

Some observations from a Rome “inhabitant”

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Abstract: Who has the power in Rome? The municipal administration does not have it. The regional administration does not have it, let alone the State. What are the real powers in Rome? They are no longer even the builders, they were in the post-war period, it was the time that can be defined as “Real Estate” where there was a relationship of dependence between the real estate company and the municipal administrations. But today the builders are no longer even the masters of Rome. Today the masters of Rome are really many, they are a caste that is not at all the political caste, it is a caste of the *Grand commis* of State, the great directors of the ministries, the great secretaries of the corporative associations and all that revolves around them. Those are the ones who hold Rome. Faced with this situation, I do not intend to speak of Rome around the Grande Raccordo Anulare, but of Rome in the historic center. A strong hand would be necessary for the historic center. I do not believe that the Casamonica and the Carminati, which are a very serious problem, are the basic problem of the administration of Rome, which concerns all sectors.

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I just wish to make a few observations as a “citizen”, even though this is a word that has been rendered ridiculous by those who defining themselves as such say they are working for our own good... so it’s better to say as resident of Rome and the historical center... First observation: we should abandon the word “capital” which is by now is just a rhetorical term, with no meaning, either for the present, nor for the future, not as a project, etc. The municipal police cars with “Polizia di Roma Capitale” have a grotesque meaning... Rome has been a capital in only two historical periods, during the period of liberal Italy, because it was born as the national capital in opposition to the Church. And because Capital Rome with its physical structures, its plans, its vision, and its new inhabitants was supposed to build an alternative to Rome capital of Christianity. The Rome capital of the secular Italian state has had its moment of maximum representation during the years with mayor Ernesto Nathan and the Regulatory plan of 1909, which is still the most

sensible for a city of 700,000 residents. It was the best that could be had from an urbanistic and architectural culture at the turn of the century. Besides, that had been the product of a common culture, the culture of a lay and liberal Italy, that made Rome its Capital. Then there has been another capital, Mussolini's, that made it into his image and following his objectives, the rest has just been a lot of talk, frankly... the plan, the visions, the projects, etc. are all things that have not had and don't even have today any future prospects. So let's abolish the word "capital", because it is laughable in a country such as Italy in which Milan could aspire to be a capital for many reasons, and in which Rome can almost no longer aspire to remain one.

Who has power in Rome? The municipal administration doesn't. Neither does the regional administration nor the State. What are the real powers in Rome? Not even the builders any longer, they were in the postwar period, it was the period Ermani recalled that could have been defined as "of the real estate" when there was a dependence relationship between the real estate company and the municipal administration. But today construction companies are no longer the masters of Rome, I don't know if Caltagirone is any longer, but it seems even the same power of the construction company of the 50s and 60s no longer exists (in 1956, I was born with Leone Cattani, council member, who clashed against that city). Today the masters of Rome are truly many, they are a caste which is in no way a political caste, the *Grand commis* of the state are a caste. The high directors of the ministries, the high level secretaries of corporative associations and all that revolves around them. They are the ones who hold Rome in the palm of their hands, so much so that whenever there is speculation, there is corruption, there are mafias, these administrative and political degenerations intersect sectors of the state's *Grand commis*, who are Rome's true important administrators. Faced with this situation, I do not intend to speak Rome outside the Grande Raccordo Anulare (ring junction motorway), but rather of Rome of the historical center.

Everyone repeats that this is Rome's heritage, this is the reason why Rome has a surreptitious economy, low level tourism. We need to realize that if we let things stand the way they are today this wealth which is brought into Rome will destroy itself, that is the wealth for which Rome attracts millions of tourists. In short, tourism is destroying Rome. Who is able to take drastic measures with respect to the surge

that is destroying the ancient heritage which produces wealth? Who is capable of making decisions of the type “bed and breakfast are no longer allowed” or “all central sites will require tickets” or “automobiles are not allowed except for those who can be clearly verified have a right to enter and have residence” or “no more licenses for Bengali minimarkets” or “do not let two-story buses circulate since they are the ones who contribute in large part to creating potholes which we complain about”? Who will be able to do all this? Rome has been administered like an aggregate of large and small corporations, the stronger the more they represent diffused interests, rather than concentrated interests. Above all the interest is to uphold the diffused powerful interest, so true is it that the two or three projects that this deplorable administration has done was in favor of these types of interests.

For the historical center a strong fit is needed. I do not believe that the Casamonica and the Carminati, who are an extremely serious problem, are the fundamental problem of Rome’s misadministration, which concerns every sector. The first duty of all of you who are experts, scholars, observers, public and private polemicists, is that of discarding the visions, abandon the great projects. I have heard mainly in the initial interventions that it is necessary to adopt the Roman residents’ point of view, like a normal city. Let’s erase the word “capital” and let us decide to tackle the emergencies of a decent and normal city. In the first place the question tourism, like in Florence or Venice. As De Rita said earlier “some has been devouring the city”, exactly so, they are *devouring* the city and *devouring* this part of Rome in reality they are *devouring* all we refer to when we think of Rome.