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# *Discorsi per Immagini*: Of Political and Architectural Experimentation

**Amit Wolf**

*Queste proposte di lavoro comprendono anche una possibilità di impiego culturale degli architetti al di fuori della professione integrata nel capitale. Attraverso la partecipazione al movimento di classe questi trovano il loro campo di ricerca: l'architettura dal punto di vista operaio, la progettazione delle nuove Karl-Marx-Hof in cui la struttura dell'abitazione collettiva è lo strumento di battaglia.*
Claudio Greppi and Alberto Pedrolli, "Produzione e programmazione territoriale"[1]

*Of primary interest to us, however, is the question of why, until now, Marxist oriented culture has…denied or concealed the simple truth that, just as there can be no such thing as a political economics of class, but only a class critique of political economics, likewise there can never be an aesthetics, art or architecture of class, but only a class critique of aesthetic, art, architecture and the city.*
Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology"[2]

No account of recent trends in American architecture should fail to mention Manfredo Tafuri's "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology." This text played a vital role in the distancing of ideas from things in the intellectual conceptualization of the profession; indeed, it set the ground for what is now referred to as "criticality." The above quotation closes the Roman critic's essay for the New Left's first issue of *Contropiano*. Its final adage follows Tafuri's dismissal of the possibility of an architectural experimentation that might nudge and expand the field's stale professionalism in the years around 1968. His text tracks--with uncanny precision and ingenuity--the political paradox that had plagued the generation of young architects who emerged from student-occupied architecture departments in Italy.

It affirms an original, if complex, scholarly discourse—soon to be harvested by American architecture theorists. Less well-known, however, is the experimentalists' answer to Tafuri, which appeared some months later in the architectural journal *Casabella*. Their response was first published in *Domus* as a set of visual tools termed *discorsi per immagini*.[3] Developed by the groups Superstudio and Archizoom from 1969 to 1972, the warlike *discorsi* emphasized Tafuri's (and like-minded late-modernists') links to Italian *riformismo*, voicing a common sentiment

[1] "These working proposals also present architects with the opportunity for cultural work that is located well outside the discipline, integrated, as it is, to capital. Participating in the class movement, they find their research field: architecture conceived after the workers' perspective, the project of a new Karl-Marx-Hof, wherein structures for collective life are the instrument of struggle." Claudio Greppi and Alberto Pedrolli, "Produzione e programmazione territoriale," *Quaderni Rossi* 3 (1963): 101. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.
[2] Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," trans. Stephen Sartorelli, in *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1998), 2-35; Originally published as "Per una critica dell'ideologia architettonica," *Contropiano*. *Materiali marxisti* 1 (1969): 31-79.
[3] Archizoom and Superstudio, "Discorsi per immagini," *Domus* 481 (1969): 46-48.

against the *centro-sinistra* and its social-economic reform programs.[4] Significantly, the *Casabella* installment begins with a parody of Tafuri's conclusion:

> [T]his is a Theory and not an alternative proposal. In the same way that a Political Economy of Class doesn't exist, but only a Class-based Critique of Political Economy, so an Urban Theory of Class doesn't exist, but only a Class-based Critique of Urban Theory.[5]

The point-by-point rejoinder to Tafuri strikingly preserves much of Tafuri's original intent. Modifying Tafuri's adage to track the recent work of 1963-66, it is a personal jab and a challenge to Tafuri's political and professional repositioning.[6] Tafuri, after all, was part of Ludovico Quaroni's group on scientific "Urban Theory."[7] In this piece, I would like to take advantage of the continuity between Tafuri's diatribe and Archizoom's subsequent reply in order to envision a fictionalized dialog between the Roman critic and Archizoom's Andrea Branzi. We can imagine the two men, caught at the pinacles of their careers, meeting, perhaps, at Tafuri's class in Venice. (Tafuri at the time is in the second year of his tenure at the I.U.A.V. and the director of the newly founded Istituto di Storia).[8] Tafuri tells Branzi: Your group is possessed by the "…illusion of being able to oppose [the capitalist project] with the tools of a different project or with those with a radical antiproject."[9] Branzi, however, does not advocate that illusion in 1969. He supports the few pieces Archizoom is developing with Sergio Cammilli and Ettore Sottsass for *Poltranova* (Pekino alias Mies, 1969), as well as the curatorial projects for Orsanmichele (Florence, 1969) and Rotterdamse Kunststichting (Rotterdam, 1970); he is much less confident, for example, in Archizoom and Superstudio's joint proposal for the Airport at Sant'Eufemia a Lamezia Terme (Catanzaro, 1970) or in his group's proposal for the University of Florence (1969). This is best impressed on us by the jovial reuse he makes of Tafuri's own words.

Tafuri says: "As the result of technology . . . architecture [is] a mere moment in the chain of production."[10] Branzi replies: "electronic media takes the place of the direct urban praxis . . . [so that] the Factory Model of Society [conforms to] . . . the Logic of Production."[11] Tafuri might reply: "Architectural ideology . . . [is] a way of mastering Disorder through Order."[12] Branzi:

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[4] The Archizoom group included Paolo Deganello, Massimo Morozzi, Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Coretti, Dario Bartolini, and Lucia Bartolini; the Superstudio included Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, Gian Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, and Alessandro Poli.

[5] Archizoom, "Città catena di montaggio del sociale: ideologia e teoria della metropoli," *Casabella*, 350-351 (1970): 43-52. Republished as "City Production Line of Society," in *Radicals, architettura e design 1960-75 = Radicals, Design and Architecture 1960-75*, ed. Gianni Pettena (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1996), 250. Cf. the discussion of the relationship between Archizoom and Tafuri in Roberto Gargiani and Archizoom associates, *Archizoom Associati, 1966-1974: dall'onda Pop alla superficie neutral* (Milan: Electa, 2007), 131-34.

[6] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 10.

[7] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 10.

[8] Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia. Tafuri gained both positions following the success of his *Teorie e storia dell'architettura* (Rome: Laterza, 1968), republished in English as *Theories and History of Architecture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

[9] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 8.

[10] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 12.

[11] Archizoom, "City Production Line," 250.

[12] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 13.

"the limit of Order coincides with Chaos."[13] Tafuri continues: only the most "marginal and rearguard roles" are attainable by way of your "radical antiproject,"[14] As the young architect begins to reply, we sense the pleasure with which he undertakes the task: "The clash no longer takes place in the field of ideology but in quantitative terms;"[15] this is said as he aspirates the phoneme *qu* in "quantitative" to a *hu*, thus reproducing, in typical Florentine dialect, Tafuri's own critique.

