.

The goal of Bolognese health policy is to introduce, promote and support such processes. Granted, this revolution will have to wait as long as the majority of the population prefers passively swallowing pills to active involvement in their own health. Loperfido is optimistic, however:

‘The more the people are caught up in the process of participation, the more awareness will grow that the factors which make them ill are often to be found in their environment — in the city, in traffic, in the school, in the factory — in short in a way of life into which they are forced, if they do not defend themselves against it.’

The Old:



Independence, not Institutions...

Roger Müller

In a back room of the old people's centre, in the neighbourhood of Galvani, an old hairdresser (who has long since been pensioned off) is once again practising her profession. Every Tuesday and Friday morning, in the company of two or three old friends, she slowly puts curlers in the freshly washed grey hair of women of her own age. The set-up in this amateur hairdressing salon is simple, but what is needed is there: mirror, sink and a hood-hairdryer — gifts from a newly equipped commercial shop. Everything else is brought by the clients themselves. Through such self-help, which has been encouraged by the staff of the old people's centre, pensioners from the area can have an occasional visit to the hairdresser, something they would not otherwise be able to afford with their inadequate pensions.

The Bolognese believe that old people should not be forbidden a little vanity, even if means are scarce. Men are not excluded from such vanity. The Galvani grandfathers, inspired by the women, have found an old barber who with the greatest of pleasure spends two half days a week shaving them and carefully snipping at their sparse hair.

Without being a matter of life or death, this service is just one of many to be offered at the Galvani centre. Even though it is not always available in all the neighbourhoods, such a service is typical of Bologna; typical of the view that no one should have to give up things taken for granted by others in the society, simply because she or he is old.

'To keep old people in our midst is our most ambitious aim,' said former Bolognese Councillor Ermanno Tondi in 1974. Bologna has diverged from what is understood by care for the aged in the rest of Italy and in many other industrial countries. It no longer builds bigger and bigger — and if finance permits more and more luxurious — old people's homes. Bologna's old age pensioners are not to be shut up in ghettos where, not surprisingly, they too often lose their last will to live. Rather, the city strives to maintain them — even if infirm and dependent — as part of the society for which they have worked all their lives. 'Old people's homes,' says Tondi concisely, 'imply a social death long before the physical one.'

Admittedly, Italy is one of the industrialised countries where the trend to the small family has not developed to the same extent as elsewhere. Even there, however, the break up of the pre-industrial extended family has caused an increase in the number of uncared-for old people who can find no place or role in their families. In Italy too, old people are becoming numerically the largest, peripheral social group. Since they are weak economically, politically and physically, they cannot keep themselves by their own efforts in the social environment in which they once lived.

Medical progress has meant that people live longer. Social progress, however, has not kept pace and only very few old people gain anything from those extra years of life apart from loneliness, material need and isolation in old people's homes, asylums or hospital wards for the chronically ill.

Italian law knows only one way of dealing with the aged who are no longer able to live independently and who have no private means. That is, putting them into old people's homes, nursing homes or asylums, depending on the problems that old age has brought them. City councils are allowed by law to pay for daily needs of such citizens only if they are kept in homes. Every other contribution to the retired is

voluntary and can be struck from the local budget by the Rome government in a time of financial stringency. There is no legal basis for providing medical supervision in their own surroundings, or for rehabilitation, or supplements to pension.

The result is quite obvious — something can be done for the old only once they are already in institutions and cut off from the social context.

This legal stipulation might have been justified at a time when there were very few old people; and these would normally spend the twilight of their lives within their families. In Bologna in 1900 only 1 per cent of the residents were over 60. Nowadays, the figure is 20 per cent and in addition as time goes by, children are less and less able to support their parents in their old age. Old people are increasingly left alone even if it is just because there is no room in modern small flats.



Bologna's city administrators want to help old age pensioners before they have to be put into homes. A whole network of aids has been devised with the object of delaying this confinement for as long as possible or making it completely unnecessary. Confinement in homes is less and less defensible for reasons other than humane ones. Financial and cultural consequences also speak out against ghettos.

● The sums which the community must put into running old people's homes and nursing homes are constantly increasing; and as the number of old people continues to rise, there is little likelihood of reduction in the future. Ermanno Tondi referred to this in a public lecture in 1974. 'The community is burdening itself with a project which, broadly speaking, is completely unproductive.'

● The second iniquitous result of this policy stormed Tondi in the

same speech, 'is that the social framework is deprived of a great many valuable qualities which, without being aware of it, each old person possesses precisely because he or she is old. A legacy of experience and authentic culture is quite literally thrown out of the civic community; and that perfectly matches the idiotic consumerism and deliberate waste which characterize our age.'

In the view of Bologna's social policy makers, the old-people's home is the worst possible solution to the problems of ageing people. The basis of all old people's services is the attempt to find an alternative to precisely this.

The policy started with the analysis of the reasons which normally led to old people being put in homes. The three main risks in their living conditions were:

- insufficient pensions which did not ensure an independent life for the old people.
- shortage of flats
- poor medical care which affects the old more than others

To ensure that Bolognese pensioners have enough to live on, the City grants a supplement which guarantees a monthly income of thirty pounds (\$50) (1975) after rent. Although this minimum pension is small, it might prevent many cases of internment in homes for financial reasons. Without the supplement many pensioners would have to get by on half that much after paying their rent, which is almost impossible. However, apart from the monetary aspect, the supplement has another significance. 'The supplement means that old people are not left alone in their misery, but know that someone is concerned about them — even if they do have limited means.' (Anna Lopes Pegna, Co-ordinator of the City Old-Age Services).

Old age pensioners receive further financial aid in the shape of a heating allowance in winter. Till 1975 this was a coupon which they could exchange for gas or any other means of heating; but nowadays they receive three to five pounds (\$5-7) instead of the coupon. Addressing a meeting of OAP's, Tondi explained with pride this change in what had previously been a paternalist system. 'We have decided to give you money instead of the coupon. Now you are not forced to buy gas or firewood. You can get a glass of wine with it — because if you want to warm yourself with wine, then you should be able to do so.'

They are also helped financially by the free use of public transport at all times. This applies to all pensioners with less than fifty pounds (\$85) a month. The Bolognese Council does not want this preferential treatment of the old to be seen as charity but as an

encouragement to stay mobile, maintain their social contacts and keep in touch with their friends. These subsidies form only a small part of the total Bologna spends on its grandparents. 'As always, despite our efforts,' says Anna Lopes Pegna, 'the lion's share of money for the old goes to maintain old people's homes and nursing homes, because that's the way the law wants it.'

Planning is the most important measure for combating the shortage of flats — the second main reason for old people being put into homes. Since 1966 the administration has been letting its own flats exclusively to needy pensioners, when these are available for new tenants. However, as Anna Lopes Pegna concedes, this still involves very few flats. The largest project for the improvement of the flat situation for pensioners is connected with the restructuring of the Centro Storico. After renovation, the administration wants to keep these flats for those who used to live in the area before. Pensioners form around 23 per cent of this population. In addition the city requires the building co-operatives (to which it grants building-land free) to design and reserve 15 per cent of newly-built flats for old people.

