

VENICE OR EXPO



IT IS UP TO YOU

Jean Cyrile Godefroy

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Photo Mark Smith

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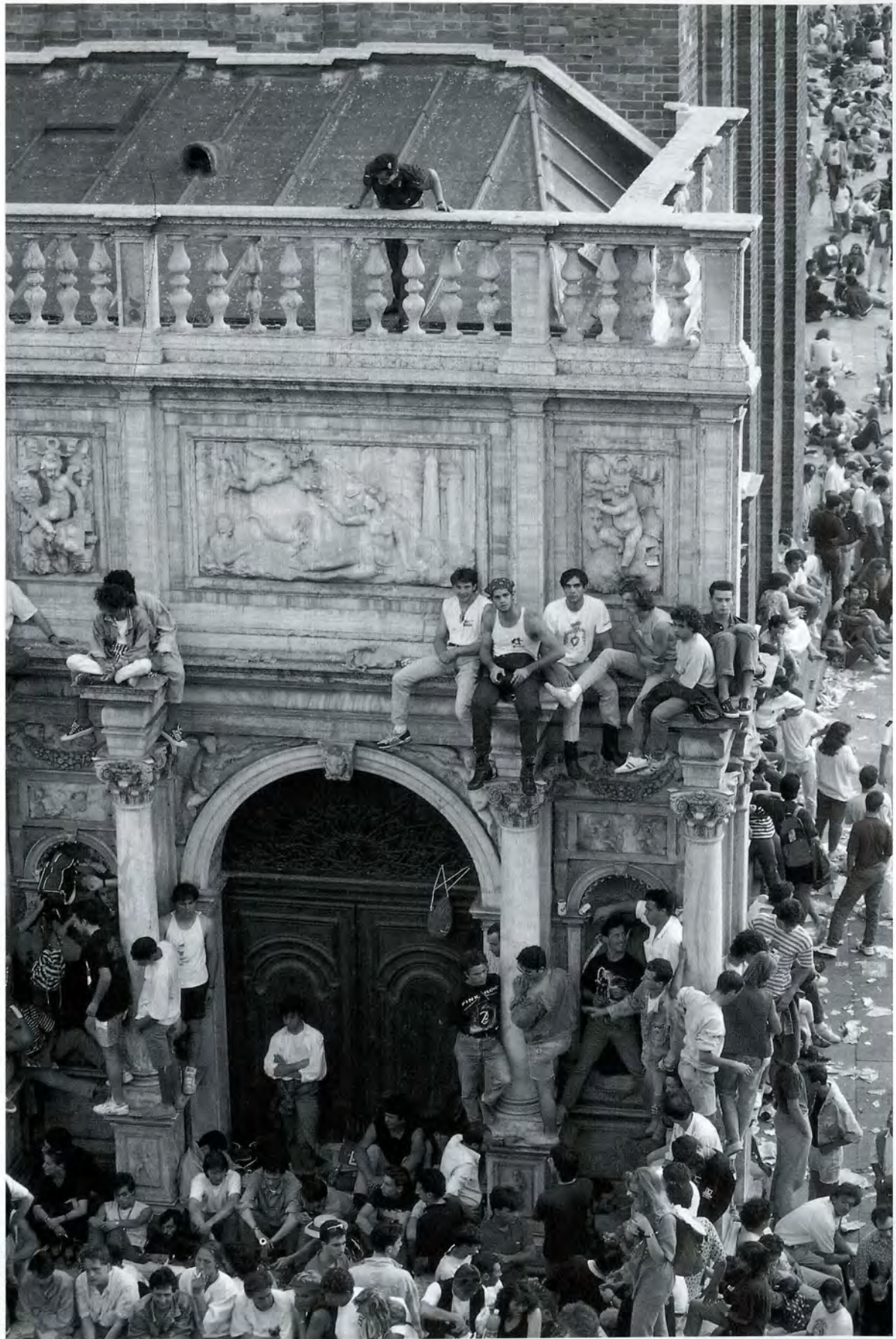


Photo Mark Smith

Foreword by the Mayor of Venice, Antonio Casellati

Doubtless in a few weeks' time Venice will be either saved or lost.

Whether she is to live may depend on you.

In June the B.I.E. (Bureau International des Expositions) will decide whether the Universal Exhibition of the year 2000 is to be held in Venice. The representatives of your country will be voting. Could you dissuade them from signing the city's sentence of death.

We believe you could.

Who are we? All those who appear in these pages. All those who refuse to be bound by a project that has been imposed without a vote of Parliament, against the opinion of the Municipal Council, against the conviction of certain ministers, against Venice itself.

An undefined project whose authors themselves admit that they do not know what will be the outcome. A hazy and changeable project, legally doubtful, out of keeping with the nature of the city, economically and socially. A project which could ruin the efforts already begun to halt its decline and which could cause a retrograde step. A project which aggravates the exodus of Venetians. A project which claims to be very up-to-date but which is based on the old idea of a purely quantitative economic expansion. An out-of-date project. Also an impossible project because, to take only one example, the city, which already at certain periods is unable to cope with the touristic influx, is physically and structurally incapable of receiving the immense crowds with which it is threatened by the most "optimistic" scientific forecasts, in the case that Expo should come to the Veneto. A project which is upheld only by those who think they have an economic or political interest in it. A project which condemns those personalities of unquestionable scientific and cultural experience who here analyse its unfortunate consequences. A project which has aroused in Italy and abroad an exceptional wave of protest. For seldom has one seen such unanimity. The pages which follow bear it but pale witness.

Architects, writers, intellectuals from every country. The private committees for the preservation of Venice and the Committee for World Heritage of Unesco. The International press.

But the Venetians too: the Municipal Council, innumerable associations and groups of all kinds and of every outlook, school children and grown men. In fact the people of Venice.

All of us refuse to accept that Venice is to become an empty stage awaiting its final performance. Will you be with us with Venice?

We believe so.

We ask you to read these pages, to take note of the facts and to form your judgement. We ask you to help us, to arouse the opinion of the authorities of your country, to urge the representatives on the B.I.E; that they should not allow themselves to become accomplices. Or to be able to say that they did not know.

You can do this. Will you do it so that Venice can live?



Photo Mark Smith

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY COMMITTEES FOR VENICE AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

In the face of the massive propaganda operation waged by those who support the candidature of Venice as a location for the World Exhibition in the year 2000, it seems to us indispensable to present a dossier, as complete as possible, setting out the concrete reasons for a categorical rejection of that candidature which we believe constitutes a mortal threat for Venice.

We repeat, these reasons are concrete, not motivated by unsustainable, sentimental lamentations nor by sterile aestheticism. Our opposition to Expo 2000 in Venice is on the contrary inspired by a calm and objective view of what effect an event of the kind would have on the fragile reality of Venice, even if the principal venues were located outside the city in the territory of the Veneto region. And it gives an objective view of the possible future of Venice; a future which cannot and never should be thought of in the context of mass events, foreign to the spirit and nature of the city which cannot and should never be demoted to a mere container for something its peculiar urban structure is unable to stand up to without damage.

Reasons, indeed, taking account of the unique historical and artistic heritage of Venice, which has survived the most serious assaults over the years and therefore deserves the most scrupulous and careful conservation; but reasons which also take account of the good fortune that such heritage should survive in the context of civilised human activity, and not exposed to the stresses of unpredictable assaults.

Our opposition will certainly not cease in the face of the resolutions which have given a favourable reply to the proposed candidature. The stake is important enough to involve the conscience of the whole world, which recognizes in Venice one of the highest achievements of civilized man. And it is in the name of that conscience which we will continue until the last possible moment, until the very eve of the deplorable event, to oppose the implementation of what we consider to be a grievous attack on those values and on that civilization.

THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND COMMITTEE OF UNESCO AND THE PROBLEM OF VENICE

The World Heritage Fund Committee met in Paris at the headquarters of UNESCO from December 11 to 15, 1989. Representatives of ICCROM, ICOMOS and the World Conservation Union attended as consultants. Representatives of the Council of Europe, the International Council of Museums and the International Union of Architects.

The Committee of the World Heritage Fund is made up of 21 members representing 111 States (including the United States of America and Great Britain) who are signatories to the Convention adopted under the aegis of UNESCO in 1972.

Venice and its Lagoon were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987. The Committee expressed its grave concern about the new threats to Venice posed by a universal exhibition, which would attract several hundreds of thousands of visitors in addition to the usual surge of tourists and would risk threatening the integrity of its heritage which is unique in the history, art and civilization of humanity. The World Heritage Committee called upon the Italian authorities to take steps to avoid irreparable damage.

STATEMENT BY CARLO RIPA DI MEANA ON THE SUBJECT OF THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITION 2000 IN VENICE

In June, the International Exhibition Bureau in Paris (B. I. E.) has to make a decision on the location for the Universal Exhibition of the year 2000.

It has to choose between 3 candidates, Hanover in the German Federal Republic, Toronto in Canada and Venice in Italy.

In the light of information available the candidature of Venice offers special interest not only of the city itself but also of other areas and towns in the Veneto region.

The unique character of the urban structure of Venice immediately provoked extremely grave preoccupations everywhere regarding the dangers which such a project might impose on the cultural heritage which this city represents for the whole world.

Also a great many organizations and well-known personalities have voiced their protests against the decisions whose consequences could be fatal for its survival.

It is important to emphasize that the Municipal Council of the city has taken up a position categorically in opposition to the project for a Universal Exhibition in Venice in the year 2000.

Up to now all the calculations which have been established show that this event would have the most disquieting repercussions, especially with regard to the volume of tourism which would affect the city.

The dimensions of these figures are impressive. For example, according to a study made by the University of Venice, if Expo were held in the area between Venice, Verona, Padua and Treviso it would increase the number of visitors to Venice, now running at about 7-8 million a year, to 15 million in the year 2000, with some daily peaks reaching 175.000, almost nine times more than the tolerable level of 20,000 daily visitors. By comparison, these peaks correspond to the level registered on the night of the Pink Floyd event which caused so much argument and damage, requiring the intervention of the Army to clean up afterwards. In any case these forecasts have probably been underestimated considering the influx of tourists coming to Italy for the Holy Year, which also falls in the year 2000, and in the light of the experience gained during the Universal Exhibitions of Brussels in 1958 and Osaka in 1970, where there were record numbers of 700.000 visitors daily.

With a little imagination and some knowledge of the present situation in Venice the impact of such a development on the capacity of the town to absorb such numbers is evident, to take only the example of waste products.

Such figures reach and indeed exceed the limits of physical absorption and the receptive capacity, already stretched to the maximum. Here as elsewhere, the law of increasing profits is the rule and each additional visitor from now on might be counted a cost rather than a benefit for the collective life of Venice.

It is evident that in a situation where the city already has great difficulty in coping with present levels of visitors, the EXPO 2000 project, making a world-wide appeal, will impose new burdens which cannot be assumed without irreversible damage.

As the European Commissioner charged with the protection of the environment, on March 14, I received a letter from Alvise Zorzi, President of the group of 21 organizations representing 13 countries engaged in the campaign for the safeguarding of Venice.

In this letter he asked me to ensure that the directives contained in EEC regulation n.85/337 (impact on the environment) be observed.

Following this approach, I now confirm that the Commission requires that the Italian authorities should scrupulously observe the Community's legislation concerning the environment for all the activities which may result from any possible decision to hold the Universal EXPO 2000 in Venice and the Veneto.

EEC Directive No. 85/337 rules that projects such as the construction of motor-roads, fast lanes and airports have to be examined, while projects such as urban development, roads, tramways, metros both above and underground, leisure ports, hotel complexes, purification plants etc. must also be examined when they are likely to inflict significant changes on the environment because of their nature, dimension or location. It goes without saying that this would certainly be the case for projects directly or indirectly affecting the city of Venice.

Besides, the directive stipulates the calculation of all direct, indirect and secondary effects, accumulative and long term, including those resulting from the influx of a large number of potential visitors. For example, the enlarging of Venice airport or other access routes and the construction of hotel complexes in the neighbourhood of Venice should also be subject to such an evaluation.

The measures proposed to counteract any negative effects must be set out.

It is also important to emphasise that the evaluation of the impact on the environment, as laid down by the directive, does not only imply instituting a research study, but also the whole process of consultation with the authorities responsible for the environment and with the public concerned. This means especially that all the organizations which have already taken up positions have the right to be heard.

In addition, I cannot underestimate the impact which such projects can cause on the other elements of the environment such as the water, air, soil or important physical features, the flora or fauna of the region, as a result of the intensification of the communications network. The Community's policy for the environment is based on a series of fundamental principles of which the most important is prevention. Prevention is better than cure, above all when faced with the threat of irreversible damage.

Conscious of my responsibility I shall personally ensure the thorough application of these directives. In order to do so, I have decided to write to the Italian Government to emphasise the obligations which are incumbent upon them in accordance with Community law. I shall also write to the Bureau International des Expositions to acquaint them of my concern that the designation of a city within the European Community as a site for Expo 2000 may be

made in the absence of the appropriate examination in the light of the impact on the environment.

At the same time, I have entrusted a task force of the Commission to carry out an inspection on the spot to collect all the necessary facts so that the matter can be thoroughly examined. Finally, I appeal to those responsible at all levels to consider seriously the consequences, direct, indirect, in the short and long term, of the decisions which they are called upon to take.



Foto Mark Smith

EXPO 2000 - 14 PREREQUISITES

What basic conditions should underlie the holding of a Universal Exhibition?

The application should be supported by the host city...

Expo has been imposed from outside. The city has never been a candidate. The Mayor and the Municipal Council are opposed to the idea.

It should have the approval of the city's inhabitants...

More than 89 professional, cultural, political, ecological and social organizations, several trade unions (including that of the city police, who say the event would be unmanageable) and the population as a whole are against Expo.

and arouse international interest...

This Expo certainly does, but only to condemn Venicè's candidacy. Some of the most famous writers, scientists, economists, industrialists and cultural figures in the world have expressed their opposition. Many of them have also helped us to compile this booklet. Not one of the many articles which have appeared in the international press has been in favour of holding Expo 2000 in Venice.

A Universal Exhibition should offer attractive prospects for the host city...

The Expo 2000 project echoes those imposed on Venice at the beginning of the century, during the Mussolini regime and again in the 1950s - expansion and economic specialization following a standard, pseudo-modern pattern. Many of these projects were subsequently abandoned before they led to catastrophe (the enclosure of parts of the Lagoon for fish-farming, further expansion of the Marghera industrial complex). Industry and "modernization" have destroyed 30% of the Lagoon since the beginning of this century.

be carefully planned...

The proposals of the promoters have been altered several times already and no feasibility study has so far been published. The only known study - an attempt to predict visitor flow - was carried out by experts of the University of Venice and concluded that if Expo were held in the area of Venice it would have catastrophic consequences for the city.

be economically and socially beneficial to the host community...

The Venetian population already suffers from a predominance of tourist traffic over the normal activities of the city. The consequences include: the high cost of living, housing problems, the replacement of services and facilities useful to a resident population with others more relevant to a tourism monoculture. A decision to hold Expo in Venice would accentuate this tendency and expose the city to the risk of further depopulation.

and leave behind structures that have at least a short-term continuing use.

What would be the use, in the year 2001, of facilities created to cope with between 70,000 and 250,000 visitors a day (as many or more than the resident population of the city) when ways are already being sought to protect Venice from overcrowding at peak tourist seasons? Other projects, like the creation of giant artificial islands, would have disastrous consequences for the already fragile ecological balance of the Lagoon.

A Universal Exhibition has always been held on a single site...

The promoters have now realized that Venice could never withstand the impact of Expo 2000. Instead, they are proposing a multi-centred event spread over a whole region some 300 kilometres wide.

This would only further complicate transport and management problems and do nothing to reduce the flow of visitors to a city that would inevitably be a key attraction.

What foreign visitor to a Venice Expo 2000 would resist the temptation to take in a trip to Venice itself? What would you do?

should be easy to mount...

The whole city is a classified monument and the Lagoon a protected environmental area. Any attempt to create the necessary infrastructure for an Exhibition would encounter endless legal problems.

and be able to use sites of appropriate size.

The Venetian Arsenal, where certain parts of the Exhibition are due to be held, covers an area of 16 hectares and is a listed monument.

The promoters now suggest siting the organizational centre of Expo at Marghera (in mainland Venice) or near Tessera Airport: neither site is more than 5 kilometres from the city.

It should take place at a suitable time...

Expo 2000 will be held in a Holy Year, which will be bringing millions of pilgrims to Italy. The Olympic Games may also be held in Milan that year. The period of the Exhibition - March to June - overlaps considerably with the normal tourist season for Venice.

and be able to count on adequate hotel accommodation.

Venice often runs out of guest accommodation already, even without Expo, and it is out of the question that it can be increased significantly.

There are high hopes that some sort of computerized reservation system will help solve Venice's visitor flow problems. But ultimately, how can people's rights to free movement be denied them in a democratic country? By putting up barbed-wire fencing to stop them disobeying the computer's orders?

It must attract a large number of visitors...

Venice is the only city in the world where, at certain peak moments, one-way streets have had to be introduced for pedestrians. On some days of the year, incoming visitors are so numerous that the causeway linking Venice to the mainland also has to be closed. Television the world over showed pictures of the 200,000 people crammed into the city for the Pink Floyd concert in July 1989: next day, the Army had to be called in to clean up the mess. According to the most conservative estimates Expo would attract even more visitors than this on over a hundred days between March and June... Would Nato have to be called in this time?

and guarantee the safety of those visitors.

Sometimes, the crush of people in the streets and shallow water at low tides mean help and rescue services have difficulty in reaching various parts of Venice within a reasonable time. Most points of access into public squares are less than 2 metres wide.

No stadium in the world, and no entertainment organization either, could possibly operate under such risky security conditions.

FOR VENICE - AGAINST EXPO

The irreparable damage that a Universal International Exhibition would inflict on Venice would be caused by the extreme physical pressure vast numbers of Expo visitors would exert on the delicate structure of the city every day for four to six months, and even more, by the irreversible transformation of a living city into an inert object, "used" only as a bait to attract ever-increasing numbers of fleeting visitors.

Venice today

Though the larger part of the Municipality of Venice has lain on the mainland for some fifty years now, the historic heart of the city remains quite separate, linked to the rest only by the rail and road bridge which crosses the lagoon.



Today, just over 80,000 people live on the island of Venice, a fixed area of about 700 hectares constituting the unique "forma urbis" which still survives thanks to a series of Special Laws and the loving attention of world culture.

Every day these residents have to share the city's limited space, services and facilities with about 27,000 commuting workers (who help to fill the 62,000 jobs available on the island), over 20,000 students travelling in to attend the Universities and secondary schools, approximately 5,000 business visitors (mainly to the government, regional and provincial offices located in Venice) and, most numerous of all, a growing flow of tourists and day-trippers. In 1987, almost 6 million tourists visited Venice (see Table 1).

Table 1

The Island of Venice, 1987.

Tourists and day-trippers

Visitors and presences

	visitors	presences
tourists	1,129,700	2,486,300
day-trippers	4,817,300	4,817,300
Total	5,947,000	7,303,600

Source: University of Venice, *Tourism in Venice towards the year 2000*, Venice, 1989.

In specific terms, there were 156 days in 1987 on which tourists in Venice exceeded 25,000, 22 days when there were over 40,000 and peaks of 60,000 to 100,000 on at least 6 days.

Several times over the last few years, Venice has experienced serious problems on these peak tourism days, with the authorities being forced to stop further access via the bridge across the Lagoon. This temporary closure, however, meant that Venice was cut off from the outside world.

But the pressure of increased tourism, especially of the growing numbers of day-trippers, not only causes sudden access problems and intolerable inconvenience to those who do not "use" Venice at the same unhurried pace as its leisure visitors; the same pressure has also triggered a mechanism whereby tourism-linked activities are gradually replacing other commercial concerns and residential accommodation: groceries become souvenir shops, chemists become jewellery boutiques, local bars are converted into pizzeria or other fast-food restaurants.

Venice is more than the sum of its monuments and its art treasures because it is still a "city" in which a varied and complex community lives and works; it is this distinguishing feature which for some time now has been placed at serious risk. If an excess of visitors could in

time also endanger Venicè's works of art, the phenomenon is already destroying the urban complexity of the city, impoverishing its character and tending to reduce it to an "object" which has no function other than to lure its visitors.

Venice towards the year 2000

The competition between tourist-orientated activities and other kinds of resident productive concerns, in which the former is already beginning to edge out the latter, will probably become fiercer as we approach the next millennium.

A potential scenario is easy to describe.

The resident population, which has fallen by over 50% in the last 40 years (from 175,000 in 1951 to little more than 80,000 now), will probably be reduced still further, with higher income and older age groups predominant; in very small part, the "lost" residents will be replaced by people actually using their second homes in Venice.