*Beginnings: the Archizoom Group and Workerism*

That Branzi's Archizoom could turn Tafuri's critical language inside out to launch an aggressive visual critique and, indeed, felt compelled to set aside a burgeoning professional practice in order to complete this visual critique is not obvious. Rather, this realization requires a basic understanding of the political dimensions of Branzi's critique, specifically the links between Italian experimental architecture and workerism. The question of experimental architecture and politics inevitably raises the problem of identifying the border or limit between the two practices, which is as crucial for Tafuri as it is for Branzi– albeit for different ends. Even within Tafuri's "scientific urbanism" there is, as Branzi notes, the possibility for another urbanism: a "Class-based Critique of Urban Theory." This suppressed possibility is revealed, for instance, in the recent comparative analysis of Tafuri and Archizoom by Pier Vittorio Aureli and in Felecity D. Scott's reading of Tafuri and Emilio Ambasz.[16] These comparisons have encouraged (and been the beneficiaries of) current scholarly interest in Italian workerism. While Aureli's and Scott's final interpretations of workerism do differ, both illuminate Tafuri's views of experimental practice in light of Archizoom, uncovering a critical theory distinct from currently prevalent notions of "autonomy" and disciplinary closure. If, until recently, architecture had adhered to the discourse of "autonomy," which is founded on genealogical and self-referential notions, the aforementioned works demonstrate current interest in the possibilities that Italian experimental politics might offer the field.

The ambition of identifying an alternate critical stance for architecture within workerism has assumed a predominant position as of late. Unlike critical "autonomy," this stance embraces -- rather than rejects -- new and experimental techniques, forms, institutions, and constituencies.[17] In contrast, recent calls outside of the field to re-examine workerism have replayed the idea of a

[13] Archizoom, "City Production Line," 250.

[14] Tafuri, "Toward a Critique," 30.

[15] Archizoom, "City Production Line," 250. The spirantization of the Tuscan dialect (*gorgia toscana*) basically means that the *k* is converted into the fricative *h*. Tafuri, on the other hand, has a Roman accent, coming from the Q.V Nomentano quarter near Piazzale di Porta Pia and Stazione Tiburtina. See Manfredo Tafuri and Luisa Passerini, *La storia come progetto ("History as a Project"): Manfredo Tafuri* (Los Angeles: Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles, and the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1993), 4.

[16] See Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism* (New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, 2008); and Felicity D. E. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 140-41, and, earlier, her "Italian Design and the New Political Landscape" in *Analyzing Ambasz*, eds. Jerrilynn D. Dodds, Emilio Ambasz, and Michael Sorkin (New York: Montacelli Press, 2004), 109-56).

[17] For an early indication of this current development, see the seminal text by Jeffrey Kipnis, "Towards a New Architecture," in *Folding in Architecture*, ed. Greg Lynn (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2004 [1993]), 56-65.

post-political "laboratory Italy," arguing for an essentially theoretical tie between workerism and vitalist theory—a linkage first noted by Tony Negri and Felix Guattari.[18] Within the expanded field imagined by this re-examination, the focus is on the varied registers and nuances of workerist thought rather than a debate over the possibility of new practices (artistic, material, political). Additionally, it offers novel historical readings of the movement; it is within the latter work that important discoveries have recently been made. Although *operaismo* and "workerism" are much-debated terms, they have acquired wide currency when referring to the radical developments in Italian politics, Marxist literature and thought that had their early manifestation in the journals *Quaderni Rossi* and *Classe Operaia*. Such developments reached a peak of intensity in the tumult of late 1960s, continuing until the late 1970s or shortly thereafter.

The motor for these developments was a sense of crisis also shared by the field of architecture: the collapse of common political and formal ideologies. Respectively developed as "critique of ideology" and "critique of architectural ideology," the work produced under these rubrics formed a body of theoretical experiments that aimed to dislodge the beliefs, illusions, and hypocrisies that had worked to protect a politically dominant *centro-sinistra* and Neo-rationalist architecture.[19] Among the key personalities of this polymorphous movement were Raniero Panzieri, Alberto Asor Rosa, Tony Negri, Franco Piperno, Romano Alquati, and Mario Tronti. In what follows, I use workerism to refer to the particular vein that grew out of Tronti's *Classe Operaia*, rather than to the earlier practices of Panzieri's *Quaderni Rossi*. This highlighting of Tronti's role builds on work by Aldo Grandi, Guido Borio, and Francesca Pozzi, who convincingly pinpoint the Roman philosopher's shift of attitudes in the autumn of 1963 as workerism's *élan vital,* which would subsequently lead to the movement's 1969 expansions.[20]

It is not my aim simply to challenge contemporary interpretations of the relationship between architecture and workerism, but to open the question of workerist practices by setting out the original stakes of one moment in the development of such practices.[21] A close reading of this moment in relation to architectural experimentation exposes two essential aspects: on the one hand, following Tronti's appeal in "Lenin in inghilterra," the unprecedented expansion of architecture's ambitions and subjects of critique; on the other, the transformation of workerism and architecture's joint politics, which gradually shift towards a new economy of visual and affective methods. In particular, I aim to explain the ways in which the *discorsi*'s visual output—

[18] Felix Guattari and Antonio Negri, *Les nouveaux espaces de liberté* (Gourdon, France: D. Bedou, 1985). It appeared in English as *Communists Like Us: New Spaces of Liberty, New Lines of Alliance* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990), and was reprinted as *New Lines of Alliance, Spaces of Liberty* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2010). The bibliography on workerist thought in relation to vitalism is extensive. For an early assessment in English, see Michael Hardt, *The Art of Organization: Foundations of a Political Ontology in Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri*, PhD diss., University of Washington, 1990).

[19] Italian Marxism, of course, has been a rich theoretical scene since the mid 1950s. It problematized the communist tradition (Stalinism) and consisted of several canonical writings: Antonio's Gramsci's work as revisited by P.C's Palmiro Togliatti and C.D's Norberto Bobbio; the Hegelian Marxism of Lucio Colletti; and the opposing, critical direction of G. Della Volpe. Workerism grew out of this context—its sense of crisis was also predicated on the inability of this Marxist scene (often termed by the movement as "Humanist Marxism") to derail the politics of the *centro-sinistra*.

[20] Aldo Grandi, *La generazione degli anni perduti: storie di potere operaio* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003); and Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi, and Gigi Roggero, *Futuro anteriore: dai Quaderni Rossi ai movimenti globali: ricchezze e limiti dell'operaismo italiano* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2002).

[21] I intend to treat a broader set of related strategies, such as Territorialism and Metadesign, which emerged within the workerist idiom in geographic, economic, and architectural practices, in my forthcoming publication with Sabrina Ovan. Our aim is to open the question of workerism to that of practice and to what we term "the third tier of workerism."

the elegant drawings and strikingly complex visualscapes developed by Archizoom—carried a precise yet disciplinarily open-ended critique, whose links to the workerist critique of reformism is both explicit and indicative of workerism's own development as a practice. For just as Tronti's critique of the reformist program of the *centro-sinistra* becomes crucial for Archizoom's critical project, so does the architectural collective's brand of experimentalism—the scathing gestural economy of their writing and urban proposals—provide Tronti with glimpses into what he then calls "experimental politics."

