

Chronicles of Ordinary Racism

Second White Paper on Racism in Italy

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Introduction

The global economic crisis is producing devastating effects on society; social and economic disparity between and within nations grows greater every day. More and more frequently, civil and human rights are predicated on a *financial* standing, the decline of the welfare system leaves wide swathes of the population without essential social services while politicians are unable to provide satisfactory responses. At such a time, many may consider racism to be an issue of secondary importance.

There are, in fact, many reasons why we must not write off the tales of everyday racism as minor events or, at the most, as acts and forms of behaviour stemming from the imbalance that the crisis of the neo-liberist system creates within nation states. Indeed, it is precisely this ongoing crisis that, by acting as an unequivocal reminder of the world's interconnectedness, should lead us to finally acknowledge that it is impossible to fight inequality if we remain attached to 'national' ideas of rights and citizenship.

However, the policies that target immigrants, non-EU citizens and the Roma community are moving, sadly, in the opposite direction. In 2008 and 2009, institutional racism found its most explicit outlet in the so-called 'safety package'. In the two following years, it gained an ever firmer hold over the decision-making process of local administrators, who combined creative decrees in the field of public order and safety with rulings aimed at limiting social rights for foreign citizens. These are dangerous decisions that could easily be used in the future to justify inequitable treatment among Italians themselves.

The breaching of fundamental human rights in Identification and Deportation Centres, the treatment reserved for Tunisian immigrants in the prison-vessels set up in order to "free" Lampedusa, the fact that the press and unaccredited associations are denied admission to Cie and Cara centres, should alert us to the dangerous regression that the guarantee of civil rights is falling prey to.

The instances of exploitation in the work place experienced by many immigrants who work in our fields, in the construction industry and even in the family and domestic care sector (which has the appearance of a deceptively sheltered environment), reveal a vast portion of our country's economy in which a significant percentage of employees have short term or no contracts. The ease with which a verbal disagreement between a native and a foreign citizen can spiral out of control tells of social system that is fractured, divided and selfishly wrapped up in personal interests.

In these pages we deal with all this and other issues, in the knowledge that the inequalities experienced by migrants and Roma form part of a process of erosion of rights (or, should we say, of the cultural values from which they stem) that affects us all.

Between 15 July and 31 August 2009 we studied 861 cases of racism reported by the media or on the internet; we offer a selection of them, inevitably incomplete, in the inventory at the end of this volume. It is a long chain of verbal and physical violence, damaged property and discrimination carried out by individuals, groups and political or institutional leaders. On the basis of this first work of collection and analysis, we have singled out some cases that appeared to particularly stand out for the way in

which they were reported by the press of for the gravity of the crimes committed. The murder of Saana Dafani, the 23-year-old Moroccan woman murdered by her father in September 2009; the Rosarno riot on 7th January 2010, brought to us in the form of articles, photos and images so that all we were left with were its more *violent* aspects; the Adro affair, where the municipality took a “firm stand” against the families who failed to meet the payment deadline for school meal fees in April 2010; the murder of Maricica Hahaianu, a 33-year-old Romanian woman killed after a trivial argument in Anagnina underground station in Rome on 8th October 2010; the murder of Petre Ciurar, a Romanian Roma of 20 shot dead in Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto on December 2010 and the sad tale of those who met their death on the Mediterranean between February and August 2011; all these events allow us to reconstruct communication strategies and practices that tend to provide simplistic and/or stigmatizing portrayals of immigrants and minorities.

The death of Yussuf Errahali, a 37-year-old Moroccan man who was assaulted and left to die in the cold, in a fountain in a Neapolitan square on 12 January 2010; the suicide of Nourredine Adnane, a young Moroccan street vendor residing in Palermo who set fire to himself after the latest in a series of police inspections on 11 February 2011; the Roma settlement evictions carried out in Rome in April 2011; the racist propaganda that appeared during the campaign for the mayoral elections in Milan and the death of Abderrahaman Salhi who died in mysterious circumstances in Borgo di Frassine, near Padua, in May of the same year; the murder of Imad El Kaalouli, a Moroccan 19-year-old boy killed by his former employer in Desenzano del Garda on 28 June 2011; these are among the most serious events that have occurred in the last two years, largely ignored by the high-circulation press.