The economic base, on the other hand, has good prospects of expansion: the number of jobs may increase, but the consequences will depend on whether growth is concentrated exclusively in tourism-linked activities or whether it includes alternative outlets: existing alternatives (such as public administration, what remains of the docks and a few craft, trade and manufacturing activities) and, more importantly, potential new areas (non-material production activities such as education and training, research and the cultural enhancement of Venicè's historical and artistic heritage), which could restore to Venice a role of similar importance to those now being performed by the main cities of Italy and the rest of Europe.

In fact, however, tourist and tourism-linked activities are growing constantly and can look forward to an increase of some 40% in demand by the year 2000 (see Table 2).

Table 2

The Island of Venice in the year 2000.

Tourists and day-trippers

Visitors and presences

	visitors		presences	
	from	to	from	to
tourists	1,540,000	1,699,000	3,491,000	3,940,000
day-trippers	6,261,000	6,915,000	6,261,000	6,915,000
Total	7,801,000	8,614,000	9,752,000	10,855,000

Source: University of Venice, *Tourism in Venice towards the year 2000*, Venice, 1989.

Today, therefore, Venice faces a crucial decision: whether to exploit the unprecedented potential it has in this post-industrial age to become a centre of non-material production activity - a role that would suit its "form" and delicate nature perfectly and at the same time provide a context for the control and rationalization of the city's tourism - or whether to allow itself to slide inexorably towards a "simplification" of the economic base, towards a touristic monoculture, towards a becoming non-city.

If it is decided in a few months' time that Venice is to become the venue for the International Universal Exhibition of the year 2000, the die would be cast and negative consequences would be inevitable.

The miracle of a historic city which has survived its own political decline and been saved from the dangers of the sea and pollution would come to an end, leaving a lifeless display of historic "objects" to be consumed by hasty visitors.

One need only consider what a Universal Exhibition must be to understand that such consequences could not be avoided.

Venetiaexpo 2000 and the dangers for Venice

Ideally, a Universal Exhibition - under the unifying banner of an attractive theme and in the most favourable part of the year - would occupy a single, large site which is easily accessible from all parts of the world and which itself has an extensive catchment area; the site would accommodate the largest possible number of exhibitors, coming from the largest possible number of countries, in buildings that would be re-usable after the event, and they would attract the largest possible number of visitors.

The problem for Venice lies entirely in the fact that an Exhibition can be successful only if it attracts a vast number of visitors and a vast number of visitors would exert a pressure which is incompatible with the maintenance of the urban functions of the Island of Venice at acceptable levels.

The plan presented to the Bureau International des Expositions is based on the assumption that the event will be the object of 30 million visits in the four months between March and June of the year 2000. The consequent presence of an average of 250,000 visitors a day, with peaks of 500,000, led the promoters themselves to withdraw any suggestion that the exhibition pavilions should be sited on the Island of Venice itself.

The proposals actually submitted to the B.I.E involve exhibition sites being spread out over the Veneto ("the production circuit") with Venice being designated as the venue for a programme of international conferences and other sophisticated events ("the ideas circuit"): the classic central site of the exposition would house only the "area of nations". This latter would, nevertheless, be the core of the event, with an expected 130 countries anxious to

make the best possible impression. The site proposed is an area of 90 hectares in Marghera or along the canal designed to link Venice with Padua, or in any case in Venicè immediate hinterland.

These proposals do certainly have the advantage of ensuring that Venice is not subjected to the pressure of 250,000 visitors every day, but, for one thing, the changes are not enough to prevent the additional tourist flow paralysing ordinary life and business in the city for the duration of the Exhibition, and for another, they would have the paradoxical effect of making it even more difficult to control the flow of day-visitors to Venice.

Decentralize Expo: concentrate visits to Venice

Is it conceivable that a visitor to the Universal Exhibition of Venice, having travelled from the Americas or Eastern Europe or some other part of the world (or even from different parts of Italy), will be content just to visit the “area of nations” at Marghera and the “production circuit” of Padua, Vicenza, Verona, etc. and ignore the opportunity to visit the historic city of Venice? What point could there be in publicizing a Universal Exhibition of Venice which systematically proposed to keep visitors to the exhibition out of Venice? Is it thinkable that tour operators organizing packages focussed on the Exhibition will not also remind potential clients of the attractions of Venice (not to mention the operators bringing millions of pilgrims to Rome for the Holy Year, also due for 2000, and perhaps sports enthusiasts to Milan for the Olympic Games the same year)?

The answer is quite obviously “No”.

A decidedly cautious estimate suggests that even if the Universal Exhibition were held entirely outside and far from the city, it would in any case generate at least 4 million additional visitors to Venice between March and June 2000.

The number of days on which normal life in Venice becomes impossible would show an exponential increase if a Universal Exhibition were to be held in the region. Ordinary patterns of existence would be disrupted for four months. The city has difficulty in coping with “normal interruptions” lasting just a few hours or, at most, a day (on Easter weekend, the Sunday of the Regata Storica, the Saturday of the Redentore celebrations and occasional other Sundays in Spring); it would not survive such treatment for four months. No one can live for more than a few minutes if prevented from breathing.

The consequences are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

Visitors to the Island of Venice

Days on which presences exceed scheduled thresholds

Year	over 25,000	over 40,000	over 60,000
1987 (1)	156	22	6
2000 (2)	216	110	16
2000 Expo (3)	216	162	96 (4)

(1) calculated on the basis of visits to the Palazzo Ducale, plus a further 6 days registering over 60,000 presences (Regata Storica, 1st May, 2 days during Carnival and 2 Spring weekend days);

(2) forecasts (averages of the highest and lowest estimates) based on present trends;

(3) Expo sited outside Venice itself, between March and June; with Expo visitors undertaking excursions to Venice added to (2) above;

(4) including 14 days on which presences as a direct result of a "Veneto" Expo would exceed 100,000.

Source: our projections of data contained in *Tourism in Venice towards the year 2000*, University of Venice, 1989.

Can the flow of Expo - generated visitors be controlled?

Is it not inevitable that sooner or later Venice will have to adopt some way of controlling tourism, presumably through a computerized reservation system? Could Expo not, therefore, be an ideal opportunity to devise and implement such a system?

The promoters of Venetiaexpo 2000 answer both questions in the affirmative, but it seems significant that they have so far produced not a single concrete suggestion as to how such a system would work; significant too that they asserted the "feasibility" of their Expo project despite the fact that the report produced *by their own consultants* stated:

"... a priority problem to be addressed is that of the impact (of the flow of visitors) on the fragile urban texture of Venice. Though somewhat diminished by the changes introduced into the plans actually submitted, the problem remains so serious that a sine qua non for the holding of Expo in the Veneto would be the creation of an effective system for the containment of tourist flow to Venice; the design of such a system, if not impossible, seems an extremely complex undertaking." (Regione del Veneto, G.T.O., Final Report, 1989, p. 50)

Venice will indeed have to adopt a tourism control system, but moves should be made now, not put off until the end of the century. The system must respect guaranteed constitutional rights and must also make Venice easily accessible to everyone except day-visitors.

The right of free movement, and therefore of access to Venice, may be “compressed” but not eliminated altogether: the visitor wishing to see Venice on a particular day because he has arranged and booked the visit in advance may perhaps be told he must come the following day, but not that he cannot come at all. The potential visitor to Venetiaexpo 2000 cannot be told that he'll have to wait until the next Expo to visit Venice.

But even if it were decided to remove the right of Expo visitors to travel into Venice the ordinance would be technically difficult to enforce. It will certainly be possible to regulate entrance to the “area of nations” and to sites on the “production circuit” and the “ideas circuit”; ticket sales for the events and exhibitions of Venetiaexpo can be subjected to daily limits and spread over all four months of its duration. But how would it be possible to limit the movements of the Expo visitor once he has left the ticket-controlled sites and become a citizen with constitutionally guaranteed rights of movement and therefore of access to Venice?

In brief, Venice itself cannot be the venue for Expo because it cannot physically accommodate 500,000 visitors in a single day; and it cannot control the flow of visitors generated by a decentralized Expo because the city itself is not itself a circumscribable exhibition site. Whichever way one looks at it, Venice and Expo are irreconcilable.

The good of Venice can only be served by dissociating the city entirely from such an event. One can only hope that the world in general understands this and manages to persuade the few who would be prepared, in its name, to sacrifice one of the great masterpieces of humanity.



Photo Mark Smith

LIST OF VENETIAN ASSOCIATIONS AGAINST EXPO

December 1989

List of the Venetian civic, professional, cultural, social and political Associations who have expressed their opposition to EXPO 2000:

P.C.I Comitato Cittadino di Venezia - Coordinamento Verdi Comunale - D.P. Comitato Comunale - Associazione Radicale per l'informazione - Verdi Arcobaleno - F.G.C.I. Provinciale - Lega Ambiente - Circoli di Venezia e Provincia - Italia Nostra - Arci Provinciale - Comitato inquilini per il diritto alla casa - Unione Inquilini - Urbanistica Democratica - Comitato Venezia a misura d'Uomo - L.I.P.U. - L.A.V. - Società Filologica Veneta - Università Verde - Smog e Dintorni - Natura Viva - Movimento Consumatori - Comitato Certosa - Associazione Universitaria «L'Isola che c'è» - Gruppo Futura VE. - RED. TERA E AQUA - Comitato Santa Marta - Pax Cristhi - Comitato «una città» - sinistra indipendente - Gruppo di Fiesole Sez. Veneta - Circolo «Baratto» - Arci Venezia - Coord. Anziani Autogestiti VE - Red. Agenzia Informativa «Coorlach» - Circolo Culturale «Olaf Palme» - Gruppo Lavoratori Manifattura Tabacchi Venezia - Club «L'Altritalia» - Circolo Culturale «OGA Magoga» - Medicina Democratica - L.O.C. Venezia - Centro «Arcobaleno» Marghera - Comitato Difesa Salute Ambiente Carpenedo Bissuola - Circolo «Erba Alta» Marghera - Redazione «Iris» Venezia - Centro «Iride» Marghera - Redazione «Rosso Veneziano» - Cine Club Marghera - Comitato per il Verde Marghera - Gilda Insegnamenti Venezia - C.D.F. Gruppo Telemit Marghera - Ass. Polisportiva ricreativa S. Marta - Arcy Gay - Comitato Sacca S. Girolamo - Istituto Gramsci «Ghandiani» - ACTV - COBAS SCUOLA - Arci Vela - Circolo «Casanova» - Coordinamento Obiettori Spese Militari VE. - Centro biodinamico A.R.U. VE. - Ass. Vegetariana Italiana - Consiglio Delegati Personale Viaggiante FF.SS - Gruppo Gondolieri per Venezia.

EXTRACTS FROM THE APPEAL AGAINST EXPO BY 63 VENETIAN ASSOCIATIONS

... All the studies so far carried out (by COSES, the University of Ca' Foscari, etc.) on tourist flow predictions have highlighted the patent unsuitability of Venice as a venue for the Universal Exhibition.

... Even if the EXPO were spread amongst several venues all over the Veneto, as has been suggested as an alternative arrangement, the estimated daily average number of visitors (between forty and eighty thousand according to the most cautious calculation) would place intolerable pressure on the fragile town-planning and socio-economic fabric of Venice.

... This opposition arises from an awareness that if EXPO were to go ahead there would be an acceleration in the present process of social, cultural, economic and environmental decay of Venice, with increased speculation in real estate and the replacement of services to residents with more remunerative services catering for tourists, with the consequent expulsion of the economically more vulnerable classes and the extinction of traditional economic activities and Venetian traditions themselves.

Resolution passed by Unions representing the City Police.

... Let it be quite clear to everybody: neither the city as a whole, nor the Council employees whose job it would be to ensure the successful holding of the event - in our case as Municipal Police - are in any sense adequately equipped to cope with such a burden, neither now nor in the foreseeable future.

Declaration by the staff of the Marciana Library

... An event of this kind appears to be utterly incompatible with the characteristics of the city, whose delicate balance would inevitably be upset by the enormous influx of visitors. The facilities needed would inevitably lead to an irreversible change in the physiognomy of Venice.

Declaration by the staff of the Superintendency for Architecture and the Environment of Venice.

... As has been shown by the recent disastrous event of the Pink Floyd, the peculiar and most delicate structure which is Venice is quite unable to absorb, in its urban spaces and

lagoon, those enormous tourist influxes which Expo would engender, even in the most dispersed locations.

Expo in our opinion represents the most insane and dangerous example of a distorted use of the city (as the Disneyland megaprojects envisaged show) which would heavily increase the disruption already in process both of its traditional economic activities (to the sole advantage of a destructive touristic monoculture), and of its urban fabric (by reason of the speculation in housing and the resulting increase in the exodus of the inhabitants), as well as of its very physical being.

Resolution passed by the teaching staff of the Department of Town Planning of the University Institute of Architecture, Venice.

... It is our opinion that for EXPO to be held in Venice is incompatible with the aspirations and needs of the city's inhabitants, with the real interests of the economy of the Veneto and with the prospects of Venice relaunching itself as capital of the Veneto.

This conviction derives not only from our scientific work but also from our daily experience and is based both on awareness of the obvious inadequacy of the city's facilities and careful appraisal of the foreseeable effects on Venice if the necessary facilities are in fact provided.



Photo Mark Smith

COMMENTS ON EXPO



Photo Mark Smith

LEONARDO BENEVOLO

The Universal Exhibition of 2000 is only the latest and most menacing in a succession of dangerous events which the city has had to confront. It is not only Expo which should be criticized, but also the process of which it is the outcome: every so-called "cultural" mass event which does not at the same time contribute towards the recovery of the basic conditions of daily life and fails to build a relationship between inhabitants and visitors must be resisted: true culture means the re-establishment of such relationships.

Ranged against this requirement are the national and international recreational circuits. The tourist agencies sell an appalling caricature of the true image of Venice and concentrate the flow of tourists on a few famous sites, downgraded to the common place. The hotels, restaurants, pizzerias, luxury shops and stores carve up the tourists market. The "cultural" institutions and public administrations assume responsibility for maintaining the elevated influx which is growing anyway in keeping with international trends, maintaining a constant level throughout the year on various pretexts, from traditional holidays to sophisticated conferences. Private and public operators in the sector divide the amenities to work a cycle whose priorities make it impossible to make an efficient programme fitting in with the requirements of the city and its environment. Reference to the historic and artistic values of Venice are only incidental, manipulated for publicity, as parasitical as are the many other activities which exploit and erode the city and its surroundings by siting every kind of obstruction, from petrochemical industries to waste disposal.

The plans proposed for Expo 2000 are a blatant confirmation of this ruinous logic.

The "organizational centre" for Expo is to be the Magnet located beside Tessera airport; a hill one kilometre across, 30 metres high and 120 metres deep, where it is reckoned there will be some 200,000 square metres of pavilion space and a large reception area for 15,000 spectators, situated in a central crater 480 metres across. Around the Magnet a vast area of open country would be transformed into a strip of artificial lagoon which would filter the inland waters as well as acting as a fish farm surrounded by parking lots, hotels, sports and leisure facilities.

According to the planners, the Magnet is intended to absorb the first wave of the millions of visitors (70,000 at a time entering the crater), who would then filter through to various locations in the lagoon and its hinterland. It is difficult to imagine what this immense structure would be used for once Expo has closed down: an isolated object standing on the edge of the lagoon, too big and too far away to take the place of existing points of access, it would remain, like the gigantic industrial complexes of Marghera, a relic for occasional use, totally out of keeping with the past history of this renowned landscape.

From the Magnet visitors are supposed to spread out into the Three Veneto area - Trieste, Dolomites, Padua and the Euganean hills, Vicenza and Verona where various exhibition itineraries and theme shows are proposed. But the committed goal will be the lagoon of Venice where it is proposed to site

- 1) some "entertainments" as yet unidentified -set up among the islands, on the mud-flats and along the canals- which come under the heading "theatre of water";
- 2) a main exhibition area at the eastern end of the city, including the Arsenal and the San Pietro basin.

In the Arsenal of the Venetian Republic, once restored, is to be set up an Arsenal museum, a museum of Innovations, a centre for Contemporary Art, a centre for Restoration, with adjacent workshops and exhibition areas, a landing place for lagoon transport and pleasure boats. All these ideas - improvised without any proper scientific preparation - are supposed to be reversible and not to interfere in any significant way with the historic buildings (there is only an absurd footbridge across the big basin, perhaps also intended to be temporary). But the correct restoration of this historic zone will be at the price of filling in by the peninsula an area to be renamed "Piazzale dei Bacini" where it is proposed to place a tourist port, houses, commercial activities, hotels, various sport facilities and another temporary exhibition centre, to be transformed into an advanced experimental and research centre.

Even here the functional post-Expo aspect remains unclear, but it is quite certain, unfortunately, what will be involved on the spot. The continuing disastrous tendency to build on open spaces - such as the ex-Saffa, Giudecca etc. - in a city where there are innumerable old buildings needing restoration, while open areas are rare and should be kept to provide breeding space for the city and the parks so far lacking.

The authors of the project are fully aware of the objections to their proposals, and respond with unresearched judgements as to Venice's future needs, even going so far as to present Expo 2000 as a means to the end of rehabilitating and "re-establishing" the city in preparation for the next millennium: they do not, of course, apply serious logic to analysing what Venice really does need and so fail to see that Expo would provide none of the answers and a whole new set of problems.

The political figures behind the proposals take no great pains to conceal their real objective, which is to get their hands on the hundreds of billions of Lire which would be earmarked for the preparation of such an event over the next ten years. This is but the latest in a series of alien speculations - the "invasions" that Venice never endured in the thousand-year history of the Republic and which have been inflicted with increasing frequency ever since -; the city may survive, as it has done before, or this may be the time it succumbs, once and for all.

JOSIF BRODSKIJ

from "Fondamenta degli Incurabili", 1989

pag. 69-70

To be sure, everybody has designs on her, on this city. Politicians and big businesses especially, for nothing has a greater future than money. It is so much so that money feels synonymous with the future and tries to order it. There are a great many outpourings about revitalizing the city, turning the entire province of Veneto into a gateway to Central Europe, boosting the region's industry, expanding the harbor complex at Marghera, increasing the oil-tanker traffic in the Lagune and deepening the Lagune for the same purposes, converting the Venetian Arsenale, immortalized by Dante, into a local equivalent of the Beaubourg for storing the most recently created international garbage, housing an Expo there in the year 2000, etc. All this drivel normally gushes out of the same mouth, and often on the same breath, that blabbers about ecology, protection, restoration, cultural patrimony and what not. The goal of all that is one: rape. No rapist, though, wants to regard himself as such, let alone get caught. Hence the mixture of objectives and metaphors, high rhetoric and lyrical fervor swelling the barrel chests of parliamentary deputies and commendatori alike.

JOHN JULIUS NORWICH

In November 1966 Venice suffered the worst floods in all her history: suddenly, the world woke up to the realisation that she was a desperately sick city. Since then, however, thanks to the magnificent effort made by successive Italian governments through the Special Law of 1973 - aided, I am happy to say, by some thirty private funds from all over the western world working under the aegis of UNESCO - the situation has been transformed. Like all cities, Venice still faces serious problems; but the three great dangers that a quarter of a century ago threatened her very existence - flooding, subsidence and atmospheric pollution - are all in retreat, and her future as the world's most beautiful city once again seems assured.

Or did, until a few months ago. We are now confronted with a project for a gigantic international exhibition a short distance away on the mainland, which will bring up to several hundred thousand visitors a day to Venice. The vast majority of these visitors will stay only a few hours and spend scarcely any money; but the damage that they will do will be incalculable. Venice is already suffering appalling harm from tourist hordes; more than once already the authorities have had to close the causeway, while the havoc wrought last summer by the 200,000 who flocked to hear Pink Floyd can never be forgotten by those who saw it. Can it really be that responsible people should now - for reasons of short-term gain - propose a scheme whose effects will be infinitely more nightmarish than anything that the city has so far experienced? That all the hard work, all the billions of lire will have been in vain?

If this scheme is adopted, Venice as we know her will die. And we, who allowed it, will have killed her.

WOLFGANG WOLTERS

Expo 2000 must not take place in Venice. The vast and preposterous infrastructures proposed for the area near Tessera Airport would mar land which is still relatively unspoiled and merits conservation. The promoters are deliberately setting out to stimulate a huge increase in mass tourism, which already, at peak periods, damages the life and monuments of the city. The infrastructures proposed for the Arsenal would deprive Venetians of an area that they should be able to use for leisure and craft-based activities. Those envisaged by the promoters include many (such as Museums and research laboratories) which already function elsewhere in Venice. The plans would also put the housing market under heavy pressure all over Venice, but especially in the district of Castello, and would encourage "heavy" renovation and redevelopment projects, with disastrous consequences for the urban fabric and individual buildings and features of historical importance.

If Expo 2000 is foisted on Venice it will mean sacrificing the city and its Lagoon to the interests of mass tourism and of those who plan to create infrastructures which are incompatible with the city and the efforts that have so far been made to save it.

The nightmare monster of Expo 2000 must remain the dream of those who conceived it.

ALVISE ZORZI

Just over a century ago, in 1886, the municipal administration of Venice published plans for the clearance and "rehabilitation" of large parts of the city. The forty operations involved what amounted to the butchering of Venice, mainly in the interests of carving six - or seven - metre - wide thoroughfares into all parts of the city and, to a lesser extent, demolishing what were held to be unsafe buildings and redeveloping the sites as housing estates.