Historically, Archizoom and workerism coincide at their inception in the Florentine architecture studio, that is, of the *Lega architetti studenti* (League of Student Architects) in 1963.[22] This coincidence can be read on at least two levels. On the most obvious, it reflects the student militarization that took place between 1963 and 1971 and the prolonged student occupation of the university. This period would radically change the architecture departments of Milan, Florence, and Turin, as new personalities and curriculum came to the fore.[23] In this first sense, the intersection of workerism and Archizoom was an entirely local phenomenon, in line with the general attraction exercised by political avant-garde figures like Tronti, Alquati, Asor Rosa, and Massimo Cacciari on Italian architecture students. Workerism offered students a particularly attractive alternative to the parliamentary politics of the P.S.I. (*Partito Socialista Italiano*), the P.C.I. (*Partito Comunista Italiano*), and the work floor *Realpolitik* of labor unionists. (Prominent architectural figures such as Tafuri participated in the P.S.I.). The appeal of workerism to architecture students is remarkable—after the publishing fortune of Antonio Negri's and Michael Hardt's *Empire*, it has sparked a bevy of related architectural scholarship, including the works by Aureli and Scott.[24]

The earliest text to note the relationship between Archizoom and workerism is *Architettura "radicale*."[25] The 1974 volume highlights this relationship on its first page, opining that the politicization of "Italian experimental architecture" was "by and large due to the intimate contact between the editorial group of *Classe Operaia*, which counted among its members important personages of the Italian New Left such as Mario Tronti and Alberto Asor Rosa" and the group *Lega Architetti Studenti*, then "formed by Massimo Morozzi, Claudio Greppi, Paolo Deganello, Gilberto Coretti, and later Andrea Branzi."[26] The latter part of the list is mainly composed of future members of Archizoom. Yet, the figure for understanding the unlikely historical links parallels between Archizoom and workerist politics is an exception to this rule: the political activist Claudio Greppi. While a fourth-year architecture student at the University of Florence, Greppi met Tronti in 1963 at the Turinese gatherings of *Quaderni Rossi*. That same year, when Tronti was ousted by the editorial board, Greppi gave him physical refuge in his

[22] This striking coincidence was established recently in journalist Aldo Grandi's *La generazione degli anni perduti* as well as some time earlier in Borio, Pozzi, and Roggero's *Futuro anteriore*.

[23] These include: Vittorio Gregotti, influential on the work of Ugo La Pietra, Leonardo Savioli and Leonardo Ricci, instrumental for Florentine experimentalist groups Archizoom and Superstudio, Carlo Mollino and his assistants, historian Carlo Olmo, and architects Roberto Gabetti and Pietro Derossi (the latter the founder of the Turinese experimentalist Gruppo Sturm).

[24] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[25] Paola Navone and Bruno Orlandoni, *Architettura 'radicale'* (Segrate: G. Milani, 1974).

[26] *Ibid*., 19-20. Apart from the detailed list of personages, the reality that sustained these links and made them productive is not broached. According to the authors, further elaboration on the "rapport between the Left and politicized students" was not made due to the text's limits as a critical survey of then-current Italian experimentalism (*Ibid*., 86, n.4). In addition, as is apparent throughout the volume, and as I confirmed recently with Orlandoni, the authors were concerned mainly with the visual production of Italian experimentalism; the question of Archizoom's ideological position was therefore secondary (Orlandoni, personal interview, 9 Dec. 2010).

architecture studio in Florence. Greppi also provided him with a new intellectual home in his *Lega Architetti Studenti*, a newly founded collective of young architecture students from the University of Florence. The product of this improbable encounter was Tronti's "Giornale politico degli operai di lotta" (Political Journal of Fighting Workers) and workerism's point of origin, *Classe Operaia*. Speaking recently to the journalist Aldo Grandi, Greppi commented:

> The first meeting of *Classe Operaia* took place in Florence in the fall of 1963 in the studio I created together with other colleagues from the Faculty. We set round two enormous plywood tables; the atmosphere was of great expectation. Tronti read us what would be his first editorial, "Lenin in inghilterra." [Different than in *Quaderni*] this time the journal was not merely a place for theoretical discussions but the instrument of direct political intervention, diffusible to the rest of Italy through . . . a net of local groups, which tried to size up the reality of what was then called class composition.[27]

This unfamiliar history reveals how Archizoom's flash encounter with *Classe Operaia* helped forge a breed of political discourse that had not yet been written: one that takes architecture as an equal, if not a better, interlocutor capable of producing new discursive modes and projects. This reading situates *Classe Operaia*'s short agitative texts—direct pieces of commentary, current chronicles, editorial cartoons, and poetry—in the context of more scholarly editorials, such as *Angelus Novus* and *Quaderni Rossi*. In the same vein, it highlights what motivated Tronti to group workerism's founding texts (beginning with "Lenin in Inghilterra"[28] [Lenin in England]) under the rubric "Un esperimento politico di tipo nuovo" (A New Style of Political Experiment); indeed, it shifts the reader away from seeing Leninist Marxism as the basis for Tronti's political philosophy and toward the programmatic principles of workerism, now understood as an experimental political practice.[29]

The agitative force of so many of the writings in *Classe Operaia*—a force at turns determined, offensive, and basic—leaves one wondering what kinds of politics might emerge in the practice of workerism. Would workerist politics be more spontaneous and less corrupting? Would its innate collectivism (with Tronti, *"questo imane lavoro o sarà colettivo o non sarà"*[30]) remain a true one? One of the strategies used to sustain *Classe Operaia*'s contrarian potential at this early moment was the publication's textual-visual style. Initially conceived as a parody of existing Marxist periodicals, this style would in turn set the tone for Archizoom's own radical uses of architectural discourse. Greppi elaborated elsewhere on the stylistic differences between *Quaderni Rossi* and *Classe Operaia:*

> It was the second year of *Quaderni Rossi* [1962] when I started to go to Turin almost regularly every two or three weeks. *Quaderni Rossi*'s editorial meetings in Turin were tremendous, no one spoke, and it was tense . . . It was clear that everybody expected interesting things to happen, except that nothing did happen

[27] Grandi, *La generazione*, 17.
[28] Mario Tronti, "Lenin in Inghilterra," *Classe Operaia* 1 (1964): 18-20.
[29] Mario Tronti, "Un esperimento politico di tipo nuovo," *Operai e capital* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1966), 87-120.
[30] Tronti, "Un esperimento politico," 106.

> and the atmosphere was squalid, boring, actually [these were] silent meetings. . . Conversely in Florence we founded a group . . . called *Lega Architetti Studenti* . . . There was a large apartment where we had a studio that served as a logistic base. . . . *Classe Operaia* met often in Florence in this funny architectural studio with enormous drawing tables . . . when I talk with Tronti he always recalls those tables. There was an extremely clear leap from *Quaderni Rossi*, with its sad, institutional, and silent meetings in Turin, to the Florentine meetings of *Classe Opeaia* in '63-'64 in our studio, which were much more fun.[31]

Greppi's distinction between *Quaderni Rossi*'s "silent meetings" and the "fun" meetings of *Classe Operaia* in the League's "funny architecture studio," as well as Greppi's claim that architecture shaped the shifts of Tronti's editorial style, are all new. Even a cursory comparison to *Quaderni Rossi* reveals the various ways these shifts of ambience played out on *Classe Operaia*'s pages. Onto *Quaderni Rossi*'s essayistic and theoretical work, *Classe Operaia* introduced freewheeling commentary and agitative pieces written in present-day language and accompanied by editorial cartoons. This new style was nothing if not polemical **(Figs. 1-2)**. As Tronti explained in his first editorial, journals such as *Quaderni Rossi* were merely posing "a problem that needed turning . . . [in order to r]estart from the base: and the base is the workers' struggle."[32] This "turning," what Michael Hardt and others have notably propositioned as Tronti's "leading role" theory, would require a new approach and an experimental political practice.[33] For Tronti, *Quaderni Rossi* was inimical to this process precisely because of its intellectual style, which he claimed needed to be turned inside out. As a consequence, *Classe Operaia*'s new political culture prominently employed alternative styles of critique—excluding Tronti's own pieces, which maintained an essayistic tenor. In the name of the workers' struggle and mass intelligibility, *Classe Operaia* would borrow from Vladimir Mayakovsky and Bertolt Brecht, eschewing the impassive and assertive gravitas of Italian Marxists. In turn, *Classe Operaia*'s unique pastiche of current commentary, cartoons, and verse not only provided a mordant satire of *Quaderni Rossi*'s theoretical premise but also a pluralistic and, therefore, affective agitative practice.

