EXCEPTIONAL HOSPITALITY FOR A MEGA EVENT AND PERMANENT HOUSING. INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR THE UNIVERSAL EXPOSITION OF ROME IN 1942

«Hearing “hotels for the masses”, I didn't understand what they were. I went there. [...] I realized that they were an old acquaintance of mine»; P.P. Pasolini1.

Mega events have received increasing attention among scholars in recent years. From an economic point of view, they have been analyzed as possible engines of growth able to activate processes of urban regeneration in the host city, or even in the host country, as well as be part of the territorial marketing strategies for global competition2. More and more frequently, the knowledge and the analytical tools acquired through ongoing researches are also used for the historical analysis of

Abbreviations: ACS = Archivio Centrale dello Stato; PCM = Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri; ASIRI = Archivio storico dell’Istituto della Ricostruzione Industriale; ASC = Archivio Storico Capitolino; ASR = Archivio di Stato di Roma.


mega events of the past. Starting with the one in London, 1851, universal expositions have been for over a century the events which, more than others, had the characteristics of the mega event; it was only during the second half of the twentieth century, that major sporting events reached such dimensions as to contend that role.

The present study follows this line of research, but from a particular analytical perspective in some respects. First of all, the case study under analysis, the Universal Exposition of Rome in 1942, is an event that never took place. The E42, as it was called, is extraordinary evidence of how sometimes mega events can trigger processes and interests of such force, as to produce significant effects regardless of their execution.

It is well known that the E42 had a significant impact on Rome. The effects on the city’s urban planning are well documented, along with the architectural heritage which formed the original nucleus of the new EUR district. But there is another significant legacy from the E42, which is the massive planning effort made to find a solution to several problems connected with the organization of an event, which was supposed to be the greatest event in contemporary Italian history until then. In fact, it is possible to find clear traces of the solutions developed for the Universal Exposition of 1942 in the organization of the events realized in the postwar period, including the 1960 Rome Olympics.

The aim of this study is to analyze one of the organizational aspects related to E42: the innovative solutions designed and partially implemented in order to make the accommodation facilities of Rome suitable for the expected huge visitor flows. The origins of the E42 are known. At that time, the press and other publications attributed the idea of the event to Mussolini, but others played a prominent role such as Giuseppe Bottai, who was the Governor of Rome during

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that period⁷. In June 1935, Bottai submitted to the Head of government a preliminary project for a universal exposition to take place in the Capital to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the “Fascist revolution”. It was the same project that Bottai had received from Federico Pinna Berchet, General director of the Fair of Padova, in April of that year⁸.

Exactly one year later, in June 1936, the formal application was approved by the Bureau Internationale des Expositions (BIE)⁹. Initially the inauguration was scheduled for the spring of 1941, but later the opening period was fixed for the period April 21 to October 28, 1942¹⁰. Between October and December 1936, the Government defined the organizational structure which would be responsible for the event. Senator Vittorio Cini was appointed General Commissioner of the Exposition, and he was placed in charge of the Autonomous Body for the Universal Exposition of Rome (Ente Autonomo Esposizione Universale di Roma - EUR). The main legislative measures related to the E42 were issued between 1937 and 1938.

The Fascist Regime intended to achieve two objectives, as was explicitly stated in the program that Cini sent to Mussolini in June 1937¹¹. The primary objective was political and propagandistic, in that it was an opportunity to show the world the power and prestige Italy had gained in all fields thanks to the Regime. The ideological significance of the event would be emphasized by differentiating the E42 from the other expositions by focusing on the political and spiritual contents and not just on the economic ones. The other purpose of the exposition was related to the development of Rome’s urban planning. In fact, the Regime planned to direct the expansion of the Capital city to the sea¹². To this end, the exhibition

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⁸ Berchet was appointed technical director of the Universal Exposition of Rome at the end of 1936; ibidem, p. 73. However, it should be noted that the idea of an exposition for the commemorative purposes of the Regime had been circulating for years. For example, see L. Santarelli, Progetto per una Esposizione Universale in Roma nel 1932 pel decimo annuale della marcia fascista, Roma, Tip. Roma, [1930], who resumed an even earlier project, Id., Le feste patriottiche del 1911 e l’Esposizione universale in Roma nel 1920, Roma, Recchioni, 1911.
⁹ As regards the BIE, see Commémoration du 75ème anniversaire de la Convention de Paris, Paris, BIE, 2004.
¹⁰ Royal Decree-Law June 4, 1938 n. 1033. Both dates had a strong symbolic value for the Regime because they were anniversaries, respectively, of the foundation of Rome and the March on Rome that brought Mussolini to power.
¹² Analogous projects had also been previously developed; M.L. Neri, Note sull’espansione di Roma verso il mare, «Storia Urbana», 1998, 82-83, pp. 31-48.
center would be built in the south, in the area of Tre Fontane\textsuperscript{13}. Moreover, unlike other expositions, the E42 would be mainly composed of permanent buildings\textsuperscript{14}. After 1942, they were to be the core of a new district, the first nucleus of the expansion of Rome to the coast.

From the earliest stages of the planning, it was clear that the problem of providing accommodation to visitors would be crucial. A huge visitor participation would be the most visible sign of the E42’s success; but, at the same time, the authorities and the organizers wondered if Rome would be able to house them adequately; otherwise the propagandistic effects targeted by the Regime would be undermined.

For the first time, Rome had to face a problem of an unprecedented scale of magnitude from the point of view of hospitality. The challenge was in no way comparable to that posed by the 1911 International Exhibition, or the Jubilees of 1925 and 1933-34\textsuperscript{15}.

For a better understanding of the issue it is useful to describe the volume of the expected visitor flows. To this end, we will use the same data that the EUR had access to which reported figures on previous international expositions (Table 1), presented in a report by the Directorate Hospitality Services (Direzione Servizi Ospitalità) of EUR in 1940\textsuperscript{16}.

The list in Table 1 is incomplete; some data are only partial and inhomogeneous, but they are sufficient to explain how, at least up to the mid-twentieth century, international expositions were the mega events with the greatest impact on host cities with regard to total visitor flows, more so than sports and religious events. The major expositions held in the 1930’s had between 10.5 and 33.5 million visitors, with daily averages of up to 194,000. For comparison, we can consider that the Olympic Games held in the same decade had far fewer spectators.

\textsuperscript{13} With regard to this choice among the different options, see L. De MAJO-I. INSOLEA, L’Eur e Roma, cit. pp. 14-15, pp. 21-26.

\textsuperscript{14} According to Godoli, such a distinction was not so marked; E. Godoli, L’E 42 e le esposizioni universali, in Utopia e scenario di regime, cit., vol. II, pp. 147-155.


\textsuperscript{16} ACS, E-42, f. 11313, b. 1146: EUR, Direzione Servizi Ospitalità, I servizi dell’ospitalità in alcune esposizioni internazionali e il programma dell’Esposizione universale di Roma, (July 30, 1940).
even though numbers were increasing for these events. There were 1.25 million spectators for the Games in Los Angeles in 1932\textsuperscript{17}. Thanks to the organizational machinery of the Nazi Regime, which used the Games for propaganda purposes, four years later the number of people who attended sporting and other events related to the 1936 Berlin Olympics, grew to nearly 3.8 million, with more than 3.16 million tickets sold\textsuperscript{18}. However, it should be taken into account that the Olympic Games were held for a much shorter period than the great expositions, usually lasting only sixteen days; consequently the daily averages of the spectators are very high, for example, more than 78,000 in the case of Los Angeles, and even nearly 236,000 for the Berlin Olympics, with 198,000 tickets sold.

Table 1 - Visitors of major international expositions in the first half of the twentieth century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening days</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total (million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris 1900</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris 1931</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels 1935</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris 1937</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York 1939</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zurich 1939</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ACS, E42, f. 11146.2, b. 1128.

Since the early stages of the E42 project, EUR worked out a forecast of the number of visitors for the Roman event based on the data listed in Table 1; the Directorate Hospitality Services assumed that the number of visitors would be similar to that of the Brussels Exposition\textsuperscript{19}. The number of people that would have visited the E42 during 200 opening days would have been 10.7 million, each of them with an average of 1.9 entrances for a total of about twenty million tickets (see Table 2)\textsuperscript{20}.


\textsuperscript{19} Another analogy with Brussels, is that a new district arose from its exhibition site.

\textsuperscript{20} For a comparison with other major events in Rome, we can consider the flow of visitors for the 1925 Jubilee; ENIT, Statistica del movimento turistico in Italia. Anno 1925, Roma, Tipografia
The various typologies of visitors had different accommodation needs. It was assumed that more than a quarter of them would not need any accommodation, such as the resident Romans, and also the many people not resident in the city who would not stay overnight. There were also those who would find accommodation at relatives’ or friends’ houses. For others, the stay ranged from 1.5 days up to 2.5 days for Italians and 3 days for foreigners, with an average of 1.9 days. Overall, the overnight stays related to the Exposition were estimated at more than 15 million with a daily average of almost 76,000. Could Rome offer suitable hospitality to such an additional number of visitors to the usual tourist flows?

The organization of the E42 made it necessary to quantify hospitality in Rome and to think about the Italian accommodation system in a more concrete manner than ever before. The documentation found in the E42 fund in the Central del Senato, 1926, pp. 43-50. On that occasion, it was estimated that about half a million pilgrims came to Rome in groups. The number of other visitors is not known but the different scale of the event is evident. The 1934 football World Cup, which was played in Rome as well, is not taken into account, as the tourist dimensions of this kind of event was still relatively modest and very different from the present ones.

