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Ivrea, yesterday and tomorrow

Giuseppe Campos Venuti

Issuing a new masterplan for Ivrea on *Urbanistica* after many years is surely an event; and writing the first article has been fallen me, for the right of old age between to people who worked at the plan.

I didn't stand on ceremony because I value masterplan of Ivrea very much and I was about to write my notes; but while I was examining plan materials, I read again my speech at the sitting of town council in which masterplan was adopted. Then I convinced myself those notes could be the best passage to be written, because it voices the general feeling with which all of us have worked to that plan and it explains the essential ideas.

Because I think its official form, but also passionate, essential, emblematic can be efficacious also for readers of *Urbanistica*, that I hope they are interested in Ivrea masterplan, as well as for town councillors, that had still to adopted that plan. So, I decided to publish that speech.

I realize, today more than yesterday, the task to draw up the new masterplan of Ivrea involves a double responsibility. Besides responsibility towards citizens and administration, we had to take the responsibility towards Italian town planning culture, for which Ivrea represents a particular historical event with no doubt. I understood it, when mayor, Fiorenzo Grijuela, asked my presence at the public debate with Francesco Rosi, on the occasion of the awarding of his honours' degree by University of Turin. The subject of the debate was the relationship between Naples of *Mani sulla città*, the unforgettable masterpiece of Rosi, and Ivrea of Adriano Olivetti, of whom my friends and I

assumed the important town planning heritage.

A masterplan for Ivrea assumes a particular cultural meaning. We only may wish we were able to respect these double engagement; anyway we take the responsibility upon ourselves to explain it to public opinion and to Italian culture on influential pages of *Urbanistica*.

Speech at town council in Ivrea, 26th April 2004

Mr mayor, Mrs and Mr councillors, while I'm beginning to speak on this ending stage of the new masterplan of Ivrea, memories of 50 years ago were milling around my mind. They regarded the period immediately afterwards Resistance movement, in which, before as student and then as young architect, I came from Rome 'on pilgrimage' to visit in Ivrea one of the rare Italian examples of modern architecture and town planning.

Neighbourhood of Castellamonte and factory by Figini and Pollini, neighbourhood of Canton Vesco by Fiocchi and Nizzoli, and then the canteen by Gardella and research institute by Vittoria (very young man at that time) and nursery school by Ridolfi and primary school by Quaroni and then INAcasa neighbourhood of Bellavista by Piccinato. At that time I was one of the few active young man belonged to INU and Adriano Olivetti was the president. In those times he promoted the first step to reform the law and the town planning practice; we have not been able to pass that reform yet.

If the presence of Adriano Olivetti and his business led to many projects in Ivrea, not the same success involves previous masterplans.

Masterplan, drawn up by Quaroni in 1952, wasn't efficacious and only in 1959 his strategies were included

in a plan with Piccinato's intentions. These intentions were updated by Bertola in 1985, with a variant of masterplan, approved in 1991: there have been 40 years before drawing up two plans and they are too much.

Things got better for me and for my colleagues; still now, at least. I found a determined administration that was convinced to draw up the first *Documento programmatico* in 2000 and *Progetto preliminare* (that is very similar to a masterplan in Piedmont) in 2002; *Progetto definitivo*, after objections, in 2004.

As president of INU, having being in office after 32 years since he was, I was no more lucky than Adriano Olivetti as regards national town planning reform; but as consulting planner, I found a public administration more determined to take the plan to an end than my masters and friends Quaroni and Piccinato.

Thanks to spur and support of the administration, we tried to bring and develop the heritage of those professional men and their projects in our plan. We can assure that heritage has been combined with the most advanced thinking of contemporary town planning. We choose urban redevelopment strategy and we refuse the rationalist growth strategy; we interpreted the strict relationship between town planning and environmental values; we organize plan process in such a way to grant always an effective implementation, knowing that now it's impossible to entrust it to a modern benefactor.

Documento programmatico, provided by regional law, has been used to define a real 'structure plan', the same one that Quaroni called 'idea plan', many years ago and the same one provided by the new legislative model promoted by Istituto Nazionale di

Urbanistica as starting point of planning process.

After objections and revision of the plan, the vision of the city is even more clear, characterized by the main gate coming from Turin and arriving in via Jervis, surrounded by Olivetti architecture, the new gate that will arrive from the main road towards the fourth Olivetti neighbourhood to be realized in ex Montefibre area.

The project for the city presents two new gates provided by masterplan. The south gate, that opens on via Torino, designed by reorganizing urban edges along the street that goes from the main street to neighbourhood of Bellavista; and the east gate, that opens on corso Vercelli, designed by reorganizing urban edges along the street that goes from *peduncolo* towards San Michele lake. A town planning design not showed off, but clear, that doesn't refuse the relationship between city and country, but that precises the boundaries through the architecture to be projected.

The objection answering process fully confirms the environmental strategy of the plan, as well as the rules that prescribe green parameters to be provided in private and public areas. The new parameters, provided by rules, concerning parks and gardens, grant a great ecologic support; they really apply the slogan "as many houses, as much green", that suggests every urban transformation has to assure a substantial growth of vegetation heritage. This new vegetation heritage will be enough to produce a quantity of oxygen indispensable to more than 3.300 new inhabitants and to absorb carbon dioxide produced by 6.000 new cars: an heritage that will be ecologically self-sufficient in respect with building growth, implemented at the same time of vegetation

bedding.

In conclusion, it seems to me right to remember once again, after this brief summary about planning strategies for Ivrea, even the innovative methodological choices, that, in spite of the regional law drafted by Astengo and still in force, make this plan completely different from previous ones.

Unfortunately, without a new regional law able to introduce the *Piano strutturale*, programmatic and not prescriptive and the *Piano operativo*, fulfilling and prescriptive, restrictions of plan concerning private destinations are still open-ended; and there is a preferential treatment in respect with real estate, of which municipality can't enjoy.

In Ivrea, even after plan revision, restrictions linked to expropriation are provided in the new masterplan, but they amounted to less than 5.000 square metres (church courtyard, school garden and the new school of Olivetti suburb) to be quickly acquired and without high charges.

Plan process managed to solve the difference of treatment between public and private uses, even without the regional law adjustment. The only possible solution consisted in perequation and compensation, in order to rescue town planning from an unbearable inequity and to grant the implementation effectiveness of the plan, as well as its total ethical nature. So, there is the planning clearness we have been waiting for many years.

Mr mayor, Mrs and Mr councillors, for all these reasons, I am pleased and proud to have taken the new masterplan of Ivrea to an end with my consulting friends, with municipal employers and with public managers to which I am very grateful. A plan that I consider one of the most

important in my life and that it is probably one of the last plan. I thank you all of you to let me do it. I'd like to wish all the best to mayor Grijuela, to town council and to all the urban community of Ivrea, with the hope they will use this plan in a good way.