Significantly, Italian architecture was bound to these intellectual shifts in ways that are not always clear to the Anglophone reader. The New Left criticized Historicist or Humanist Marxism —canonized in the Hegelian literary criticism of Francesco de Sanctis (who would influence Bruno Zevi), the aesthetics of Benedetto Croce (essential for an accurate reading of Giulio Carlo Argan) and the political thought of Antonio Gramsci (indispensable for Della Volpe's later critique of historicist Marxism).[34] Such theories were (and still are) foundational to the Italian

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[31] Claudio Greppi, interview with Guido Borio, Francesca Pozzi, and Gigi Roggero. See Borio, Pozzi, and Roggero, *Futuro anteriore*, CD-ROM, 23 Sep. 2000. Cf. discussion of the divergence of styles between the two journals in Grandi, 10-25.

[32] Tronti, "Lenin in Inghilterra," 20.

[33] A reversal or common historical perspectives that, as Hardt explains, considers essential "not the entrepreneurial spirit of capital, but rather the antagonism posed by the working class, the workerist refusal of capitalist relations of production [as that] which constitutes the motor driving the development of mature capitalist society. The 'leading role of the working class' is not merely the slogan of a future communist society, but it is already the fact within capital itself . . ." Hardt, *The Art of Organization*, 4.1.

[34] Important references are Bruno Zevi, *Lezioni di storia dell'architettura italiana* (Rome: Stab. Tipo Litografico V. Ferri, 1947) and Galvano Della Volpe, *Critica del gusto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960).

architectural critique that Archizoom would repeatedly come up against.[35] Rejecting the critical traditions of these older iconic intellectuals cannot simply be attributed to the circle's "bad boy" attitudes, as Sottsass once simplistically remarked about Branzi's group.[36]

Like later workerist journals, *Classe Operaia* was the product of many hands, which makes the task of tracing the individual voices of the architects impractical. A case study of the exchange between Tronti and Archizoom can, however, be found in Greppi's 1963 essay in *Quaderni Rossi*, "Produzione e programmazione territoriale" (Territorial Production and Programming).[37] Written shortly before Tronti was ousted by the Turinese editorial board, it is an intellectually modest essay, often extreme in its attacks on institutional architecture. It was written with fellow Florentine architecture student Alberto Pedrolli in consultation with Alquati and Tronti. It content is in line with Greppi's and Predolli's chief concerns at that time -- the factory as a technical, rational, and vulnerable system and Tronti's theory of transfers. (Tronti projects the factory system and its vulnerabilities "territorially" upon the geography of the Industrialized North.)[38] The authors' contribution appears in the text's conclusion, where they propose a provocative model of architecture practice based on the residential forms invented in Red Vienna--the *höfe*:

> Today we can recognize that the only truly revolutionary urban experiments were the fortified working class neighborhoods built in the wake of the twenties European revolutionary movement.[39]

Making a more direct appeal to the field, the authors conclude:

> This working proposal also presents architects with the opportunity for cultural work that is located well outside the discipline.... Participating in the class movement, they find their research field: architecture conceived after the workers' perspective, the project of a new Karl-Marx-Hof, wherein structures for collective life are the instrument of struggle, because they oppose bourgeois mystification, in the same way that in Vienna extensive fortifications and unyielding barricades opposed bourgeois' cannons.[40]

Significantly, Greppi and Pedrolli already depart from the *Quaderni*'s brand of critical style; their proposal is gestural rather than analytic or theoretical. For the two architecture students, Karl-Marx-Hof does not represent an advanced model for habitation, largely because of the superblock's impressive massing and outstanding perimetric effects. Such canonical architectural

[35] Important references are Bruno Zevi, *Lezioni di storia dell'architettura italiana* (Rome: Stab. Tipo Litografico V. Ferri, 1947) and Galvano Della Volpe, *Critica del gusto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960).
[36] Ettore Sottsass, "Nuovi mobili: gli Archizoom," *Domus* 455 (1967): 37. The actual phrase, telling in itself, is "Questa volta il panico lo getteranno gli Archizoom che sono dei bravi ragazzi abastanza cattivi per non lasciarsi inibire dai vecchi discorsi . . ."
[37] Claudio Greppi and Alberto Pedrolli, "Produzione e programmazione territoriale," *Quaderni Rossi* 3 (1963): 94-101.
[38] See Greppi, interview, in Borio, Pozzi, Roggero, *Futuro anteriore*, 23 Sep. 2000.
[39] Greppi and Pedrolli, "Produzione," 100.
[40] Greppi and Pedrolli, "Produzione," 102.

argumentation gives way in the text to a discussion of ideology: if "the Viennese cannons that subdued the workers' resistance" in the twenties are now replaced with the wholesale colonization of workers' psychology by "privatistic, petty bourgeois values," architecture's only logical answer is "the reaffirmation of collective life."[41] In this battle of ideological values, the essay's critical style can shift from the technicism of Alquati's analyses to a more lyrical and ironic language. Here, the entire argument (the workers' aggregation in superblocks and its communal life as a worthy political strategy) hinge on the iconic image of Karl-Marx-Hof's "fortified" "collective structures," or better yet, its namesake.[42]

Greppi and Pedrolli's text provides one of the earliest critiques by young Italian architects of Neo-rationalism and the "scientific" rationalization of the metropolis it had pursued in following the *centro-sinistra* reformist ideals. Essentially a diatribe, the text levels a polemic against the proponents of Italian Neo-rationalism and denounces its urban *riformismo*. For Greppi as for the future Archizoomers, the ties between Neo-rationalist architecture and the P.S.I. over the question of *riformismo* were condemnable: co-opted acts of architecture, comparable in graveness to historical Rationalism work for Fascism. Neo-rationalism's brand of "scientific" urbanism—after Rationalist Giuseppe Pagano—responded to the reformist program of, among others, Christian Democrat economist Pasquale Saraceno. Famously, Saraceno posited that Italian economic development was deformed, warranting "calibrating" reforms. Nowhere, argued Saraceno, was this "deformation" more palpable than with the backwardness of the agrarian *Meridione*, which offered the inverse image of the booming industrial *Settentrione*—hence the perceived importance of Neo-rationalist planning for the D.C. and the P.S.I.