The plans were supported by much impressive-sounding reasoning, which promised improved traffic and air flow around the city and better housing for its inhabitants. But, as the great historian Pompeo Molmenti so incisively pointed out in an article which resulted in the majority of the forty projects being withdrawn, bringing the city up to date and fulfilling the aspirations of its citizens need not involve savagely disfiguring an urban fabric that had evolved over the centuries nor destroying the innumerable beautiful things that the "clearance" and "rehabilitation" operations would have swept away. Molmenti then added (and a century later his words remain disconcertingly relevant): "The movement of people and goods, hygiene and decency are all causes which demand our attention, but when it is claimed that Venice will never again achieve greatness until motor vehicles run in her streets, what we are hearing is foolish blasphemy".

A hundred years on, the same battle is being fought between those who want and those who do not want Expo 2000 to be sited in Venice, with the latter - fearing the incalculable damage that would be wrought by the inevitable flood of visitors and alarmed too at the equally inevitable "developments" and "improvements" that would be claimed as essential to the success of a Universal Exhibition in Venice or the Veneto - being branded and berated as enemies of Venice. And of progress, and of the future of the city, which the "conservationists" would condemn to decay, totally out of touch with the modern world, a sterile museum-piece whose only lifeline would be mass-tourism.

Such were the arguments raised by many against Molmenti's timely intervention. "Venice would become worse than a mummy or a stinking corpse if it were to decide to cut itself off from modern life", wrote one newspaper among many. Yet earlier scars which the municipal administration had inflicted on the urban fabric in the name of modernization - the uncompromisingly straight lines of Via XXII Marzo or Via Vittorio Emanuele, the so-called "strada nuova" - had contributed nothing at all to any revival of the city's economy or its social life, both of them clearly untouched by these and many of the other changes introduced, in good faith, to breathe new life into the city and bring it back into touch with the times.

And earlier still, in the fortunately short period of Napoleon's Regno Italico (1806-1814), the extensive demolition and rebuilding work (not without admirers even today, so unassailable

is the myth of the great Corsican) did nothing to allay the effects of appalling economic crisis that laid Venice low for decades and caused irreparable damage not only to her artistic and historical heritage but also to the city's cultural and human identity. Some of these operations were undoubtedly prompted by excellent intentions - the Public Gardens in Castello, for example, which were created at the cost of a good number of fine old churches, or the cemetery of San Michele in Isola, which entailed the demolition only of the Church of San Cristoforo della Pace. But, it must be repeated, neither these "redevelopments" nor the suppression of dozens of churches and scuole and the consequent demolition of at least seventy important buildings and the removal of at least twenty-five thousand works of art in any way alleviated, still less solved, the many grave problems facing Venice. Indeed, many of these problems are still with the city, impervious to the efforts of successive national and local governments. Now, we are told, Expo 2000 will finally provide the solutions that neither Napoleon, nor Metternich, nor a united Italy were able to come up with. One does not need to have accumulated a vast experience of life to realize that the answers to such deeply rooted problems do not lie with the mounting of a spectacular, disruptive, clamorous event such as a Universal Exhibition. And that new, inevitably far-reaching operations performed on the body of Venice and its surrounding environment could not possibly produce benefits worth making even the smallest sacrifice for. Venice has already been made to pay too high a price by those determined at all costs to demand "progress" and "look to the future". Venice must live now, in all its beauty and harmony, and its future must be planned without relinquishing these two essential features of its true nature.

APPEAL
to the Commission of Enquiry
of the Bureau International des Expositions

WE SAY NO
TO EXPO IN VENICE

Venice is the precious inheritance of all humanity. But Venice is precious because it is a miracle of equilibrium: equilibrium between nature and the work of man, between aesthetic values and daily life, between conservation and transformation, between centuries-old buildings and the people who live in them today.

This equilibrium could be shattered, irreversibly, by the effect of the implementation of a Universal Exhibition which, given the name of Venice, some wish to be held in the area of this delicate and precious city.

Among the maladies from which Venice suffers today, among the risks which threaten its future, is that stemming from a distorted use of the city, of its utilization as a shop-window or stage for events which attract thousands of visitors.

Venice cannot take huge influxes and vast dimensions. Every day Venice becomes a little more distorted if its daily tenor and that of its inhabitants, lively and complex as they are, is increasingly displaced by events linked exclusively to tourism.

Why deliberately add to the maladies from which Venice already suffers, and for which it is already difficult enough to find a remedy? Why bring in 200 or 300 thousand visitors daily for four months: in a city already suffocated by the average number of 30,000 per day in the summer months? Why protract for four months the drama of Pink Floyd Saturday?

Why Expo 2000 in Venice? We the undersigned, friends and citizens of Venice united in the will to defend a unique city, know that in the face of misconceived proposals one must know how to say no. To Expo in Venice we say NO.

The following are among those who have signed:

Claudio Abbado conductor Wien - Berlin
Friederich Achleitner - Berlin
James S. Ackerman - professor Fine Arts - Cambridge Mass.
Valerio Adami - painter - Paris
Marella Agnelli - Torino
Luis F. Alonso - architect - Barcelona
Irina Antonova - director Puskin Museum - Moscow
Alberto Anzi - FAI - Milan
Alberto Arbasino - writer - Rome
Ronald Arculus - former Ambassador to Italy - London
Giulio Carlo Argan art historian - Rome
Rosellina Archinto - publisher - Milan
Giorgio Armani - fashion designer - Milan
Riccardo Aroca - architect - Barcelona
Guido Artom - former chairman - Confindustriali Milan
Margherita Asso - superintendent - Venice
Rosario Assunto - professor - Rome
Giovanni Astengo - town planner - Venice
Maurice Aymard - historian - Paris
Christopher Audland - U.K. Rep. Europa Nostra - London
Gae Aulenti - architect - Milan
Umberto Baldini - former Superintendent - Florence
Hilary Barratt Brown - The World Monuments Fund - New York
Alfonso B. Barros - architect - Lisbon
Giorgio Bassani - writer - Rome
Aldo Bassetti - industrialist - Milan
Elena Bassi - architectural historian - Venice
Germain Bazin - conservator Louvre Museum - Paris
Julian Beinart - architect - Cambridge Mass.
Richard Bender - architect - Berkeley
Leonardo Benevolo - architect - Brescia
Morino Berengo - historian - Venice
Isaiah Berlin - philosopher - Oxford
Jean Bernard - French Academy - Paris
Carlo Bertelli - art historian - Milan
Bernardo Bertolucci - film director - Rome
Alessandro Bettagno - art historian - Venice
Laura Biagiotti - stylist - Rome
Irene Bignardi - journalist - Rome

Pietro Bigongiari - professor - Florence
 Oriol Bohigas - town planning architect - Barcelona
 Edouard Bonnefous - Institute Cancelor - Paris
 Horst Bredekamp - art historian - Hamburg
 Lord Bridges - former Ambassador to Italy - London
 Giuliano Briganti - art historian - Rome
 Josif Brodskij - Nobel Prize winner Literature - New York
 Peter Brook - theatre director - London
 Sergio Bruno - economist - Rome
 Arnaldo Bruschi - art historian - Rome
 Bonnie Burnham - director World Monuments Fund - New York
 Howard Burns - architect - Cambridge Mass.
 Manuel Burrus - France-Italie Ass. - Paris
 Piero Buscaroli - musicologist - Bologna
 Massimo Cacciari - philosopher - Venice
 Roberto Calasso - writer publisher - Milan
 Vittoria Calzolari Ghio - architect - Rome
 Alan Campbell - chairman British Italian Society - London
 Sherban Cantacuzino - secretary Royal Fine Art Commission and president ICOMOS UK -
 London
 Carlo Caracciolo - publisher - Rome
 Maria Carrilho - architect - Lisbon
 Lord Carrington - chairman Christiès - London
 J. Carter Brown - director National Gallery of Art - Washington D.C.
 Antonio Casellati - Mayor of Venice - Venice
 Paola Ceccarelli - director Institute of Architecture - Venice
 Suso Cecchi d'Amico - theatre designer - Rome
 Antonio Cederna - journalist - Rome
 Camilla Cederna - writer - Rome
 Gianni Cerami - writer - Naples
 Pierluigi Cervellati - architect - Bologna
 Renato Cevese - director Centre Palladian Studies - Vicenza
 André Chastel - art historian - Paris
 Noelle Chatelet - director France Institute - Florence
 Enrico Chiari - FAI - Venice
 Françoise Choay - town planner - Paris
 Anna Maria Cicogna - Italian C.ttee for Venice - Venice
 Franco Cingano - administrator Medio Banca - Milan
 Giorgio Ciucci - History of architecture - Venice
 Ashley Clarke - president Venice In Peril Fund - London
 Francesco Clemente - painter - Rome

Joseph Connors - director American Academy - Rome
Ulrich Conrads - historian - Berlin
Federico Correa - architect - Barcelona
Commandant J. Cousteau - Académie française - Paris
Benedetta Craveri - writer - Rome
Giulia Maria Crespi - FAI - Milan
Elena Croce - Italia Nostra - Naples
Mario G. Cusmano - architect - Florence
Masolino D'Amico - professor - Rome
Francesco Dal Co - architect - Venice
Werner Dechslil - Art critic - Zurich
Roger de Grey - president Royal Academy - London
Vezio De Lucia - urban architect - Rome
Daniele Del Giudice - writer - Milan
Philippe de Montebello - director Metropolitan Museum - New York
Burin de Rozières - former Ambass. to Italy - Paris
Cesare de Seta - architectural historian - Naples
Alla Dimidova - actress - Moscow
Gianfranco Dioguardi - engineer - Bari
Michel Droit - Académie française - Paris
Maurice Druon - Académie française - Paris
Georges Duby - historian - Collège de France, Académie française - Paris
Jean Dutour - Académie française - Paris
Umberto Eco - writer - Milan
Giulio Einaudi - publisher - Turin
Josè Maria Ezequínaga - architect - Barcelona
Edmonde Fabes - historian - Paris
Ester Fano - sociologist - Rome
Jane Fawcett - ICOMOS - London
Mario Fazio - journalist Italia Nostra - Rome
Silvia Ferino - director Kunst Istor. Museum - Wien
Rosa Filippini - deputy - Rome
Pascal Flamand - historian - Paris
Vittorio Foa - senator - Rome
Marino Folin - architect - Venice
Antonio Fonseca Ferreira - architect - Lisbon
Kurt Forster - director Getty Center Santa Monica - California
Teresa Foscari-Foscolo - Italia Nostra - Venice
Sydney Freedberg - National Gallery - Washington D.C.
Conrad L. Frommel - director Herziana Library - Rome
Jesus Gago - architect - Barcelona

Giuseppe Galasso - architect - Barcelona
Luis F. Galiano - architect - Barcelona
Françoise Gallimard - publisher - Paris
Ignazio Gardella - architect - Milan
Eugenio Garin - philosopher - Florence
Livio Garzanti - publisher - Milan
Severino Gazzelloni - musician - Rome
Carlo Ginzburg - historian - Bologna
Natalia Ginzburg - writer - Rome
Paul Girolami - chairman Glaxo - London
Vittorio Giorgini - Columbia University - New York
Decio Gioseffi - art historian - Padua
Ernst Gombrich - art historian - London
Laura Gonzales - publisher - Rome
Nicholas Goodison - chairman National Art Collections Fund - London
Lord Gowrie - chairman Sotheby's - London
The Duke of Grafton - president Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings
Baron Grandmaison - president Historic Houses Ass. - Paris
Mina Gregori - art historian - Florence
Vittorio Gregotti - architect - Milan
Ronald Grierson - banker - London
Nikolaj Gubenko - minister of Culture - URSS
Randolph H. Guthrie - chairman Save Venice - New York
John Hale - historian - London
Francis Haskell - art historian - London
Yves Hersaut - professor Ecole Hautes Etudes - Paris
Conrad Hoberhuber - director Albertiner Museum - Wien
Eric Hobsbawm - economist College London University - London
Howard Hodgkin - painter - London
René Huyghe - Académie française - Paris
John Kendrew - Nobel Prize Biology 1962 - U.K.
Antonio Jannello - secretary Italia Nostra - Naples
Martin Jacomb - banker - London
Fleur Jaeggy - writer - Milan
Guido Jesurum - economist - Rome
Enrico Job - scene designer - Rome
Philip Johnson - architect - New York
Walter Kaiser - director "I Tatti" - Florence
Richard Krautheimer - Herziana Library - Rome
Gina Lagorio - writer - Milan
Gianni Lanzinger - deputy - Bolzano

Adriano La Regina - superintendent - Rome
Denys Lasdun - architect - London
Vito Laterza - publisher - Naples
Luisa Laureati - art historian - Rome
Peter Lauritzen - writer - Venice
Jacques Le Goff - historian - Paris
Tunney Lee - director Dpt. Urb. St.y Plann - MIT - Cambridge Ma.
Eduardo Leira - architect - Barcelona
Pierre Lemoine - conservator Versailles - Paris
Douglas Lewis - National Gallery - Washington D.C.
Dimitri Ligacev - chairman Cultural Fund - Moscow
Francisco Lopez-Groth - architect - Barcelona
Neil Mac Gregor - National Gallery - London
Giovanni Macchia - professor - Rome
Denis Mack Smith - historian - London
Tomas Maldonado - architect - Milan
Eduardo Mangada - architect - Madrid
Mario Manieri Elia - architectural historian - Rome
Fernando Marias - historian - Madrid
Paolo Marzotto - industrialist - Vicenza
Pietro Marzotto - industrialist - Vicenza
Gianni Mattioli - deputy - Rome
Alfonso Milà - architect - Barcelona
Guy Millard - former Amb. to Italy - London
Antonio Miranda - Madrid
Giuseppe Montalenti - president Accademia Lincei - Rome
Giovanna Nepi Scirè - superintendent - Venice
Sy Newhouse - publisher - New York
Victoria Newhouse - publisher - New York
Luisa Nicholson Vertova - art historian - Rome
Luigi Nono - musician - Venice
John Julius Norwich - historian, writer - London
Konrad Oberhuber - director Albertina - Wien
Werner Oechslin - art historian - Zurich
Richard Oldenburg - MOMA director - New York
Franca Ongaro Basaglia - senator - Venice
Eric Orsenna - Prix Goncourt - Paris
Antonio Paolucci - superintendent for Monuments Florence - Pistoia
Giuseppe Patroni Griffi - Film director - Rome
Desideria Pasolini Dall'Onda - Italia Nostra - Paris
Nicolò Pasolini Dall'Onda - president Dimore Storiche - Rome

Marilyn Perry - director Samuel Kress Foundation - USA
Terisio Pignatti - art historian - Venice
Edmund Pillsbury - director Museum Fort Worth Texas
Leopoldo Pirelli - industrialist - Milan
Pierluigi Pizzi - theatre director - Venice
Francisco Pol - architect - Barcelona
Arnaldo Pomodoro - sculptor - Milan
Gillo Pontecorvo - film director - Rome
John Pope-Hennessy - Met Museum Conservator - New York
William Porter - director Dpt. Architt. MIT - Cambridge Mass.
Christian Prevost-Marcilhacy - Inspector General Historic Monuments - Paris
Francois Puaux - ambassador - Paris
Emilio Pucci - stylist - Florence
Lionello Puppi - art historian - Padua
Fabrizia Ramondino - writer - Naples
Vieri Razzini - journalist - Rome
Andreas Reidmester - director Museum - West Berlin
Jacques Revel - writer - Paris
Maurice Rheims - Académie Française - Paris
Jacques Rigaud - president ORTL - Paris
Fernando Rigon - director Museum - Vicenza
Giandomenico Romanelli - director Civic Museums - Venice
Sergio Romano - historian, former ambassador - Rome
Richard Rogers - architect - London
David Rosand - art historian - New York
Francesco Rosi - film director - Rome
Guido Rossi - jurist senator - Milan
Hugh Rossi - chairman Anglo-Italian Parliamentary Group, House of Commons - London
Lord Rothschild - banker - London
Nicolai Rubinstein - Emeritus Prof. Westfield College - London
John Russel - art historian - New York
Edoardo Salzano - architect - Venice
Bengt Samuelsson - Nobel Prize Chemistry 1982, Pres. Karolinska Inst. - Stockholm
Giuseppe Santomaso - painter - Venice
Nicole Saye - Musée d'Orsay - Paris
Guy Schöller - publisher - Paris
Ghislaine Schöller - writer - Paris
Jurgen Schulz - art historian - New York
Massimo Scolari - architect - Venice
Camillo Semenzato - art historian - Padua
Evelyn Shuckburgh - former Ambassador to Rome - London

Muriel Spark - writer - Siena
Peter H. Stern - The World Monuments Fund - New York
John Smith - president Landmark Trust - London
Anna Somers Cocks - editor Apollo - London
James Sterling - architect - London
Lord St John of Fawsley - former Minister for Fine Arts - London
Hans Stimman - architect - Lübeck
Giorgio Strehler - theatrical producer - Milan
Paolo Sylos Labini - economist - Rome
Manfredo Tafuri - architectural historian - Venice
Philip Tauffe - painter - Naples
Christof Toenes - historian - Berlin
Derek Thomas - former Ambassador to Italy - London
Roberto Tonini - trades unionist - Rome
Gianni Toniolo - economist historian - Venice
Christian Topalov - sociologist - Paris
Lord Thorneycroft - former Chancellor of the Exchequer - London
Cy Twombly - painter - Rome
Oswald Mathias Ungers - architect - Cologne
Francesco Valcanover - art historian - Venice
Lucette Valensi - historian - Paris
Gino Valle - architect - Venice
John Vane - Nobel Prize Chemistry 1982, director William Harvey Research Inst. - London
Ornella Vanoni - singer - Milan
Gianni Vattimo - philosopher - Turin
Salvatore Veca - philosopher - Milan
Emilio Vedova - painter - Venice
Gore Vidal - writer - Rome
Bruno Visentini - senator, chairman Fondazione Cini - Rome
Andrej Voznesienskij - poet - Moscow
Grisha von Rezzori - writer - New York
Klaus Wagenbach - publisher - West Berlin
John Walsh - The J.P. Getty Museum - Los Angeles
Martin Warnke - art historian - Hamburg
Lina Wertmuller - film director - Rome
Matthias Winner - Herziana Library - Rome
Etienne Wolf - Académie Française - Paris
Wolfgang Wolters - art historian - Berlin
Bernardo Yncenga - architect - Madrid
Guglielmo Zambrini - engineer - Milan
Daniel Zarza - architect - Madrid

Bruno Zevi - architectural historian - Rome

Alvise Zorzi - writer, president of international Private Committees - Rome

Mimì Zorzi - writer - Rome

Lord Zuckerman - biologist - London



Photo Mark Smith

THE PRESS

Panorama

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ANDREA PATTARO VISIOM

VENEZIA/IL GOTHA MONDIALE CONTRO L'EXPO

Giù la testa, Attila

Marella Agnelli e i Newhouse. Brodskij e Gubienko. Pirelli e Cingano. 250 firme per fermare De Michelis «il barbaro». Ci riusciranno?

di CORRADO INCERTI

Gianni Agnelli, il presidente della Fiat, ha risposto con grande cortesia. Capisce i grandi problemi che Venezia dovrà affrontare se sarà designata quale sede dell'Esposizione universale del Duemila, suggerì-

sce di approfondire gli studi di fattibilità del progetto, ma una firma contro l'Expo veneziana lui non la mette. Per un motivo molto semplice: in vita sua non ha mai firmato un appello, un'istanza, una protesta. Eppure la famiglia Agnelli è divisa: la moglie dell'Avvocato, Marella Caracciolo, non ha infatti dubbi, e sottoscrive il no all'Expo.

Sempre in casa Fiat Cesare Romiti, l'amministratore delegato, è altrettanto gentile. Anch'egli è preoccupato per l'impatto di un'eventuale Expo 2000 sulla Laguna, ne ha anche parlato con Gianni De Michelis, il ministro degli Esteri ideatore, nel 1985, del progetto di Expo a Venezia. Ma la firma, no, non la mette. Cesare Annibaldi, responsabile delle relazioni esterne della Fiat, è invece più drasti-

CORPO A CORPO. A destra, il sindaco *pro* di Venezia Antonio Casellati. In alto, una manifestazione contro De Michelis

co. Perché mai boicottare l'Expo veneziana? Non firma neppure lui.