Illness and need for care are the third important reason for old people going into homes; and Bologna is attacking these with a series of special old people's services which are being set up in clinics in all eighteen city neighbourhoods. By extending out-patient care and creating a home-care service, unnecessary spells in hospital are being increasingly avoided. This is of decisive importance for the prevention of internment in homes. 'Several days or weeks in bed for old people means immediate decline of physical strength, with the result that they need care for the rest of their lives,' thus Anna Lopes Pegna describes the consequences of a spell in hospital. 'The structure of the hospitals forces people to stay in bed, even if this is not necessary, unless they are able to get up and walk about themselves. The personnel cannot offer them help and relatives or friends who could do so are not allowed in the hospital except at specific times — so the old are forced to stay in bed.'

All too often this also applies to cases which could be treated as out-patients. In Italy someone who does not have enough money for a private doctor has only a very slight chance of getting out-patient treatment. The sickness-insurance firms normally cover the costs of out-patient services only if these can be undertaken in their own treatment centres. But these are few and far between; and so a patient must either make fairly long journeys or be able to afford a private doctor. If he is not in the position to do either, he will sooner or later be

taken to hospital; and from there it is only a short step to chronic illness. Bologna is beginning to overcome this state of affairs by providing medical care within the neighbourhoods.

● Local clinics now provide various services for the aged: the 'callista' or corn doctor is the first service mentioned by the aged. He treats their feet free — and his work is important. Very often simple corns are responsible for the unwillingness of old people to make even the short trip to the butcher or baker by themselves. Bad feet and the consequential curtailment of movement means that even a few steps in their own flats overtax them and they soon have to be taken into homes.

● So that a broken arm, or even lesser infirmity, does not lead to demoralisation and the need for care for the rest of a person's life, an average of two home helps is available in each clinic. They assume temporarily or wherever necessary on a long-term regular basis, those tasks which old people cannot manage anymore. Another of their important tasks is to 'activate' neighbours to give simple but very necessary help. 'A broken arm,' says a Bolognese home-help, 'is basically harmless, but it does mean that an old person can no longer wash, get dressed or cook for himself'. Without help he or she must end up in a home and only very rarely does someone come out again.

● A neighbourhood doctor is responsible for medical help in the clinics, with regular surgery hours not only for the old. There is also a nurse who performs routine functions such as injections and distribution of medicine in the clinics, or if necessary in the homes of the old.

● In 1975 there was a physiotherapist in only five of Bologna's clinics to treat stiffening limbs and bring movement back to the old after accidents. There is a great shortage of physiotherapists throughout Italy because their training had only been organised and recognised within the last few years. A geriatric specialist also holds regular surgery hours in the clinics. This doctor takes over difficult cases from the general practitioners and is responsible for specific diagnoses. Especially in the Old Town where there are many flats without a bath or shower, the equipment of the clinics includes a bath. The hygiene programme for old people is completed by a laundry. Washing is handed in and collected through the clinics.

● A social-worker is included on the clinic's old-age staff. She or he is responsible for sorting out the social circumstances of a partially-handicapped or infirm old person, living conditions, income etc. This staff member is also concerned with enlisting people who are willing to

help old neighbours, to check up on them from time to time, go shopping, keep them company occasionally or accompany them to the clinic.



Co-operation between all who work in this service is one of the crucial postulates of Bologna's old-age policy. Specialisation limited by narrow boundaries is discouraged, and inter-disciplinary co-operation between medicine and social work is being tested. 'This is the only way the problems of old people can be seriously overcome,' says social worker, Archimede Romagnoli. 'Otherwise you might be treating a pensioner preventatively, but do not notice that she does not have enough money for adequate nourishment. So despite your efforts the patient finds herself in hospital two months later because of malnutrition.'

Co-operation is also necessary among all clinic workers. 'Bologna does not want geriatric services which are segregated from other services.' In Corticella, a workers' areas all clinic employees have a weekly meeting which lasts at least two hours. The group makes suggestions to the local Social Security and Health committees for the programming of new services and the improvement of existing ones. Both these committees, on which some of the clinic employees sit, discuss all suggestions and work out a programme which must finally be submitted to the neighbourhood Council for approval.

Geriatric work on the local level is to be completed in future by the setting-up of day-hospitals. Patients who do not have to be hospitalised, but need other specific treatment than that offered by the clinic, can go on living at home while receiving treatment several times a

week at the day-hospital (an institution first tested in England). Six such hospitals, one for every three neighbourhoods, are planned and the first is already in operation.

The work here, like that in the more specialised clinics, provides an alternative to internment in homes. 'To prevent the hospitalisation of an old person is our most important goal' explains Dr Walter Belletini, director of the first Italian day-hospital attached to the Ospedale Malpighi, one of the most modern Bolognese clinics. Every day about 35 patients are brought into the day hospital and the majority of them come twice or three times a week. The day hospital is adapted for 50-55 daily patients. According to English and Italian calculations, this number of places is adequate for an area in which 100,000 to 150,000 people live.



The main task of the day hospital is to help old people move their limbs if these have become stiff, or if they have been in an accident. 'Restrictions in their ability to move are the worst handicap for the elderly: patients can have other more serious complaints, but they will still be able to do something for themselves if they can visit the doctor or friends. So long as a patient can manage the four steps into her flat then even a serious illness does not mean her exclusion from society. However someone who cannot move from bed to bath by herself, even if she is otherwise healthy, is almost certainly out of society,' states Belletini.

Some of the day patients come for further treatment after leaving hospital — patients who have to learn to move again after being bed-bound for a while or breaking a bone. Others are sent from the clinics when the physiotherapeutic measures there are inadequate. A

social worker, and various other staff ensure that the Malpighi day-hospital does not just concern itself with medical means for rehabilitation.

Belletini: 'Our goal is complete rehabilitation — physical, social and psychological.' The day hospital with its services is to become 'the second defence after the clinics to the social expulsion of old people.'

By 'care for the elderly' the Bolognese do not understand the mere guarantee of a minimum level of existence or medical treatment. The city administration offers holidays every year to growing numbers of old people. Groups travel free for a week to the Ligurian Coast, the Adriatic or to the fresh mountain air of the Appenines. Many of them enjoy the first holidays of their lives in the simple 'pensione' which the Council reserves out of season for this purpose. Letters of thanks show how many women sit and let themselves be waited on for the first time. Many of them also visit the sea for the first time and are overjoyed at the sight — though Bologna is only a little over a hundred kilometres away. The holidays for the elderly have been operated since 1974. They were so successful in the first year that the City Council unanimously increased the budget for them. The sum is now sufficient to send 2000 Bolognese pensioners on holiday.