Tronti's solicitation of the Greppi piece was itself occasioned by the passage of the *centro-sinistra* planning reform laws; specifically, Sullo's Act n. 167 in April 1962.[43] Greppi and Pedrolli's detailed examination of the juridical implications of Sullo's act for the built environment is impressive for first-time writers. But, the two also resist identifying too closely with this task, as their critique ultimately veers toward architecture and the figure of Roman Rationalist Ludovico Quaroni and the Roman group S.A.U.[44] For the authors, Sullo's reform and the "new tools [it enables for] integrating industrial and agricultural planning perspectives under the umbrella of global territorial control" mark the first disturbing victory of S.A.U.'s plan for urban "rationalization." That plan was promoted by the S.A.U's Stressa meeting in 1962, under the banner *città-regione* (city-region):

> [We need to] extricate the techno-scientific myths ("city-region") that present the factory as purely objective fact . . . The question then is no longer of "democratic" interventions as professed by these architects . . . We should capsize the techno-scientific visions of an open and dynamic spatial form that is suitable for developed society, "free from the alienating techniques used by the class-based

[41] Greppi and Pedrolli, "Produzione," 102.

[42] It is safe to argue that the choice of Karl-Marx-Hof, out of a history of more significant architectural experiments around the theme of the Viennese Hof, is not accidental, but it indicates a conscious use of the title of Karl Ehn's 1927-30 project. Cf. the converse approach in the exhaustive discussion in Ernesto N. Rogers' *Casabella-continua* around 1962-63, as well as Francesco Dal Co's research in *Contropiano* as developed at the I.A.U.V.

[43] Act n. 167, by D.C member Fiorentino Sullo, then Minister of Public Works, was an extensive planning reform. Its key aim was the creation of new, inter-regional (or "*comprensoriale"*) planning tools that would facilitate large scale public works, in particular popular housing schemes.

[44] Società di Architettura e Urbanistica, which then included among its members Carlo Aymonino and the Florentine historian Leonardo Benevolo.

> society," (like some young theorists write) . . . [because it is precisely] this *technicism*—mystified forms of science that stem from class-based capitalist society—that can be seen to give rise to architectural utopia and operational inability. Ultimately, these are the two poles in which critical and operative activity of the architects-urban-planners currently moves.[45]

The text criticizes the ingenuity of S.A.U.'s "architects-urban-planners" and their precepts of "democratic," "anti-monopolistic planning." It goes on to reject the Rationalist project by describing the falsity of its underlying science and politics -- namely urbanism and the social and economic programming promoted by the alliance of the P.S.I. and the D.C. It ends with the call for architects to create "cultural work" "located well outside the discipline" and to find clear programs for "participating in the class movement"—all practices that, for better or worse, would find their fulfillment in Archizoom.[46]

Greppi provides only one architectural image of his critique of *città-regione*: the economic technicism behind its Rationalist drives and its importance for Sullo's planning reform. Nevertheless, it offers many parallels to Archizoom's better known work. Pier Vittorio Aureli convincingly argued that Greppi's territorial city offered Archizoom a critical model for the development of its own *discorsi* under the title "No-Stop City."[47] Similarly, the project clearly falls within Leonardo Ricci's research on the *Città Integrata*, particularly the theme of a continuous, functionally undifferentiated interior that Archizoom would later borrow for its proposals. Lastly, Greppi's project reflects on the theme of an extended urban-territorial megastructure for the *Piana of Prato*—a scholastic project shared also by the future Archizoomers.[48] Presented in 1964 as Greppi's thesis project and titled "Territorial City-Factory," the project is an iconic image for Act n. 167. Greppi's City-Factory consists of a superimposed grid of repetitive programs, much like the new legal unit of the *comprensorio* (district) of Sullo's Act n. 167. Like the *comprensorio*, the City-Factory could be applied, according to Greppi, to larger portions of the region, thus disarming the juridical restrictions of existing municipal and regional plans.[49] Perhaps the most striking aspect of City-Factory appears in a detailed drawing: an oblique grid turned at a forty-five-degree angle, meshed to form a shallow relief of intricate city-flowers. Indeed, much like *Classe Operaia* with respect to *Quaderni Rossi*, the result is figurative and gestural rather than analytical. Conduits and circular enclosures here surpass the simple line diagram used by Neo-rationalist planners.

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[45] Greppi and Pedrolli, "Produzione," 95.

[46] Interestingly, Greppi and Pedrolli's critique of the ingenuity of rationalism with respect to the politico-economic forces anticipates Benevolo's and others' later disavowal of the notion of City-region at the latter part of the 1980s. See Manfredo Tafuri, *Storia dell'architettura italiana, 1944-1985* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1982), 96-99; Leonardo Benevolo, *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (Rome: Laterza, 1996), 75.

[47] Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 70.

[48] Cf. Navone and Orlandoni, *Architettura 'radicale,'* 109; Gargiani et al., *Archizoom Associati*, 8-9.

[49] The relevant citation is: "Il comprensorio e lo strumento più interessante proposto dalla nuova legge, la quale per il resto non è altro che l'adeguamento della legislazione italiana a quella degli altri paesi capitalistici. Anche se l'iniziativa del gruppo parlamentare comunista ritarderà sicuramente l'approvazione della legge *Sullo l'ipotesi di una suddivisione di tutto il territorio nazionale in comprensori non è avveniristica, perché di essa il capitale tiene già conto oggi quando affronta il problema delle nuove localizzazioni*." Greppi and Pedrolli, "Produzione," 99.

From 1969 to 1972, Archizoom published its more well-known monuments on the pages of the architecture publications *Domus* and *Casabella*—from Superstudio and Archizoom's joint piece "Discorsi per immagini"[50] (which featured the seminal Monumento Continuo of Adolfo Natalini et al.) to Archizoom's "Città catena di montaggio del sociale." The latter text in *Casabella*, supplements the *discorsi* with twenty typewriter-drawn diagrams of a "non-figurative architectural language." The same diagram for a "continuous and homogeneous" city-system is successively expanded in three different articles, forming a visual compendium that appears in part in "Discorsi per immagini." Jointly titled No-Stop City, it is still today the most complete example of a contemporary visual discourse—*un discorso per immagini* of the city.[51]

The *discorsi* introduce two important themes in the development of contemporary architecture: first, an opposition to "Urban Theory"; second, the use of "unfigurative" data as the apotheosis for this opposition. Whereas Greppi's critique of Neo-rationalist architecture closely followed Tronti's critique of the territorial expansions of the factory model, Archizoom directly confronts Neo-rationalist "Urban Theory" as well as the "Ideology of the Metropolis" (chiming in with the general Marxist critique of ideology.) The urgency of Archizoom's project—the reason why the group sets aside its professional work to center on this critique—is of a fortuitous nature. Tafuri's article in *Contropiano*, cited at the top of this paper, signaled an insincere and tendentious turn from his previous work with P.S.I under the banner of "rationalism" and "reformism." No less significant was the polemical publication of *Progetto 80* (1969) **(Fig. 3)**, a document which offered the clearest description of the reformist ambitions of the *centro-sinistra*. Together with the Neo-rationalist texts of Carlo Aymonino, the *Origini e sviluppo della città moderna* (1965) and of Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966), these few coordinates form the basic framework that No-Stop City visual discourse was intent on interrupting.[52]

No-Stop City is not easily summed up. It is a visual discourse in the best tradition of Piranesi's *Campo di Marzio*, Bernard Tschumi's *Manhattan Transcripts*, and Rem Koolhaas's graphic addendum to his *Delirious New York*. It can be safely inserted in such an inventory chronologically and conceptually, as it anticipates the latter two.[53] Specific to Archizoom, the project participates in the group's destabilizing of the function of architectural drawing -- a task already addressed in its articles for *Pianeta fresco in 1968*. Combining typography (X, O, +, L, a, and a $ turned on its side) with structural and functional architectural units (bathroom, elevator, wall), freehand scribble, optical manipulation, and photomontage, the adjoining interiors of No-Stop City are animated by disparate modes of expression as well as by questions over mixed

[50] Archizoom and Superstudio, "Discorsi per immagini," *Domus* 481 (1969): 46-48.