State Archive reveals how the hospitality in Rome became the object of a lively debate between the EUR and the General Directorate of Tourism of the Ministry of Popular Culture; discrepancies emerged over the number of beds for the visitors that already existed in Rome and over how to increase the tourist accommodation facilities up to the levels required by the Exposition. The approach of the General Directorate of Tourism was generally more optimistic. At the end of 1940, the number of beds available in hotels, guesthouses and inns were less than 17,000 according to the data collected by the Ministry of Popular Culture. The hotel accommodation capacity could be potentially increased by approximately 20%, by adding beds to existing rooms, thus reaching almost 20,000 beds. However, it was pointed out that a part of the beds would be occupied by the normal tourist flows, independently of the E42, or by resident people in Rome. Therefore the availability of beds for the visitors of the exposition had to be reduced by 35%, decreasing to a number of about 12,000. The evaluations were partially discordant, but Rome would certainly need a very large additional accommodation capacity before the opening of the E42: 55,000-65,000 more beds were needed according to the General Directorate of Tourism, and even 75,000 in the opinion of the EUR Directorate Hospitality Services. How could this gap be filled?

The reports of the Directorate Hospitality Services analyzed the ways in which other cities had solved the problem of accommodation for great events. The situations are all diverse, although in some cases the solutions are similar. Brussels had an equally insufficient hotel capacity when it hosted the Universal Exhibition in 1935: approximately 11,000 beds. The authorities invited the residents to host visitors in furnished rooms, approximately 6,000. Some dormitories were set up in public buildings to accommodate school groups for a total of 19,000 beds. Moreover, 4,000-5,000 visitors used campsites.

During the 1936 Olympic Games the permanent tourist accommodation capacity in Berlin was not entirely adequate, but the German Capital was able to rely on


22 It was the first time that the number of beds available in the tourist accommodations of Rome were analytically quantified; see M. Teodori, L’ospitalità a Roma tra la grande crisi e la seconda guerra mondiale, in A.M. Girelli Bocci (ed.), L’industria dell’ospitalità a Roma. Secoli XIX-XX, Padova, Cedam, 2006, pp. 303-377.

23 The reduction was based on the average percentage of bed occupancy in hotels in the preceding years; the possibility of a displacement effect produced by the exposition was not taken into account.

24 ACS, E42, f. 11313, b. 1146.
the proximity of other urban centers well-connected by an efficient transport system. Here too the authorities asked citizens to rent out unused rooms in their homes.

For the 1940 Olympic Games in Helsinki, which was later cancelled due to the war, the approach was similar, but since it was a coastal city, accommodations in large passenger ships anchored in the port were also planned for the visitors.

On the other hand, for the Paris Exposition of 1937, the demand for beds had not caused any issue of concern. In this respect, Paris was “the best equipped in Europe”. There were more than 22,500 hotels and guesthouses in the city center and in the suburbs, with more than 340,000 rooms that could accommodate about 600,000 people. Another 150,000 beds were available in furnished rooms. In addition, three great reception centers – consisting of large sheds with very basic services – were built on the outskirts of the city for visitors that could not afford normal accommodation rates. Finally, groups of students were hosted in temporary accommodation created in schools and colleges.

The construction of new tourist facilities for the New York exposition in 1939-40 was not necessary as well. According to the data collected by the Directorate Hospitality Services, the existing hotels in the city – 435 with almost 250,000 beds – were quite sufficient\(^\text{25}\); in addition, there were 50,000 beds in the suburb hotels. Another 150,000 beds were available in furnished rooms and clubs. The establishment of large camps was proposed, but only two were set up, which were only used by a few soldiers and students. In evaluating the actual impact of visitors on the city, also from the point of view of hospitality, it must be taken into account that New York was a metropolis of about 7.5 million inhabitants\(^\text{26}\). In this regard, even if we do not know how many residents visited the exposition, we have a rough indication by correlating the total number of visitors to the inhabitants; this ratio is 4.3 and it is very low compared with those calculated for most of the other cities that hosted international expositions. Zurich was the opposite extreme: visitors amounted to more than thirty-one times the number of

\(^{25}\) Considering that a double room was the current standard in the U.S., these data are not very different from those collected for the hotel census in 1929, according to which there were 509 hotels in New York City with more than 25 rooms open all year round, totaling 126,632 rooms. This assessment underestimated the actual total capacity of the city given that the census did not take into account apartment houses, boarding houses, clubs, YMCA, YWCA, tourists camps, Turkish baths, and farm houses with accommodation; U.S. Department of Commerce-Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States. Census of Hotel 1930, Washington, 1931, pp. 48, 95.

Innovative solutions for the Universal Exposition of Rome in 1942

Residents, which totaled only 340,000 in those years. For the two Expositions in Paris, the ratio varies between 11.0 (1937) and 11.6 (1931) but it decreases to 5.4 and 5.9 respectively, considering the population of the entire urban area (5.7-5.8 million). Finally, the number of visitors for the Exposition in Brussels was about twenty-five times the residents, which totaled 840,000 in the early 1930’s.

For the 1942 Exposition in Rome, it was also thought that the gap between the existing number of beds and those needed to host the visitors could be bridged by relying on several different measures. An effort was made to build new hotels and improve the quality of existing ones. The approach of the E42 led to a qualitative leap in the Italian tourism and hotel policy; the State decided to intervene financially in an unprecedented way. This is proof of the deep concern for the situation of the Italian hotel accommodation system. The Government established outright grants of up to more than one third of the total investment for the construction of new hotels and the renovation of existing ones. In addition, after decades of requests from the hoteliers and several postponements, it was finally decided to create a specialized institute for hotel credit, which would disburse subsidized loans to build or renovate hotels before the beginning of the E42.

Although the authorities had taken such measures to encourage the construction and renovation of hotels and pensions, they were fully aware that it was necessary to face the extraordinary accommodation needs related to the E42 without increasing the supply of hotel hospitality in Rome in a large and permanent way. In actual fact, hotel accommodation in Rome was considered numerically quite adequate for an ordinary demand, although it was urgent to upgrade the quality adapting them to tourists’ new expectations. The memory of the hotel crisis in Rome caused by an excessive proliferation of hotels in the mid-twenties, particularly due to the 1925 Jubilee, was still alive. Besides, more than ten years of fluctuations in international tourist flows

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27 As for the other European cities, population data are taken from B.R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics. Europe 1750-2005*, Houndmills, Basingstoke–New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 75-78. The report of the Directorate Hospitality Services highlighted the extraordinary result obtained at the Exposition of Zurich especially compared to the number of inhabitants of Switzerland, which was only 4.5 million.

28 The Autonomous Section for Hotel and Tourism Credit (Sezione Autonoma per il Credito Alberghiero e Turistico) was established in 1938 as a division of the National Bank of Work (Banca Nazionale del Lavoro). The State partially contributed to the payment of the interest on the loans granted. Of course, most of the loans were given for hotel accommodation in Rome, but other Italian tourism sites also received part of the funds; M. Teodori, *Alle origini del credito alberghiero in Italia. I primi anni di attività della Sacat (1939-1943)*, presented at the International Conference on La storia del turismo in Italia. Prospettive di ricerca, (Sorrento, 20-21 ottobre 2011), (forthcoming).

29 See D. Strangio, *Domanda e offerta dell’organizzazione turistica italiana nei “felici Anni Venti”. Politiche di intervento, individuazione, progettazione e attivazione di circuiti turistici-culturali*.
and economic results, which were anything but brilliant, did not encourage hotel entrepreneurs to invest. In addition, it is worth pointing out that the very little collaboration on the part of the Rome Governorate often created obstacles which delayed the construction of new hotels, which was fully blocked in any case because of the war. In this light, the confidential correspondence between the Directorate Hospitality Services and some officials of the General Directorate of Tourism contains very harsh evaluations; the behavior of the Governorate was explicitly associated with the desire to favour other interests related to the urban development of the Capital\textsuperscript{30}.

The General Directorate of Tourism, in his early optimistic assessments, relied heavily on traditional forms of hospitality in Rome to face the emergency during peak periods, such as religious institutes, furnished rooms for rent by landlords, temporary accommodation created in schools and other public buildings. With regard to religious institutions, the beds available were estimated to be at least 10,000 but there were actually many more, perhaps 50,000; these had been used during the previous Jubilees. However, the Directorate Hospitality Services did not share the optimism of the General Directorate of Tourism and urged for a closer investigation into the situation; this provided more detailed information about religious communities highlighting their rules, timetables, the sobriety of the services; such aspects made them unsuitable as accommodation for most visitors of the exposition. Besides, an International Missionary Exhibition in Rome taking place at the same time as the E42 would have made them unavailable in any case.

Furnished rooms was another possible solution to the lack of accommodation. According to the first assessments of the General Directorate of Tourism, there should have been about 40,000 beds available from authorized landlords; in addition, another 30,000 visitors could have been accommodated in private homes by convincing Roman families to offer their available rooms. The authorities relied heavily on this type of accommodation to the point that in 1939, for the first time, the Italian Government issued a regulation on the activity of landlords specifically related to the E42\textsuperscript{31}. Nevertheless, the estimated available furnished rooms in Rome proved unrealistic. The Directorate Hospitality Services initially reduced the figures to 10,000 beds; later, in agreement with the General Directorate of Tourism, this item disappeared entirely from the list of figures on Rome’s receptivity\textsuperscript{32}. Essentially, two reasons led to the exclusion of

\textit{a Roma}, in \textit{L’industria dell’ospitalità a Roma}, cit., pp. 251-302 for a detailed investigation of the hotel industry in Rome during that period.

\textsuperscript{30} ACS, \textit{E42}, f. 11146.2, b. 1128.

\textsuperscript{31} Law June 16, 1939 n. 1111. A draft of this regulatory intervention is in ivi.

\textsuperscript{32} The planned camp site in the pine forest of Castel Fusano also disappeared from that list; ACS, \textit{E42}, f. 11146.2, b. 1128; f. 11313, b. 1146, pp. 145-148. See also P. Masera, \textit{L’ospitalità
rented rooms. First of all, most of the rooms offered by landlords had inadequate hygienic conditions and the levels of comfort were often below the minimum quality standards required. In addition, it became clear that they were almost all unavailable because they were permanently occupied by people living in Rome.