The unanimity of the Council for this increase and the method of holiday preparation allays any suspicion that the Council's red majority is using public money to get votes. Since the City cannot pay for holidays for all old people, the neighbourhoods must decide democratically who needs the holidays most. This selection demands that all the participants, including the elderly, be clear about conditions in the area and the effect on the treatment of the problems of the elderly. In addition, the organisers stress that holiday groups should not just be thrown together, but should be composed of residents of the same building or street. Only in this way will holiday friendships and shared experiences have a beneficial effect on the social life and solidarity of the neighbourhood.

Thus Bologna gives its elderly citizens not only bare essentials, but also some pleasure in their advanced age. Such generosity reinforces their will to live and in turn aids their health.

The Bolognese policy-makers realise that medical care and financial support are not sufficient for the avoidance of social alienation and internment in homes. So that the aging process does not become a misery, solidarity is needed among the elderly and also between all age groups. Solidarity is, however, not something that can be delegated. Neither the day hospital nor the clinic can take its place.

Even excellent socio-medical services cannot prevent loneliness which saps the will to live. 'It would be a mistake to employ people to keep the elderly company,' warns Anna Lopes Pegna. 'This would only relieve the community from its responsibility. It would mark the end of the discussion about social responsibility and the beginning of a total institution, which would even take care of social contacts for the citizens. The solution to such problems can only come from neighbours activated to bring pensioners back into society again. Social-workers can help them only in the short term to make new contacts with the outside world. But it would be a great mistake to believe that an administration can solve social problems in the long term,' states Ms Pegna.



The fact that old people fall ill and act strangely or confusedly creates not simply medical problems but also human ones which cannot be solved by technical means and need to be met by mutual support. Industrial society does not even excuse people for diminished intelligence due to old age. Instead of creating living conditions in which even the old can remain intellectually flexible, society puts them away into institutions where for reasons of organisation, they cannot be allowed to make even a single decision. Encouragement of social

solidarity on behalf of the elderly is one important landmark of the Bolognese policy. 'Our basic idea is to connect the present social situation of the elderly with the work situation that they have behind them,' says social-worker Archimede Romagnoli.

Work, which comes to a complete and abrupt stop with retirement and contributes decisively to the alienation of old people, will, however, not be affected by Bolognese policies in the near future. The readiness of the young to become aware of these problems is at the moment as small as that of the elderly to take part in policy-making. In order to increase knowledge about the social reasons for alienation in old age, as well as to improve the services for the elderly, Bologna is running a large-scale survey of its retired inhabitants. Stress here is placed on the type of work done and its economic, social and health consequences. Due to financial restrictions, the survey focuses on old people in most peril of losing their independence, that is, those who live and have lived in difficult economic and social conditions.

The first part of the survey is a medical questionnaire filled in by the examining doctor at the clinic. The second deals with the socio-economic position of the elderly and is completed by social-workers, home-helps or medical assistants with the pensioner. In a few neighbourhoods this second questionnaire is discussed by groups of old people. The goal is an investigation in which the people investigated also take part. Anna Lopes Pegna: 'It should give the elderly an instrument for the analysis of their own needs, from which a series of future projects can be derived — testimony which can contribute to nationwide campaigns for new housing policies, better pensions and reform of medical care; and, on the district level, to the development of services to meet specific demands and claims.'

In view of their long list of services, projects and political plans it is always astonishing when Bologna's social policy-makers insist that a city can do very little for its population. The claim, of course, shows a sense of political reality. A single city cannot solve the problem of the elderly, because these problems have national ramifications.

The ambition of the Bolognese policy-makers is to serve in some ways as a model for the rest of Italy: 'By its measures Bologna is trying to initiate a campaign for national reforms.'

Where such a campaign is already under way with, for example, public housing and higher pensions as its aim, we try to supply alternative models for the solution of existing problems and thus strengthen the campaign.'

Interview with Mayor Renato Zangheri:



Red Bologna. Example or Exception?

After completing their research the authors requested an interview with the mayor of Bologna. Max Jäggi, Roger Müller and Sil Schmid spent several hours in September 1975 talking to Renato Zangheri, born 1925, Professor of Economic History at Bologna University and a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

Authors: Mr. Mayor, you and your colleagues from the Giunta like to emphasize that Bologna is not simply a happy island. Yet, you must admit, the social order in Bologna is an exception in the chaos of Italy today. What do you see as the difference between the exception and the island?

Zangheri: In a social, political and cultural situation like that of modern Italy — and of the modern world — there are no islands. On the contrary, there are thousands of inter-relationships which are the results, on the one hand, of politico-economic realities and on the other, the social structure. Bologna has the same social structure as other Italian towns and regions — a capitalist one. Bologna is, therefore, a part of a capitalist society with all its well-known features

and a few additional ones peculiar to the Italian situation: the quite exceptional imbalance between the development of town and country, between North and South.

Authors: And what is the effect on Bologna of its being a part of Italy?

Zangheri: In this country there is a city called Bologna. And in this city, the left has been in power for thirty years. That means it has had to defend itself against repeated attacks. At times, these have been very fierce attacks; because in times of severe political disagreements in Italy, our opponents have felt they must blot out the exception from the rule: the rule being a majority of the centre, or a centre-left government. Various methods of attack have been used, some quite open, some concealed. I believe that no means has been left untried in the effort to bring down Bologna's left-wing administration.

Authors: What sort of attacks do you mean?

Zangheri: I mean tax chicanery, excessive controls — we have been put to all sorts of tests. It seemed as though we were being looked at through a magnifying glass so that every possible fault, every possible mistake, even the corruption of the Bolognese local government might be found out. We have passed these tests without anyone having found anything.

Authors: Has the magnifying glass influenced the style of government of your administration?

Zangheri: The fact that we have passed the test has definitely helped in winning for Bologna the reputation of being a well-run city. At the same time, we feel there is no particular merit in running a city with integrity. We feel integrity should be a basic prerequisite for every administration. We have, in our opinion, introduced an element into the life of this city which goes beyond correctness and administrative integrity. This has to do with the democratisation of the administration: that is, the organisation of the direct participation of the citizens over and above the equally necessary expression of their wishes by means of voting in elections.

Authors: Because of the long tradition of left-wing administration, it is then true that an exceptional situation has come about.

Zangheri: If you mean that the workers and their parties, the communist and socialist parties, have brought better qualities to light in their 30 years of running the city than other social classes or other political groups, then it is true. But this is not a question of the personal qualities of individuals; rather of the qualities of political classes. From

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this derives the view currently widespread in Italy that more responsibility in the running of the country should be given to a new class, the working class and to new political groupings of the left. If, however, one tried to maintain that this 30 years of work had essentially changed the Bolognese situation, so that Bologna was now fundamentally different — qualitatively and socially — from the other Italian cities, then this would be an exaggeration and a mistake.

Authors: Surely this also has to do with the fact — as we have repeatedly emphasized in this book — that Italy is a centrally-administered state which leaves little place for local initiative?