[51] Archizoom, "No-Stop City, Residential Park: Climatic Universal System," *Design Quarterly* 78/79 (1971a): 17-20; "No-Stop City, Residential Park: Climatic Universal System," *Domus* 496 (1971b): 49-54; "Paesaggio urbano" and "Gazebo a scala paesaggistica," In*, Argumenti e immagini di design* 5-7 (1972).

[52] Always in this vein, with relation to Rossi, the architecture of homogenized and climatized interiors envisioned by Archizoom provides particularly strong contrasts with Rossi's urban theory. Whereas Rossi posits an idea of "qualitative" place, Archizoom pursues the notion of a "quantitative" non-place whose coordinates are basically structural and machinic.

[53] Cf. the discussion of the relationship between Piranesi's Campo di Marzio and the No-Stop City, Gargiani et al., *Archizoom Associati*, 131-34, 215. Similarly, Tschumi's and Koolhaas's relationships with No-Stop City have been well documented. For important discussions see Dominique Rouillard, *Superarchitecture: le futur de l'architecture 1950-1970* (Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2004), 511-527, and Koolhaas's references to No-Stop City in "Typical Plan," *S.M.L.XL.,* ed. Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 334-50.

media typical of Sixties visual art and aesthetics. Celant, the art theorist who would go on to create the narrative for *Architettura radicale,* played a major role in speculating on the relationship between Italian architectural experimentalism and art by following this exact conflation of artistic territories. Confirming this view, Roberto Gargiani has recently traced Archizoom's and Superstudio's usage of the term "image discourse" to Celant's own writings on *arte povera*, as well as to the Genoese art critic's use of this term to refer to land art, and to figures like Walter De Maria, Richard Long, Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, and Robert Smithson.[54]

As frequently noted, No-Stop City's first drawings are an extrapolation of recurring late-Modernist models: for instance, the structural grid of Mies van der Rohe's American period as used in the five-tower scheme for Toronto-Dominion Centre (1963-67) and some of this model's antecedents—Mies's own Seagram Building (1958), Ludwig Hilberseimer's Vertical City (1924), and Le Corbusier's open slab-pillar structures of Maison Dom-ino (1914-1915). These few references find their specific logic in No-stop City. Every instance of the twenty Homogeneous Housing Diagrams of the first installment for *Casabella* offers a comparable model-grid. Archizoom's basic structural model is transposed in increasingly ingenious arrangements by air-conditioning grids, vertical circulation schemes, parking signs and, ultimately, with picturesque elements (winding hills and lakes) and *bacterio* partitions—a pattern that would later become the canonized décor of Memphis, a group formed out of Archizoomers in 1980. No-Stop City might have been read, in fact, as just that—décor—were it not for Archizoom's ability to ground each drawing in the practicality of a standardized structural model by way of canonical Modernists such as Mies, Hilberseimer, and Le Corbusier.

No-Stop City's most successful installment, as well as the best known, appeared some months later in the British *Design Quarterly* in the "Conceptual Architecture" issue. The title page provides twelve reduced illustrations from the preceding "Discorsi per immagini" and "Città, catena di montaggio del sociale." Also present is a photomontage of a desert scene, dotted with repetitive steel column and nude female figurines with an overhanging and continuous ceiling system. This photomontage, prefigured already in *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* a year earlier, would be recreated as No-Stop City Continuous Interior Landscapes for *Domus*.[55] The pressure put here by *Design Quarterly* to produce an entirely visual project is fully actualized (the same demand is observed also by Peter Eisenman, with the famous stripped version of his "Conceptual Architecture: Towards a Definition").[56]

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[54] Gargiani et al., *Archizoom Associati*, 84. This group of artists was previously examined in Navone and Orlandoni, *Architettura 'radicale,'* 71. For Navone and Orlandoni, No-Stop City exemplifies the shift in the circle's work from "Pop-Architecture" to "Conceptual Architecture"—specifically, from the minor figurative pieces such as the Gazebos and Dream Beds to the gigantism that permeates Archizoom's No-Stop City. The same argument is further evidenced by a side-by-side view of the visual patrimony of Smithson's Spiral Jetty to Archizoom's No-Stop City. Similar links to *arte povera*, programmed art, and digital art, as well as art-architectural in-between figures such as Raimund Abram and Walter Pichler, were later expanded on in Orlandoni's successive title with Giorgio Vallino, *Dalla città al cucchiaio: saggi sulle nuove avanguardie nell'architettura e nel design* (Turin: Studio Forma, 1977).

[55] The contraption made for the creation of these images in *Domus* was the same optical mirror device used, in fact, by Deganello's students for their Piper project, rescaled, however, to the size of a standing man. See Gargiani et al., *Archizoom Associati*, 139. Further, in the *Domus* installment, the previously generic, "universal" Residential Diagrams increase in detail in relation to the group's proposal for the University of Florence competition (1970-71). No-Stop City's corresponding scheme as published in *Domus* in 1971 thus offers a more complex net of vertical and horizontal communications routes—including vehicular—which are integrated into the plan with secondary throughways plugging into circumscribing roads. The final result, while still within the paradigm of "homogenous interior space," forsakes the idea of the original scheme of a "Non Discontinuous Plan."

[56] Peter Eisenman, "Conceptual Architecture: Towards a Definition," *Design Quarterly* 78/79 (1971): 1-5.

The purest case for the group's *discorsi per immagini*, *Design Quarterly*'s "No Stop City: Residential Park", offers none of *Casabella's* parodying of Rationalism's "Ideology of the Metropolis" or *Domus'* elaborate designs. Although the diagrams maintain many of the decorative traits found in the *Casabella* installment, the structural grid is here rendered less vividly. Additionally, architectural figures have replaced the repeating, rectangular insignias in the original parking layout. The resulting diagram is a more refined technological vision, showing symmetrical bathroom units with hollowed vertical ducts—attached perpendicularly or parallel to the unit—as well as doubly laid elevators. As with the earlier piece, looser elements are in tension with the grid of services: swamps, shallow hills, winding rivers. Yet, in the final plan/drawing plane, neither nature (which is delineated as its own separate figure) nor the almost transparent column grid represent the composition's foundational component. Instead, it is the bathroom. The attitude, of course, is that of provocation and "shock." Equally indebted to Piero Manzoni (and what he created in 1961 by pitting Marcel Duchamp against Warhol) and Joe Colombo's industrialized bathrooms for sale around 1969, this is elegant yet profane architecture.[57]

Whether or not Archizoom—the group most associated with *Classe Operaia* and the *de facto* foundation of workerism—can actually be considered workerist during the late sixties and early seventies, the possibility for a built No-Stop City that would translate the *discorsi*'s politico-disciplinary ideas into actual forms died with both the groups controversial self-elimination from the Florence University competition (1969)[58] and its unrealized Airport at Sant'Eufemia a Lamezia Terme (Catanzaro, 1970, together with Superstudio). No-Stop City's subsequent reiterations in the context of galleries and professional magazines in 1971-72, such as "The Abolition of Work" installation for Rotterdam; the competition projects for Graz's "Trigon" and for the seventh Biennale de Paris; and, lastly, the *Gazebo a Scala Paesaggistico* and *Paesaggio Urbano* (published in Ugo La Pietra's *In*) offer no added critical or stylistic values.[59] The unremarkable perspectives of gallery interiors for Graz, the Situationist plan as applied to Graz's historic center, or the rescaled Buckminsterian Gazebos in *In* all represent here a retreat that reaches its nadir with the *Paesaggi urbani* in *In* and the accompanying essay, "La città amorale"—a diluted version of Archizoom's "Città catena di montaggio del sociale."