It is necessary to dwell on this aspect, as it provides a key to understanding the decisions made in order to solve the problem of hospitality for the E42, especially with regards to introducing innovative forms of accommodation in addition to the traditional ones. An important aspect which needs to be taken into account is the demographic evolution of Rome in those years, which was a crucial factor in relation to the urban and social development of the Capital. The growth trend that characterizes the post-unification period continued in the interwar years at a faster rate from the mid-twenties onwards (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Residents in Rome (1900-1945)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>Five years variation index</th>
<th>Index base: 1900</th>
<th>% of all the residents in Italy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>435,215</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>471,435</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108,3</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>512,336</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>117,7</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>609,890</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>140,1</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>662,451</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>152,2</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>739,747</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>170,0</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>945,621</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>217,3</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1,114,166</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>256,0</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,353,942</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>311,1</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1,500,513</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>344,8</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Rome’s population was growing more than any other large Italian city and more than the total population of the country, primarily as a result of heavy immigration. From 1900 to 1920, the residents grew by 52%, but in the following years...

ai milioni di visitatori che verranno in Italia per la E42. Una serie di possibilità interessanti aperte all’iniziativa italiana, «Domus», 1939, 134, pp. 73-80.

33 ACS, E42, f. 11146.2, b. 1128.
35 In 1900, Rome’s population was 1.3% of the total population of the country; in 1920 1.8%, in...
decades the increase was even greater: compared to 1920, it more than doubled in 1940. In just five years, from 1925 to 1930, residents increased by 28%; in the subsequent two five-year periods the growth was lower but still very strong: 18 and 22%, respectively. This demographic trend, of course, was reflected on the housing demand. As noted, “the limited availability of accommodation for the vast majority of the population [...] became the central issue for the socio-political equilibrium of the city”36.

After the end of the World War I, also thanks to many facilities granted by the State and the local authorities from 1919 onwards, the construction of dwellings started again and became particularly significant during the period of Fascism37. Public housing increased38, and building cooperatives were initially very active39. Public or semi-governmental bodies also invested in the housing sector40, but it was the private building industry that took a leading role in the expansion of the built-up areas. The activity of private constructors grew significantly in the 1920’s until it clearly prevailed in the next decade; what is more, it showed an increasing tendency towards intensive building41. Once again the interests related to the construction sector, central to the Roman economy, made a decisive contribution to urban development plans42.

1940 3%. During the period of Fascism, the population of the Capital had annual increases between 30 and 37 per thousand, very much higher than the rates of growth of the whole Italian population, fluctuating around 8 per thousand; G. Bonetta, Dal regime fascista, cit. p. 245. Taking the population in 1911 as a reference, at the end of 1938, the index of growth of the Roman population was 237, whereas it was 172 for Milan, 162 for Turin, 139 for Genoa, and 121 for Naples; ibidem. 36 G. Bonetta, Dal regime fascista, cit. p. 253.


39 See F. Bartolini, Roma borghese. La casa e i ceti medi tra le due guerre, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2001, chapter 2, about cooperative societies for the houses of civil servants.

40 Among others, the National Institute of Insurance (Istituto Nazionale delle Assicurazioni - INA); F. Bartolini, Roma Borghese, cit. chapter 3.

41 According to the data on construction permits, only 20% of them were given to private entrepreneurs in the early 1920’s; this percentage rose to 35-40% at the end of the decade and in the 1930’s it stabilized around 60%. G. Bonetta, Dal regime fascista, cit. p. 255. In the second half of the thirties, the percentage of authorized rooms was approximately 30-35% for housing cooperatives while the remainder was related to public bodies; L. Maroi, L’attività edilizia in Roma nel quinquennio 1934-1938, «Capitolium», 1939, 6, pp. 268-290: 286.

42 See A. Martini, Dall’edilizia abitativa ai lavori pubblici. Imprese e industria delle costruzioni a Roma negli anni del fascismo, «Roma moderna e contemporanea», 1998, 3, pp. 507-528. For a discussion on the most important entrepreneurs in the construction industry working in Rome in
Table 4 - Residents in overcrowded conditions in the Italian cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (1931)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Average people per room</th>
<th>Overcrowded houses</th>
<th>People living in overcrowded houses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>% of total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bari</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>18.188</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taranto</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>9.710</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napoli</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>70.228</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggio Calabria</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>10.584</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catania</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>20.474</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palermo</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>29.923</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messina</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>14.122</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>44.274</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cagliari</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.360</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferrara</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.674</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padova</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.951</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezia</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6.829</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trieste</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6.829</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milano</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>50.761</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brescia</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.728</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livorno</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.636</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torino</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>20.386</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verona</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.994</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Spezia</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.004</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bologna</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5.006</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firenze</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.710</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genova</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>5.335</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: elaborations based on data from ISTAT, Indagine speciale sulle abitazioni al 21 aprile 1931, cit.

Nevertheless, the housing crisis remained one of the city’s emergencies; it primarily affected the working class but also part of the white-collar workers of the lower middle class. The forced evictions due to heavy demolition in some areas of the city center, decided by the Regime, as well as the high rents, exacerbated the situation43. The 1931 housing census reported that one Roman family out of four (24%) was living in sublease, forced to share an apartment with one or

those years, see P. TOSCANO, Le origini del capitalismo industriale nel Lazio. Imprese e imprenditori a Roma dall’Unità alla Seconda guerra mondiale, Cassino, Università degli studi di Cassino, 2002, pp. 98-110.

43 As regards demolitions, for instance, we can mention here the data for the period 1934-38 in which 2,291 apartments were demolished for a total of 10,439 habitable rooms; L. MAROI, L’attività edilizia in Roma, cit., p. 287.
more other families because of the housing shortage\textsuperscript{44}. Among the Italian cities with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and with the greatest rate of overcrowded houses, Rome was in eighth position just behind the major cities of the South (Table 4)\textsuperscript{45}. In Rome, 323,000 people – i.e. 37.5\% of the residents – lived in overcrowded dwellings; the corresponding figures were 26.1 for Milan, 16.8 for Turin, and 6.6 for Genoa. The overcrowding of dwellings remained very high in many areas of the city, despite the fact that the total average of people per room in Rome was gradually decreasing compared to previous decades: in 1921 it was 1.48 – or 1.55 according to other calculations – while in 1931 it had fallen to 1.31\textsuperscript{46}. The Governor of Rome, in a speech in April 1942, reported data that quantified the housing needs of Rome at 125,000 rooms. The report claimed that population growth would cause the number to increase and in 1944 it would have totaled 244,000\textsuperscript{47}. It is important to note that in 1941 the draft plan for a variation in the general urban development plan of Rome emphasized that after the war “more urgently than anything else”, it would be necessary “to provide for the rapid creation of healthy, rational and organic districts of housing, especially taking into account the needs of the popular classes”\textsuperscript{48}.

It is in this context, in 1937, that the idea of an innovative kind of intervention was conceived so as to help solve the problem of hospitality for the E42. The solution consisted of the so-called hotels for the masses. These were large constructions for temporary visitor accommodation during the E42 which would then be converted into permanent residential buildings at the end of the event. This solution reflected the Fascist Regime’s interventionist approach to the econ-

\textsuperscript{44} This percentage was much higher in the central areas of the city.

\textsuperscript{45} According to ISTAT parameters a dwelling was considered overcrowded when the rooms were occupied by more than two persons on average; the census took into account only the dwellings for use by resident families, thus excluding hotels, barracks, convents, etc. A room was considered large enough to contain a bed, even though it was prevalently used for other purposes; the number of residents did not take into account the homeless; ISTAT, \textit{Indagine speciale sulle abitazioni al 21 aprile 1931}, 2 voll., Firenze, Vallecchi, 1934, 1936.

\textsuperscript{46} G. Talamo, \textit{Dagli inizi del secolo}, cit., pp. 40-41; G. Bonetta, \textit{Dal regime fascista}, cit. p. 253. In this respect, it needs to be pointed out that there was also a reduction in the number of vacant apartments and habitable rooms of about 78\% during the 1930’s, even though there was a temporary inversion of the trend from 1935 to 1937; L. Maroi, \textit{L’attività edilizia in Roma}, cit., pp. 287-288.

\textsuperscript{47} This figure can be broken down as follows: 45,000 rooms in very popular houses, 80,000 in working-class houses, 70,000 in middle-class houses, and 35,000 rooms in luxury houses; \textit{La prima riunione della nuova consulta di Roma, «Capitolium»}, 1942, 3-4, pp. 68-84: 82.

omy and it showed that the Government was fully aware of the fact that it could not always rely on market mechanisms\textsuperscript{49}. As already pointed out, the first market failure concerned the housing market and it had already been in progress for a long time. The above mentioned initiative followed the many measures taken by the State and local authorities, after the First World War, to increase the housing supply: the elimination of rent control, subsidized loans, the opportunity to purchase public building lots at particularly favorable economic conditions, tax exemptions on new buildings and building materials, contributions for builders of the so-called “houses in convention”\textsuperscript{50}.

There would have been further failure of market mechanisms if the solution for extraordinary accommodation problems had relied primarily on the initiative of hoteliers, despite the incentives granted to them. The State attempted to provide a solution to a dual problem through the construction of hotels for the masses. Firstly, this would contribute to the success of the E42 increasing the accommodation capacity of Rome in a temporary way, avoiding an unsustainable excess of hotel hospitality after the end of the E42\textsuperscript{51}. In other words, the Regime could not solve the problem of hospitality only through subsidized hotel building, and for this reason it also commissioned subsidized buildings to be used as temporary hotels. At the same time, it provided a partial contribution to the solution of the housing crisis in Rome, not to mention the widespread effects on the economy of the city and the demand for labor coming from public and private funds used for construction\textsuperscript{52}.