Zangheri: We cannot introduce really radical measures for that very reason. The whole legislative power is in the hands of the State. For instance, as you know we have taken a great interest in urban planning in order to bring about a more rational distribution of land, and as far as possible, to keep the city free of speculative interests; and we have partly succeeded in this. We have — as you have seen — defended our 'Collina' (hill zone) and a part of the 'Centro Storico'. This we have done in face of a thousand difficulties, because the national law is against our intervention, since it is a reactionary law which leaves the door wide open to speculation. So, our efforts have been curtailed, delayed and complicated by the existing regime which supports private property and by the legislative power which I have just mentioned.

Authors: How do you explain the fact that the Bolognese administration has yet succeeded in initiating reforms which would have been surprising even in federal states?

Zangheri: We have tried in every sphere to prevent the worst consequences of an economic, social and political system which runs basically counter to the good of the people. These efforts have attained some success but not as much as we would have wished, nor as much as would have been possible if the national system as a whole were a different, more rational one.

Authors: The fact that you repeatedly insist that Bologna is not an island leads one to conclude that it would be dangerous to let this idea spread. What danger is it you want to avoid?

Zangheri: It would be dangerous to spread the illusion that we know the answers to many questions and problems — the very difficult problems of a modern city. We do not have the answers. At best, we can indicate how one might respond and perhaps try out a few possible answers. And we must look for these answers through the work of the masses — through democratic work. We cannot give complete answers because we have not got the necessary new instruments: 'Laws,

financial measures, the opportunity of really effecting certain social developments. We lack these opportunities. I will give you an example. A few months ago the newspaper, 'Corriere della Sera', published a series of articles on Bologna, and in connection it arranged a debate here in the press club with the title, 'Who rules in Bologna?' Various Bolognese politicians were invited, Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Socialists and myself. There I in fact suggested that Democrazia Cristiana rules in Bologna as in the whole country, because it controls the big banks, holds the economic power, and produces the television programmes that the Bolognese watch. The radio broadcasts which the Bolognese hear are made in Rome by Democrazia Cristiana, and even cultural information is produced from Christian Democrat sources. That may seem over-exaggerated to you, but we must fight against it here, even if with very modest means.

Authors: Has the 15th of June 1975, that is, the altering of the Italian political landscape by the local elections, changed anything in this respect?

Zangheri: We Communists conquered or re-conquered most of the big cities, a large number of the regions and many of the provinces. However, the character of the society in which we live was not changed. The laws are not different; nor are the relations between the state and the municipalities. The Italian state is still a highly centralised one which makes highly centralised decisions. It would be an illusion to believe that the life of the people in the cities where we won can change overnight. It is very difficult to organize this change. On the 15th of June we merely took one step forward.

Authors: Do you not believe that Bologna nevertheless awoke hopes in the electorate which perhaps contributed to the good result of the 15th of June?

Zangheri: In my opinion, Bologna had only a very moderate influence on the election results. I see the reason for the results as being the failure of the Christian Democrats. And the irresistible wish of a great part of the Italian people for change, for new areas of concern, for a more effective local political situation, closer to the people and corresponding more to their needs. If Bologna contributed anything to that, then it was perhaps the indication that the left can show the direction for such a change. But this would never be in the sense of a model which is valid for everyone. We have always believed that every town must find the right administration for itself, adjusted to the will of its population as well as to prevailing realities and needs. We have never claimed to be a model; we have always rejected the idea of

Bologna as a model or an exemplary experiment. It is only an experiment which should be thought about and discussed. And I believe that some Italians did consider this experiment in Bologna. More important for them, however, it was necessary to change the Christian Democrats' way of governing. That was an urgent demand, and we have come closer to this goal even if we have not quite reached it.

Authors: So Bologna is not a model; but the democratisation and the participation of the citizens, which has become possible in Bologna, is exemplary. Do you think this participation of the citizen is possible in other towns with other preconditions?

Zangheri: I believe that all towns, or at least the big and middle-sized ones, must open the way to the increased participation of the citizens in administrative decision-making. We began this ten years ago and we regard the results achieved up to now as positive. Other towns have started on the same road and still others must do so as well — they are a long way behind. However, it is not a Bolognese peculiarity but a stipulation of the PCI, that democratisation is to be striven for on all levels, in the most varied forms — at the place of work, in the school and in the municipalities. In Bologna we were able to begin the process earlier because we had the approval of the people. Very interesting and constructive contributions were received even from the Christian Democrats.

Authors: Bologna has for various reasons set an upper limit of 600,000 to its population. Does not the possibility of directly involving the citizens in decisions depend on the size of the town?

Zangheri: I do not believe the demographic factor to be decisive. More important in Bologna was the living tradition — a tradition of participation, the spirit of struggle, a very high degree of politicisation, which goes back many decades. Back to the years of class struggles and the political battles which were being fought even before fascism, when the first socialist movements put down their roots here. Since then, they have developed into a huge tree. I might add, however, that certain representatives of the Catholic world have realised, as I said before that the problem of democracy in Italy is not going to be solved by stereotyped normal elections or by forms such as exist in other European countries. They too must find their own form. Our form consists in regarding the whole city with its various districts as bearing administrative responsibility. It is a question of combining the concept of delegation of power with that of direct participation. And that's not because there is a contradiction between delegation and participation, but because each is incomplete without the other. The integration of the

two forces seems to us to be a possible solution to the problem of giving a firmer base to the democratic life and institutions of our country. We were not alone in thinking this way. The Catholics, and I must admit, the representatives of some other parties concur.

Authors: How has it come about that the Communist Party has come to be the guardian of a republic which was after all founded by liberals?

Zangheri: Perhaps I should go into that more deeply. Someone living in a different country might find our concern for the fragility of our democratic institutions difficult to understand. First of all, it stems from the fact that not only did we lose our freedom under fascism, but also any possibility of organising a democratic life. In addition, since its foundation, our state has had a very narrow popular base. It is true that this narrow base has gradually widened but always only thanks to political movements in opposition to the ruling class. Communist and Socialist movements on the one hand, Catholic movements on the other. The spread of democracy in Italy was not solely achieved by those who founded the state and governed it for many years. It was also achieved by those who were in opposition to the founders. Italian democracy was limited, but not because the founders of the state were unliberal or particularly narrow-minded people — on the contrary, they were cultivated men, patriots with open minds. But even as they founded the state around 1870, they had to take note of the emergence of completely new classes. The young, still unconsolidated Italian State was put in danger by the rise of these classes, whose aims were not unanimous: reactionary as well as progressive forces existed among them. The state saved itself by going on the defensive. It immediately took care to keep the influence of the masses to a minimum. It enacted restrictive election laws and repressive tax laws and had an extremely limited education policy. This situation has gradually improved over the decades as a result of the peoples' struggle, but above all by means of the mass participation of the population in the anti-fascist resistance. The new constitution of 1947 reflects the new character which the Italian State was to receive: a democratic state which should open itself to the masses, a decentralised state with extensive local autonomy. However, in all these aspects, the constitution has not been turned into reality. On the contrary everything has been done to prevent this. So, with what we are doing here, we are fulfilling a basic demand of the Italy of this century and of our constitution. For that reason, we can only smile when we are accused of wanting to overthrow the constitution — we are, in fact, the most convinced champions of the

constitutional order which is however only partly in existence. It is still partly to be brought about on a solid democratic ground, beyond any party calculations. In the Neighbourhood Councils, we have never placed the party question in the foreground. It has always been a question of differences of opinion, of confrontation of ideas and the determination of the needs of the people — that is, a question of the extension of democracy.