Ma se sul fronte Fiat, che con Olivetti, Ibm, Fininvest, Ciga, Montedison, Coca Cola, banche e altri gruppi ha costituito il Consorzio Expo Venezia, i volontari della guerra all'esposizione veneziana, guidati dal sindaco repubblicano Antonio Casellati, non hanno fatto breccia, su quello della cultura internazionale sono riusciti, con un lavoro minuzioso e sistematico, a fare il colpo grosso. Fra pochi giorni invieranno al Bureau International des Expositions (Bie) di Parigi, che il prossimo 14 giugno deciderà in via definitiva se assegnare l'Expo 2000 a Toronto, Hannover o Venezia, le tre città rimaste in gara, un volumetto che contiene



NICOLE GREGOLIN

250 firme anti-Expo di altissima risonanza mondiale, relazioni e lettere di esperti e ritagli di articoli qualificati apparsi sulla stampa internazionale, come quello scritto sul *New York Times* di domenica 10 dicembre 1989 dal critico d'arte John Russell. Titolo: *Immaginate Venezia come una Disneyland galleggiante*. «L'Expo 2000 distruggerà Venezia fisicamente e moralmente» dice Russell a *Panorama*. «I danni all'ambiente cittadino saranno enormi e incalcolabili. Le strutture urbanistiche non saranno in grado di sopportare un incredibile afflusso di gente, 100 mila al giorno, con punte di 300 mila. La città pagherà questa follia. Venezia appartiene al mondo, non solo all'Italia. Il governo italiano dovrebbe rendersene conto».

O come l'editoriale apparso nel numero di marzo della prestigiosa rivista internazionale d'arte *Apollo*, dove, alla fine di un veemente attacco a De Michelis, si legge: «Suggeriamo di boicottare tutti gli eventi artistici e le mostre sponsorizzate dalle industrie che partecipano al Consorzio, a partire dall'attuale Andy Warhol a palazzo Grassi. La Fiat non si è rivelata un vero patrono delle arti...».

La lunga e silenziosa marcia del fronte anti-Expo è cominciata il 5 ottobre scorso, con una riunione, nell'isola di San Servolo, dei 21 Comitati privati internazionali per la salvaguardia di Venezia. Prima di allora, dopo la proposta lanciata nel 1985 da De Michelis, erano partite da Venezia per Parigi tre lettere. La prima, scritta dall'allora sindaco Nereo Laroni, so-

cialista, legato a De Michelis, avviava «cautelativamente» la candidatura per l'Expo 2000 a Venezia, la seconda, settembre 1987, firmata dall'allora presidente dc della Regione Veneto la appoggiava («L'Expo non potrebbe avere una cornice migliore»), la terza, 10 maggio del 1988, scritta da Casellati, teneva aperta la prenotazione e comunicava l'avvio di studi preventivi. «Per noi era una semplice iscrizione» dice il sindaco. «E invece era già partita la gara ufficiale». Tre lettere e un mistero all'italiana. In una lettera del 22 giugno del 1989, il Bie scrive al delegato italiano Roberto Palmieri, consigliere economico presso l'ambasciata di Parigi: «Il Bie, prendendo in considerazione la richiesta del governo italiano, ha deciso di far procedere l'inchiesta preliminare». Quando e da

chi è partita quella richiesta ufficiale? Casellati non lo sa, così come il Consiglio comunale di Venezia e il Parlamento nazionale.

Il 14 dicembre, a Parigi, Venezia è una delle tre candidate ufficiali. È a questo punto che quello che il ministro degli Esteri De Michelis chiama con disprezzo «il partito del no» (in campo politico, pci, dp, pri, i verdi, qualche socialista e gruppi di varia estrazione) accentua il suo impegno e si getta alla raccolta di firme di prestigio. Le 250 che stanno per arrivare con il dossier sui tavoli del Bureau sono il Gotha mondiale nei campi più disparati.

La prima è quella di Josif Brodskij, poeta russo che vive a New York, premio Nobel per la letteratura. Altri nomi. Tra gli storici dell'arte: James Ackerman, decano di Harvard, André Chastel, dell'Institut Français, René Huyghe, dell'Académie Française, William Porter, del Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Tra i direttori e i conservatori di musei e di fondazioni: Irina Antonova, museo Puškin di Mosca, Germain Bazin, Louvre, Philippe de Montebello, Sir John Pope Hennessy, Metropolitan Museum di New York, Bonnie Burnham, World Monuments Fund, Carter Brown, National Gallery di Washington, Roger De Grey, Royal Academy di Londra, Neil McGregor, National Gallery di Londra. Tra gli editori: Rosellina Archinto, Carlo Caracciolo, Giulio Einaudi, Livio Garzanti, Vito Laterza, Sy e Victoria Newhouse, della potente Condé Nast di New York, Klaus Wa-

CONTRARI. Leopoldo Pirelli e Marella Agnelli, tra i firmatari contro l'Expo



RENATO POLO



E. MARTINO MARCA



Epoca!

IN FONDO

DI MICHELE SERRA



L'Expo di Cadoneghe

Mentre i familiari delle vittime delle stragi ancora impunte (cioè tutte) si sono ritrovati a Bologna, per testimoniare civilmente e pateticamente (due avverbi ormai sinonimi in questo Paese incivile e cinico) il loro dolore e la loro impotenza, la scena politica italiana è occupata da un'appassionante disputa di campanile: dove ospitare l'Expo 2000?

È un affare da 2000 miliardi (di qui il nome), e nessuno sembra escludere in partenza la possibilità di potersene, come dire, fare carico. De Michelis, il Pink Floyd del governo, vuole confermare l'Expo a Venezia, ma proprio nelle fila del suo partito è in corso una febrile gara per sottrarglielo. Tognoli vuole l'Expo a Milano, Carmelo Conte a Napoli, Carraro a Roma, perché avercelo sottocasa, come il salumiere e la farmacia, è senza dubbio una grande comodità. Circolano, tra gli esponenti di maggior spicco del Psi, ciclostilati prestampati, nei quali si ribadisce «che la città...», in virtù della propria indiscussa vocazione europea e internazionale, è senza dubbio la sede più opportuna per ospitare l'Expo 2000. Firmato, onorevole...».

Basta riempire i puntini, e ognuno può candidarsi, secondo quelle regole della libera competizione che hanno fatto la fortuna del nostro Paese. Dicono che anche la Dc veneta «si stia muovendo»: una notizia che ci conforta, essendo semplicemente impensabile che città come Belluno o Cadoneghe possano essere ingiustamente discriminate. Nei bar, negli uffici, in famiglia, gli italiani seguono con attenzione e viva preoccupazione l'evolversi della faccenda. «La vedo in ansia, cavaliere. Qualcosa non va con sua moglie?». «Ma no, ma no,

È per via dell'Expo 2000. Lei dove la farebbe?». «Non saprei. Anch'io non ci dormo la notte. Ma si tranquillizzi: ho letto che si è mossa la Dc veneta».

Ritengo sia dovere civico di ogni italiano occuparsi dell'ubicazione dell'Expo 2000. E, di conseguenza, ho deciso di porre con forza la candidatura del paese di mia moglie, San Lazzaro di Savena.

Come presidente onorario del comitato «Expo a San Lazzaro», non starò a tediare con la superflua sottolineatura della indiscussa vocazione europea di questo ridente borgo, i cui meriti sono stati illustrati, tra l'altro, dal cantautore Francesco Guccini nella canzonetta licenziosa *Alla fiera di San Lazzaro*. Posso assicurare, però, che mio suocero è senza dubbio alcuno la persona più adatta a presiedere l'Expo, potendo contare sulla collaborazione di diversi congiunti (zia Enrichetta, zia Laura, zio Mario e il

cugino Beppe) e su una perfetta conoscenza dei luoghi.

Mia moglie potrà occuparsi validamente dell'ufficio stampa e dell'ospitalità, io degli aspetti contabili, onde garantire a me stesso e ai miei parenti l'opportuno beneficio economico. Dal punto di vista logistico, San Lazzaro di Savena offrirà ai visitatori dell'Expo il massimo del comfort e dell'efficienza: soprattutto viale Kennedy, dove risiede la famiglia di mia moglie, potrà disporre di comodi parcheggi a pagamento allestiti all'uopo (provvederà alla riscossione un compagno di scuola di mia moglie, Tubertini Paolo). Alle pubbliche relazioni, zia Rina. Per i problemi logistici, l'elettricista Guido e il muratore Lorenzini. Servizio ristoro: il bar all'angolo con la via Emilia, dove ho potuto constatare personalmente l'ottima qualità dei bomboloni e la gentilezza del gestore, signor Widmer. Raccomandate

dal Comitato promotore anche le crescentine di Romano alle Mura. Per le pulizie, rivolgersi alla signora Filicori. Adesioni e suggerimenti vanno inviati presso «Expo 2000: per una San Lazzaro europea, Epoca, Mondadori, Segrate».

L'onorevole Gorla (un uomo che passerà senz'altro alla storia patria per la barba eccezionalmente ben curata) propone la rifondazione della Dc. Una rifondazione «trasversale»: se ho ben capito, significa che alla gara d'appalto devono poter partecipare tutte le correnti, così, almeno, a cose fatte nessuno potrà lamentarsi. Questa faccenda della rifondazione della Dc non mi giunge nuova: da quando ero bambino (erano i tempi di Tremelloni e Pella) quasi ogni giorno mio padre tornava a casa dall'ufficio annunciando a mia madre che stavano rifondando la Dc.

Ciò che mi sfugge, piuttosto, è perché mai la si voglia rifondare, e proprio da parte democristiana. La Dc è al governo da quando è nata, le sue attività appaiono fiorenti, amministra da sola o in comproprietà quasi tutto ciò che è amministrabile, e mentre c'è chi gongola per essere «l'ago della bilancia» essa può tranquillamente compiacersi di essere, «tout court», la bilancia, soppesando l'Italia, da 45 anni, un tanto al chilo. Perché, dunque, questo frenetico succedersi di pranzi e cene, documenti e telefonate, convegni e raccomandazioni? Onorevole Gorla, non si affanni. Le cose, per voi altri, vanno a meraviglia. Si metta comodo, si rilassi e continui ad occuparsi della sua magnifica barba: le suggerisco, per esperienza diretta, un bel taglio trasversale. Dona da matti. ■

LA MIGLIORE DELLA SETTIMANA



Da «la Repubblica» del 3 agosto 1989.

De Michelis
a Venezia
tra Bokassa
e Gheddafi

la Repubblica

Direttore Eugenio Scalfari

di BRUNO VISENTINI

CIRCA un anno fa un convegno socialista organizzato a Venezia per discutere sull'avvenire della città storica e insulare, si chiuse con un intervento dell'on. Gianni De Michelis, roboante e asseverante, il quale ripeté più volte che Venezia deve diventare «città dell'elettronica». Che cosa questo volesse significare e come dovesse avvenire, l'oratore non si curò di dire. E dopo di allora nulla fece. All'on. De Michelis bastava la formula, che doveva sembrargli ardita ed originale nella retorica della modernità e dell'innovazione che fa parte del suo bagaglio, ad imitazione di ciò che era di moda negli Stati Uniti vent'anni fa e in Francia dieci anni fa.

In altra successiva occasione l'on. De Michelis affermò che la salvezza di Venezia sarebbe derivata da un «asse Bartellona-Venezia-Budapest»: formula assolutamente vuota, che può servire soltanto a qualche inutile convegno fatto di turismo e di vanità. Chiunque, prendendo una carta geografica, può tracciare a cacciaccio «assi» di presunto sviluppo economico, ritenendosi brillante.

Del resto, come vice presidente del Consiglio, l'apporto dell'on. De Michelis all'infelice governo De Mita fu la imposizione prepotente di un condono tributario che intendeva fare larghissimi abbuoni delle imposte dovute ponendo dei limiti massimi ai pagamenti, quali fossero i redditi e quali fossero i ricavi o i proventi dei contribuenti, e che addirittura si sarebbe dovuto applicare a redditi, ricavi e proventi ancora in corso di formazione e per i quali non erano scaduti i termini per le dichiarazioni. Lo stesso governo fu costretto, in un secondo momento, a togliere questa ultima concessione, e il Parlamento eliminò alcune altre indecenze. Rimangono comunque nel provvedimento elementi di confusione che rendono difficilmente gestibile la materia, sia per i contribuenti che per l'amministrazione.

Non è quindi da stupirsi che nella primavera del 1985, l'on. De Michelis, reduce da una visita all'esposizione universale di Tokio, affermasse che la salvezza di Venezia si doveva trovare in una esposizione universale.

13 ottobre 1989

De Michelis a Venezia tra Bokassa e Gheddafi

TRAVANDO, come sempre, eco e adulazione da parte di taluni personaggi del giornalismo locale in costante cupidigia di servilismo. Chissà cosa avrebbe proposto l'on. De Michelis se fosse stato reduce da una caccia grossa in Kenia o da una scalata all'Himalaya.

Come è evidente a tutti e come ho altre volte scritto su questo giornale, se vi è una città che non può pensare a iniziative di esposizioni universali, che richiedano spazi immensi e che portano frequenze di oltre centomila persone al giorno per un arco di sei mesi, questa è proprio Venezia.

Né vale dire, come viene af-

fermato con molta leggerezza e con ipocrisia, che tutto è questione di organizzazione e che il numero delle affluenze a Venezia può essere controllato e limitato. Perché iniziative di massa di quel tipo o analoghe, sono strutturalmente incompatibili con Venezia. Né vi è organizzazione che possa superare tale incompatibilità strutturale. Mentre un controllo e una limitazione delle affluenze restano affermazioni verbali, che cadono quando si voglia passare alle possibili concrete realizzazioni.

Anche lo spettacolo del Pink Floyd venne catapultato a Venezia e imposto «da Roma». Gli

accordi e lucrosi contratti con la Rai e con le altre televisioni precedettero ogni autorizzazione. L'Azienda provinciale per il turismo di Venezia, con relativo presidente socialista, si impegnò per l'attuazione dell'iniziativa. Le varie autorità statali veneziane, delle quali soprattutto le necessarie autorizzazioni erano di competenza, non mancarono di far sapere che lo facevano per le pesanti pressioni «da Roma», che alla fine si fecero sentire anche sulla Sovrintendenza ai monumenti affinché superasse le perplessità inizialmente espresse.

Il sindaco Casellati aveva

manifestato parere recisamente contrario. La giunta comunale in data 10 maggio, con una deliberazione presa in assenza del sindaco, aveva deciso per una autorizzazione di massima, ma aveva posto la condizione che la manifestazione avvenisse in una data diversa dalla sera della festa del Redentore (15 luglio). L'assessore socialista Laroni con lettera del 6 giugno dava invece agli organizzatori del Pink Floyd risposta affermativa, senza richiamare la essenziale condizione di una data diversa, subendo (7 giugno) un immediato richiamo scritto dal sindaco. Ma il 26 giugno - ancora una volta approfittando dell'assenza del sindaco vincolato da un impegno ufficiale - la giunta, su proposta dell'assessore Laroni (il quale sostiene che, per gli impegni già presi, la manifestazione doveva avere luogo proprio nella sera del Redentore) approvava a maggioranza la proposta del Laroni che, come all'indomani rilevò con compiacimento certa stampa locale, aveva messo la giunta di fronte al fatto compiuto. La medesima stampa locale, che poi espresse sdegno e condanna, sollecitava l'iniziativa e

rimproverava al sindaco, nei termini beccati oramai per essa consueti, la sua opposizione e parlava addirittura di «occasione storica» da non perdere.

Idelfo Laroni, in una recente intervista, ha affermato, con chiaro riferimento ai comunisti, che questi hanno responsabilità assai maggiori delle sue. Senza entrare in valutazioni di ordine quantitativo, non vi è dubbio che anche il vicesindaco e gli assessori comunisti furono determinanti nel voler la manifestazione del Pink Floyd, senza dare ascolto ai richiami dell'on. Pellicani e riaffermando anzi la loro autonomia nei confronti del sindaco «padrino».

Certamente anche il sindaco Antonio Casellati ha molte colpe e molti torti. Egli è un gran galantuomo; ed è caritatevole non fare confronti. Egli è un uomo indipendente, che ha sempre svolto con successo e prestigio la propria professione e che alla attività politica dà con disinteresse e con personale sacrificio la propria competenza e la propria passione. Viviamo invece in un mondo nel quale sempre di più la politica è professione e mestiere; con tutte le dipendenze, gli opportunisti (e spesso cose peg-

giore) che questo comporta. Ma Casellati è anche persona che alla passione politica e alla gestione della sua città di Venezia associa la propria professionalità ed i propri interessi. Ed anche questo non gli viene perdonato - e suscita anzi sentimenti quasi di risentimento e di invidia - da parte di chi per l'attività politica e amministrativa non sa rinunciare né ad un cliente né ad un affare. Egli è un uomo leale, che «copre» la giunta ed i suoi componenti anche quando qualcuno di questi opera arbitrariamente contro i suoi indirizzi e in modo difforme dalle deliberazioni prese. Di fronte al furberisti e ai furberisti, egli non può che essere perdente.

Per persone che hanno siffatta colpa vi è sempre meno posto nella vita politica e amministrativa italiana.

L'on. De Michelis, scomparso oramai Bokassa imperatore dell'Africa Centrale, cerca di far valere le sue affinità elettive con il colonnello Muhammad Gheddafi; e un giorno d'altro ci dirà che la salvezza di Venezia sta nell'annessione alla Libia.

BRUNO VISENTINI

L'AMMISSIONE della candidatura di Venezia, assieme a quella di Hannover e Toronto, segna un passo verso quell'autentica sciagura che per Venezia sarebbe l'Esposizione Universale del 2000. Una sciagura contro la quale duecento personalità della cultura italiana e straniera, critici e storici d'arte, letterati, scrittori, artisti, architetti, urbanisti, hanno lanciato un vibrato appello, illustrato l'altro giorno nella sede della stampa estera dai docenti delle due università veneziane e dai rappresentanti di Italia Nostra, Istituto nazionale di urbanistica, Wwf, Lega Ambiente.

Calcoli accurati mostrano in tutta evidenza il carattere di autentica calamità artificiale che avrebbe l'Expo (che l'illustre critico d'arte John Russett ha condannato sul *New York Times* come una «Disneyland galleggiante»). Venezia è visitata ogni anno da 8 milioni di persone, che è prevedibile nel 2000 saliranno a 10; con la conseguenza che nei mesi estivi, invece dei 32.000 visitatori attuali, avremo una media giornaliera di 45.000, esattamente il doppio di quelli che il centro storico è

Una calamità artificiale

15 dicembre 1989

di ANTONIO CEDERNA

in grado di sopportare.

Questo senza l'Expo. Se questa si facesse, tenendo presente il flusso turistico provocato dalle sette esposizioni universali che si sono avute nel mondo negli ultimi trent'anni, richiamerebbe a Venezia, nell'ipotesi più sottostimata, altri 10 milioni di visitatori. Il che significa che la marea turistica si triplicherebbe, con punte di 150-230.000 persone: facendo saltare (ha detto Gianni Toniolo, dell'università di Ca' Foscari) la «capacità socio-economica di accoglienza» cioè il livello di attività turistica compatibile col normale funzionamento residenziale e produttivo della città. I centri storici, ha osservato Edoardo Salzano presidente dell'Istituto nazionale di urbanistica, non sono beni generici adoperabili come sceno-

grafie teatrali da buttare al macero quando sono consumate: il centro di Venezia diventerebbe un bazaar per la paccottiglia turistica, negozi di maschere e vetri prodotti a Empoli o Bratislava, merletti di Burano prodotti a Hong Kong, gondole e ventagli di Taiwan eccetera.

La conseguenza più sconvolgente, ha detto Francesco Indovina dell'Istituto universitario di architettura, sarebbe l'aumento dei prezzi del mercato immobiliare.

La domanda generata dall'Expo per abitazioni temporanee, sedi di rappresentanza, ricettività, servizi, commerci eccetera, provocherebbe una fortissima, irreversibile ondata di espulsione dal centro storico della popolazione residente (già oggi ridotta a 85.000 per-

sone).

A una proposta sbagliata come questa bisogna rispondere «no», ha detto Ada Becchi Colli della sinistra indipendente: tutti gli interpellati per l'appello si sono meravigliati che l'idea dell'Expo fosse ancora sostenuta da qualcuno.

L'Italia, col suo straordinario patrimonio storico-artistico, ha incalzato Antonio Jannello segretario generale di Italia Nostra, e già di per sé un'esposizione universale di beni culturali, e non ha bisogno di altri, degradanti richiami.

L'Expo, ha concluso Luigi Scano, è incompatibile, intollerabile, inconciliabile con la sopravvivenza di Venezia: sarebbe un autentico terremoto artificiale.

E' l'espressione di una mentalità perversa che si è fatta dominante in questi anni Ottanta: quella mentalità che crea emergenze artificiali per poter scardinare i principi e gli impegni di una corretta pianificazione, per derogare dai vincoli di interesse pubblico, per passare dagli appalti alle concessioni, per mettere da parte le norme, i processi, le decisioni che, in un paese bene ordinato, dovrebbero regolare la gestione dell'ordinario e la buona amministrazione per risolvere i problemi seri del territorio.

Problemi seri che per Venezia sono, ad esempio, il ripristino dell'equilibrio lagunare (dopo l'affossamento anni fa del piano comprensoriale ad opera delle stesse forze politiche che oggi vogliono l'Expo), la riconversione ecologica di Marghera, il risanamento del centro storico. Ma l'Expo è sostenuta da un consorzio di una trentina di imprese private (Montedison, Fiat, Ibm, Fininvest, Ciga, Eni eccetera).