\textsuperscript{49} For an overview of the housing policies and the cases for which economic theory justifies direct public intervention on the housing market see M. Baldini, \textit{La casa degli italiani}, Bologna, il Mulino, 2010, pp. 109-176.

\textsuperscript{50} See: Bonetta, \textit{Dal regime fascista}, cit. p. 260; V. Vidotto, \textit{Roma contemporanea}, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2006, pp. 197-198. The houses in convention (\textit{case in convenzione}) were an initiative taken by the Governorate to increase social housing. A prize of 1,000 Lire was offered to private builders for each room built. In return, the Governorate had the right to assign one third of the apartments – to people who belonged to some pre-defined categories – and to authorize the assignment of the other two thirds to people chosen by the builders. In addition, the rent was fixed at a low rate for at least five years.

\textsuperscript{51} The construction of a hotel for the masses was also planned for the Overseas Exhibition in Naples in 1940, but it was not completed at the time of its opening: ACS, \textit{E42}, f. 11146.8 b. 1128; “L’albergo in Italia”, 1939, 6, p. IV. The hotel was to be built and managed by the OND, and consisted of two connected buildings situated near the square where the entrance to the exhibition was. It would occupy an area of about 17,000 m\textsuperscript{2} with a total cubature of about 100,000 m\textsuperscript{3}; it would have 500 rooms and large common areas. “Bollettino della Federazione nazionale fascista alberghi e turismo”, 1939, 10, p. 13. In any case, the exhibition was closed after a few weeks as a result of Italy’s entry into the war.

\textsuperscript{52} It is superfluous to point out that the construction sector was a primary component of the
The idea of a hotel for the masses was not an absolute novelty from a conceptual point of view; in some ways it recalled other existing buildings in Rome. The so-called “suburban hotels” can be considered as a precedent; they were planned by Innocenzo Sabbatini and built between 1927 and 1929 by the Autonomous Institute for Social Housing (Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari – IACP) on the borders of the new Garbatella neighborhood. These were four large buildings built to be used for temporary rotation accommodation for about nine hundred homeless families who were waiting to find stable arrangement in other buildings. It was immediately clear that the major beneficiaries of the suburban hotels were the evicted families from demolitions in the center of the city as a result of town planning interventions carried out by the Regime in those years. The suburban hotels were structured to rent beds in rooms or gender-separated dormitories to families or individuals. All the activities were carried out in large common areas: bathrooms, kitchens, dining rooms, lounges; inside the group of buildings there were also kindergartens, schools, a laundry, a doctor’s surgery, a maternity ward and a chapel. There were several proposals for the possible different uses of the suburban hotels once they had fulfilled their original purpose. They could then be used to accommodate the masses who came to the large fascist gatherings, or for beggars or displaced persons in the event of floodings caused by the Tiber and the Aniene. They could also be converted into permanent housing. The latter approach prevailed when the Governorate realized that it would be very difficult for Roman economy, even in those years. According to the data of the 1936 population census, the citizens employed in the construction industry in the Capital were a higher percentage than those in other major Italian cities: 5.6% of the present population aged ten years and older. In Milan and Naples the corresponding percentage was 2.4, in Turin 2.9, in Genoa 3.4. Overall, 11% of the working population in Rome worked in the building sector; ISTAT, VIII censimento generale della popolazione. 21 aprile 1936, vol. IV, Professioni, parte II, Tavole, Roma, Failli, 1939, table II. The unemployment figures are even more significant. In 1937, 35.4% of the unemployed in Rome consisted of building and road construction workers; G. Bonetta, Dal regime fascista, cit. p. 537.


54 These buildings were referred to as “hotels for the evicted”. The hotels also housed the inhabitants of demolished slum settlements in the suburbs; R. Ricci, L’Ufficio di Assistenza sociale nel 1929. Baracche e sbaraccamenti, «Capitolium», 1930, 3, pp. 142-149.

55 M. Sinatra, La Garbatella a Roma, cit., p. 40.
the families already housed to find stable accommodation elsewhere. Therefore, between 1929 and 1935 the IACP gradually remodeled the rooms and dormitories, transforming them into apartments which were permanently assigned; the original project had essentially failed\textsuperscript{56}.

Despite the conceptual similarities with the suburban hotels, it should be stressed that the intention to create permanent buildings such as hotels for the masses, so as to cope with the temporary tourist accommodation problem for a mega-event and then use them for social housing, can be considered unprecedented. It would seem that nothing similar had been done before, not only in Italy, but also in other cities of the world in which the largest international exhibitions were held. The same applies for the Olympics, where similar solutions were considered to accommodate Olympic teams; but the transformation of the Olympic Villages into permanent housing became common only after the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki\textsuperscript{57}. However, the Olympic Villages had a much smaller total cubature compared to the hotels for the masses as they were designed to accommodate fewer people\textsuperscript{58}. From this point of view, the hotels for the masses planned for the Universal Exposition in Rome in 1942 can be seen as an anticipation of future solutions on a much larger scale.

It should be clarified that these forms of lodging were not directed to ordinary tourists. In fact, it was initially decided to structure the hotels for the masses in large dor-

\textsuperscript{56} Ibïdem, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{57} F. Muñoz, Historic Evolution and Urban Planning Typology of Olympic Villages, in M. de Moragas, M. Llinés, B. Kidd (eds.), Olympic Villages. A Hundred Years of Urban Planning and Shared Experiences, Lausanne, International Olympic Committee, 1997, pp. 27-51. L. Millet, Olympic Villages after the Games, in Olympic Villages, cit., pp. 123-129. L. Milani, I grandi eventi come contributo al fabbisogno di residenza sociale. Riflessioni a partire dalla riconversione dei villaggi olimpici e delle aree Expo, tesi di dottorato in Pianificazione urbana, territoriale e ambientale (XX ciclo), Politecnico di Milano, 2010. However, two partial exceptions deserve to be mentioned. The first is the Olympic Village in Berlin which was the first Village designed to be used after the Games, although for military housing; M. Meyer-Künzel, Berlin 1936, in Olympic Cities, cit., pp. 165-182. The other concerns the 1940 Olympics in Helsinki, another event which never took place. While the construction of the hotels for the masses was beginning in Rome, the Municipality of Helsinki began to build an Olympic Village for 3,200 people as an integral part of its social housing policy. The 23 brick buildings had been designed to be later used as permanent housing for 500 families alleviating the shortage of housing. The buildings were completed despite the cancellation of the Games; The Official Report of the Organising Committee for the Games of the XV Olympiad. Helsinki 1952, Porvoo, W. Söderström, 1955, pp. 22, 84.

\textsuperscript{58} The size of Olympic Villages has grown enormously over the years. For the most recent editions of the Summer Olympics, the manual drawn up by the International Olympic Committee for candidate cities specifies that Olympic Villages should have a capacity of approximately 16,000 people. L. Millet, Olympic Villages after the Games, cit.
mitories differentiated by gender and conceived only for visitors who would come to Rome in large groups organized by the National Recreational Club (Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro - OND), the most important state-controlled leisure and recreational Italian organization for workers, and other fascist mass organizations. Furthermore, the organizers of the E42 were expecting a large turnout related to group travel organized by the corresponding German organizations, to which the OND was linked by exchange agreements, in particular the Deutsche Arbeitsfront, and within this the Kraft durch Freude. In this respect, the hotels for the masses were a possible solution for the hospitality problem to be framed in the light of tourism as a form of involvement of the masses by totalitarian regimes. Afterwards it was decided to modulate the quality of some of the hotels for the masses upgrading them for higher-end hospitality, hypothesizing their transformation into permanent luxury hotels after the E42.

The decision to build the hotels for the masses was taken by the Government. Unfortunately, it is only partially possible to reconstruct the timing and modalities of the genesis of this measure, because of the unavailability of archives of the General Directorate of Tourism of the Ministry of Popular Culture, which promoted the building of these kind of lodgings; however the documentation of the EUR Directorate Hospitality Services allow us to partly overcome this deficiency.

The idea to construct permanent buildings to temporarily accommodate the visitors of the Roman Exposition was already circulating in the aftermath of the official announcement of the event, although the approach was initially different from the solutions adopted later. Marcello Piacentini, the main inspirer of the transformation of Rome during the Fascist period, in October 1936 wrote about the possibility of creating building complexes to temporarily host visitors during the E42.


61 Most of what remains of the archive of the General Directorate of Tourism of the Ministry of Popular Culture is now stored in the archive of the Ministry of Tourism, abolished in 1992, which is not yet open to consultation except for a small part deposited with the Central State Archive; P. Ferrara-G. Tosatti, Ministero del turismo e dello spettacolo, in P. Ferrara, P. Gemini (eds.), Per la storiografia italiana del XXI secolo. Seminario sul progetto di censimento sistematico degli archivi di deposito dei ministeri realizzato dall’Archivio centrale dello Stato, Roma, 20 aprile 1995, Roma, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali – Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1998, pp. 221-224.
along the roads that would connect Rome with the coast and the surrounding hills; the same buildings would later be used as hotels, houses, schools, barracks, or industrial, agricultural and sporting facilities. In the following months this concept was also developed by Vincenzo Civico. He believed that the best location for these new villages with such a dual function, was in the proximity of the Exhibition center, on the knolls along the left bank of the Tiber. He distinguished between collective accommodations for large groups to be converted later into public buildings – schools, barracks, and so on – and accommodations for small groups or individual tourists, to be converted after the mega event into normal permanent housing for the working class and agricultural workers. In November 1937, Dagoberto Ortensi came close to what would be the adopted solution attributing to the mass hotels the specific task of welcoming visitors who came to Rome in large organized groups. In this way, these buildings would be composed of large dormitories and located close to the railway stations provided near the exhibition area.