Authors: Even in Bologna the powers of the neighbourhoods are still somewhat limited. How are you considering their extension?

Zangheri: The next step is the direct election to the councils by the neighbourhood itself, if we can come to an agreement with the democratic political forces — for we do not want to undertake anything unilaterally. Recently a delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany was here, headed by the Mayor of Mannheim. I explained this to him, and he asked me, 'Might not the neighbourhoods become a boomerang for you some day? Might it not come to conflicts between the administration and one of the neighbourhoods, for example, one with a Christian Democrat majority?' We do not regard that as a danger. We believe on the contrary that it is precisely such conflicts which serve in making clearer the will of the people, possible even by means of disagreements and controversies. We regard this as the correct way for the further development of democracy in Italy — the extension of the political dialectic. And everything which serves democracy is right, while everything that limits democracy just brings difficulties — for example, in the governing of a city. The crisis of some cities which are ruled by the Christian Democrats is precisely that, — a lack of democratic oxygen.

Authors: You are a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party. To what extent can you bring the experiences of Bologna into the strategies of the PCI?

Zangheri: The policy of the PCI on the national plane is, as you know, a policy of reform: reforms of the economic and social structure of the country. And also, adaptation of the state to the constitution, since there is still a great difference between the state and the structure laid down in the constitution.

In addition the PCI wants to contribute to the economic progress of the country by putting economic development on a different basis. This basis should not be one of unlimited profit, but a programmed plan of needs and above all social, collective needs. Private enterprise functioning on a profit-base is to have a place in this framework; but a private enterprise which will develop, not

anarchically, but within a definite supply system. Private entrepreneurs themselves demand such a framework nowadays in Italy; measures to which they can adhere to avoid sales difficulties which occur when the market is no longer in a position to absorb production. These then are the difficulties that the PCI has taken on. However, it does not claim to be able to accomplish it all alone. For this very reason, it has developed a specific strategic line which is called 'Compromesso Storico' the 'historic compromise'. This compromise consists of joining in the necessity of planning and working together, all forces in the population, whether Communist, socialist or Catholic. And as a great part of the Catholic masses struggle within the Christian Democratic Party or vote for it, these forces too must be included. This, of course, implies a Christian Democratic Party which initiates an energetic process of self-criticism and which just as energetically suppresses its tendency to arrogant, improper use of power. What we are doing in Bologna fits organically into this PCI policy.

Authors: Are there conflicts between Bologna and the PCI?

Zangheri: No, on the contrary. For we believe that the people who run this policy must come from the cities and the regions. This is another reason for our involvement in this area and for our efforts to grant the cities and regions all possible opportunities for democratic renewal. So, what we are doing here is merely realising the national policy of the PCI. Our contribution is the modest one of investigation, testing and experience. There is a mutual exchange between the centre and Bologna, between the centre and the periphery, an exchange of relations and the search for a way out of the Italian crisis — a way of putting the society and the state on a new basis. So it is our vision of a new type of economic development based on social needs which gives content to our policies here. And the extension of the social services which we have introduced here would provide exactly what the country needs to create a new market, one not based on individual, private consumption but on social, collective consumption. Thus, the basic features of our national policy correspond to those of local policy. Of course there are some local polarities, and there are naturally the other political forces with which we are working. All schema dissolve in concrete action — then reality counts. And the reality of Bologna in my opinion is linked with the national renewal in which we believe.

Authors: You spoke of the 'historic compromise'. How do you believe it will be possible to convince your electorate of the necessity of a compromise with that very party which the PCI has always blamed for all the bad features of present-day Italy?

Co-operation is necessary because the problem is so big that no one political force is in the position to solve it. One cannot split the country in two halves; one must try to span the gap between all forces that desire the progress of the country. It is very difficult, however, because the Christian Democrats are going about the reform of their own party with so much delay and such great difficulties. And the internal reform of the Party is an indispensable prerequisite to its being able to contribute to the reform of the country. My own view is that the 15th of June gave them a lesson, and I hope the friends of the Christian Democrats draw the right conclusions from the lesson. The process is difficult because it is not enough just to want a change; one must also effect the change. Tangled networks of interest and power systems block their way. This is, nevertheless, the way the Christian Democratic Party must go if it wants to continue to play any role at all in this country.

Authors: Historical examples show that wherever workers' parties have formed coalitions with bourgeois parties, it has led to an integration of the workers' party in the system, and never to the overthrow of the system.

Zangheri: This has not always been true. Ho Chi Minh for instance organised great coalitions and even made the emperor of Indo-China his own adviser. Apart from that, every country must find the way to a solution of its own problems, in terms of its own history and within its own reality. Italian history or at least the 100 years since the unification of Italy, show that in order to attain positive results it has always been necessary to mobilize the greatest possible mass of forces — this precisely because the basis of the state is so narrow and fragile. Even the unification of Italy in the nineteenth century came about by means of a compromise, which at that time was called 'Connubio', a marriage. Its architect was Count Cavour. He succeeded in uniting moderate and progressive, civil and ecclesiastical forces in a national policy.

The masterpiece of Cavour and his liberal policy consisted in severing a great part of the so-called Liberal Catholics from the church and leading them to unification while the church was taking up reactionary, anti-unification positions. So, in other phases of our history, there has been this same necessity to let the various forces work together even if they come from different areas of the political spectrum. I quite understand that for instance, in Anglo-Saxon countries the problem would not arise in this way. That is because these countries have very solid democratic institutions. The two parties who

alternate do not put these institutions in any danger: the opposition is always 'Her Majesty's Opposition'.

Authors: And in Italy?

Zangheri: In our country the political struggle always tends to become radicalised, and we always face the possibility that constitutional institutions will be endangered by this. Just as during the Risorgimento (The Italian Unification Movement of the nineteenth century) there was a danger from the right in the 'Movimento Nazionale', there is a danger from the right today which wants to prevent the country from making necessary progress. To defeat this threat we must, as far as possible, throw off the reactionary elements. We will do this not only by winning as many individuals as possible for the idea of socialism and progress, but also by winning over the organisations in which people work.

Authors: Do you regard this as possible with a bourgeois party like the Christian Democrats?

Zangheri: The Christian Democrats are not merely a bourgeois party. It is, of course, the party which has traditionally represented the interests of the Italian upper middle class. However, it is also an inter-class party which embraces large masses of the people; and that is true even after 15 June. Even today there are 13 million Italians who vote Christian Democrat, while 11 million vote Communist. Do you think it is possible that these 13 million are all reactionary? That one cannot count on them in making a policy of progress and reform? This is just not possible and it would be a great mistake to believe it. For among these 13 million Christian Democrat voters, there are, without doubt, countless workers who desire the progress of the country. And it would be a great mistake if we did not realise that we must include the great mass of the Catholic workers in our policy of democratic progress who still vote for Christian Democrats. This is not really a question of definition, of a simple distinction between the 'goodies' who are capable of it and the 'baddies' who are not. It is necessary first to create the conditions for setting the forces in motion. If we do not create these conditions, then we split the country in two: on the one side the Socialists and Communists, on the other the Christian Democrats and their allies. Such a balance of forces would not set anything in motion, least of all progress. This relation of forces must be set in motion so that it does not become static. That is why we have put the 15th of July on this basis — on the basis of a proposition of unity.