Interessi potenti sono scesi in campo per dar corpo ai mostri generati dal sonno della ragione.

LA STAMPA

A giugno si decide, forti opposizioni da mezzo mondo. Parlano favorevoli e contrari

VENEZIA una guerra per l'Expo

ATTILA contro Saint-Marc è il titolo di un articolo dedicato da *Le Monde* alla proposta di esposizione universale del Duemila. Attila viene esplicitamente identificato con Gianni De Michelis, ministro degli Esteri, strenuo sostenitore dell'Expo che i critici avversano come un attentato mortale alla città.

La candidatura di Venezia per la grande manifestazione del Duemila, voluta da De Michelis, non è però unica. Sono in gara Hannover e Toronto. Entro i primi di giugno deciderà il Bureau International des Expositions, con sede a Parigi. Arrivano voci di forti perplessità all'interno del Bureau stesso e nella Cae.

Carlo Ripa di Meana, socialista, commissario a Bruxelles, definisce «assurda» l'Expo a Venezia, e probabilmente in contrasto con le norme della Comunità.

E' scattata l'insurrezione delle forze culturali di mezzo mondo. Sono usciti duri attacchi sul *Times* (immaginate Venezia come una Disneyland galleggiante), sul *New York Times*, sui principali quotidiani francesi, tedeschi, svedesi. Il Consiglio comunale ha approvato un ordine del giorno che esclude l'ipotesi dell'Expo, considerando le condizioni in cui si trova Venezia.

Anche il ministro dei Beni culturali, Ferdinando Adornato, aveva già espresso parere negativo con un telegramma a Italia Nostra. Il sindaco Antonio Casellati mi dice: «Io ho il dovere di comunicare a tutto il mondo che Venezia non vuole l'Expo. Lo sto scrivendo a tutti i capi di governo dei Paesi che fanno parte del Bureau International des Expositions. A Venezia si rischia di ripetere, concentrata e ingigantita, l'esperienza dei campionati mondiali di calcio, utilizzando l'Expo come strumento eccezionale che consente di fare un po' di tutto, mentre le opere necessarie aspettano da decenni.

Le ragioni del no possono essere sintetizzate riducendo il discorso in termini numerici: Venezia verrebbe sommersa e stravolta da un minimo di 80 mila a un massimo di 200 mila visitatori al giorno per sei mesi (previsioni prudenti). Le recenti esperienze come quella del concerto dei Pink Floyd, dimostrano che un organismo così prezioso e delicato non ammette iniezioni di massa. Venezia è già sofferente sotto il peso di 7-8 milioni di turisti l'anno. Se dovesse riceverne 20 o 30 milioni in sei mesi cadrebbe in rovina.

Il professor Paolo Costa (Dipartimento di Scienze economiche di Ca' Foscari) ha diretto una ricerca sui flussi turistici prevedibili: «Anche nell'ipotesi di un forte decentramento dell'Expo nelle altre città venete il numero dei visitatori sarebbe insopportabile. Quale turista straniero, dopo aver visitato le sedi espositive a Padova, Vicenza, Verona, Treviso, rinuncerebbe a San Marco? C'è solo da sperare che le perplessità affioranti nel Bureau diventino più forti di fronte ai dati da noi raccolti e al no deciso della città».

Il sindaco Casellati incalza: «La capacità fisica di accoglienza è del tutto sproporzionata all'Expo. Pensi che i posti letto negli alberghi veneziani sono 11 mila. Ma anche nelle altre città venete l'ipotesi dell'esposizione universale provoca apprensioni. L'esperienza veneta tira le somme, non ha bisogno di sforzi violenti. Tra i più contrari troviamo industriali come il conte Marcotullio. Un altro industriale



Il ponte e la chiesa degli Scalzi in un'illustrazione di Moebius che fa parte d'una serie dedicata a minacciose immagini di Venezia senza acqua

Enrico Chiari, presidente degli «Amici dei musei a Venezia», è terrorizzato: «Se è impossibile muoversi nei giorni di Carnevale, figurarsi nei mesi dell'Expo. E' un'assurdità, ma il progetto riceve forti spinte politiche».

Domando a Cesare De Michelis, docente universitario, vicepresidente del Consorzio Expo, se le spinte vengano soprattutto dal fratello ministro (il quale sembra poco propenso ai colloqui su questo tema: non ha risposto a una mia richiesta scritta, e solo ieri sera ha accettato il «processo» tv *Terzo grado*, su RaiTre, in cui ha difeso rabbiosamente l'Expo). «Abbiamo avuto l'appoggio di Craxi e di Andreotti, in passato quello di De Mita. Mio fratello è convinto come me della necessità di dare un nuovo impulso a Venezia, avvilta da un turpismo di rapina e da una terziarizzazione di qualità modesta. L'università offre all'economia locale un contributo ridicolo alle nemesi e agli attaccamenti, non sviluppa sinergie culturali. L'Expo sarebbe un fatto effimero ma con un forte valore

promozionale in tutto il mondo». Si stenta a credere che Venezia abbia bisogno di promozione, come se non fosse abbastanza conosciuta. Cesare De Michelis ribatte velleitoso: «Venezia ha bisogno di cambiare immagine, il suo marchio è mortuario». Eppure sono contro l'Expo i componenti del comitato dell'Unesco per la salvaguardia del patrimonio mondiale e quelli dei 22 comitati privati per Venezia operanti in Italia, in Francia, Gran Bretagna, Germania, Olanda, Svezia, Svizzera, negli Stati Uniti, in Australia.

Ne fanno parte scrittori, in prima fila il premio Nobel Josef Brodskij, scienziati, artisti, intellettuali, esponenti di associazioni di tutela. Dalla «Save Venice Inc.» di New York a Italia Nostra, al «Venice in Peril Funds», al «Italy San Marco Frances». Cesare De Michelis ironizza: «Si agitano molto. Li definisco i crocossoni di Venezia: temono di perderne il cadavere rimanendo disoccupati».

Gli domando se il rischio di collasso sia secondo lui frutto di

immaginazione. Mi risponde senza esitare: «E' probabile che il rischio Expo sia mortale per Venezia. Nelle attuali condizioni la città non è in grado di organizzare un'esposizione universale, di accogliere i visitatori. Il problema esiste, perché Venezia si paralizzava più in fretta di qualsiasi città. Ma il nostro progetto nasce dall'idea di cambiare Venezia per la Duemila, creando condizioni diverse, modificando il rapporto con l'entroterra, superando la monocultura del turismo».

Una prospettiva grandiosa, nel segno della telematica e dell'informatica, con centri di ricerca e laboratori diffusi in tutto il Veneto e Venezia che passo da un'economia «scartivata» a un terziario dinamico, grazie all'Expo dell'intelligenza umana e artificiale. Cambiare Venezia per adeguarla al Duemila. Come? Hanno fatto scalfare progetti di isole artificiali, di giardini galleggianti, di zattere su cui far espellere la festa dell'Expo intrecciando musei e luminarie, ristoranti e teatri.

Come inserire l'affermazione nella ricerca di nuove e più alte funzioni per la Serenissima del futuro? Risponde Cesare De Michelis: «Due architetti, Emilio Ambasz e Tonci Foscari, hanno abbozzato alcuni progetti immaginando nel parco della Laguna Nord una serie di punti di ristoro e di trattamento. L'idea può piacere o no, ma non è questo il problema di fondo. Il cambiamento di Venezia deve avvenire nella sua struttura e nei suoi servizi. Restauro della parte di città in abbandono, riempimento delle parti vuote, trasferimento della stazione ferroviaria per creare nuovi accessi. Quelli di oggi sono disastrosi. Una ferrovia metropolitana dovrebbe arrivare dall'entroterra a Venezia proseguire sotto la Laguna fino al Lido». Sullo stato di disastro degli accessi tutti d'accordo, ma immaginiamo con sgomento la stazione del metro a San Marco, come in piazza Duomo o in P'cesadilly Circus.

Balemano promesse di investimenti favolosi, 19 mila miliardi, per realizzare un disegno di tra-

sformazione di Venezia che la ridurrebbe a copia di altre città. Complessi alberghieri e edifici di servizi dall'ex stazione marittima fino al monumentale mulino Stucky; trasferimento del porto commerciale sulla gronda lagunare con nuove banchine; ristrutturazione dell'antico Arsenale utilizzando i suoi 35 ettari per centri espositivi e laboratori tecnologici, nuovi collegamenti con l'entroterra e persino il ritorno a vecchie idee che sembrano sepolte, come quella del metrò, ricalcata sull'ancor più vecchio progetto di sistema autostradale in Laguna.

Alvise Zorzi, presidente delle organizzazioni private per la tutela di Venezia e della «Dante Alighieri», mi dice: «Va combattuto proprio il tentativo di trasformare la città col pretesto dell'Expo. Non è un tentativo senza precedenti. Anche Napoleone ebbe l'ambizione di cambiare Venezia, sventrando e demolendo: 72 chiese distrutte, interamente, i Giardini Pubblici. Gli austriaci costruirono il ponte ferroviario. Il tentativo di annullare l'insularità di Venezia continuò dopo l'unità, interrando canali per costruire inutili strade. In epoca fascista, ecco il ponte stradale, gli imbonitori e le zone industriali a danno della Laguna. Sempre senza capire che l'originalità di Venezia va difesa e non cancellata».

Sir Ashley Clarke, ex ambasciatore di Gran Bretagna a Roma, vive a Venezia dove fondò il «Venice in Peril Funds» dopo il disastro del 1966. Mi dice: «De Michelis sembra insensibile a ogni critica e promette nuova vita a Venezia. Ma per frenare la decadenza fisica del centro storico occorrono le opere attese da decenni. La popolazione è scesa dai 170 mila abitanti del 1950 a 79 mila (erano 133 mila nel 1300) proprio a causa di questa decadenza. Le fantasie di De Michelis e dei suoi amici farebbero piombare Venezia nel caos. Sta per uscire un pamphlet di 72 pagine, in quattro lingue, che espone e documenta i motivi di opposizione, col contributo di 50 associazioni culturali, di studiosi stranieri e italiani come Manfredo Tafuri, Leonardo Benevolo, Cesare De Seta, Alvise Zorzi».

Opinione diffusa: cominciamo a risolvere i problemi dell'acqua alta e della manutenzione del patrimonio abitativo, corso dall'umidità, dopo decenni di chiacchiere. «Mancano le fognature e i depuratori, i ri non vengono scavati né ripuliti da trent'anni, in Laguna si diffondono lenchi di alghe che impediscono il moto ondoso distruggere rive e fondamenti» denuncia instancabilmente la sezione di Italia Nostra.

Ne parlo con Luigi Zanda, presidente del consorzio «Venezia Nuova» che ha la responsabilità delle opere di difesa della Laguna e vicepresidente del Consorzio per l'Expo. «Mi sembra che il tema di fondo non sia quello del sì o no all'esposizione universale del Duemila ma quello di occuparsi del rapporto di Venezia con l'entroterra, cominciando dal disinquinamento e dalla regolazione dei flussi turistici. Questo problema diventerà sempre più grave nei prossimi anni. Se non cambieremo la struttura dell'Expo sarebbe una follia».

Non sarebbe ragionevole un forte impegno di tutti per rimettere finalmente in sesto Venezia e proporre per il suo futuro un progetto egualmente orientato verso la ricerca scientifica e le tecnologie di avanguardia ma meno pericoloso dell'Expo, meno effimero? Cesare De Michelis: «La nostra non è un'idea unica e obbligata. Se nasce qualcosa di meglio lo sero pronto». Qualcosa che rispetti l'identità di Venezia non soltanto per le sue pietre e i suoi linguaggi, così cari a Ruskin, ma come combinazione unica di fattori geografici, ambientali, culturali, che investa nuove vite, senza snaturarlo. Il solo organismo urbano a misura d'uomo ancora esistente al mondo.



MARIO POMILIO
E' morto lo scrittore del «Quinto Evangelio»

Lorenzo Mondo



PARLA KOHL
Il futuro della Germania? Presto uniti e presto ricchi

David Marsh

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FUNARI, PAROLACCE
«Dal video do alla gente informazione viva»

Marinella Venegoni

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tuttoscienze



BIOLOGIA
Guerra di veleni tra le piante e gli animali



DIFESA AMBIENTALE

La Cee in campo contro l'Expo a Venezia

(DAL NOSTRO INVIATO)

BRUXELLES — «Attila contro San Marco», ha titolato «Le Monde»; «A morte Venezia» ha scelto la «Frankfurter Allgemeine». Ma sul tema, in toni analoghi, si sono mobilitati anche il britannico «Times» e l'americano «New York Times». Pietra dello scandalo il progetto di fare di Venezia la sede dell'Esposizione universale 2000.

Ora sul sentiero di guerra si è messa anche Bruxelles. Il commissario Cee all'Ambiente, Carlo Ripa di Meana, ha infatti annunciato ieri l'intenzione di scrivere una lettera al Governo italiano richia-

mandolo agli obblighi di tutela dell'ecosistema, cui deve attenersi in base alla legge comunitaria. Per la precisione, in base alla direttiva 85/337 «sull'impatto ambientale», entrata in vigore nel luglio '88.

Questa direttiva stabilisce che tutti i progetti come la costruzione di autostrade, ferrovie e aeroporti, di opere urbane come strade, tramvie, metrò, porti, complessi alberghieri ecc. devono essere sottoposti sempre «ad attenta valutazione quando suscettibili di provocare effetti significativi sull'ambiente, causa la loro natura, dimensione o localizzazione».

La direttiva precisa inoltre che la valutazione deve riguardare «tutti gli effetti diretti, indiretti e secondari, cumulativi a breve e lungo termine, compresi quelli derivanti da un accrescimento del numero dei visitatori potenziali».

Basta questa rapida scorsa all'eurolegge per concludere che sembra fatta apposta per salvaguardare Venezia. E Ripa di Meana sembra deciso a farsene il "guardiano", visto che ieri ha annunciato anche l'invio nella città di una task force della Commissione «per raccogliere tutti gli ele-

menti indispensabili a valutare gli sviluppi del dossier».

Da segnalare poi anche un'altra lettera, questa volta indirizzata al Bureau International des Expositions (Bie), che il 14 giugno deciderà l'assegnazione della sede tra tre candidate: Venezia, Hannover e Toronto. Al Bie Ripa di Meana scrive per mettere in chiaro che una scelta europea dovrà essere in linea con le disposizioni della direttiva, pena l'inapplicabilità della decisione.

Adriana Cerretelli

(continua a pag. 2)

Ma ecco l'antefatto della vicenda. L'idea della candidatura di Venezia fu lanciata dall'attuale ministro degli Esteri, Gianni De Michelis, con il pieno appoggio dell'allora consiglio municipale e dell'allora presidente della Regione Veneto, Carlo Bernini, attuale ministro dei Trasporti. Oggi, tre anni dopo, il consiglio municipale si è schierato contro il progetto, allarmato dalla negativa esperienza in luglio del concerto dei Pink Floyd.

A fargli cambiare idea hanno contribuito anche le proiezioni di uno studio dell'Università di Venezia: queste annunciano che se Expo 2000, che durerà quattro mesi, si terrà nel quadrato Venezia-Vicenza-Padova-Treviso, ci sarà un'invasione di 15 milioni annui di visitatori nella città lagunare, contro i 7-8 milioni attuali, con punte giornaliera di 175mila persone, cioè nove volte superiori alla soglia di tolleranza di 20mila.

Le esperienze di Bruxelles e Osaka parlano però di presenze record fino a 700mila visitatori al giorno. Ma che, secondo Carlo Bernini, che si trovava ieri a Bruxelles per il Consiglio Trasporti, sono prive di fondamento. Perché Expo 2000, dice il ministro, sarà «diffusa su tutto il territorio» circostante, quindi la pressione dei visitatori si manterrà sulle 20mila unità al giorno. Quanto alla Commissione Cee, secondo il ministro, al momento sta «processando solo un'idea, visto che i progetti veri e propri, lo studio sull'impatto ambientale verranno compilati solo quando ci sarà stata l'assegnazione della candidatura».

Adriana Cerretelli

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IL GIORNALE DELL'ARTE

ALBERTO ALLEMANDI & C.

MENSILE DI INFORMAZIONE, CULTURA, ECONOMIA

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Expo 2000

Venezia, il balocco di De Michelis

VENEZIA. «Considerate questa città, con tutti coloro che l'abitano, come un balocco che si può buttare dove si vuole, che si può fare a pezzi (...) è questo il sentimento dei mercenari (...) Noi, beninteso, siamo al di sopra di tutto questo: noi facciamo la storia». La città è Venezia, le parole sono di uno dei congiurati che nel dramma di Simone Weil *Venezia Salva* tramava di distruggerla per consegnarla agli spagnoli.

La vicenda della congiura del 1618, sventata per il tradimento di un cospiratore e tema di una delle più luminose, seppure frammentarie opere di Simone Weil, si ripropone ad emblema di una condizione che ieri come oggi incombe sui luoghi privilegiati dalla storia e per questo più fragili: se ieri Venezia era ambita per la sua ricchezza e potenza, oggi lo è come simbolo e memoria da consumare; il suo potere, come

quello di re Mida, è di valorizzare ogni cosa che vi succede, di darle risonanza e prestigio, in una parola, di attirare denaro.

Ma la situazione del dramma weiliano si è oggi ribaltata: sono proprio gli stranieri a prendere tenacemente le difese di una città preda di voraci e potenti mercenari italiani, i politici e i capitani d'industria guidati da Cesare De Michelis che pensano all'Expo Duemila, l'ul-

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Un projet d'exposition universelle pour l'an 2000 provoque des polémiques

Attila contre Saint-Marc : Venise au péril de l'expo

Comment enrayer le déclin de la cité des Doges ? Comment lutter contre la pollution qui ronge ses vieilles pierres et les hautes eaux qui envahissent ses places ? Comment concilier le respect de son passé historique et le développement de son activité industrielle et commerciale. Comment empêcher l'exode de sa population et la protéger d'une marée touristique chaque année plus inquiétante ? M. Gianni De Michelis, député de Venise et ministre des affaires étrangères, a une réponse : installer en l'an 2000, à proximité de la place Saint-Marc, une exposition universelle. Une proposition sérieusement examinée par le Bureau international des expositions et qui a déclenché, on s'en doute, de violentes polémiques.

VENISE
de notre envoyé spécial

A Venise, ses adversaires le surnomment Attila. Les gondoliers lui ont d'ailleurs décerné, près du pont de Rialto, un prix qui porte ce nom, sous la forme d'un lion d'or (symbole de la ville), « made in Hongkong ». Son idée d'installer en l'an 2000 une exposition universelle dans la cité des Doges fait pousser des rugissements à la majorité du conseil municipal et à bon nombre de ses concitoyens. Mais elle séduit une fraction non négligeable de la population.

Gianni De Michelis est l'homme du scandale, le fléau qui menace Saint-Marc et sa basilique. Député socialiste de Venise depuis des lustres, il est élu député à cinquante ans, ministre des affaires étrangères et surtout l'homme fort de la Vénétie. Il proclame sa fierté d'être à la tête du « camp des oui », de ceux qui vont de l'avant pour « sauver Venise », comme il aime à dire, et qui refusent tout au nom du passé et condamnent la ville au déclin.

Il a marqué le premier point. Le 14 décembre 1989, le Bureau international des expositions (BIE), dont le siège est à Paris, a officiellement enregistré la candidature de Venise pour l'an 2000, avec celle de Hanovre (RFA) et de Toronto (Canada). Son maire, M. Antonio Casellati, venu spécialement dans la capitale française à la tête d'une délégation, a tenu de se faire recevoir par M. Desfrénes, le responsable administratif du BIE. Celle-ci avait prudemment quitté ses locaux proche de l'Étoile. Elle n'enregistre, déclare-t-elle, que les candidatures émanant des gouvernements. Ce sont les représentants des quarante-trois pays inscrits au BIE qui, au printemps prochain, désigneront la ville où se tiendra l'exposition universelle du prochain millénaire.

La proposition de Gianni De Michelis fait-elle l'unanimité au sein du gouvernement italien ? Pas totalement : l'hostilité du ministre des biens culturels, M. Facchiano, est publique. Le représentant de l'Italie au comité du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO a fait voter à l'unanimité une motion exprimant sa « vive inquiétude devant la menace qui pèse sur [ce] joyau de l'humanité en péril l'éventuelle tenue de l'exposition universelle ». A Rome, un sénateur de la gauche indépendante, M. Massimo Riva, note que l'idée, à sa connaissance, n'a jamais été discutée officiellement par le gouvernement ni présentée devant le Parlement.

Quel est donc ce projet qui déchaine tant de passion et que personne ne connaît ? Il est, à vrai dire, extraordinairement flou. On en connaît surtout la genèse.

M. De Michelis, revenant en 1985 de l'exposition de Tokyo, a une illumination. Fasciné par la modernité et tous les mots en «-tique», il est revenu dans sa ville natale en imaginant pour elle un deuxième millénaire glorieux sous le signe de l'informatique et de la télématique. Ce miracle post-moderne doit s'accompagner d'une intense médiation : l'exposition universelle en est le truchement nécessaire.