Alongside the chronicle of the everyday racism are a number of contributions that try to reconstruct the political and cultural context, starting with the study of the main trends that characterised the public debate and institutional decisions, the development of legislation and jurisprudence, in the field of immigration in the last two years.

The impact of the crisis on the foreign workforce, discriminatory policies in the welfare system, the bad management of the influx of immigrants from Tunisia and Libya, the disgraceful policies for the evacuation of Roma settlements, the use of the Italian language test as a further obstacle on the road to social inclusion have provided the material for propaganda but also for unfair, discriminatory and oppressive political choices that impact millions of people’s lives.

However, the past two years have also yielded some positive signals. Court rulings against discrimination show that institutional racism can be fought by offering the victims legal protection. The conclusion, after three years, of the trial on the case of Emmanuel Bonsu, the 22-year-old Ghanaian who was insulted, kidnapped and beaten up by a group of eight local policemen on 29th September 2008, led to an important conviction for one of the most serious racist acts of violence ever reported in our country; for seven of the defendants, the judge accepted racism as an aggravating circumstance. Today, the promotion of a campaign, on the part of two citizens’ initiatives, for the reform of the law on citizenship and the recognition of the right to

vote in administrative elections to non-EU nationals, are causes that have rallied a wider number of supporters than happened with similar campaign launched in the second half of the 90s. We can only hope that these signs foreshadow even greater changes in the future.

SECTION 1.

THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Two years of racism in Italy. Main actors and secondary players, victims and rebels.

Annamaria Rivera

In memory of Mohammad Muzaffar Ali

aka. Sher Khan

untamed lion killed by alcohol and disillusionment

discrimination and neglect

prisons and state-run concentration camps:

in other words, by racism.

No chance of assimilation.

On 20 December 2010, “Corriere della Sera” newspaper published an editorial by Giovanni Sartori, *L’integrazione degli islamici* (The integration of Islamic people) that dusted off, using the same old terminology and style, the old theory – a true obsession – of the “utter non-integrability” of Muslim immigrants.¹ The political expert’s piece gives rise to a *querelle* that is drawn out, in a constant exchange of opinions (among which the letter from Tito Boeri), until 10 January 2011. As is often the case at crucial points in the public debate on immigration, the Milanese newspaper deploys a number of leading columnists in an attempt to direct public opinion against the customary scapegoat. The real target appears in fact to be whoever dares to criticize the law that defines illegal immigration a crime and to propose legislative measures facilitating foreigners’ access to Italian citizenship.

What is most striking about the article by Sartori is its compulsive tendency towards reiteration, as if nothing had changed since 2000. In that year a short work by this very same political expert – councillor for the *Ulivo* coalition - *Multiculturalismo, pluralismo culturale ed estranei* (Multiculturalism, cultural pluralism and aliens – published, significantly, in August), set in motion an anti-Muslim campaign that recruited the Archbishop of Bologna Giacomo Biffi among its first followers, not to mention the usual Northern League crowd.

The climate created by the campaign fostered a notable instance of thuggish behaviour in Lodi: on 14th October 2000, the Northern League, in the course of a rally with other members of the Casa delle Libertà (House of Freedoms) and with exponents of the neo-Nazi movement, “desacrated” the soil upon which a new Mosque was scheduled to be built with pig urine, thus resurrecting a style associated with the most aggressive brand of anti-Semitism.

As if ten years were not enough to conduct a more thorough reading of the Italian Constitution and gain some idea of the real state of immigration in Italy, in the

¹ The categories of “immigrants” and “Muslims” are both generic, arbitrary even. It is more arbitrary still to talk of “Muslim immigrants” or, as Sartori usually does, “Islamic people”, grouping together, it would appear, all those, believers or non-believers, who come from countries with an Arab-Muslim majority and choose to settle in western countries. Sartori’s confusion aside, in the present day, when, even in Italy, immigrants or offspring of immigrants are undergoing a process of differentiation, even the use of the more correct term “immigrants” is not entirely satisfactory, as it should be supplemented with a reference to variables of *status* and social class.