Authors: When parties work together on a governmental plane, then it is not the base the people, which are working together but their

representatives. That means that the PCI must wait long enough for the Christian Democratic Party to reorganise itself so that the top of the party represents its base of non-reactionary voters.

Zangheri: Certainly, that's the problem. We are trying to solve it by giving our policy of unity a mass base, and not making it merely the concern of leadership. Thus, when the leaders of the DC say No to us, we can say, 'It's not up to you, it's up to your base; and it's a question of how long you have until your supporters force you to change your views. Or perhaps get rid of you and look for other leaders.'

Authors: Your policy you say is a policy of reform. Does the PCI want reforms or does it want to change the system?

Zangheri: We believe that in the present historical situation reforms show the way to changes in the system.

Authors: In the foreign — and bourgeois — press the PCI is portrayed as a reformist party of technocrats and compared to the German Social Democratic Party. Do you agree with this portrayal? And does that mean that the PCI has given up the idea of the revolution?

Zangheri: I believe that one must be realistic in politics. And for that reason I believe those who renounce the idea of revolution are the defeated ones. Those who relinquish the revolution are those who make mistakes: the mistake of separating themselves from the masses, the mistake of sectarianism, the mistake of being incapable of understanding what the real problems are, and what the power relations in the country and in the international sphere are — they are necessarily defeated.

Authors: Are you thinking of Portugal?

Zangheri: I hope that defeat has not yet come in Portugal, and for that reason I would not make such a judgement. We have certainly made our own critical comments about the position of our Portuguese comrades, with all due respect for their independence, precisely because we were afraid they were losing sight of reality. It is not those who shout 'revolution' loudest who necessarily want it. It is those who create the conditions for the revolution's coming. And it never comes in the same way. Each time it comes in a different guise and everyone must find his own way to change to socialism.

Authors: What is Italy's way?

Zangheri: We have called our way the 'national' way to socialism, but we could perhaps also speak of a European or a West European way. This is a consequence of the fact that a series of countries in the world have turned socialist; and the international

situation is affected in a positive sense by the existence of these countries. We are very grateful to all countries which have toppled the power of imperialism. As you know, we here in Bologna have developed an intensive solidarity with Vietnam and all other countries which are fighting for their freedom and independence — from Mozambique to Spain. But we do not regard our internationalism as a one-way street, as if we were the ones who had to help the Vietnamese, or the people of Mozambique or Spain. On the contrary it is often they who help us. The Vietnamese have given us invaluable aid, and not only in a moral or idealistic sense but also quite practically by reducing the danger of new imperialist attacks on other countries. You see we are concerned with an international view of the relations of countries with one another. In such a view, the position of Italy is particularly delicate: it is at the centre of the Mediterranean, almost of the centre of Europe. And we are realistic enough to appreciate that neither of the blocks would approve a change in the status quo without reacting. That does not mean we accept the two blocks or the logic of mutually opposed blocks. On the contrary, we believe that the blocks must be overcome, especially in Europe, and hence, we welcome the results of the Helsinki conference and any steps at all which lead to the reduction of international tension. On the other hand, we regret every occasion when set-backs occur. We have followed the Ostpolitik of the German Social Democrats with great interest and likewise support all other efforts to overcome the present situation. Indeed, every effort which attempts to prevent a hardening of the positions of the blocks. We derive the first aspect of our foreign policy from this attitude. We are against leaving NATO or at least against a unilateral withdrawal. Here too we think in terms of measures which will allow a gradual and agreed-upon disappearance of the two blocks: measures which contribute to an improvement in the situation and not to its worsening. It would be unrealistic to try to bring about socialism in Italy by the destruction of the USA-led block; that is, by means of a head-on collision with the other countries of this block.

Authors: What does the Italian way to socialism look like in Italy itself?

Zangheri: The economic situation in our country is very serious, and we do not intend to try to improve it by further nationalisation. In Italy, there is already a significant proportion of state ownership. Here the problem consists in running the already existing industries better. Until now they have been run badly. To run them better means to run them for the benefit of the population and not for the benefit of small

groups. And not to run them so that they are subordinated to the interests of the big monopolies, as is the case today. Our aim is reform of state industry but not its expansion. In a country like Italy, there are hundreds of small enterprises and industrial firms. The whole Bolognese and Emilian economy consists of such small enterprises. To do away with them would mean a death-blow for production and productivity. To put production on a new basis without destroying great resources, without worsening the living conditions of the workers seems almost impossible. We believe, therefore, that it is more a question of allotting these firms a new role inside a democratically-planned economy. Here too — just as in our foreign policy — we are taking up positions which do not correspond to the usual, classical and pure Marxist perspective. Unfortunately purity does not exist in this world: there are only complex, unclean things. Italian capitalism is a very unclean thing — a mixture of dividends, profits, speculation, highly-developed industry and under-developed regions. One has to reckon with this reality and we cannot simply topple such things in the way they have been toppled in some countries, with consequences which will be difficult to repair. We always have the example of Chile in our minds. Chile was choked by international intervention, a feat made simple by Chile's closeness to the United States. It was, however, also overcome by military intervention — a feat made possibly only by considerable political confusion. I do not say this as a justification for the putschist generals, but only to show how it came about that these putschists could succeed. They can succeed in political disorder; and they can succeed thanks to a vacillating middle class — who can prove to be of decisive importance. You remember how important this function of the middle class was in the final phase in Chile.

Authors: Left-wing critics accuse Bologna and the PCI of showing how reforms can be carried out within the system without endangering the system. Indeed — these critics argue that in fact reforms help stabilize the system.

Zangheri: There we have altogether differing opinions. My own view is that our policy sheds much clearer light than any other policy on the contradictions of capitalism and thus helps to overcome it. And overcome it with reforms that induce the largest possible numbers of people to mobilize — that is the point — and bring genuine solutions to the problems of the system. We do not believe these solutions remain within the capitalist system. Rather we would say that emergence from capitalism comes about if one solves the contradictions of capitalism. One emerges out of capitalism and enters a new society, a

transitional society in which at least some of the characteristic features of capitalism are extinguished. Others will remain and be removed only very slowly. The problem cannot be looked at in a schematic manner. There is no X-hour when capitalism ceases to exist and socialism begins. There will be varying lengths of transitional phase. Above all, it is a question of altering the nature of power and one alters the nature of power by extending democracy. Our policy of extending democracy is a policy of transforming power. It also has to do with changing the way an economic system, and an economic mechanism function.