However, reflections on this issue did not remain confined to the debate between architects, engineers and urban planners; the project for hotels for the masses was taking shape also at the Ministry of Popular Culture. In the spring of 1938, Minister Dino Alfieri wrote to the Governor of Rome, Piero Colonna, soliciting every effort to help solve the accommodation problem for the 1942 Exposition. Until that time the Governorate had not been very collaborative, especially in giving precise guidelines about areas to be allocated to the construction of new hotels. In this regard, Alfieri also invited the Governor to give special attention to requests for the allocation of areas to be destined to “popular type of buildings to be used during the exhibition as hotels and then transformed into dwellings”. In this way, it would have been possible to host large masses of visitors during the E42 and, since 1943, to have a large number of houses to cope with the increase of the inhabitants or to accommodate the evicted families due to the future demolition in the popular district of the city center.

64 With respect to the location, Civico proposed an analogy with the Olympic Village for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin built next to the sports facilities.
66 A copy of the letter was sent to the Directorate Hospitality Services on May 27; ACS, E42, f. 11.146.2, b. 1128.
At last, at the beginning of 1939, the construction of the hotels for the masses entered into the operational phase. On February 2, the National Agency for the Tourism Industry (Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche - ENIT) – the State body in charge of their management during the exposition – signed the conventions with the construction company that would build them, the Federici and Igliori snc; a further agreement was signed on February 22 of the following year\textsuperscript{67}. The Ministry of Popular Culture had chosen to implement four large groups of buildings to be used as hotels for the masses during the E42, defining their size and location (see Table 5), although with later partial modifications.

Table 5 - Hotels for the masses established by the agreements between ENIT and the Federici and Igliori company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Owner of the area prior to the conveyance to the construction company</th>
<th>planned beds (dec. ‘40)</th>
<th>planned cubature (m$^3$)</th>
<th>m$^3$ for bed</th>
<th>Construction cost excluding land price (estimated in Lire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>average for m$^3$</td>
<td>overall (million)</td>
<td>Lire for bed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomentana road</td>
<td>Elia Federici</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>255.000</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperiale road (now Cristoforo Colombo road)</td>
<td>Governorate of Rome through expropriation</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>260.000</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperiale road - Esagonale square (now Navigatori square)</td>
<td>Governorate of Rome through expropriation</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>430.000</td>
<td>107.5</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almone Valley (now Ostiense circumvallation road)</td>
<td>IACP - others through expropriation</td>
<td>5.500</td>
<td>420.000</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.500</td>
<td>1,365.000</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Sources}: ACS, \textit{E42}, f. 11146.2, b. 1128; for the owner of the areas see notes 80-82; for the cubature see note 67; for the estimates of the construction cost see note 68.

Contrary to the first hypothesis published in newspapers and specialized magazines, this kind of accommodation for the visitors to the E42 would have been of the intensive type: multiple buildings in each location, with many floors. The total planned cubature, of almost 1.4 million cubic meters, reflects the significance of this housing project\textsuperscript{68}. The countercyclical impact on the economy of

\textsuperscript{67} Acts of Notary Sabelli.

\textsuperscript{68} The data on the cubature are taken from: «L’albergo in Italia», 1939, 6, p. IV; «Architettura» 1939, December special issue, pp. 29, 35.
the city would also have been significant. Excluding the value of the areas, the total cost of construction can be estimated at more than 225 million lire, with reference to the average cost per cubic meter at the end of 1939 in Rome. Moreover, the estimated number of working days required for the completion of the hotels for the masses was 4.2 million.

With regard to the location, we can distinguish four distinct nuclei: one in the northeast of the city, the others in the south, between the Aurelian Walls and the area of the Tre Fontane where the E42 was to emerge. The first nucleus consisted of six 30 meter high buildings along the Nomentana road – each with seven to eight floors – in an area enclosed by a bend of the Aniene river, just before Tazio bridge which had connected the city to the new Monte Sacro district since 1922. The planned total cubature was about 255,000 m³. There were to be 4,000 beds within the Nomentano nucleus according to the December 1940 estimates. Two of the other groups of hotels for the masses would arise along the Imperiale road, the current Cristoforo Colombo road, planned to connect the E42 to the city center: one, denominated Imperiale B, on Esagonale square – the current Navigatori square – where the new large road crossed Sette chiese road; the other, denominated Imperiale A, some hundred meters ahead towards the E42, in front of the site where the former Rome Fair center would be built in the post-war years. The twin building complexes on the two sides of the Esagonale square would provide approximately 4,000 beds for the E42 visitors; each complex consisted of four buildings for a total cubature of 430,000 m³. The other group on Imperiale road, consisting of six buildings, had a cubature of 260,000 m³ where about 3,000 tourists could be accommodated. The last group of hotels, referred to as Almone, named after the little river that flowed in that area, would be built on the edge of the Garbatella district, along the planned road linking the Imperiale and the Ostiense roads. This group of buildings, with a total cubature of 420,000 m³, would have provided 5,500 beds. All the buildings were

69 The production cost used for the calculation is an average of the extreme costs recorded for non-economic buildings in Rome in December 1939; «Annuario statistico italiano», 1943, p. 116. The estimate, of course, is merely indicative; in reality the construction costs grew enormously in nominal terms in the following years in relation to the ongoing inflation process.

70 «L'albergo in Italia», 1939, 6, p. IV.

71 For every building complex the capacity in terms of beds varied slightly over time depending on the stage of the projects.

72 This group of hotels was not mentioned in the first drafts of the housing programs of the Ministry of Popular Culture; see the minutes of the Special Committee for the selection of sites for the construction of hotels in Rome, meeting of March 16, 1939; ACS, PCM, Gabinetto, 1937-39, f. 14.1.200.3.3, b. 2485.
designed to be easily reconverted into residential use by subdividing them into 3, 4 or 5 room apartments to be assigned to government officials and civil servants.

In addition to those listed in the Table 5, other hotels for the masses should have been constructed but they were not included in the lists of the Ministry of Popular Culture regarding the E42 accommodations; in fact, these projects were later dropped and never realized. A group of buildings should have been built along Cassia road. It was designed to be also used as an Olympic Village in the event, considered very likely, that the 1944 Olympics would be awarded to Rome, after the withdrawal of its candidacy for the 1940 Games, which went to the benefit of Tokyo. This additional use provides an explanation for their location in the vicinity of the area of the Mussolini Forum where there was an increasing concentration of sports facilities. Another group of hotels for the masses should have been built on the area of the former Trastevere railway station. Finally, there was also a plan to use the Workers’ Village built to house the personnel employed in the construction of the E42 to accommodate groups of visitors but eventually this type of accommodation disappeared from the final programs.

As regards the location of the hotels for the masses, three groups of four were to arise between the city center and the exhibition area, not far from the new Ostiense railway station and adjacent to the main road and rail connections with the E42. On the contrary, the Nomentano nucleus was located in an area away from the exposition and distant from the main communication route to the E42.

73 Ibidem. The construction of this building complex had also been entrusted to the Federici and Igliori company that had already paid the fee for the building permit; Governatorato di Roma, Deliberazioni del Governatore. Anno 1940. III trimestre, Roma, Centenari, 1940, p. 1619. The realization of the project was interrupted presumably after the International Olympic Committee assigned the XIII Olympics to London in June 1939; L. Toschi, Impianti sportivi a Roma nell’“era fascista”, in M. Canella, S. Giuntini (eds.), Sport e fascismo, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2009, pp. 279-303: 290-295. The project is available in the author’s personal archive; Archivio Cesare Valle: CV-PRO/097; Carteggio e allegati ai progetti, Progetto alberghi di Masse sulla via Cassia. 1939, CV-CAR/083, faldone 13; Elaborati grafici, [Villaggio Olimpionico ed “Alberghi di masse” in via Cassia] 1939, CV-PRO/097, scatola 18. See also ENIT - CONI, Roma olimpiaca, Roma, Stabilimento grafico F. Capriotti, 1939, pp. 32-33.

74 ACS, E42, f. 11146.2, b. 1128. At first the number of available beds totaled 600, but after the enlargement of the Village they rose to 2,500. As mentioned in a note by Vittorio Cini sent to Mussolini in 1938, the Workers’ Village was supposed to be built at the expense of ENIT, with a contribution of 40% from EUR, in relation to its further use after the cessation of its original purpose. However, the agreement between the two State bodies was never achieved and the Village was built by the EUR; ACS, Carte Cini, f. 118, b. 8. The construction was entrusted to the firm Elia Federici. The same firm was also entrusted with the construction of the third section of the Imperiale road; Ditte che collaborano ai grandi lavori di sistemazione dell’Urbe, «Architettura» 1939, December special issue, pp. 95-96.
This irrational choice was the subject of observations in articles in specialized magazines and even in Parliament\textsuperscript{75}.

As to the architectural quality, it should be noted that special attention was given to the hotels for the masses which were to emerge along Imperiale road\textsuperscript{76}. Together with the other planned buildings – mainly ministry and other relevant state body headquarters – they were supposed to contribute to creating monumental wings on either side of the new great road, beginning to fill up the void that separated the new district which would rise from the E42 and the city; this latter aim was considered crucial for the fast urban development of the area, to achieve the city planning objectives related to the E42\textsuperscript{77}. The projects were entrusted to Cesare Pascoletti, a close collaborator of Marcello Piacentini, very active in Rome in those years. The designer of the buildings complex Almone was the architect Giorgio Calza Bini\textsuperscript{78}. The relationship between the capacity of the hotels for the masses in terms of beds and their cubature denotes significant differences in the architectural characteristics of the four groups of buildings. In fact, the average cubature per bed varies from a minimum of 64 m\textsuperscript{3} – Nomentano nucleus – to almost 108 m\textsuperscript{3} of the buildings around Esagonale square. These differences are also reflected in the estimates of the average construction costs per bed, between the 10,519 Lire for hotels on Nomentana road and the 17,738 Lire for those on Esagonale square.