aforementioned article, and in two subsequent ones, Sartori recycled the usual clichés and outdated notions, using unsuitable and superficial vocabulary, resembling street jargon. For example, in order to back the claim that “Islamic people” are intrinsically (by nature?) unable to integrate – so much so that “they have never managed to integrate, over the centuries (for more than a millennium, in fact) in any (sic) non-Islamic society”² –, he contrasts them with “Chinese, Japanese, Indian people”, who “settle in the West with no trouble at all”. As well as perpetuating the age-old, crude confusion between nationality and religious affiliation (not worthy of a political expert), as well as pretending to ignore that it is in fact possible to be both Indian *and* Muslim, Chinese *and* Muslim, Moroccan *and* Christian, Tunisian *and* Jewish, Maghrebian *and* agnostic, Iraqi *and* atheist and so on, he reveals himself to be completely ignorant of basic empirical data. For instance, a statistic that, if we were to go by *his* criteria, should indicate scarce integration on the part of “Asian people”: according to Foundation Ismu’s estimates (relating to 2008, but still largely applicable today), the majority of irregular immigrants in Italy come from Asian countries, with China in the lead.³

And what should we make of the debate against “speedy Italianisation”? Can it be possible that the political expert is unaware of the vast gap between Italy and the other European countries where immigration is common, with regard to the conferral of nationality by the host-country and the recognition of the right to asylum? Suffice it to say that the ratio of citizenships granted in Italy in 2009 to the number of foreign residents stood at 1.5, whereas in Europe it is 2.4.⁴

In order to fully grasp the Italian idiosyncrasy – which trivializes intollerant remarks and makes them acceptable to an unusually large portion of society– it is necessary to attempt an exercise in decentralisation: is it conceivable that, in other European countries, which have to deal with an equally increasing degree of institutional and popular racism, independent newspapers similar to the “Corriere della Sera” – “Le Monde”, “The Independent” or even “The Times”, for instance – would publish an article of this sort, or, indeed, a violently Islamophobic booklet such as *La Rabbia e l’Orgoglio* (The Rage and the Pride) by Oriana Fallaci?

Now, to refute the eminent political expert is as easy as taking candy from a proverbial baby, as he is not a reliable *connoisseur* of issues surrounding the life, status, discrimination and rights of immigrants. If we give an account of this repartee it is not because we too are falling prey to an obsession (it is not the first time we have criticized Giovanni Sartori) but because it helps to illustrate how backward public debate in Italy still is when dealing with the status and rights of immigrants and minorities, particularly Roma and Sinti.

And it does not end here: the fact itself that the main Italian newspaper entrusts the job of representing its editorial line to crassly Islamophobic articles, written not by an

² The triple negative evidenced by our “sic” bears witness not only to the mediocre quality of his writing, but more importantly to his overemphatic, bigoted, stylistic affectations.

³ In 2008, almost one third of the 651,000 irregular immigrants, that is 207,000 individuals, consisted of people who had arrived from China (10% of all illegal migrants), Bangladesh (9,9%) and Pakistan (5%)

⁴ *The highest percentages are to be found in Portugal (5,8 citizenship requests granted for every 100 foreigners), Sweden (5,3) and the U.K. (4,5). Source: Eurostat Report 2010.*

inexperienced intern but by an influential political expert, of considerable renown, gives an idea of how deep-rooted, almost commonplace, racist discourse has in fact become.

Racist nuances

It is, in actual fact, doubtful that stigmatizing and racist rhetoric has ever been truly criticised and deconstructed in Italy, except perhaps by a minority consisting of a few scholars, some excellent journalists (some writing for the most important publications), a certain number of anti-racist activists and some specialised media outlets. Also worthy of note is the space given over to the issues of racism and of the general living conditions of immigrants by Italian cinema in recent years.⁵ Even though in some productions we still find traces of the “good-hearted Italian” myth, this filmography undeniably bears witness to the fact that at last, at least in this department, a more positive portrayal of the events linked to immigration begins to emerge.

We also find, contributing to this trend, certain mainstream TV and newspaper formats, for example the enquiries of “Repubblica-L’Espresso”.⁶ In this regard, from the very start of the fourth Berlusconi government, the newspaper edited by Ezio Mauro shows itself to be more scrupulous in reporting racist and discriminatory acts. As with other mainstream newspapers, however, sloppiness and lack of discernment are widespread when the articles are not the work of knowledgeable and informed journalists such as Spinelli, Stefano Rodotà or Chiara Saraceno, to name but a few.