Authors: Have you definite ideas about how this should happen?

Zangheri: One must, for instance, ask oneself the question, do the many public and social elements in Italy play a leading role? In no way. It will be a question of creating a leading function for state industries so that they determine economic development and not the other way round. Therefore, it is a question of changing development of mechanisms and their goals. It is a question of changing the consumption model, and perhaps even the mode of life itself. Such changes, we believe, can only be brought about by mass movements and not by decrees from above. Only a far-reaching mobilisation of the masses will allow us to reach such goals. Otherwise one runs the risk of proclaiming goals which are never reached, thereby frightening opponents and inciting them to close ranks. One must instead attempt to unite a maximum of progressive forces. Reformism means reforms and, of course, these reforms take place within capitalism. It makes improvements on the margin, improves capitalism. But a reformist policy also serves to uncover the vast basic problems of the society, to solve them, to give a positive answer to them and to transform capitalism.

Authors: Since 15 June, PCI participation in the government has been a possibility.

Zangheri: A possibility ... but not a certainty. It is better not to anticipate things over much. Our standpoint is that PCI participation in the government is urgently necessary whether in a direct or indirect form. We have never demanded ministerial positions, but rather to take part in the decisions which are made on a governmental level. We use the argument that the mass of the people whom we represent must be brought up to this level.

Authors: What is meant by 'indirect participation'?

Zangheri: It can mean taking part in the majority without entering the government — supporting the government without being a part of it.

Authors: What would be the most important reforms you would aim to bring about?

Zangheri: One of the most scandalous aspects of Italian politics is the way in which public finance is organised. A democratic finance policy is one of our primary concerns. You see, in Italy the only people who pay taxes are those who work. Those who do not work and, above all those who live from the work of others, pay nothing. This assumes quite grotesque forms. In 1972 a so-called tax reform was passed which was an addition to the 'anagrafe tributaria'. By this law, tax could be assessed at the place where the income was made. With the old tax law, this wasn't true. Someone who owned factories in Sicily, Milan and Naples could be taxed separately in each place because he managed to hide the accumulation of his wealth. The 'anagrafa tributario' was to take in all the sources of income of a citizen by means of an electronic accounting centre. This electronic accounting centre was greatly praised as an extremely modern affair. That was three years ago. The centre has never functioned and it is quite clear that it will not function in the future either. The outcome is, of course, that high incomes are not declared, while the tax of wage-earners is deducted before they are paid. Because the rich pay practically no taxes, tax rates must be set extremely high. But the tax-dodgers are freer than ever and they embezzle sums estimated at billions of lire. Part of this money is sent abroad — for instance to Switzerland. This constitutes real theft to the detriment of the nation. And so, one of our first concerns will be to put an end to such theft; not only for moral reasons but also for economic ones. Imagine, old age pensioners and workers pay taxes, but the rich do not. These billions would be very useful in paying off the deficits of the cities.

Authors: It is said that Italian cities are too much in debt ...

Zangheri: As I see it, all the cities in the world are in trouble. The American cities have even more problems than the Italian. New York is on the edge of bankruptcy. Even German cities have similar problems. The problems of Italian towns also stem from the fact that they have to do many things which should, in fact, be undertaken by the State. They offer social services which the state should offer and to pay for them they have to borrow. Now, if the tax system were rationalised, it would be possible without further action to pay off the deficits of all 8,000 Italian cities. At least 2000 million pounds (\$3500 million) are necessary to pay off these deficits, and this sum would be brought in automatically by a more just tax system. That will be one of the goals of our party; but it will involve a difficult struggle. Those who

say it is easy to carry through reforms should understand that to do so, we must be in a position to mobilize a large part of our forces. We must overcome an incredibly powerful opposition, which before admitting defeat, will use all possible means — including violence and terror — in order not to have to relinquish its privileges. That's why we say we must unite the population. It is only with a united population that we can defeat the privileged.

A further important reform would be in agriculture, since antiquated agriculture is one of the main reasons for our not being able to keep our balance of payments in the black. It produces too little and forces us to import a great proportion of our food and, in particular, meat from abroad. However, in order to increase the productivity of agriculture, the farmers must take things into their own hands: they must wage war against the large land owners. This is true particularly of the cattle-breeding sector, the most backward in our agriculture. A further problem, with which I am particularly concerned as a civic administrator, is a new City Law which provides new rules for the relations between the state and the cities. The Italian constitution stipulates that the republic be based on decentralisation and local autonomy. This is not yet the case.

Authors: Going back to finances — in an interview with the French magazine 'Vie Publique' you said that City budgets had to be in the red ...

Zangheri: Yes, that is true, at least in the present state of Italy's finances. A situation could conceivably arise where the budgets might be balanced; but the present manner of financing the cities makes a deficit inevitable, if the City Councils are not to be completely paralysed. Initiatives by the City Councils must be paid for by means of bank credits. I know, the Italian Finance Law envisages the city deficits being covered by a state institute which would distribute credits approved by the Ministry. This institute actually exists. It is called 'Casa di Depositi e Prestiti'. Yet in all these years, the ministry has never authorized this institute to distribute credit.

Authors: Perhaps you could explain the procedure for the financing of the Italian city budgets?

Zangheri: The mechanism functions as follows: local governments submit their budget to control. According to the law they should only have to submit it to regional control. But according to a practice which we are fighting — since it runs counter to the law — local budgets must also be submitted to central control ... This double control delays the procedure by many months. After the second

control, the ministry in Rome authorises a certain deficit which should be paid simultaneously by the 'Cassa Depositi e Prestiti'. But this does not happen: only half the deficit is covered. For the rest, the local governments must turn to the open market and to the banks. While the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti should provide this credit at an acceptable rate of 7 per cent or 8 per cent, the banks demand 15 to 20 per cent. This of course enormously increases a city's burden of debt.

Authors: Are City Councils subject to the same credit limits as private individuals?

Zangheri: Technically, yes. But I acknowledge that banks have granted us high credits until now — Whether because we pay higher interest-rates or because we offer good guarantees ...

Authors: What sort of guarantees?

Zangheri: First, the guarantee of our own revenues. The cities always had their own tax revenues with which they could meet part of their commitments. Since the so-called tax reform, these revenues are taken by the state; but the state still guarantees us, the City Councils, the sum it received from us up to 1973. With this sum, we can stand security at the bank. A further guarantee are the City's possessions. The Council possesses 15 per cent of the Bolognese territory. Incidentally, we bought this land and did not expropriate it. And we bought it on favourable terms and at favourable times to set up green areas, schools or other civil projects. However, all this has been changed by a drastic measure: in the procedure for approving the budget for 1975, the state undertook decisive expenditure cuts. It reduced our allocation by twenty million pounds (\$34,000,000); Florence's by one-third more; Naples' by £70 million (\$119,000,000); and Pavia's by £4 million (\$6,800,000) from just over four and a half million pounds. The small cities have suffered more, proportionately, from the cuts than the big ones. These cuts are not without an inner logic, as the local governments spend the money in a clearly defined way — on nurseries, on care for the aged, on things such as you have seen in Bologna. That is, they are social services; and when these are cut, it means money is being taken from the weakest people. The logic, therefore, is class logic — a logic which hurts the people.