Un premier programme est élaboré par un groupe d'architectes où figure Renzo Piano. Comme il est difficile de déloger un espace faisant sur ce terrain saturé d'histoire, ils imaginent de construire une série de docks flottants sur la lagune. En 1987, la coalition municipale bascule, le nouveau maire, M. Antonio Casellati, est un opposant farouche à toute idée d'Expo 2000. La ville fait savoir qu'elle refuse d'associer son nom au projet. Qu'à cela ne tienne, l'exposition ne s'appellera plus « Venezia 2000 » (Venise 2000), mais « Venetia 2000 » (Vénétie 2000).

Une ville qui se vide

Désormais, la région, où M. de Michelis possède une confortable majorité, est associée à l'exposition, qui sera « éclatée » sur plusieurs villes. Son thème, « la construction de l'équilibre du système terre », a trois niveaux : le « réseau des idées » dont le centre sera à Venise (sur le terrain de l'Arsenal, propriété de l'État) et qui accueillera les résultats de la production intellectuelle des laboratoires des centres de recherche de toute la Vénétie, qui seront ensuite diffusés dans le monde entier au moyen de la télématique. Ce réseau sera relié à la « zone des nations », située sur la terre ferme, entre Mestre et l'aéroport de Tessera, où seront logés les pays participants.

Le « réseau de production » — les avancées technologiques les plus récentes — sera dispersé dans les villes de l'intérieur, Padoue, Vérone, Trévise, Pordenone, Vicence... Ainsi pour la première fois une exposition universelle se tiendra sur plusieurs sites. Il est également indiqué — c'est une première — que les pays participants n'auront pas à financer la construction de leur pavillon, mais



Le maire de Venise, Antonio Casellati (au centre, avec des lunettes) à la tête d'une délégation devant le siège du BIE, à Paris, en décembre 1989.

à réaliser et à décorer des espaces qui seront mis à leur disposition gratuitement au sein d'une grande zone d'exposition commune.

Le pilote de « Venetia 2000 », dont le coût est estimé à 19 000 milliards de lires (200 milliards de francs), est un consortium où se retrouve tout le gratin de l'industrie italienne : de Mondadori à Fiat, en passant par Olivetti, Benetton, Montedison, ENI et Ferruzzi, sans parler de Coca-Cola, Philips ou IBM. Le président de ce front est M. Giulio Malgara, l'un des plus gros publicitaires de la Péninsule. L'un des vice-présidents est M. Luigi Zanda, responsable, par ailleurs, du groupe « Venezia Nuova », à qui a été concédée la gestion de tout le projet d'assainissement et d'aménagement de la lagune.

L'autre vice-président est M. Cesare De Michelis, frère cadet de Gianni, universitaire et responsable d'une maison d'édition (Marsilio Editore). Le but du consortium, explique ce dernier, est d'étudier la « faisabilité » du projet en évitant les lourdeurs administratives. Les contours de celui-ci sont flous : M. Cesare De Michelis ne le sait pas, mais il n'est pas possible, explique-t-il, de le développer davantage tant que la proposition vénitienne n'est pas formellement retenue par le BIE.

M. Cesare De Michelis part d'un constat : Venise se vide. Au début des années 50, sa population s'élevait à 170 000 habitants ; elle vient de passer sous la barre des 80 000. Sa seule activité, c'est le tourisme. Mais un tourisme archaïque, « un tourisme de rapine qui ne profite qu'à une poignée de boulangiers avides de s'enrichir rapidement et qui n'investissent pas dans la cité ».

Tertiaire magique

Il dénonce la mort qui gagne la ville, « avec la complicité des intellectuels de tous les pays, qui assouissent leur désir de paternité morbide. Pour passer d'une économie d'opiate et de charité à une économie d'investissement, il faut des moyens et un coup de légal. L'Expo 2000 est cette occasion. Elle permettra, explique-t-il, de réorganiser les accès de la ville, d'imaginer de nouveaux moyens de transports, d'utiliser les espaces vacants, de restructurer des quartiers, de créer un parc naturel au nord de la lagune et de contrôler le flux touristique grâce à l'informatique. « Oui, c'est une exposition à risque », conclut-il. Mais il faut savoir prendre des risques pour sauver Venise ».

C'est ce programme maximaliste du tout ou rien qui heurte quantité de Vénitiens, et pas seulement une poignée d'esthètes décadents. « L'exposition n'est pas une panacée. C'est même le contraire de ce qu'il faut pour Venise », explique M. Stefano Bosto, urbaniste, universitaire et élu (vert) au conseil municipal. Venise est une ville fragile. Pour régler ses nombreux

problèmes, dont le principal est effectivement la monoculture touristique, il faut mener une politique de longue haleine et ne pas céder aux coups médiatiques. Oui, Venise a besoin d'activités nouvelles. Les investissements existent. On préfère les utiliser à des entreprises herculéennes au lieu de restaurer l'écosystème physique et biologique de la lagune et d'y planter ici des activités non polluantes et tout à fait rentables.

« Les espaces existent : les 36 hectares de l'Arsenal, mais aussi les anciens entrepôts de la Salute, les moulins néogothiques de la Giudecca, la pri-

ces projets étaient torpillés. La situation est en train de changer. Mais, si l'Expo 2000 a lieu, il faudra remettre à dix ans tous ces projets qui prennent corps, indique-t-il, puisque toutes les énergies seront tournées vers elle ».

MM. Ettore Belgrano et Antonio Scarpa animent une petite association de gondoliers — ils sont aujourd'hui moins de quatre cents. A naviguer au raz de l'eau, toute la journée, ils ont une conscience aiguë des multiples problèmes qui assaillent Venise et que tout le monde veut ignorer : vagues provoquées par les embarcations rapides et qui sapent les fondations des

Les écuries d'Augias

VENISE

de notre envoyé spécial

Le problème le plus criant, exorcisé à coup de puces informatiques par les tenants du « tout Expo », est celui de l'afflux touristique dans une ville qui s'y prête mal. Le département des sciences économiques de l'université de Ca' Foscari vient de publier une étude significative. La ville accueillait aujourd'hui 25 000 visiteurs par jour avec des pointes de 100 000 lors d'événements exceptionnels comme le Carnaval. La ville est alors fermée, au bord de

l'infarctus. Mais les gens continuent d'arriver à pied.

Lorsque, le 15 juillet 1989, le groupe Pink Floyd donna un concert de rock place Saint-Marc, 200 000 personnes envahirent la Cité des doges. Il fallut l'intervention de l'armée pour nettoyer ces nouvelles écuries d'Augias. Une exposition universelle drainerait un minimum de 80 000 visiteurs par jour, de mars à juin, estiment les chercheurs de l'université. Avec des pointes de 120 000 à 200 000 personnes. Selon ces mêmes chercheurs, ces estimations excessivement prudentes seront sans doute dépassées.

E. DE R.

son désaffaiblissement de Santa Maria et trente-quatre îles abandonnées sur la lagune.

On retrouve ces thèmes dans la bouche du maire, M. Antonio Casellati, qui rêve de revitaliser l'Arsenal, propriété de la marine italienne, une succession de bassins envasés et de hangars crevés clos d'une enceinte fissurée. « C'est un espace très important pour la ville. Pour son passé comme pour son futur. Je propose d'installer dans une partie des bâtiments restaurés le grand musée maritime qui manque à notre ville. A côté de lui, on pourrait trouver les ateliers de construction ou de réparation navales qui sont en train de disparaître et des unités de pointe tournées vers la recherche maritime dans tous les domaines ».

Mais cette association de l'étude et de la recherche, ce pôle tertiaire magique qui doit redonner vie à la ville, n'est pas une utopie. Un groupe, Technomar, qui associe une vingtaine de laboratoires et fait travailler aujourd'hui deux cents personnes — de l'aquaculture à la biologie marine, — est installé à la Giudecca, dans des locaux provisoires. Un investissement de 60 milliards de lires a été consenti.

M. Angelo Marzollo, professeur de mathématiques, toujours en évolution — est plus radical : « Il faut tirer les conséquences de la situation de Venise. C'est une ville maritime. Cette vocation doit être revitalisée. Une ville étudiante. L'université doit être maintenue. Une ville touristique. Le flot des visiteurs doit être rationalisé. Une ville historique. Elle doit être protégée ».

Mais que peut cette vingtaine d'associations (quatre-vingt-neuf au total) et d'individuels pleines de bonnes volontés contre le puissant front industriel et politique mis en place ? La mairie elle-même est fragile. M. Antonio Casellati, membre du parti Parti républicain, est à la tête d'une fragile coalition, (PCI, Verts et PSI) qui risque fort de ne pas être reconduite après les élections administratives du printemps prochain. « Il faut que la communauté internationale, qui est étrangère au petit jeu politique économique qui inspire cette exposition, se manifeste », affirme M. Casellati. Elle seule est assez puissante pour sauver Venise du désastre qui la guette. — Puisse-t-elle être entendue.

EMMANUEL DE ROUX

Un demi-siècle de désastres

VENISE

de notre envoyé spécial

Dès la fin des années vingt, pour tirer Venise de son assoupissement et la doter d'une activité qui ne souillerait pas son centre historique et multiplierait sur place les emplois, deux industriels, Volpi et Cini, décidèrent de la doter, sur la terre ferme, à Marghera, d'un puissant conglomérat chimique.

Le pont du chemin de fer, construit par les Autrichiens au milieu du XIX^e siècle, fut alors doublé par un pont routier. Après la guerre, la zone industrielle s'étend : une énorme raffinerie et un port associé sont ouverts. Sans se préoccuper de la pollution. Les pétroliers se mettent à croiser devant Saint-Marc. Au cri de « Venise va brûler », on creuse un canal qui aiguille le trafic vers la troisième bouche du Lido mais dont l'existence aura des effets pervers sur la fragile écosystème de la lagune.

On débat encore de son influence sur les hautes eaux, dont la ville va souffrir de plus en plus. Celle de 1966 est particulièrement dramatique. Elle provoquera une campagne internationale « Venise spinoia », orchestrée par l'UNESCO, qui publie à cette

occasion un volumineux rapport. En 1970 un prêt international de 300 milliards de lires est consenti pour « sauver Venise ». Il servira essentiellement, dit-on, à soutenir la lire.

Le sénateur Bruno Visentini demande en vain la création d'une autorité pour « coiffer » les administrations qui gèrent l'imbroglio vénitien. En 1973, une loi est votée : « La République italienne préserve le patrimoine de Venise et sa lagune », indique son préambule. Grâce à elle l'extension de la zone industrielle de la terre ferme est définitivement bloquée (d'autant plus facilement que la crise est bientôt là) ; le chauffage au fioul, cause de pollution importante, est interdit dans la ville.

« Tu es comme ennemis les fleuves, la mer, les hommes »

« Venise s'annonce », découvre-t-on alors. L'arrêt du pompage des puits artésiens règle un phénomène que beaucoup nient aujourd'hui. Puis on s'attaque au problème des hautes eaux : Après un projet d'écluse aux débouchés de la lagune, un triple barrage flottant est mis à l'étude. Un prototype « fonctionnant aujourd'hui ». Mais la pollution — d'origine

industrielle, urbaine et agricole — gagne.

Le Parlement italien, en 1984, vote une série de crédits : 9 000 milliards de lires pourront être débouqués sur plusieurs années. Ces crédits seront faiblement utilisés et les retombées de la manne sur Venise seront modestes. Seul le consortium « Venezia Nuova », alimenté par ces fonds publics, pousse ses gros travaux qui doivent « sauver Venise ».

C'est ce noble but qui amènera M. Gianni De Michelis à proposer pour Venise une exposition internationale. Le sénateur Visentini écrivait dans « la Repubblica » du 13 septembre 1989 : « Ne nous étonnons pas que l'Onorevole De Michelis de retour de l'Exposition universelle de Tokyo ait affirmé que le sauvetage de Venise pouvait se résoudre par une Exposition universelle. Qui sait ce qu'aurait pu imaginer l'Onorevole De Michelis de retour d'une grande chasse ou d'une ascension sur l'Himalaya ».

Christoforo Sabbadino, un hydraulicien vénitien notait déjà au XVI^e siècle : « Tu es comme ennemi les fleuves, la mer et les hommes. Dompte les fleuves, retiens la mer et fraine les vents démesurés des hommes ». C'est peut-être la partie du programme la plus difficile à résoudre.

E. DE R.

LE FIGARO

premier quotidien national français

A X X JEUDI 7 DÉCEMBRE 1989 (N° 14 084). — ÉDITION DE 5 HEURES — PRIX : 4,50 F

Sauver Venise

La cité des Doges pourrait accueillir la prochaine exposition universelle en l'an 2000. Ce n'est pas, loin de là, la seule menace qui pèse sur la lagune.

Les grandes civilisations, les civilisations vivantes sont celles dont le présent sait s'appuyer sur le passé et construire l'avenir ; les civilisations qui meurent sont celles qui ne voient plus que leur présent, ses intérêts momentanés et ne vivent que par lui. Autrement dit, ce sont les civilisations où ne valent plus que les intérêts immédiats et leur cupidité. Serait-ce l'image de notre monde

manent pour les structures des rives. Faudra-t-il réveiller le projet insensé d'installer un métro à Venise ? Comment assurer l'hygiène publique ? Venise a gardé un souvenir aussi nauséabond qu'épouvanté du concert nocturne, donné, cette année, par le groupe Pink Floyd qui avait attiré 200 000 auditeurs.

Comment assurer le logement ? La capacité hôtelière

PAR RENÉ HUYGHE

actuel ? L'argent, le gain importent seuls. Contre leur convoitise, quelles luttes ne faut-il pas mener pour que subsistent les valeurs spirituelles qui, seules, comptent dans l'histoire. Quelle dérision que cette vogue de l'art qui passionne aujourd'hui les foules par les cotes qu'atteignent les tableaux dans les ventes.

Le destin de Venise est le plus éclatant témoignage de cette dérive : il a fallu une indignation quasi mondiale pour que soit arrêtée l'extension dévastatrice à sa proximité des industries de Mestre et de Marghera ; il a fallu que, sous l'égide de l'Unesco, soit créée une commission internationale, dont j'assumai la présidence pendant plus de dix ans, pour que fussent prises les mesures fondamentales de sauvegarde, qui entre autres, ont freiné et presque arrêté l'enfoncement progressif de la cité des Doges et la toxicité de son atmosphère empuantie par les chaudières modernes. En Europe et en Amérique ont été collectés les fonds qui ont permis la restauration des monuments essentiels. C'est dire la place de Venise dans la culture mondiale.

Acceptera-t-on de voir s'élever une nouvelle menace et ruiner tant d'efforts ? Le danger est imminent. L'Italie s'est mise sur les rangs pour obtenir d'héberger la prochaine Exposition universelle, celle de l'an 2000 ; pour accueillir son installation elle propose le territoire vénitien : c'est M. de Michelis, propre ministre des Affaires étrangères, qui patronne cette offre.

Enorme foule

Que prévoit-on ? On espère 20 millions de visiteurs, 230 000 par jour, qui viendront s'ajouter au contingent actuel déjà porté au point limite : cette année, au carnaval, le préfet a dû faire fermer l'accès à la ville, quand ce nombre est monté à 130 000 ! Or, les derniers jours, on escompte un afflux quotidien de 580 000 personnes. Comment assurer leur transport ? Le nombre de bateaux circulant sur le Grand Canal est déjà, par les remous qu'il provoque, un danger per-

est déjà utilisée à plein. Construire des hôtels ? Mais où ? Pas de place dans Venise. Sur les îles de la lagune ? Des projets ont été esquissés : mais ce serait défigurer par des bâtiments modernes, visibles de la ville, ses abords immédiats. Or il faut prévoir un complexe de 3 000 chambres ! Le quartier de l'Arsenal est menacé : oserait-on dénaturer cet ensemble monumental qui équilibre la pointe de Venise, alors qu'à son autre extrémité il faudrait ajouter d'autres garages, analogues à celui de Tronchetto qui déshonore déjà l'accès à Venise.

Insensé !

Le maire de la cité et son conseil municipal sont épouvantés par ces perspectives et protestent contre elles ; les comités internationaux, où se sont groupés les plus grands pays d'Europe et d'Amérique qui ont déjà tant œuvré pour la sauvegarde de Venise, ont condamné ce projet insensé, il y a déjà plus d'un an. La presse italienne, *La Stampa*, *Le Corriere della Sierra* ont élevé de véhémentes protestations ; la presse étrangère s'y est jointe : le *Times* a consacré une page entière à ce drame...

Mais des cupidités sont éveillées : les villes de la Vénétie, Trévise, Padoue, Vérone, Vicence supputent les bénéfices commerciaux à attendre (mais pourquoi l'une d'entre elles ne se dévoue-t-elle pas ?), la rumeur court que certains intérêts privés bénéficieront de savantes combinaisons et pèseraient de tout leur poids afin de les réaliser... Va-t-on leur sacrifier Venise, cette ville magique où miraculeusement le passé reste intact, de Byzance avec Saint-Marc, du gothique avec le Palais des Doges, aux splendeurs de la Renaissance et du baroque ?

Qu'on y prenne garde : les civilisations qui assassinent leur passé tuent souvent leur avenir. Et, à cette heure où l'Europe se constitue, oserait-on une telle injure à sa gloire ? Venise l'appelle à son secours.

René HUYGHE
de l'Académie française.

ART

ART VIEW/John Russell

Imagine Venice As a Floating Disneyland

WHAT HAPPENS TO VENICE affects all of us. The great city does not belong only to Italy, or to the Italians. It is held in trust as part of the inheritance of all humankind.

This being so, every possible public attention should be accorded to the projected Expo 2000—a many-centered rambling extravaganza or picturesque World's Fair, impinging in various degrees of intensity from Rovigo to Trieste, that will have as its indispensable ingredient the city of Venice.

If this venture comes to fruition, it will be owed primarily to Gianni De Michelis, now Foreign Minister of Italy, to the Italian Government and to the immensely powerful consortium of commercial and industrial interests that is determined to push it through.

As far as Italy is concerned, the auspices could hardly be more formidable. Though known in part for his recent book on the 250 best discos in Italy, and for his chairmanship of the Italian national basketball association, Mr. De Michelis has his cultural interests and as a politician he is not to be taken lightly.

The chairman of the consortium in question is Mr. De Michelis's brother. The commercial interests concerned include the CIGA hotels, Fiat, Olivetti, I. B. M., Coca-Cola, Philips and the publisher Mondadori, together with banks, insurance companies and venture capitalists. All doubtless will benefit, directly or indirectly, from a scheme that will cover a large amount of ground and, in particular, is intended to give rise to extensive development. Above all, on the northeastern edges of the Venetian lagoon, the sponsors of Expo 2000 see "a potential for a leisure port and recreational facilities of great interest both in terms of town planning and the local economy."

In February of this year, Expo 2000 was looked over by the International Exhibitions Bureau, which exists to monitor the validity of projects of this kind. This very month, a 47-nation board is to meet in Venice to say yes or no to Expo 2000.

We owe it to Venice, and to ourselves, to know more about this project. Is Expo 2000 the long-sought solution to all Venice's problems? Or will it be a catastrophe for which posterity will lay a curse, not only upon the Italians, but upon all those who stood aside and did nothing to prevent it?

As to that, the lines are clearly divided. The city of Venice never asked to be a part of Expo 2000. The Mayor of Venice detests the

If it isn't stopped, Expo 2000 would bring artificial islands, a Sport City and light shows on the Grand Canal.

very idea of it. So do the Venetian police, the Venetian museum authorities and virtually everyone, worldwide, who ranks the preservation of Venice above the creation of a high-tech freak show within a very few miles of it. It is common knowledge in Italy that while Expo 2000 may end by giving a lot of visitors a good time, it is also about power, about votes, about careers and about money.

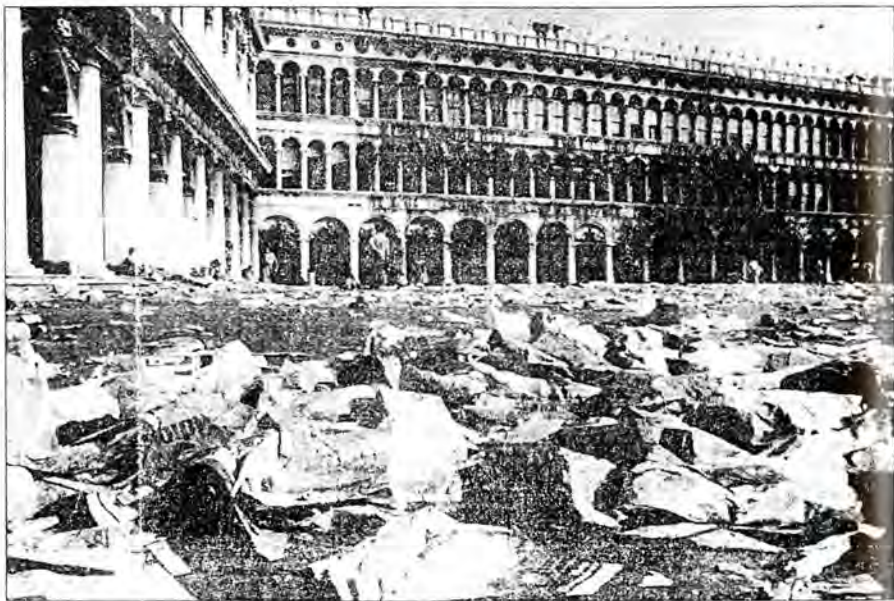
To read the glossy promotional material that has been prepared and put out by an Italian public relations firm, one might think that Venice itself is to lead a charmed and protected life throughout the six-months' run of the Expo. But when popular opposition was manifested in Venice earlier this year, a "spokesman for Mr. De Michelis" was quoted in *The Times of London* as saying simply that "as for the effect on Venice, that's a risk we have to take." It would be interesting to know if that spokesman is still in Mr. De Michelis's employ.