Indeed, almost as if immigration were a new phenomenon in Italy, the newspapers, with few exceptions, seem unable to correctly name and distinguish when they are dealing with “aliens” to whom even the generic qualification of nationality is often denied, only to be replaced by the asymmetrical and patronizing “ethnicity”.

Thus, even in the most authoritative newspapers, it is not unusual to come across disgraceful expressions such as “individuals of Latin-American ethnicity” or “illegal immigrants of Chinese ethnicity”.

News reports in major publications also yield gems such as “three North Africans, or rather two Egyptians and one Ivorian”⁷ or “North Africans, that is Nigerians”⁸: proof of the fact that similar inaccuracies do not stem from intentional spite, but from sheer ignorance. Similarly enduring seem to be the euphemistic description of detention centres as “reception centres” and the over-use of the term “clandestini (illegal or

⁵ More than ten productions dealing with issues of immigration and racism were presented at the 68th Venice International Film Festival (2011). Among them *Terraferma* by Emanuele Crialese that was awarded the special jury prize.

⁶ In this article, by ‘media’ we mean newspapers and online media only (the author, through personal choice, does not watch television).

⁷ *Milano, ucciso 19enne egiziano. Dopo la rissa è rivolta nelle strade* (Milan, Egyptian of 19 killed. Riots in the streets after the scuffle), “Corriere della Sera”, 14 February 2010:

http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_febbraio_13/milano-nordaficano-ucciso-coltellate1602458972870.shtml

⁸ Francesco Viviano, *Massacrati a bastonate mentre urlavano per uscire, sono morti come topi*, (clubbed to death while screaming to be let out: they died like mice) “la Repubblica”, 2 August 2011, p. 13. Before and after writing about the “15 metre-long boat, which set sail from Tripoli and became a tomb for 25 Northern Africans”, the journalist reports, in the same article, the eye-witness accounts of two Nigerian citizens, one, the brother of one of the victims and another, one of the few survivors.

clandestine)”, loaded with negative connotations, even when referring to refugees or asylum seekers.⁹

Even the derisory phrase “vu’ cumprà” (‘do you want to buy’, a common nickname for street vendors, mostly of Senegalese or Bangladeshi origin, which plays on the grammatically incorrect construction) has made a comeback – if it ever actually fell out of use – repeated by press agencies, newspapers and “progressive” politicians.¹⁰ Indeed, the phrase has taken on an even more insulting meaning, for it has extended its remit from foreign street vendors to become synonymous of immigrants from outside the EU:¹¹ all of them, even the iron foundry workers.

As we have mentioned elsewhere¹², the persistent bad habit of putting a label on people, of describing “others” in a mocking, disparaging or patronizing tone, reveals how a large proportion of the media and of Italian citizens – even though they themselves are descended from *ours, ritals, macaronis, dagos, katzelmacher, babis, cristos*, used as nicknames for Italians who emigrated to France, Germany etc. – still perceive immigrants and those belonging to ethnic minorities (especially Roma and Sinti) as an amorphous and homogeneous mass of beggars, individuals at the edge of society or delinquents, belonging to a different “species” compared to other citizens. This is, among other things, a sign that the general public has not yet accepted – or even acknowledged – that our country is, and has been for at least thirty years now, an immigration hub, and as such is characterized by a complex and varied plurality of cultures, faiths, customs and lifestyles.

This denial, present in other European countries as well, is furthermore linked to a distorted perception of reality. Let us consider an example. According to the 2010 survey, *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, the general public, almost everywhere in Europe, perceives immigration more as a problem than an opportunity and believes the percentage of migrants residing in their country to be much higher than the official statistics would have them believe. In Italy, however, this twisted perception seems to

⁹ Both are present, for example, in the article of Alberto Custodero and Corrado Zunino *Guerriglia nei Cie, è strategia della violenza*, (Warfare in the Cie centers: strategy of violence) “la Repubblica”, 3 August 2011, p. 15. As well as the alarmist title, hypocritically placed in inverted commas, the article yields other pearls of wisdom: Cie centers are designated more than once as “reception centers” and even the asylum seekers who live in the Cara (Reception center for asylum seekers) are described as “clandestine”. The following day, Salvatore Aloise reports synthetically and impeccably in “Le Monde” about the rioting: he never uses the word “clandestine” (the headline mentions “migrants”) and correctly distinguishes between “centres de retention” and “centres d’accueil pour demandeurs d’asile”.