The fact that Archizoom's politico-disciplinary critique against reformism was quickly losing its appeal contrasts the rise of Tronti's own "esperimento politico," as first discussed with Greppi's Florentine *Lega* and building up toward the *autunno caldo* of 1969. In Turin, where Archizoom first presented its *discorsi* publicly, positive interest in the group declined around the renunciation by Branzi et al. of collective action for the politics of cultural institutes. As Archizoom was turning its sights toward new opportunities for its *discorsi* within the specialized magazine and the gallery, the collaborative discourse that the group forged with Tronti in 1963 had become by 1969 part of the attitude shared by workers and young architects militating in universities and at factory gates all across the Italian peninsula. The context of this shift in Turin was the workerists' recently won university-level victory against the P.C.I. This victory followed Alquati's lessons on Tronti's *Operai e capitale* at Turin's Centro Piero Gobetti (with Romano Gobbi), which saw the wholesale militarization of the student section and that of the faculty's unpaid assistants, all renouncing the P.C.I. to join the workerist group *Potere Operaio*.[60]

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[57] The reference is, of course, to Manzoni's "Merda d'Artista," 1961. Andrea Branzi makes ample reference to Duchamp in his work. See, for example, his "Il ruolo dell'avangardia," *Casabella* 363 (1972): 27-33.
[58] See Gargiani et al., *Archizoom Associati*, 137.
[59] Archizoom, "Paesaggio urbano," *In, Argumenti e immagini di design* 5-7 (1972).
[60] Grandi, *La generazione*, 75.

In April 1969, following the appeal made by the militarized Turinese faculty, Archizoom appeared in Turin with the first batch of drawings of its No-Stop City **(Fig. 4)**. Here Branzi asserted that No-Stop City "is not a work of architecture to the extent that problems are not solved, but rather are modified, and in so far as formal unity is eluded for the homogeneous, undifferentiated whole . . . If anything, we would add only that these operations are best limited to decoration. . . ."[61] The use of the term "decoration" is consistent with the effects we have seen elicited by the *discorsi*. Still, the group's use of the term as a political strategy is particularly provocative. As with its rejoinder to Tafuri, Archizoom subverted the situation to suggest a more ambiguous affiliation with workerist politics and the idea of a corresponding architectural anti-project.

It is by such inferences that Archizoom's *discorsi* can be seen as distinct from the attitudes of 1969 Turin. Branzi's group was far less interested in the Turinese turn to workerism than in touting the *discorsi*'s visual and iconographic content. On the one hand, Archizoom was too close to Tronti's "Lenin in Inghilterra" to feel anything but indifferent at the Turinese discovery of that same piece. On the other, it was too detached from the Turinese milieu to subscribe to its re-readings of Tronti's critique of the continuity between the factory in relation to Fiat's city. Rather, Archizoom presented its *discorsi* as decoration. Yet the critique put forward by the *discorsi* as well as their particular beginnings in *Classe Operaia*, for better or worse (if unwillingly) embody the workerist turn of 1969. If one can trace how Branzi's preoccupation with décor—as a polemic—would evolve in the 1980s, one may equally trace how for proponents and apologists of experimental architecture in the *discorsi* could have been assimilated into the visual output of practitioners like Archigram and Hans Hollein.

But with the *discorsi*, unlike with other visual monuments of '60s and '70s architecture, the workerist turn did take place. Although it remains paradoxical that, in terms of ideology, Archizoom ultimately rejected the protest in Turin, it should not be surprising that the *discorsi* still offer the very apotheosis for this protest.

[61] Archizoom, "Relazione al convegno Utopia e/o Revoluzione," *Marcatré* 50-55 (1969): 100.

# l'uso operaio della dimostrazione di piazza nelle lotte del dopoguerra

*aggredendo direttamente il capitale perché, al passo di una superiore unificazione del movimento, sindacati, partiti e repubblica si troveranno uniti in una forma finalmente reale di lotta politica e la classe si rivelerà ancora troppo disorganizzata per sostenerla apertamente.*

*Così, intorno all'insurrezione ungherese e all'inizio della guerra d'Algeria, il grande dibattito politico tra la classe operaia della Renault — perché allora il movimento si riconquista questo posto qualitativo nel « centro » — continuerà in lotta sotterranea.*

*I numerosi movimenti di questo tipo, le fermate, gli scioperi parziali, le invasioni degli uffici, le assemblee dentro e fuori le fabbrica, gli aperti scontri politici con i sindacalisti non trovano sbocco in forme superiori e politiche di movimento. Allora il capitale rioccupa improvvisamente tutta la scena, con le sue ristrutturazioni, la sua guerra, la sua politica e il suo sviluppo.*

*Incomincia il grande spazio vuoto segnato dalla guerra di Algeria, dopo le rivolte politiche degli operai richiamati, le manifestazioni di strada. Tutta la situazione politica rivela il pantano riformista del movimento istituzionalizzato e l'insufficiente organizzazione di classe. Ma non una delle conquiste strategiche viene meno (la ricomposizione politica di tro e contro l'omogeneizzazione del capitale.*

*Le prime espressioni di quanto è avvenuto nel lavoro di talpa si hanno come diretta conseguenza dell'ondata di lotte '60-'62. Finisce la guerra d'Algeria e il maggio '62 improvvisamente si riempie di uno spontaneo e vastissimo movimento, che si generalizza, in alcuni dei più importanti nuclei di classe, contemporaneamente alla fase più violenta e più politica di lotta nelle Asturie. E' lo sciopero delle ferrovie (origine: una contestazione circa i criteri di promozione di un operaio delle ferrovie del rale di solidarietà con gli operai dei settori dell'amministrazione pubblica: i minatori attuano lo sciopero ad oltranza.*

*Di fronte all'iniziativa autonoma degli operai, sindacati e partiti lasciano che gli scioperi si sviluppino secondo una dinamica « spontanea ». Le organizzazioni, come per una tacita convenzione imposta dagli operai, si occupano solo della solidarietà finanziaria con gli scioperanti.* Le Populaire, *organo della SFIO, scrive: « La lotta è al suo giusto livello, si rivolge contro una politica di insieme che ha stancato tutti e trascina i lavoratori man mano che il bisogno di combattere si allarga. Inutile. scioperi sono atti di anarchia, attentati allo stato: bisogna impedirli ad ogni costo. Il Sindacato offre la sua mediazione e dichiara lo sciopero generale. Il 6 novembre quasi due milioni di operai del settore pubblico sono in lotta.*