The implementation of the projects for the construction of the hotels for the masses and the relationship between the State and the construction company deserve comment. In some ways, the pattern recalls the so-called houses in convent. The agreements signed with the ENIT established that the Federici and Iglioni firm


\textsuperscript{76} ACS, PCM, Gabinetto, 1937-39, f. 14.1.200.3.3, b. 2485. The characteristics of the buildings to be constructed along the Imperiale Road were established by the same law – n. 1433, September 16, 1940 – that extended the 1931 town-planning scheme including the area between the city and the E42. See art. 4, in particular, for the hotels for the masses on the Esagonale square.


\textsuperscript{78} He was another close associate of Piacentini. Calza Bini also designed the hotels for the masses which were never built in the area of the old Trastevere train station; V. CIVICO-G. B. TROTTA, \textit{In marcia per risolvere il problema alberghiero della Capitale}, cit., pp. 16-20, 24. The architect Cesare Valle, the designer of the Olympic Village, also deserve a mention. Whereas, for the nucleus Nomentano it has not yet been possible to identify the designer.
would build the four groups of buildings by 1941 of its own account, but availing of a public grant. This grant amounted to 170 Lire per cubic meter and appears very substantial; it would perhaps have been able to cover almost the entire costs of construction if they had remained stable. The urgency of realizing the accommodations for the visitors of the E42 had evidently prevailed over other considerations. The Federici and Igliori company committed itself to rent the buildings to ENIT, which would then use them to provide accommodation for tourists during the E42 or even longer if necessary. For this purpose ENIT made an agreement with the Swiss company Holdingkontor to constitute a company together (ISEA) which would furnish and manage the hotels. Once the extraordinary accommodations were finished, the buildings would be returned fully available to the construction company; anyway ENIT would have the right of first refusal in the case of any sales decisions made.

The ways in which the buildable areas were acquired by the construction company are also of some interest. In the case of the group Nomentano, the land already belonged to Elia Federici, one of the partners of the firm in charge of the construction. Instead, the building plots along the valley of Almone, very close to the suburban hotels, were mostly transferred to the Federici and Igliori company by the IACP of Rome which had realized the nearby Garbatella district in the

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79 The Federici and Igliori company initially thought to finance the work with their own resources, hotel credit, state contributions and grants requested from the Consortium Subsidies on Industrial Values (Consorzio Sovvenzioni su Valori Industriali), at that time a section of the IMI. The credit actually granted by IMI amounted to 23 million; ACS, PCM, *Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo*, titolo XIII, f. 18-24, b. 427, report November 27, 1945, pp. 23, 28.

80 Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni, *Atti della Commissione legislativa del bilancio*, cit., p. 1608. The grant per cubic meter refers to the Nomentano nucleus, but it can be assumed it was similar to the grants for the other hotels for the masses.

81 The land on the Nomentana, which was contributed by Federici in the general partnership, was evaluated at 140 Lire per square meter; ACS, ASIRI, *Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, Sezione autonomia gestioni sequestratarie* (hereinafter SAGES), f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285 (ex 18). The fact that this area already belonged to Elia Federici offers a possible explanation for the heavily criticized localization of the Nomentano nucleus. Before the project were dropped, Federici had also become the owner of the area of the former Trastevere station where another group of hotels for the masses should have been constructed. The purchase contract with the State Railway was signed on August 23, 1939 by A.S. Benni, the Minister of Communications. The area purchased by Federici was about 165,000 m² and cost L. 42,750,000, L. 259 per m². The buyer took possession of the area and paid the price in 1942. Pending the detailed plans, the 1931 general planning scheme provided for intensive constructions for that area, and in 1938 it was among those destined to hotel construction by the Governorate. After the war, Federici’s purchase drew the attention of the High Commissioner for the Sanctions Against Fascism in the belief that the terms of sale were arbitrary and overly favorable to the buyer; see the report dated November 27, 1945 in ACS, PCM, *Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo*, titolo XIII, f. 18-24 Federici Elia, b. 427; in that regard see also the Federici’s self-defense in ACS, PCM, *Gabinetto*, 1944-47, f. 3.1.10.27140, b. 3410.
previous years\textsuperscript{82}. Finally, through private negotiation, the construction company bought three lots from the Governorate of Rome, which had previously acquired them through expropriation. These lots would be allocated to the construction of the other two groups of hotels along the Imperiale road. The lots were registered at the Land Registry, like those acquired in the Almona valley, as arable land and vineyards, with a few mostly rustic buildings\textsuperscript{83}. Two lots consisting of 22,377 and 26,523 square meters respectively were located on two sides of the future Esagonale square\textsuperscript{84}; the third lot was further on along Imperiale road and it had a surface of 41,040 square meters\textsuperscript{85}. The construction company took possession of the lots long before the signing of the final contracts – between late August and mid-October 1939 – so as to start the construction works as soon as possible.

It is now necessary to add some information about the company in charge of building the hotels for the masses, also in order to understand the business environment in the Roman construction sector in those years, especially with regard to the

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\textsuperscript{82} ASR, \textit{Ufficio Tecnico Erariale, Catasto rustico di Roma e provincia, Registro partite Roma}, n. 321, cadastral number (partita) 71422: notary acts Grisini, January 16, 1941 n. 20133 and January 13, 1942 n. 21214. These lots were paid 110 Lire per square meter; ACS, \textit{ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES, f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285}. It should be noted that the purchase contracts were drawn up long after the construction company had taken possession of the areas. At that time the IACP was chaired by the architect Alberto Calza Bini, father of the author of the project of the hotels to be built in that area. By decree of the Prefect of Rome on July 6, 1941, another contiguous portion of land was expropriated – mostly to the heirs Torlonia – and sold to the building company for 75 Lire per square meter; \textit{ivi}.

\textsuperscript{83} Most of the estates belonged to private individuals, but between the former owners there is also the Italian Petroleum Agency (Agenzia Italiana Petroli - AGIP) from which 21,000 m\textsuperscript{2} of the northern lot on Esagonale square were expropriated; AGIP had just purchased the land to build its headquarters. Another area along Imperiale road was freely ceded by the National Trade Confederation (Confederazione Nazionale del Commercio) whose headquarter was supposed to be built on Imperiale road close to the hotel for the masses; ASR, \textit{Ufficio Tecnico Erariale, Catasto rustico di Roma e provincia}, cadastral registrations nn. 2886/42, 765/43, 798/43.

\textsuperscript{84} For the first lot, located north of Sette Chiese road, see ASC, \textit{Attiblisci}, 1941 vol. 974 (ex 40), November 21, 1941 n. 24080 for the sale contract and attachments. For the second lot, located south of the same road, see ASC, \textit{Attiblisci}, 1941 vol. 975 (ex 41), November 26, 1941 for the registration of the preliminary agreement of January 29, 1940; in this case the final contract has not been found.

\textsuperscript{85} ASC, \textit{Attiblisci}, 1942, vol. 995 (ex 7): preliminary agreement July 29, 1939; sales contract March 26, 1942. The preliminary agreement concerned a slightly smaller area (36,000 m\textsuperscript{2}). The agreed price for all three lots close to Imperiale road was 40 Lire per square meter for the land, plus 25 Lire per square meter as a contribution for the urbanization works. Altogether, the Federici and Igliori company paid the Governorate just under 1.5 million Lire for the northern lot on Esagonale square and nearly 2.7 million Lire for the Imperiale A lot. For the south lot in Esagonale square the price was almost 2.7 million Lire, but no attestations of payment have been found. It is worth noting the huge difference in the price per square meter paid for the other lots; probably the sale was made in particularly favorable conditions, but the rural character of the area at that time must also be considered.
relationships with the public sector. As mentioned above, the Federici and Igliori was a general partnership constituted on January 4, 1939 between Elia Federici and Ulisse Igliori, both builders already active in Rome; the sole purpose of the partnership was initially the construction of hotels for the masses for the E42 in Rome. In the beginning, both members were competing for the construction job, but then they decided to join forces to build the hotels. They had quite different personal trajectories. Igliori was an important exponent of Fascism, but in the mid-twenties he reduced his involvement in politics to devote himself to the building sector. Elia Federici, instead, had begun in his father’s construction company before becoming a major exponent of the Italian construction industry.

The available documentation does not allow us to fully understand how the Federici and Igliori company was chosen to carry out the work; it appears that the company did not win a call for tender, but it was directly chosen for a private negotiation by the Ministry of Popular Culture. Certainly both members of the firm had shown to have the technical and organizational capacities to carry out large projects. In particular, Federici had built the suburban hotels of Garbatella, and the huge building complex in XXI April avenue, one of the most notable examples of intensive housing in Rome at the time.

The ability of the members of the company to interact with the public administrations at all levels was as much sure. According to many, the rise of Igliori in the construction sector was based on his close ties with the Regime, thanks to

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86 A copy of the instrument of incorporation is in ACS, ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES, f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285. The initial capital was 800,000 Lire paid by the two partners in equal parts. The initial duration of the company was four years unless extended.


88 Federici (Barrete, AQ, 1882-Roma, 1961) was originally from Abruzzo. He gained a very strong position in Rome in the years of the Governorate, starting with the contract for road maintenance and waste collection in the third zone of the city. His firm was one of the most active in the city center demolitions – particularly in the areas of the Roman Forum and the Theatre of Marcellus – and built “via dell’Impero”. He also carried out major road works and construction in Albania. More detailed information about Federici’s entrepreneurial activity can be found in ACS, PCM: Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo, t. XIII, fasc. 18-24, b. 427; Gabinetto, 1944-47, f. 3.1.10.27140, b. 3410. See also P. Toscano, Le origini del capitalismo industriale nel Lazio, cit. pp. 103-104.

89 Private negotiations were very common in the public works sector in Rome; P. Salvatori, Il Governatorato di Roma. L’amministrazione della capitale durante il fascismo, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2006, p. 40.