¹⁰ An Ansa bulletin dated 18 April 2011 went under this heading: *Protesta venditori souvenir contro vu’ cumprà* (souvenir dealers’ protest against *vu’ cumprà*). On the same day “Il Gazzettino” reports that Massimo Cacciari interviewed on the issue has just been heard to state: “they do not bother me: every Italian city is full of *vu’ cumprà*”. For its part, *repubblica.it* in an article of 28 August 2011 used “*vu’ cumprà*” in reporting about a praiseworthy act performed by some migrants: the voluntary cleaning of some streets in Naples:

<http://tv.repubblica.it/edizione/napoli/napoli-i-vu-cumpra-diventano-spazzini/74899/73261?ref=HREV-5>

¹¹ An Ansa bulletin dated 7 September 2011 reports that Prosecutor of Savona, Francantonio Granero, signs a ruling inviting judiciary police officers to refrain from using the word “extracomunitario” (non-EU citizen) in crime notifications and substituting it with the term “cittadino straniero” (foreign citizen)”. Who knows if journalists will ever conform to this wise suggestion.

¹² Cf. among the latest works: A. Rivera, *Regole e roghi. Metamorfosi del razzismo, (rules and pyres. The metamorphosis of racism) Dedalo 2009; id., La Bella, la Bestia e l’Umano. Sessismo e razzismo, senza escludere lo specismo, (The beauty, the Beast and the Human. Sexism and racism, not to mention specism) Ediesse 2010; id., Razzismo di lotta e di governo, (Militant and government Racism) in “MicroMega”, 1/2011: *Berlusconismo e fascismo (1)*.*

be even more widespread: in 2010, when regular immigrants amounted to 7% of the total population, the Italians who were interviewed thought they reached 25%. Moreover, according to 65% of this sample, “illegal” immigrants by far outnumbered regular ones.

On top of this, the survey “revealed that Italians are the most skeptical towards immigration”: for instance, 57% of those interviewed believed that the presence of “illegal” immigrants leads to increased crime levels and 55% thought that they should be repatriated. Conversely, 55% is in favor of granting regular immigrants the right to vote in local council elections and 72% of opening channels for regular entry into Italy. And, to conclude, “the opinion that Muslim immigrants pose a threat *is less established in Italy than elsewhere*”.¹³

The tireless work of Sartori and others who chose to subscribe to Islamophobic tendencies seems thus to have achieved results that are less than satisfying. On a wider scale, the alarmism preached by media and politicians does not appear to have met with unmitigated success. According to the European public safety watchdog, for example, “fears relating to the presence of foreigners appear more contained compared to a few years ago. Only 6% of interviewees list immigration as a priority”, the main concerns being unemployment, inflation, and quality of social and health services.¹⁴

This last statement does not seem particularly meaningful in itself, seeing as the concepts of “unemployment”, “inflation” and “quality of services” are not on the same plain as “immigration”: the first three belong to the more concrete sphere of experience and everyday life, the last to that of ideology. It is, nevertheless, undeniable that Italian public opinion still fosters distorted perceptions and negative representations of immigrants. These stem not only from information spread by the media but also from *racist pedagogy* peddled, over the course of several years, mainly by the Northern League but also by other parties and institutional representatives¹⁵. An explicit, often unrestrained, form of racism marks the behaviour, and not only on informal occasions, of politicians, administrators, MPs and government ministers. To cite only some among the most recent instances, we can bring to mind the exceedingly refined “Immigrati, fora da i ball (immigrants, get the hell out of here)” in the Minister Bossi’s best Lombard dialect. This charming cry is later taken up by the Minister Calderoli, himself a prolific deviser of racist initiatives and phrases,¹⁶ who adds: “If somebody sees thing differently, he can put the illegal immigrants up in his own house”; a recurring

¹³ *Transatlantic Trends: Immigration*, main results 2010, in: http://www.affarinternazionali.it/documenti/TT-immigr10_IT.pdf (the italics in the quotes are ours).