The promoters of Expo 2000 are of course well aware that their plans will meet with opposition. The name of Venice plays no part in the title of Expo 2000. The words "ecological" and "ecosystem" form the leitmotif of many of their presentations. As they see it, not only the lagoon but also the canals of Venice itself are to be the better for the coming of Expo 2000.

In the promotional brochures we read of the regeneration of the lagoon with the help of artificial floating islands, and of its transformation after the end of the Expo into a Natural Lagoon Park. We read of a "Sport City" to be built on an artificial peninsula not far from the airport. We read of hydrofoil and motor boat routes to Venice itself.

There is talk of fish farms, of the transformation of the animal and vegetable biomass,

Continued on Page 47



Canaletto's "Campi S. Polo," top, reminding one that in terms of scale, Venice was as humane a living space as has ever been devised. Above, the Piazza San Marco after a concert by the rock group Pink Floyd last July—The Army had to help clean it up.

It is in trouble with its steady subsidence, inch by dreaded inch. It is in trouble with the recently built deep-water canal that allows tankers to go straight to the mainland industrial complex.

It is in trouble with the factories in Marghera that produce poisonous waste of such a kind, and in such a quantity, that no waste dump will accept it. It is in trouble with the brilliant green algae — likewise industrial in its origin — that fouls the air, compels gondoliers to wear masks and has side effects that on one recent occasion made it necessary to close the Venice airport.

Newest and not least, it is in trouble with the deposits of natural gas that have been detected only six miles away. Given the gigantic income that is expected from them, it is too much to hope that these deposits will not be exploited. But they represent yet another molestation of the great city.

Venice has also a population problem. In the last generation, roughly half its population has deserted it. To put it simply, too few people can find work in Venice. Even fewer can afford a decent place to live in. (When even gondoliers have to commute

from the mainland, something has to be wrong.) Venice in its more seductive aspects has become a city for the very rich, and most of the very rich come for at most a few weeks in the year.

Without affordable housing, and without the possibility of something other than seasonable low-level employment, Venice will become in part a visitors' city and in part a ghost town, the Fatehpur Sikri of the Western world.

Anyone who goes to the Canaletto exhibition that can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum through Jan. 21 will see immediately that in happier times Venice was a working city. Everywhere you looked, someone was doing something constructive. It was a city of narrow streets, narrow bridges and narrow canals, but it also had its grand, open, hospitable spaces.

Looking at Canaletto's "Campo S. Polo," we recognize the magical asymmetry of Venetian open spaces, and the gait of men and women who have time to stop and talk, and just

to turn to specifics) we also see the Gothic palace in which the 21-year-old Casanova once played in the orchestra at a ball.

In terms of scale, Venice was as humane a living space as has ever been devised. It had an inborn equilibrium. Never empty, it was never too full, even on the festive occasions of which Canaletto gave so vivid an account. Above all, it was a city for Venetians. Foreigners were welcome, and some of them were royally fleeced, but fundamentally Venice was there to be lived in, year round, and preferably by people who had been born there.

It is not by scenes of this sort that our generation will be remembered, but by disasters such as the all-night concert that was given in July of this year by Pink Floyd. Equipped for the occasion with a huge temporary waterborne shell that faced the Piazzetta, just off the Piazza S. Marco, the rock group attracted a crowd estimated at 200,000.

The point about Venice is that its few large open spaces are often

reached by way of narrow alleys that in many cases are mere slits in the wall. Venice was built for people who wanted to stroll around, but who also had somewhere to go to and liked to take the shortest way home.

Where 200,000 people are crowded into small spaces for long periods of time and most of them have nowhere to go to, problems of personal hygiene are bound to assert themselves. That is why, on the morning after the Pink Floyd concert, the center of Venice was fouled in depth — and in ways that no reader would wish to have detailed at the breakfast table. To clean it up, the Italian Army had to be called in.

This is not, therefore, the best moment at which to put forward a scheme by which Venice may be asked to receive crowds every day of the week for month after month that will be as large as those that turned up for the Pink Floyd concert.

Venice is, and will always be, a very fragile city. Already it cannot deal with the crowds that want to go there. On the last night of this year's carnival, the city was overcrowded to such an extent that the causeway

from the mainland had to be closed.

For the three-week World Cup soccer matches to be held in Verona in June-July 1990, more than 300,000 excursion tickets have already been sold by the Italian railways to people who plan to come into Venice (in most cases for the day). The current figure of 25,000 visitors a day in the high season is already the very most that the city can accept. If it is asked to receive a further 100,000 or 150,000 a day during Expo 2000, the damage will be beyond calculation.

If it were known for certain that a large proportion of the profits of Expo 2000 would be invested for the long-term needs of Venice itself, there might conceivably be some ground for negotiation as to whether there might be redeeming aspects. But as nothing has ever been put on paper in that regard, we have to foresee what Sydney Freedberg has called "the inevitability and finality of the destructive effect."

Here, if ever, is a project which world opinion should stop while there is still time. □

Trees would move along the water like Birnam Wood in a water-rounded Dunsinane.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1989

Eagerly the Promoters of Expo 2000 Make Plans for Venice

Continued From Page 41

and of the re-creation of freshwater flood lands that will "encourage the repopulation of the area by a range of biotypes."

We read of an artificial grass-covered hill, called the "Magnet," that will stand in the middle of an artificial lagoon and serve as the nerve center of the Expo. Capable of handling 150,000 visitors a day, it will brief them as to all that is going on.

But in the presentation made in February to the International Exhibitions Bureau, there was also talk of a possible underwater subway, of a "Floating Bar 'Florian' in the basin of St. Mark's," of underwater light shows along the Grand Canal, of "multimodal aquatic vehicles" charging through Venice's canals and of trees moving along the water like Birnam Wood come to a water-wooded Dunsinane.

At the entrance to Venice, there were to be "clouds of cold-water vapor with color images projected by laser beams that constitute the ceremonial entrances that in a crescendo unite the Veneto, the Lagoon and Venice." We also read of the estimated annual return of 7.6 percent that investors could hope to receive.

Connoisseurs of p.r. pap will know perfectly well that without the potential of Venice as an attraction Expo 2000 would never have got even as far as it has. In Expo 2000, Venice is the indispensable ingredient. The true "Magnet" is not a humpbacked artificial hill overloaded with gadgetry. It is the incomparable city itself. Given the closeness of the "Magnet" to Venice itself, it is inconceivable that most of the 150,000 visitors a day will not opt to go and see it.

Informed opinion in this country is nothing if not succinct. "It will be the end of Venice," said Everett Fahy, chairman of the department of European painting at the Metropolitan Museum. "It's absolutely appalling," said Sydney Freedberg, till lately chief curator at the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The presentation, in his view, was "inflated nonsense, with a great potential for danger and no substantive evidence of anything that would be to the good of Venice."

Among the many disinterested private bodies that since 1966 have been paying for the restoration of individual buildings all over Venice, not one regards the project with anything but outrage and loathing.

Those bodies do not, of course, have unlimited millions behind them, as does Expo 2000. They function thanks to private donations from people who love Venice and are working to preserve it, day by day and inch by incomparable inch. A sample of their activities will make that point. Since the calamitous high tide of 1966 put much of Venice under water, financial support has been forthcoming from the United States for the Church of the Gesuiti, the Church of San Francesco della Vigna, the Chiesa della Pietà, the Chiesa di San Pantalon, the Chiesa di San Moise, the Ca' Rezzonico, the Church of San Pietro Martine in Murano, and that most spectacular of outdoor winding staircases, the Scala Contarini del Bovolo.

Financial backing came from France (the Ca' D'Oro, the Casino Venier), from West Germany (the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and the Scuola Grande di San Marco), from Britain (the Querini-Stampalia Gallery and the Chiesa di San Giorgio Maggiore), from Switzerland (the great Church of the Frari), from Australia (the Chiesa di San Martino) and from Canada and the Netherlands. These results were achieved by thousands of private citizens who could not bear to stand by and see Venice in decay. Their voices should be heard.

It is not, of course, in dispute that Venice can do with some salvation, whether by gradual perseverance or by a single great stroke of the imagination. For Venice is in deep trouble. It is only just coming to terms with the dreaded phenomenon of the "high water" that from time to time sweeps into the city.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1989

The Sunday Telegraph

0 * * * *

NOVEMBER, 5 1989

PRICE 50p

World Fair jamboree will turn Venice into Disneyland-on-Sea'

by Leslie Childe

ROME

years, theatres and cinemas everywhere, fake clouds used as the screens for laser light shows, trees borne along on the water, and ornate fountains splashing in the city's famous lagoon.

Despite drawing millions of tourists annually from all over the world, the sinking city still cannot raise enough cash to protect it from continuing ecological, social, economic and environmental decline.

And that, insists the 48-year-old De Michelis — an MP since 1976 — is where the Expo 2000 idea can bail the city out "and guarantee it a dignified future".

The politician, who has headed the state participation and labour ministries as well as serving as deputy premier before being promoted to his present post, told me: "It won't be a vulgar Disneyland.

"The Expo 2000 will safeguard the city's future and make up for all the lack of enterprise during the past 40 years.

"It will be a great occasion. I've been backing it all the way."

He is undismayed and unre-

pentant about mounting attacks from the conservationists. "If the plan is approved we will be able to consign my beloved Venice to the next millenium!"

The sports-loving statesman — he is also head of Italy's Basketball Federation — last

year wrote a highly-successful guide book to Italy's top 250 discotheques, titled *Where Shall We Go to Dance Tonight?*

The Venice regional government has already spent more than £500,000 on a feasibility study for the exposition.

Forty private and publicly-owned companies have formed a consortium to ensure that La Serenissima — The Most Serene One, as the city is called — will lead the world into the 21st century with a laser-lit bang.

The conservationists counter the Expo 2000 supporters by insisting that the answer to Venice's problems lies in fewer, not more, tourists.

They suggest a daily ceiling of 22,000, compared with 180,000 who often crowd the narrow alleys and canals during the summer months.

They say that Expo 2000 could bring an average of 231,000 tourists flooding in every day — or even as many as 600,000 daily during the peak periods. Venice, they say, would be suffocated by "this horror show".

And the former Treasury Minister, Signor Bruno Visentini, a respected economist, has compared the De Michelis plans to the grandiose projects of the disgraced Central Africa Emperor, Jean-Bidel Bokassa.



De Michelis: wrote book on discos

ITALY'S colourful and controversial Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis is at the centre of an uproar over plans for a World's Fair in his native city of Venice in the year 2000.

In between dealing with the weighty affairs of state and writing learned articles about Italy's discotheques, the long-haired Signor De Michelis is one of the leaders of a powerful pressure group campaigning for the exposition which opponents say would turn the lagoon city into a Disneyland-on-Sea.

De Michelis declares his sole interest is in saving Venice from further decay. But conservationists and environmentalists see the plans as little short of madness.

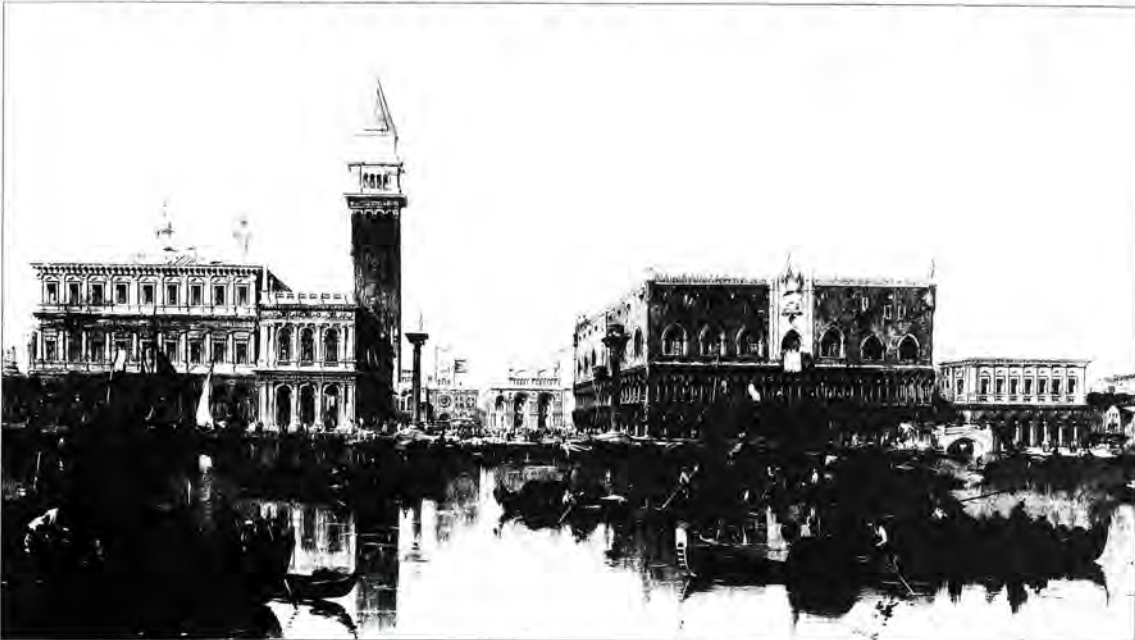
Venetians, still smarting from the chaos left behind after the Pink Floyd rock concert in July, are now contemplating the daunting Expo 2000 plans.

These include a futuristic underground railway system, a fake lagoon in the unattractive area near the airport where 70,000 visitors could be accommodated, restaurants on floating platforms, "multimodal aquatic vehicles" plying the city's canals, a congress hall to accommodate thousands, an ultra-modern exhibition complex near the ancient arsenal which has lain abandoned for

- COOKING: MIGHTY MEAT STEWS
- WINE: THE BEAUJOLAIS PHENOMENON
- EATING OUT: JONATHAN MEADES
- SHOPPING: THROWAWAY TABLEWARE

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11 1989

NIGHTMARE IN VENICE



Two faces of Venice: romantic (top), by Robert Pritchett, 1828-1907... and rabbitly after a pop concert
 Next month a 47-nation congress will decide whether to elect Venice as host to Expo 2000. But Brian James discovers that the people of Venice do not want the honour, fearing it may bring about the destruction of their magical city

Venice, born uniquely with its feet in water and today often living up to its waltz in filth, is assailed by every accidental consequence of a century of man's careless abuse of nature. Now it faces a deliberate problem which could inflict irreparable harm on its most sensitive architectural treasures and destroy its character forever.

Next month it will be decided whether Venice should become host to Expo 2000, an "honour" which, if granted, will condemn the already choked city to 20 million extra visitors and could ensure that the chaos of one nightmare evening endured this summer will be repeated again every day for six months. The prospect enrages those who live there, appals those who have fought for 25 years to preserve the heritage of Venice, and therefore surely would never be tolerated by any responsible authority.

Surely? In fact, it is the Italian government which promotes the drive to secure Expo 2000 for Venice. So does the regional government. So does the provincial administration. And so do 35 of Italy's largest corporations which has formed the promoting consortium.

Those who stand against this power are the people of the city, led by their mayor, the city police, and the city students, the city's scholars and museum superintendents. With them are a host of international organizations that begged worldwide for money to preserve Venetian treasures, and now wonder whether their energy was wasted.

They are united in opposition, and not a few share the view that what is at issue here is something more sinister than mere entrepreneurial opportunism gone amok: not quite conspiracy, but rather a collective official Italian weariness with Venice and all its problems.

Has Venice simply become too expensive and too troublesome to preserve in its ancient form as a living city? Do its needs hold up development of the industrial region in its hinterland, and does

it stand as an archaic impediment to a potentially thrilling exploration for natural gas? If so, then perhaps a final solution, which Expo 2000 would launch, is a future as a sort of live-in museum, a waterland theme park which shuts its gates behind the last visitor to depart each night.

Paradox, of course. Yet events encourage the darkest dreams. The City of Venice never asked to be considered an Expo site and its council refuses to this day to accept its candidature.

Only after local protest, and back-door diplomacy by the international community in Venice, was its mayor slated in and given 20 minutes to voice the opposition when the inspecting team from the Paris-based organization Bureau International des Expositions flew to Venice last month to inspect potential pavilion sites.

Like most things in Italy the future is about money. Like all things in Italy it is also about politics. The word "Let Italy host Expo in Venice" were first heard from Gianni De Michelis, now Minister for Foreign Affairs, four years ago. The proposition was not taken too seriously for De Michelis was from the area of Venice, and must therefore know the bizarre impracticability of siting an Expo amid the complex of canals where no square yard of unused land exists. But that was seriously to misread the value to his political future of bringing a fortune in road and rail development, in tourism and trade to the region where he gathers his votes.

This is why a student wearing a De Michelis lookalike mask was ceremoniously presented with the "Aulia Award for Barbarism" during a demonstration that greeted the arrival in Venice of the BIE delegation. There was a Fallin-esque atmosphere about the fustling of protesters' boats on the misty Canal Grande, the chanting, candlelit procession to Ponte di Rialto, yet the may/majesty seemed oddly lifeless and unbelonging.

A sense of helplessness might well arise, because of the unwavering determination of those who

would bring Expo ("The risk to Venice? We just have to accept it," said a spokesman for De Michelis the morning after the demonstration) and because there can be no compromise: the gulf between what Expo would mean and what Venice can accommodate seems unbridgeable. Two events earlier this year made this clear.

At the annual carnival in February the district Prefet decided "for the sake of public order" to close the city. Barricades placed across the causeway linking Venice with the mainland prevented more visitors adding to the chaos at the narrow bridges and squares. Police had estimated Venice was swollen by 130,000 visitors that day.

Then, on July 15, the pop group Pink Floyd attracted 200,000 into Venice for an all-night concert. Venice is almost totally without public toilets, so in addition to a

tide of discarded soft-drink cans and food wrappings, Venetians awoke next day to find many of their canals and alleys awash with urine and excreta; clearing up was so beyond the resources of the city that the army was drafted in.

Yet, based on the proposals of the Expo consortium and on evidence from past exhibitions where attendances have frequently surpassed 60 million, an unchallenged study by Venice University's economics department makes this forecast:

The average attendance of Expo-driven visitors to Venice will be around 210,000 per day compared with 25,000 on a typical high-season day at present. And on special occasions, say at the weekend of opening or closing ceremonies, that attendance could rise to 600,000 or even 600,000.

The Expo consortium has already much-modified its plans.

No longer is it proposing to rebuild the famous Arsenale area where Marco Polo's galleys once sailed; instead, a principal site will be on the mainland beside Marco Polo airport. But faced with the implacable facts of the university study, it has counteracted with an implausible solution.

Although it insists, this will indeed be labelled the "Venice Expo" many attractions will be spread about the entire Veneto region, with events staged in Padua or Verona, and visitors billeted as far away as Vicenza or Mantova. This is as audacious as proposing to invite the world to spend their days in Cleopatra's.

Will there be a single visitor attending the Venice Expo who

Continued overleaf

NIGHTMARE IN VENICE

Continued from page 31

will be content not to visit Venice? Will they be forbidden entry? What is suggested is fraudulent: Venice will not lend its name to a forgery," declares its mayor, Antonio Castellani, a lawyer.

Like most Venetians, he was unaware of the power of the thrust to secure Expo until his election in December 1987. He found on his desk a document from the BIE implying a *fait accompli*. "But there could be no question: Venice was not, and could never be a candidate city."

Castellani says he was, finally, well received by the BIE delegation. "We spoke for 20 minutes, 10 minutes of which about the weather. I managed to tell them of our very great fears, that while Expo will be good for the economy of the region, the death of Venice is too big a price. But I am still frightened. For I have no idea what they will decide."

(Even after speaking to Ted Allan, the British head of the BIE delegation, I could offer no reassurance. Civilly, Allan pointed out "the matter was not *judicium*," and while the "protection of a magical city" was vitally important, the technical feasibility of a multi-centred Expo and the depth of support from national government were the central questions for his team.)

The mayor continues: "To defend Venice, to prevent that if becomes no more a city of unique beauty but an empty museum... one, yes, like Disneyland... once more I think the world must come to help. Very quickly."