91 It was an house in convention and it was designed by Mario De Renzi.
which he was able to obtain many important contracts from the public sector\textsuperscript{92}. In this respect, the close relationship that Igliori had with the Head of the government should also be emphasized\textsuperscript{93}. Although he was very active in the private sector, Federici was also considerably involved in the field of public contracts. Along with a few other big companies, he had almost monopolized the public works sector in Rome thanks to a privileged relationship with the Governorate\textsuperscript{94}.

The construction of the hotels for the masses began in late 1939, but after the beginning of the conflict it became immediately clear that postponement of the E42 was inevitable. However, the Italian Government waited for the BIE to decide, which it did on June 12, 1940, two days after Italy joined the war. The correspondence between EUR and the General Directorate of Tourism shows how they thought that the war would end soon, and hence that the deferment of the Roman exposition would have only be temporary. For this reason, the current plan to increase the number of available accommodations for visitors had to be carried out. However, on July 1940, the Ministry of Popular Culture communicated the suspension of the works for the hotels for the masses\textsuperscript{95}.

After the postponement, the authorities thought that the more time available before the opening of the exposition could be used to review the hospitality plan and to implement even more ambitious projects. In particular, there was the idea to directly involve state bodies as the National Institute for State Employees Housing (Istituto Nazionale per le Case degli Impiegati dello Stato - INCIS), the National Social Insurance Institute (Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale) and the INA to build other building complexes to be temporary used as hotels – 20,000 beds in total – and to be then converted into permanent housing\textsuperscript{96}.

\textsuperscript{92} See also ACS, \textit{PCM, Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo}, t. XIII, fasc. 18.62, b. 429. Igliori had been a member of the Chamber of Deputies since 1924 and member of the National Council of Corporations since 1939. He had also been the vice president of the National Fascist Federation of Builders from 1935 to the end of Fascism.

\textsuperscript{93} ACS, \textit{Segreteria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Ordinario, 1922-43}, f. 532406, b. 1962. Igliori's familiarity with Mussolini allowed him to explicitly ask the Duce the entrustment of important projects, such as those of the Victorion Tower, which was in fact never realized.

\textsuperscript{94} The other companies were the Romolo Vaselli and the Tudini and Talenti; P. Salvatori, \textit{Il Governatorato di Roma}, cit., pp. 40-42.


\textsuperscript{96} ACS, \textit{E42}, ff. 11146.2, 11146.3, 11146.8 b. 1128.
The postponement also had an effect on the agreement between ENIT and Holdingkontor. After signing the compromise with the Swiss company on June 6, 1940, for the furnishing and management of the hotels for the masses, ENIT thought it would be more convenient to resort to a consortium composed also by a group of Italian hoteliers97.

Postponing the date of the exposition, the hotels for the masses, some of which were in an advanced state of construction98, began to be the subject of interest of various State administrations who wanted to redirect them to a different use than was previously expected. During the spring of 1942 the rumor spread in government circles that the buildings along Imperiale road were due to be used as ministry offices, a hospital and other purposes. The General Directorate of Tourism managed to prevent this from happening99; on the contrary it put pressure on the Government to use some hotels for the masses as permanent hotels: Imperiale B as high-class hotels and Imperiale A as middle-class hotels. Presumably with this intention, ENIT decided to exercise its right of first refusal on the buildings of Imperiale and the conditions of purchase were defined100. There was a change of ownership also for the buildings of the Momentano nucleus, but in this case they were meant for a different purpose. One of the six buildings was sold to the State for 14.5 million to be used for the Court of Auditors (Corte dei Conti) offices101. The other five, yet uncompleted, were purchased by INCIS to

97 ACS, Ministero della cultura popolare, Gabinetto, f. 344.1, b. 55; PCM, Gabinetto, 1937-39, f. 14.1.200.6.4, b. 2485; E42, ff. 11146.2 e 11146.3, b. 1128. The national organization representing the Italian hoteliers (Federazione Nazionale Fascista Alberghi e Turismo) was also involved in the plan to organize the catering services for the mass visitors of the E42; ACS, E42, f. 11146.10, b. 1128.

98 See the photos in A. Schiavo, Gli alberghi di masse a Roma, «Italia», 1941, spring, pp. 43-46.

99 See the report May 27, 1942; ACS, E42, ff. 11146.2, b. 1128.

100 ACS, ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES, f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285.

101 A special law – April 3, 1942, n. 407 – was needed to authorize this sale allowing a derogation to the agreements signed between the Federici and Igliori company and the ENIT. The parliamentary debate about this law was very lively and some councilors expressed discomfort for an operation which seemed to favor the construction company, especially since one of the partners was a parliamentarian. Anyway, the Government stated that the cubature of the building in question (50,016 m³) had been built in excess compared to what had initially been agreed on for the hotels and so it was fully available to the builders. It also assured that for that building the construction company had not received contributions from the State. Finally, it was stressed that the sale price (290 Lire per m³) took account of the remarkable growth of the construction costs after the start of the war; Camera dei fasi e delle corporazioni, Atti della Commissione legislativa del bilancio, cit., pp. 1607-1609. As regards this transaction see also the letter from the General Superintendent of the State Domenico Bartolini to the Finance Minister Paolo Thaon de Revel (December 18, 1941); Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Archivio Thaon de Revel, n. 2.3.3. Pending the
be used as dwellings; the construction company was entrusted with their completion, but the works were soon suspended\textsuperscript{102}. Meanwhile, the Federici and Igliori had also been engaged in the construction of barracks for the Ministry of War in Viterbo and in Rome in the Cecchignola area\textsuperscript{103}.

Since the fall of the Fascist Regime the company had to face several serious problems which were not only related to the general difficulties of the country\textsuperscript{104}. Both members were placed under investigation on charges of obtaining profits and capital gains as a result of accession or participation in the Fascist Regime\textsuperscript{105}. Consequently, in the autumn of 1944 the company was placed under sequestration and entrusted to an external sequestration commissioner for some years\textsuperscript{106}. The same situation had already happened with the members’ assets.

signature of the contract – it was signed on April 2, 1943 – the offices of the Court of Auditors settled in the building in July 1942 paying the rent for a year; ACS, PCM, Gabinetto, 1940-43, f. 1.1.17.20.23000.5.10, b. 2699.

\textsuperscript{102}The amount of government grants received by the company was deducted from the sales price. The contract for the completion works, amounting to 66.7 million Lire, date back to July 13, 1942 (notary Zanghi); ACS, PCM, Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo, t. XIII, fasc. 18.62, b. 429, report November 27, 1945, p. 28. The institutional purpose of the INCIS, established in 1924, was to build or to acquire buildings to be used to provide rental accommodation to civil servants; INCIS, La casa. Venticinque anni di attività dell’Istituto nazionale per le case degli impiegati dello Stato 1924-1949, Roma, INCIS, 1950.

\textsuperscript{103}ACS, ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES, f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285. To this end, on January 4, 1941 the members extended for two years the expiry of the company and they also extended the corporate’s construction tasks, which had been originally limited to the construction of hotels for the masses. The contracts for the construction of the barracks were signed in April 1941 and September 1942. The Federici and Igliori also worked for the Genio Civile – mostly demolition and rubble removal as a result of the bombings of the city – and for the Governatorate building drains and roads in the vicinity of the hotels for the masses. During that time Federici and Igliori were also involved in an initiative completely unrelated to their main field of activity; in July 1942, they acquired the capital of the Mediterranea film company, set up in 1937. During their administration, it produced two films; ACS, PCM, Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo, t. XIII, fasc. 18-24, report November 27, 1945, b. 427, pp. 24-25.

\textsuperscript{104}Ulisse Igliori was arrested, and then released on August 26, 1943; he escaped from a further arrest warrant by fleeing to Trieste; ACS, PCM, Alto commissariato per le sanzioni contro il fascismo, t. XIII, fasc. 18/62, Igliori Ulisse generale, b. 429.

\textsuperscript{105}Legislative Decree of the Lieutenant General of the Realm, n. 159, July 27, 1944 (title III).

\textsuperscript{106}The decree of seizure by the Court dates back to October 27, 1944. The management of the Federici and Igliori company’s assets was initially entrusted to the Section for Mortgage Credit of the Bank of Naples (Sezione per il Credito Fondiario, Banco di Napoli). On August 13, 1945 SAGES, established at the IRI, became the new sequestration commissioner; on February 11, 1946 the engineer Gobbi Belcredi succeeded SAGES; ACS, ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES, f. Federici Igliori, b. 3285.
The minutes of the seizure of the building yards provide a detailed report on the state of the works for the hotels for the masses still owned by the Federici and Igliori company107. The building complex called Imperiale A was in a more advanced state of construction; it had been built up to the rooftop, although it was still incomplete as regards partitioning and other works108. With regard to Imperiale B the situation was different for the two lots on Esagonale square. The construction were most advanced in the northern lot; even if the partitioning was missing, the central building was built up to the roof, while the other buildings were mostly on the second floor. On the other side of the square, instead, the twin building complex had its foundations only, except for the central building which had reached the second floor, but nevertheless it was still incomplete. Finally, the buildings under construction in the Almone area were not only mostly incomplete, but some had suffered serious damages from aerial bombings.

All construction sites of the hotels for the masses were closed for years. The only current activities were the demolition and removal of the rubble of the buildings under construction in the Almone area, on behalf of the Genio Civile, and the works required to carpenter workshop on the Nomentana by the Allied Command109. Several factors prevented the resumption of work and the completion of the buildings under construction fostering a climate of uncertainty. Despite the pre-emption, the ENIT had not yet bought Imperiale A. The INCIS was thinking of cancelling the contract for the completion of its buildings of the Nomentano group. Moreover, the company had yet to collect large sums owed by public entities. Among these, there was also the penalty owed by ENIT, because of the suspension of the construction of the hotels for the masses110.