Authors: How long can Bologna maintain its social policies and incur deficits, especially in view of these cuts?

Zangheri: We should have to stop at the end of 1975. If we cannot stop the cuts, we will be completely paralysed — and not we alone, all the Italian cities. You know the proverb: 'Those whom the Gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.' I have the impression that

they have gone mad in Rome.

Authors: If Bologna has to discontinue all its social services from the nurseries to free buses, will people put up with it?

Zangheri: We hope a mass movement will arise with the aim of bringing about a change — on a national plane too, as that would be one more proof of the incompetence of the rulers of this state.

Authors: It looks as though the Christian Democrats are desperately rebelling against the fact that left-wing local governments have appeared all over the country.

Zangheri: Yes, it looks like punishment, as if they were saying 'O.K., you have taken the big cities, now govern them — but without any money.' That is an insane way of looking at it, because the big cities are a part of this country, precisely — there are no islands. They risk plunging the whole country into a crisis, which not only they, but all Italians will have to pay for.

Authors: Might these measures not lead to radicalisation, even in those cities which are run by the Christian Democrats and not by the left?

Zangheri: Of course. And especially because other towns are even worse hit than Bologna, because they have to catch up in the public service sector, while we have managed to attain some reserves. For example, Bologna has built a water supply system which will guarantee water till the year 2,000, in summer as well as winter. In Florence there is no water in the summer, it is rationed. Still, if we have not got the money to run our services, then they're not much use, are they?

Authors: What is the situation with the Bolognese debt? Is it higher than that of other cities?

Zangheri: The Bolognese debt is high, but significantly lower than that of Rome or Naples, and about the same as Milan or Florence. But that only implies half the truth. The other half concerns what is done with the money. The Christian Democrat cities offer a picture of unrelieved mismanagement. The basic question is not the deficit, but what a city has to show for it. In Bologna the deficit is balanced by a great many services, but in other cities money is wasted. The voters finally handed in their bill on 15 June. How else can you explain the fact of Christian Democrats being thrown out in Florence and Turin after 25-year-rule, while they gave us more votes than ever, after our 25 year rule? If we believe in democracy and, therefore, in the importance of elections, then we must recognise that this result implies a judgement.

Authors: Since the 15th June, there have been not only a few, but a few thousand councils, at least partially run by the PCI. Power they say corrupts. Are you afraid that other communist councils will bring less honour to the PCI, that they will be less competent and have less integrity than the Bolognese?

Zangheri: Why should that be the case? To be 'good' or not, is not a personal quality but depends on the political forces which one represents. Workers are honourable. And they introduce the element of integrity into politics or the politics of their parties. Our party is relentlessly vigilant: a party which keeps close control of its representatives. I do not mean this in the sense of a secret surveillance, but in the sense of public discussion about problems and decisions. It is considerably more difficult in such circumstances to set personal interest above the interests of the masses. That's why the prospects of communists being just administrators in other cities, too, are very good.

Authors: Another matter: how are relationships between your administration and the church?

Zangheri: Our relationship with the church is good. It seems to us that the church has given up the antagonistic position which it once adopted in relation to us. The second Vatican council had a decisive effect in this respect, and Bologna itself had a representative of the Church (Cardinal Lercaro) who was steeped in the spirit of this Council. His successors, too, have behaved towards us correctly, and in my view very realistically.

After 15 June, I remarked to some Catholic friends of mine that the largest Catholic Party in Bologna is the PCI. It is simple to work out: without doubt more than half of our voters are Catholic and about half of the total electorate voted Communist. The Christian Democrats did not quite make 25 per cent and certainly count a few atheists in their ranks who vote not for reasons of religion, but to further their interests. Therefore, it is completely realistic to say that our party is the one with the most Catholic votes in Bologna. Such being the circumstances, we will concern ourselves to see to the interests of our Catholic citizens. And I believe that the church also correctly evaluates and respects the power relationships.

Authors: Are there any representatives of the church who are communist?

Zangheri: Well, I believe if there were any, they wouldn't say so. However, I believe we did receive a few votes from nuns and priests. It seems to me that in Italy the way of judging things is changing. Practice

is judged separately from doctrine. It is true that materialism is rejected from a Catholic perspective, but the practice of the party is accepted. Our party is one which a person joins because of a political programme and not because of a political ideology or doctrine. For that reason it is no longer so alarming for the church if someone is a Communist. Not without reason did the secretary of the Christian Democrats lay the blame for the Communist victory on June 15 on the shoulders of the church hierarchy, saying they had not been as committed to them in this election campaign as before.

Authors: In Italy the church is an economic as well as an ideological force. To what extent is the PCI setting a collision course with the church by, for instance, combating the privileges that were created by the Lateran agreements?

Zangheri: We are naturally in favour of a revision of the agreement between the state and the Vatican. We are not alone in this. Even the Christian Democrats recognise the necessity for its revision. With respect to the interests of the church — they are undoubtedly powerful. But I must say that here in Bologna pressure has never yet been exerted in the name of these interests — with the exception of normal channels which are also open to all citizens. We have always acted impartially, measuring the legitimate interests of the church with the same yardstick as those of all other citizens.

Authors: Does the church pay taxes?

Zangheri: It must pay taxes on its possessions like the rest. Admittedly, occasional exceptions have been made which were not justified.

Authors: How would the Communists treat the church in terms of tax reform?

Zangheri: The church would be affected in the same way as all other citizens.

Authors: With that we are back to reform. One definition of socialism is the socialisation of the means of production. How would you wish to achieve socialism, so defined?

Zangheri: As I said before, a certain socialisation of the means of production has already taken place. For us, therefore, it would be a question of developing this. The socialisation of the means of production must be understood in the sense of the most important means of production being brought into public ownership. It is not necessary, either in theory or in practice to nationalise small industrial or agricultural firms. That may have been necessary in other countries; and, in some cases, even there it has gone too far. We do not see it as

being crucially important to nationalise the ice-cream salesmen.

Authors: You have already shown in Bologna how socialisation can be striven for. For example, by unambiguous preference for co-operative forms of production. Would it be possible to practise this on a national scale?

Zangheri: Yes, provided it was the free decision of the producers. It must not be a forced process. For instance we encourage the manual workers here to organise themselves in co-operatives, in order to rationalise their industries. But it ought always to remain on the level of free decision, or we would lose family or private initiative completely. That would have the double disadvantage of causing loss of entrepreneurial imagination and energy.

Authors: Can you envisage Fiat for example as a self-managed co-operative at some time in the future?

Zangheri: No, in my opinion that is not a problem at the present. There are so many complex, urgent problems to be solved that the idea of changing Fiat into a co-operative is not a high priority.

Authors: But would such an idea be conceivable?

Zangheri: Everything is conceivable but one might risk thereby becoming a socialist Utopian instead of a realistic politician.