Very quickly indeed. For after their filing and tour of Veneto sites, the BIE delegation was whisked to Rome in the persuasion of De Michelis and his allies. At the Douvres meeting of the 47-nation BIE congress the change between the claims of Venice, Hannover and Toronto will be made if the Venetian protest were to be dismissed, then Italy would have the strongest claim.

Could the Italian authorities really be so crafty? Enrico Chiaro, wealthy industrialist, president of the powerful Friends of Museums in Venice and a board member of Italy's national trust, has no doubts. But there, he used to employ the man who is now chairman of the Expo consortium: "These men will not turn aside because of what students cry or what art-lovers say. Too much is at stake. They do this for power. For careers. For money. People will launch themselves on the death of an incomparable city."

"No attention, therefore, will be paid to the special problems of this city," he says. "Every apple that is eaten in Venice must be carried in by boat and then on to hand. And then its core must be carried out."

I have left my house and wood motorboats, unable to move a pace for one hour at the heights of carnival. These men want to bring twice as many people each day... 20 million more people in San Marco each day... 20 million more people crowding into tiny chapels every time it rains. It is absurd. It is unbelievable. But it is not impossible, for behind Expo is a very great and powerful political push.

Local protest, but government and business backing may be stronger

More wash, and thus more damage. They say they will build more toilets, but where? There is not an inch of spare land, so more destruction: lack of hotels, beds? They talk of building on artificial islands, that means less space for the water to expand, so more flooding."

Sir Ashley speaks of a city already dying from an excess of tourist interest. In under 40 years half its inhabitants have been driven out, the population is now 70,000, compared with 170,000 in the 1950s as the shops that once sold them bread closed and responded to peddle carnival masks or model gondolas made in Taiwan. "For 23 years and more Venice has lived on the brink, finding desperate measures for its many problems... more this," Sir Ashley says.

Those problems included the subsidence of the ancient city as a result of nearly five metres a year, highlighted by the chilling 1966 floods and the people's anger caused by the extraction of subterranean water by factories as the Marco Polo industrial complex built on the lagoon-edge. Now that extraction is forbidden, Venice dips into the mud at "only" four-fifths of an inch a year.



Local protest, but government and business backing may be stronger

"They say there will be control, laws. There were laws to prevent Pink Floyd. Too much money, so no one objects?" But says *quattro* problems loom.

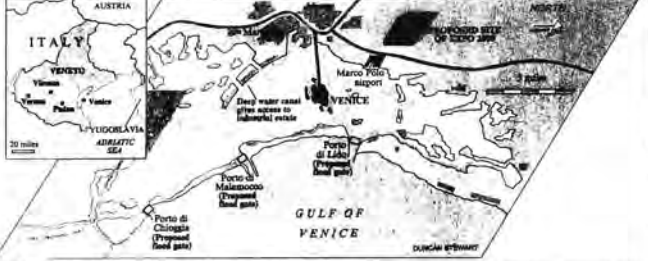
The hydro-geological balance of the lagoon has been destroyed, he argues, by the dredging of a deep-water canal permitting tankers to reach the industrial complex. In some places the 49th channel has been deepened to 5.5 yards by the consequent tide race. Now this volume of dredged faster water is to be banked back by huge barriers across the three lagoon entrances. They are massive, complex mechanisms in motion. And if, one day, even one fails, what then? Venice dies."

The point where the tides must meet to cleanse the winding canals with their swirling waters has shifted to the west, and today Venice stands in increasingly stagnant water that he worries-must about the rich forecasts for natural gas from fields discovered just miles out from Venice.

Fears that gas-extraction may cause subsidence loom less than the apprehension that nothing will be allowed to stand in the path of their exploitation. "I am told the profits from these gas fields may be huge. Enough to pay off Italy's national debt. To achieve that, nothing would be spared."

Total sympathy for Venice is impossible. Its traders are among the most vocal on earth, their short-changing more a religion than mere ritual, and visitors do not so much look into its heart as runners by Accorsi or Vise to help even Venetians are controlled by the politicians they observe.

But perhaps there have chosen to give them guardianship of one of the most remarkable cities on the planet, because, if not because of its very life, the world's most influential should use the first line that are left to prevent Venice from being left to the chaos of becoming a seaborne wasteland. In Expo 2000's final stand.



Plan for disaster? Venice is already threatened by flooding and pollution; experts fear that millions more Expo 2000 visitors could increase the risks

Frankfurter Allgemeine

ZEITUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

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Am Abgrund

„Expo 2000“ in Venedig?

Am 15. Dezember fällt in Rom die Entscheidung, ob Venedig in den nächsten zehn Jahren in seinen sozialen und baulichen Strukturen durchgreifend verändert wird. An diesem Tag berät das „Bureau International des Expositions“, ob es dem Vorschlag einflussreicher Regierungskreise, angeführt vom derzeitigen Außenminister Gianni De Michelis, folgen wird, im Jahr 2000 die Internationale Weltausstellung (kurz: Expo 2000) in und bei Venedig abzuhalten.

Gegen das Projekt haben sich nicht allein die venezianische Stadtverwaltung und die Venezianer ohne Wenn und Aber ausgesprochen. „Italia Nostra“, eine hochverdiente und an Mitgliedern sehr reiche Kulturschutzorganisation, dazu die privaten Hilfsorganisationen aus aller Welt sowie zahlreiche Persönlichkeiten des kulturellen Lebens in Europa und Amerika haben in leidenschaftlichen Appellen die Verantwortlichen beschworen, den aberwitzigen Plan fallenzulassen.

Vorspiel: Bei der Generalprobe zu diesem Jahrtausendereignis, dem berühmtesten Pink-Floyd-Konzert am 15. Juli dieses Jahres, haben 150 000 Besucher (Venedig zählt derzeit etwa 80 000 Einwohner) nicht nur ein Meer von Unrat zurückgelassen, sondern sind vielerorts in bedrohliche Situationen geraten. Beim Karnival 1989 mußte die Brücke zum Festland an einem Tag polizeilich gesperrt werden, da das Risiko für Leib und Leben der Besucher und der Bewohner zu groß geworden war. Die Begleitumstände beider Ereignisse hatten ein internationales Echo, die Befürworter der Expo 2000 sahen im lebensbedrohenden Chaos jedoch nur eine Folge organisatorischer Mängel, die unschwer zu beheben seien. Diese Argumentation deckt sich mit den beschwichtigenden Äußerungen der Veranstalter der Fußballweltmeisterschaft im nächsten Jahr, bei deren hektischer Vorbereitung mehrere Arbeiter tödlich verunglückten und in mehreren Städten schwere urbanistische Sünden begangen wurden.

Eine gründliche, an Daten reiche Studie der Universität Venedig, die im Auftrag der Stadtverwaltung erstellt wurde, hat die Touristenströme untersucht und festgestellt, daß während der Saison an einem normalen Tag 25 000 Besucher die Stadt bevölkern, während die maximale Aufnahmebereitschaft bei etwa 100 000 Besuchern liegt, eine Zahl, die im letzten Jahr einige Male erreicht wurde. Während der Öff-

nungszeit der Expo 2000, also für ein halbes Jahr, muß jedoch pro Tag mit etwa 230 000 Besuchern gerechnet werden, an einigen herausragenden Tagen sogar zwischen 400 000 und 600 000.

Es ist jedem aufmerksamen Besucher deutlich, daß Venedig durch die derzeitige touristische Übernutzung in seiner Sozialstruktur bereits gelitten hat. Masken- und Glasgeschäfte haben die Tante-Emma-Läden verdrängt, für die noch verbliebenen Einwohner wird es immer schwieriger, in der Stadt zu leben. Sollte die Entscheidung für die Expo 2000 fallen, wird die Stadt sich auf die Verpflegung von durchschnittlich 230 000 Touristen pro Tag einstellen. Venedig würde zum Kaufhaus mit Übernachtungsmöglichkeit, die Abwanderung der Bevölkerung aus einer nicht mehr lebenswerten, der Spekulation und dem Raubbautourismus überantworteten Stadt wäre unvermeidlich.

Der Ansturm an Touristen während eines halben Jahres wird tiefgreifende Eingriffe in das bauliche und städtebauliche Gefüge der Stadt zur Folge haben. Um die Massen in der Stadt zu verteilen, müssen die Verkehrswege verändert werden. Straßenerweiterungen scheinen (noch?) nicht geplant, denkbar ist die Anlage einer Ringstraße sowie von Zubringerstraßen durch die Lagune auf den Lido sowie auf andere Inseln. Der alte Vorschlag einer Untergrundbahn (Haltestellen: Piazza S. Marco und Arsenal) wird derzeit wieder propagiert. Hinzu kommt eine Vervielfachung des Bootsverkehrs auf den Kanälen, dessen verheerende Folgen für die Statik der Bauwerke bekannt sind.

Venedig hat keine Kanalisation. Ein System, das ohne Schaden für das Erscheinungsbild der Stadt anwendbar wäre, ist nicht bekannt. Schon jetzt fördern die Touristenströme mit ihren Abwässerungen das alljährliche, von pestilenzartigem Gestank begleitete Umkippen der Lagune. Die Expo 2000 brächte das Ende des so empfindlichen, bereits schwer belasteten Ökosystems Lagune. Wer heute glaubt, das Projekt müsse scheitern, weil es die Stadt und ihre Sozialstruktur zerstöre, ihre Bewohner vertreibe und Venedig zum gewinnbringenden Disneyland mache, irrt. Die skrupellose Durchsetzung des Pink-Floyd-Konzerts, bei dem es wie durch ein Wunder keine Toten gab, gegen erheblichen Widerstand nicht nur der mutigen Denkmalpflege, hat die Venezianer eines Besseren belehrt. Fruchtet der internationale Protest in Rom nichts, werden die Venezianer und die Freunde der Stadt sich einiges einfallen lassen müssen, um zu retten, was zu retten ist.

WOLFGANG WOLTERS

noterat

Rom

Av CAJ LUNDGREN

TILL ÅR 2000 kan det tyckas vara långt kvar, men i Italien går debattens vågor redan höga kring ett högst eventuellt evenemang på tröskeln till nästa årtusende. Det gäller idén att förlägga en världsutställning det året till Venedig, den sjunkande lagunstaden som redan är hårt ansträngd av turisternas horder och andra former av miljöförstöring. I denna vecka sammanträder delegater från fyrtiosju nationer, medlemmar av den internationella utställningsbyrå, i Paris för att begrunda rapporter från de team som har undersökt förutsättningarna på de tre platser som står på kandidatlistan – förutom Venedig handlar det om Toronto och Hannover.

Venedigborna, som ännu med fasa minns det kaos som uppstod när popbandet Pink Floyd höll konsert för hundratals människor på Markusplatsen i somras, betackar sig för äran trots de ekonomiska aspekterna. Idén kom emellertid ursprungligen från Gianni De Michelis, numera utrikesminister, och tycks vara väl förankrad i den italienska regeringen. Det slutliga beslutet om utställningsort kommer att fattas först till våren.

Venedigs försvarare gör nu allt för att avvärja hotet. En lång rad föreningar i skilda länder, däribland svenska Pro Venezia, är starkt engagerade, och stadens borgmästare gav vältaliga uttryck för oron när inspektionsteamet från Bureau International des Expositions kom på besök i oktober. Demonstranter fyllde Canal Grande med ett vimmel av båtar och tågade över Rialtobron med körer av slagord och levande ljus i händerna.

DEN EKONOMISKA fakulteten vid Venedigs universitet har beräknat att världsutställningen skulle få 230 000 besökare i snitt varje dag – att jämföra med 25 000 en normal dag under Venedigs högsäsong. Utställningskonsortiet har tagit intryck härav och ändrat ursprungsplanerna, som omfattade en kraftig ombyggnad av det historiska arsennalsområdet i utkanten av centrala Venedig. Man vill i stället lägga utställningens centrum nära Marco Poloflygplat-

sen på fastlandet. Men kritikerna påpekar givetvis att mycket få besökare skulle hoppa över själva staden och nöja sig med de bitar av evenemanget som man vill placera i Padua, Vicenza eller Verona.

Tanken att minska trycket på Venedig genom någon sorts besökskvotering diskuterades redan efter Pink Floyd-konserterna men anses svår att genomföra. Dock kan det stigande miljömedvetandet i Italien beräknas slå igenom mer och mer. Att lutande tornet i Pisa stängs för allmänheten är redan ett accepterat faktum, och att Venedig är en öppen stad år 2000 kan man nog inte utan vidare ta för givet.



Alessandro Manzoni – oumbärlig i skolan.

ETT VECKOSLUT i november håller de italienska förlagen bokmässan på Biblioteca Nazionale i Rom, under sympatiskt anspråkslösa former – fritt inträde, stillsam bokförsäljning – och publiken strömmar till i stora skaror. Det nybyggda bibliotekets stora aula är proppfull när Luciano De Crescenzo håller föredrag om den "libridinösa" drift som får människor att älska boken även i videons och datorernas tidevarv.

Filosofen och Neapelskildraren De Crescenzo – känd även i Sverige för sina sokratiska dialoger med professor Bellavista som centralfigur – har ett allvarligt ärende också: att avtäckta en staty, föreställande en klassisk tänkare, som

monument över en rad på sistone nedlagda boklädor i Rom. Skälet är de skyhöga hyrorna i centrum som tränger ut bokhandlarna och släpper in jeansbutikerna. För den summa en fattig student förr betalade för en pocketbok kan han nu köpa en T-shirt i samma lokal, förklarade De Crescenzo för en starkt engagerad publik, delvis rörd till ursinnets tårar. Närmast i tur till nedläggning står Libreria Frattina, ett kärt boktempel på en gata där klädbodar och kaféer redan trängs.

EN SVENSK GÄST kan emellertid knappast klaga över klena möjligheter att köpa böcker i Rom: de kvarvarande bibliotekerna ligger alltså synbart tätare än i Stockholm. Och kärleken till litteraturen tar mycket konkreta uttryck, senast i form av den uppståndelse som vållats av en TV-serie byggd på den största italienska artonhundratalsromanen.

Alessandro Manzonis "I promessi sposi", De trolovade, hamnade på andra plats tätt efter Dantes gudomliga komedi när tidningen La Stampa nyligen frågade sin läsekrets vilka böcker som var mest oumbärliga i skolans litteraturundervisning. En TV-version av romanen, regisserad av Salvatore Nocita, har de senaste veckorna setts av cirka sexton miljoner italienare och fyllt kultursidorna i pressen med debattinlägg, enkäter och rundabordsdiskussioner om det sätt varpå det älskade verket har hanterats.

Protesterna har övervägt och mest handlat om den alltför starka tonvikten på action ("Manzoni som spaghettivästern") och skådespelarvallet: det är mest utlänningar i huvudrollerna och serien är inspelad på engelska, med dubbing till italienska (som allt annat utländskt i TV och på bio). Oavsett troheten mot förlagan är den vacker, välgjord och spännande och kommer antagligen att visas även i Sverige med tiden, utan vidhängande uppståndelse. Som tecken på hur intensivt levande det litterära arvet alltså är i Italien får dock rabaldrat på hemmaplan betraktas som både glädjande och avundsvärd.

EL PAÍS

DIARIO INDEPENDIENTE DE LA MAÑANA

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EL PAÍS, sábado 16 de diciembre de 1989

LA CULTURA

43

El alcalde de Venecia protesta en París contra la candidatura de su ciudad a la Expo 2000

La decisión final se aplaza a junio, mientras crecen las críticas contra el proyecto

J. A. SOROLLA / J. ANTÓN, París / Barcelona

El Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), organismo responsable de determinar la ciudad que acogerá la Exposición Universal del año 2000, se reunió el jueves en París para estudiar las tres candidaturas: Hannover, Toronto y Venecia. Tras escuchar los informes de las comisiones de inspección, el organismo se limitó a aprobar las tres candidaturas y a aplazar a junio su decisión final. No obstante, un participante en la reunión señaló que las posibilidades de Venecia han disminuido a causa de la polémica desencadenada en torno a su candidatura, polémica puesta de manifiesto bajo las propias ventanillas del BIE por una delegación de venecianos contrarios a la Expo y encabezados por su alcalde, Antonio Casellati.

La candidatura de Venecia fue presentada en París con una novedad, primer resultado de las críticas que en Italia y en todo el mundo está cosechando la idea de celebrar la Expo 2000 en la ambientalmente frágil ciudad de los canales. La de Venecia sería una Expo especial, dicen los delegados italianos, con un replanteamiento radical que pondría el acento en la calidad y no en la cantidad de lo expuesto. Sería además una feria "descentralizada", con Venecia ciudad como núcleo simbólico, pero ubicada sobre otras zonas, y cuidadosa de la ecología. La nueva propuesta propone significativamente como tema de la exposición *La construcción del equilibrio del sistema Tierra*.

"Han dado la vuelta al planteamiento", señaló un asistente a la reunión del BIE, "pero se trata de una candidatura difícil, y que además se aparta de las normas: la Expo se concede a ciudades y no a regiones".

La protesta en París del alcalde Casellati, republicano, encabezando un "comité por el no" de un centenar de ciudadanos de la Serenissima, es solamente el último eslabón, por el momento, de una cadena de críticas contra la candidatura.

La comisión de investigación del BIE ya se encontró con un boicoteo al *vaporetto* con el que debían surcar los canales

de la ciudad de San Marcos, y el puente que une la ciudad con tierra firme puede verse estos días lleno de pintadas que proclaman "Expo no", alternadas con algún más visceral "De Michelis, bastardo". Gianni de Michelis, ministro de Asuntos Exteriores italiano, está considerado uno de los principales impulsores de la candidatura veneciana, y algunos medios le han acusado de tener intereses económicos privados en el proyecto, a través de un hermano.

Ataques menos politizados contra la Expo son los lanzados por asociaciones culturales y especialistas en arte internacionales. Efectuar la exposición universal en Venecia, dicen los críticos —que aumentan día a día—, sería darle la puntilla a una ciudad empeñada en una batalla a muerte contra sus problemas ambientales. El acontecimiento colocaría sobre la maltrata Serenissima varios millones suplementarios de visitantes.

Curiosamente, la polémica internacional ha coincidido con la celebración en Venecia de un encuentro de ciudades de todo el mundo enfrentadas con el agua. Según el programa, De Michelis, que desde luego no apareció, debía pronunciar el discurso de clausura, ante, entre otros, el alcalde Casellati, presidente del centro organiza-



Una muestra de la contaminación en las aguas de Venecia.

dor de las jornadas. Pero eso no evitó la polémica: el que sí se presentó fue otro ministro, el de Ambiente, que se enzarzó en una polémica con el presidente de la junta regional véneta, Franco Cremonese, sobre la responsabilidad (Estado o Gobierno regional) en la lentitud con que se procede ante el deterioro ambiental de la laguna. Alcaldes, científicos y técnicos de todo el mundo (desde Port Moresby —Papúa— a Singapur, pasando por Osaka y Río de Janeiro) han sido estupefactos testigos del espectáculo

mientras, fuera, la marea alta lamía los escalones de las iglesias y palacios.

Las jornadas concluyeron, polémica política aparte, con una llamada a las ciudades costeras para que asuman su responsabilidad frente a un posible alzamiento de las aguas como resultado del efecto invernadero. Los especialistas han convenido que las obras de ingeniería *hard*, las soluciones tecnológicas fuertes, no son la mejor solución contra el mar y han recomendado estrategias flexibles y adaptadas a la ecología.

Los bienes de Alberti en Roma, cedidos al museo del poeta en Cádiz

JUSTO ROMERO, Cádiz

Todos los bienes que se conservan en Roma pertenecientes a Rafael Alberti pasarán a engrosar el futuro museo que se establecerá en la casa portuense en que el poeta pasó los primeros años de su vida. Alberti entregó ayer en Cádiz a Alfonso Perales, presidente de la Diputación Provincial, un documento notarial por el que se ceden "gratuitamente" todas las propiedades romanas del poeta a la fundación que lleva su nombre. Entre estos objetos se encuentra la importante colección pictórica de Alberti, que comprende diversas obras de Picasso.

Entre los bienes que Rafael Alberti conserva aún en Roma (ciudad en la que pasó la última etapa de su largo exilio), y que, según el documento que ayer entregó Alberti, serán traídos a España en fecha próxima, se encuentran, además de numerosos manuscritos y ediciones —tanto de su obra como de la de otros escritores amigos—, la colección de pinturas del poeta, que incluye, junto a la de Picasso, firmas como la de los artistas Tàpies, Miró, Orellana, Guayasamin, Ortega, Genovés, Saura y el propio Alberti.

El origen del largo proceso de cesión que culmina hoy arranca de 1979, año en que Rafael Alberti y María Teresa León, su esposa, realizaron una escritura notarial por la cual "la sociedad conyugal establecida por ambos dona a El Puerto de Santa María, de forma gratuita, todos los bienes que se conservan en Roma".

La escritura, otorgada el 17 de octubre de 1979 por el notario de Madrid Manuel Ramos Armero, condiciona esta donación —que ya se conoce como el *legado Alberti*— al hecho de que los bienes "no podrán enajenarse posteriormente y deberán ubicarse en la casa portuense del poeta".