Plans and estimates for the completion of the incomplete hotels for the masses were presented to the Ministry of Public Works and to the Ministry for Post-War Assistance111. There were also negotiations with the General Directorate of State Railways to allocate them as houses for railway workers. In the meantime, 

107 *Ivi.* In this regard see also ASR, *Archivio del Genio civile di Roma: Case popolari*, f. Incis lotto Nomentano Impresa Federici and Igliori, b. 516; *Ministero dei lavori pubblici*, b. 344.

108 The buildings under construction occupied only 15,000 m³ of the area purchased.

109 *ACS, ASIRI, Numerazione nera, Ufficio affari generali e organi deliberanti, SAGES*, f. Federici Igliori, b. AG 3285.

110 The conventions signed in 1939 and 1940 with the Federici and Igliori company provided for the payment of a penalty to the building company in the case of any suspension of the works on the grounds of force majeure.

111 *Ibidem.* The projects emphasized that the buildings would provide hundreds of apartments on its completion – more than 400 just in Imperiale A – and the works would engage a large workforce. Crucial conditions for the resumption of work were the provision of: funding, building materials and means of transport, besides the settlement of the legal disputes with ENIT and INCIS.
the exasperation due to the lack of housing in Rome was growing. Since August 1945 hundreds of displaced persons had occupied one of the buildings not yet completed in the Nomentano nucleus. Since the end of 1946, the opposition parties began to push for the completion of the hotels for the masses in order to give jobs to many unemployed workers and to use them as accommodation for the people living in precarious conditions in Rome.

Presumably between the second half of 1946 and the beginning of 1947 the obstacles to the resumption of works began to be removed. The Federici and Igliori company returned to work on the completion of the buildings of the Nomentano group for the INCIS. A solution was also found for Imperiale A and for the northern lot of Imperiale B. At the end of 1947 the Government allocated 500 million Lire for the completion of the building complexes along Imperiale road and for their transformation into dwellings for State employees. A few months later, in March 1948, the Superior Council of Public Works gave a favorable opinion on the agreement between ENIT, INCIS and the Federici and Igliori company on the purchase of the Imperiale A lot by INCIS.

The building company started construction again, which continued with many interruptions. While the work at Imperiale A was still under way, many homeless people were moved to a wing of the buildings. They were housed under severe overcrowded conditions: several families lived together in the same apartment. It was supposed to be only temporary accommodation, but in the early 1960’s the situation remained unchanged arousing many demonstrations.

Meanwhile, the works continued also in the lot on the north side of Esagonale square. In both cases, it can be assumed that the works were completed in early 1950; on May 31 of that year, in fact, the sale deeds for both the building complexes were signed by the building company and INCIS. The progressive
opening of Cristoforo Colombo road in 1950 reduced the isolation of people who began to inhabit the buildings of INCIS, which were the only buildings in the area for years. Together with those of the Nomentano nucleus, these buildings were part of the assets of the INCIS until the beginning of the 1970’s; after the dissolution of this body, following the reform of public housing, they passed under the management of the IACP.

Among the nuclei of hotels for the masses, the last that was completed was the one called Almone, although in partially different forms compared to the original project. In June 1951 a newspaper complained that the building

buildings – dwellings and shops today between the Cristoforo Colombo road, Costantino and R. Carducci Guarnieri streets – 2.387 rooms on 13 floors including the ground floor and two underground levels. The former Imperiale B – dwellings and shops today between Navigatori square, and the A. Malfante and L. Pancaldo streets – consists of 405 rooms in the central building – on twelve floors including the ground floor and a underground level – and of another 1.934 rooms in the surrounding buildings consisting of ten floors, including the ground floor and a basement.

120 In July 1950, the Tramways and Buses company of the Municipality of Rome (Azienda Tramvie e Autobus del Comune di Roma) established a bus service with a terminus in front of the hotels for the masses linking them to Venezia square. Since 1951 another bus line connected Navigatori square to Termini station.

121 Law October 22, 1971 n. 865, art. 8. The law provided for the dissolution of the INCIS by December 31, 1972.
Innovative solutions for the universal exposition of Rome in 1942. 

In 1942, the Federici and Igliori company obtained the permit to build six buildings in the lots on the Ostiense circumvallation road, just when the dispute with ENIT on the compensation for the interruption in 1940 of the works to the hotels for the masses was finally being resolved. Within a few years, at least two buildings were completed. In November 1954, the building company wrote to the President of the Council of Ministers proposing the purchase of a building nearing completion on the Ostiense circumvallation road. The proposal, which wasn’t taken into account by the Government, pointed out that the internal division of the building made it suitable for offices, which could also be subsequently easily transformed into apartments; these are the same features as other buildings built on those lots which had already been completed and sold to the Posts and Telegraphs administration.

Along with the other three housing complexes built by the Federici and Igliori company according to the convention established with the ENIT, these buildings represent the most tangible legacy of the initial project of the hotel for the masses. They never accommodated the visitors of the mega event, because it never took place, and they were built with much delay and with some modifications compared to the original projects. Nevertheless, in the end, the hotels for the masses were used for their original purpose, thus permanently increasing the supply of housing in the Capital, and in particular with a prevalence for public housing.

This kind of solution to the problems of exceptional hospitality was never again proposed for the subsequent mega events in Rome. In Republican Italy, it was no longer necessary to accommodate large masses of tourists organized under a dictatorial regime; the phenomenon of tourism was changing rapidly along with the needs of tourists. The lack of housing in Rome remained an emergency for several decades, but State intervention to increase public residential housing

123 ACS, PCM, Gabinetto, 1951-54, f. 3.1.10.18836, b. 4350. The two lots were enclosed between the Ostiense circumvallation road, Marcellino da Civezza street (now G.B. Magnaghi), I. Persico street, Caffaro street, and they were separated by A. Fantosati street (today Nicolò da Pistoia). The projects were slightly different from the original ones of Calza Bini.
124 ENIT and the Federici and Igliori company signed a transaction, with the approval of the competent State organs, for the payment of compensation for the interruption of the works on the hotels for the masses in 1940; ACS, PCM, Gabinetto, 1951-54, f. 3.1.10.18836, b. 4350.
125 Ivi.
126 Aerial photos show that in 1958 only three of the six buildings included in the 1951 permit had been built; in 1970 there were also other buildings in those lots, but they did not conform to the projects approved in 1951; Un patrimonio urbano tra memoria e progetti, cit., pp. 29-31.
was arranged differently. Partial similarities can be found in some of the accommodation facilities set up for the 1950 Jubilee. Despite the name, it is not the case of some temporary hotels for the masses that were prepared for that event, because they were created in existing buildings. The so-called villages for pilgrims, instead, were built by private entities specifically for that occasion along the access roads to the city, and they were supposed to be later used for residential purposes. Anyway, as mentioned earlier, the case that most resembles the experience of hotels for the masses was the Olympic Village for the Olympics in 1960. The Village was built by INCIS, the same State body which had become the owner of most of the hotels for the masses. It consisted of 33 buildings each with 2-5 floors, for a total of nearly 583,000 cubic meters; after the Games it was turned into about 1,800 apartments to be assigned to State employees.

However, to fully understand what has been the legacy of the hotels for the masses project, a final remark is necessary to show how, after more than seventy years, it continues to produce effects on the urban planning of the city. On October 3, 2002 the City Council of Rome ratified a program agreement with the Federici and Iglioni, now a joint stock company, and the Immobiliare Conformcommercio spa; this agreement was concerned with the urban renewal of Navigator square – the former Esagonale square – through a variant of the planning scheme. It established the construction of a multifunctional building complex of 150,000 cubic meters – with offices, commercial areas, a hotel, and a car park – and a civic center with green areas. Among other things, the agreement put an end to a long legal dispute between the Federici and Iglioni Spa and

127 V. Vidotto, Roma contemporanea, cit., pp. 278-289. The public residential housing made possible by the INA-Casa plan deserves a special mention; J. Farabegoli, Oltre il neorealismo, cit.
128 Insolera believed that the hotels for the masses along the Imperiale road had been built for the 1950 Jubilee; I. Insolera, Roma moderna, cit., p. 236.
130 The agreement between INCIS and the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) was signed on August 8, 1957; «L’Unità», August 9, 1957, p. 4.
131 The designers were Vittorio Cañiero, Adalberto Libera, Luigi Moretti, Vincenzo Monaco and Amedeo Luccichenti; V. Vidotto, Roma contemporanea, cit., n. 74, p. 436.
133 The original project, by the architect Manfredi Nicoletti, was selected through an international competition under the auspices of the Municipality, the first advertised in Rome by private persons; http://www.manfredinicoletti.com. With regard to previous redevelopment projects of the area see also Dalle mura all’E 42. Proposte per il Piano Quadro Cristoforo Colombo, edited by M. Argenti and R. Misitano, Roma, Grafiche per la stampa, 1994.
the Municipality of Rome. It concerned the ownership of almost 29,000 square meters in Navigatori square\textsuperscript{134}; it is the same lot south of Sette Chiese road where one of the two groups of hotels for the masses on Esagonale square should have been built in the past. In fact, the building company had taken possession of that area in 1939 and had signed the compromise with the Governorate of Rome in 1940, but the purchase was never completed as the contract was never signed and the payment never given. The Federici and Igliori company subsequently brought the Municipality of Rome to court for recognition of the property by adverse possession\textsuperscript{135}. Currently, the project has been partially completed by the Acqua Pia Antica Marcia spa; but there are still bitter polemics because the initial plan, which also proposed the burial of a stretch of Cristoforo Colombo road and the creation of pedestrian and green areas, has so far only been carried out with regard to the construction of private buildings. In this final episode what can be considered the red thread that binds all the events described so far re-emerges, and well-illustrates the difficulty in obtaining a balance between public and private interests in the transformation of a city.

\textit{Marco Teodori}


\textsuperscript{135} In addition to this controversy, in the 1990’s the Federici and Igliori Spa brought an administrative proceeding against the Municipality which had changed the urban destination of the areas close to Cristoforo Colombo road.
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