*Ora il capitale tenta di nascondere la sua incapacità di controllo della lotta. Il sabotaggio operaio delle linee del metro di Parigi vien fatto passare come incidente tecnico dei nuovi macchinari.*

*L'anarchia delle lotte operaie, denunciata oggi dal capitale e dal sindacato, è proprio questa loro rottura con la logica di sviluppo del capitale stesso. Di fatto, oggi le lotte operaie si pongono strategicamente e tatticamente al livello della lotta internazionale. Il rapporto, determinato dalla lotta di classe,*

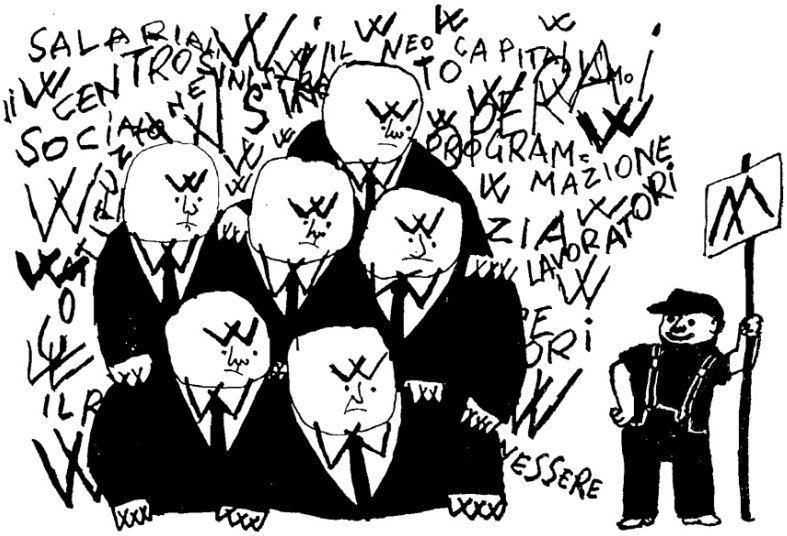


**Fig. 1.** From *Classe Operaia* 2, "L'uso operaio…" (1964): 5.

## l'europa e l'equivoco del retaggio storico

*Party* e la capacità di assorbimento dimostrata dal sistema, nei pochi tentativi di insubordinazione diretta della classe operaia inglese (sciopero generale del '26, movimento degli «*shop stewards*»).

In Francia, Italia e Germania invece le cose sono andate ben diversamente: in questi paesi, si può dire che solo ora una struttura tradizionale, di tipo latamente corporativo e autoritario, stia cedendo il posto, sotto la spinta dell'allargamento dei mercati e dei movimenti della classe operaia internazionale, ad *una struttura capitalistica* «moderna», pluralista e contrattuale, di tipo anglosassone. Questo, e nient'altro che questo, significa il «centro-sinistra europeo».

Questo ritardo nello sviluppo istituzionale sembra chiaramente imputabile alla forza d'inerzia dimostrata dagli elementi paleo-capitalistici presso queste società: la struttura capitalistica si è venuta infatti a sovrapporre qui a residui feudali e a privilegi di origine aristocratica e terriera, che hanno frenato la stessa capacità di innovazione imprenditiva e di «apertura sociale» delle elites dirigenti. Si pensi alla struttura familiare dell'industria francese o italiana, al paternalismo autoritario e alla struttura feudale della industria tedesca, dagli junkers ai Krupp... Né va dimenticata la funzione frenante, esercitata dall'apparato giuridico-istituzionale di derivazione corporativismo di Vichy, del «sistema» della IV repubblica, dell'interclassismo gaullista. Certo, c'è stato un momento in cui la classe operaia, in questi paesi, ha preso direttamente nelle sue mani la direzione del conflitto, spingendolo oltre il semplice rivendicazionismo dei diritti di cittadinanza entro il sistema, ed è il momento dei Consigli: non è un caso che la risposta capitalistica sia stata allora il ricorso allo stato autoritario. Il passaggio al livello del *capitale sociale*, in questi paesi, in quanto imposto da usto, questa ambivalenza di soluzioni istituzionali è sempre presente in qualsiasi società capitalistica: perfino negli Stati Uniti, che abbiamo descritto prima come il caso più limpido di organizzazione democratica e pluralista dello sfruttamento, ritroviamo gli Stati del Sud, dove i feudatari industriali controllano direttamente la polizia, gli sceriffi, i giudici, gli uomini politici e gli agenti del governo federale, e possono fare ampiamente a meno della contrattazione collettiva e della organizzazione sindacale, necessaria invece negli Stati del Nord per controllare i movimenti della forza lavoro. Vero è che iscritti ai partiti operai diminuiscono a vista d'occhio, non solo in Italia, ma anche in Francia. Significa tutto ciò che è davvero in corso un processo di spoliticizzazione delle masse operaie? Noi non lo crediamo. Se fosse, come spiegare la crescita continua della lotta sindacale, in tutta Europa? Come spiegare lo stesso successo elettorale del PCI e del PCF? In realtà, c'è un'esigenza politica anti-capitalistica sempre più diffusa che si esprime oggi come può: in forme spontanee, di protesta, sulle piazze, nelle fabbriche, o nel voto dato genericamente «a sinistra». Il grosso pericolo oggi è che questa

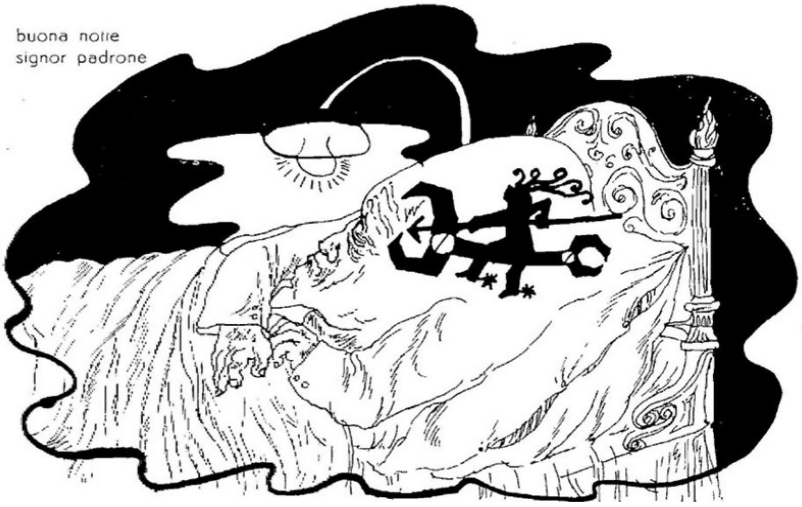


**Fig. 2.** From *Classe Operaia* 2, "L'europa e l'equivoco…" (1964): 10.

**Fig. 3.** From *Marcatré* 50-55 (1969): 20; reproduction of the cover of *Progetto 80: Rapporto preliminare al programma economico nazionale, 1971-1975* (Milan: Libreria Feltrinelli, 1969).

**Fig. 4.** From *Marcatré* 50-55 (1969): 28-29; reproduction of the conference pamphlet for "Utopia e/o Rivoluzione," 25th-27th April, 1969, Turin.

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