¹⁴ European Wtchdog on Security, *Synthetic Report 1/2011. La sicurezza in Italia e in Europa*, (Security in Italy and Europe) in www.demos.it/2011/pdf/1877sintesi_report_osservatorio_europeo_sulla_sicurezza_luglio_2011.pdf

¹⁵ For the acts and statements of the Northern League, cf. the well-researched work: *La Lega spiegata con le sue stesse parole* (The league explained in its own words) by W. Peruzzi and G. Paciucci (afterword by A. Rivera), *Svastica verde. Il lato oscuro del va' pensiero leghista*, (Green Swastika. The dark side of the League’s va’ pensiero) Editori Riuniti 2011.

¹⁶ Among the “evergreen” racist statements on the part of the “Pig-Day” creator, we recall: “Give the vote to the *extracomunitari*? A country that has any civil pride cannot allow these bingo-bongos to vote. Till very recently, they were still living in trees”; “Some ethnic groups have a greater inclination to work and others less. Others have a greater aptitude for delinquency”; “If a high number of sex-crimes are performed by “*extracomunitari*”, it is because they are young, with raging hormones: they come here without women and are turned down by prostitutes. Fewer of them should come, and with their women. Otherwise I would suggest giving them one of those little pills that kills the sex-drive”.

platitude, which Beppe Grillo¹⁷ also subscribed to at one point. But this is not all: the encouragement on the part of Deputy Minister Castelli to use weapons in order to drive back the immigrant “hordes”, reiterated by EU MP Speroni, yet another member of the Northern League; the statement made by MP Giancarlo Lehner declaring gay sex to be “violent and against nature” and the proposal of introducing chemical castration as a deterrent to immigrants; the niceties uttered by Berlusconi himself, ranging from the identification between the struggle to combat “illegal” immigration and the fight against crime to the hideous description of Milan as “Islamic *gipsytown*”. And, last but not least, the public statement of Northern League MP Mario Borghezio who, referring to Anders Behring Breivik, the author of the Norwegian massacre on 21 July 2011 asserts: “violence aside, some of his ideas are excellent”.

If we were to recount all the racist overtones of Minister Maroni, an entire volume would not suffice: to name but a few, his praise of racist vigilante patrols; the statement “I imagine they must have mistaken it for a ship carrying illegal immigrants” to justify a Libyan-Italian patrol vessel opening fire against a harmless Sicilian fishing boat; the threat to deport the entire Roma community “even if they are EU citizens”; the attack against the magistrature, which, he claims, “favours illegal immigrants”.

Hence the severity of the latest (2011) Report on Italy drafted by commissioner for human rights at the Council of Europe appears nothing if not understandable. Thomas Hammarberg, after remarking that almost no progress had been made by the Italian authorities in guaranteeing the respect for the human rights of Roma, Sinti and immigrants, expresses the hope that the criminal code will, at the very least, be used “to stem the continual tide of racist slogans employed by politicians”.¹⁸ Among many reliable reports is one drafted by Amnesty International in 2010 and published in May 2011, which laments the rapid increase in “disparaging and discriminatory comments directed by politicians against immigrants, the Roma community and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals” that “fuel a climate of mounting intolerance”.¹⁹

All this also goes hand in hand with a certain degree of conformism. Even among the opposition, be it in the media or political parties, there are some who recycle and repeat, even though in a milder form, the same patterns and clichés that form the framework of the current government’s ideology and its alarmist, security-oriented, emergency-fuelled and repressive (if not explicitly racist) strategies. You would think, therefore, that those who wish to oppose the current government would profit from playing on the theme of racist rhetoric and discriminatory practices. Hence, for strategic reasons if nothing else, such individuals should make an effort to adopt a diametrically opposite style and put forward very different proposals. Sadly, this is not the case. In Italy – and increasingly in other European countries – right-wing populism and liberal tolerance

¹⁷ On August 2006, Grillo launched an attack, on his blog, against Minister Paolo Ferrero, who expressed an extremely reasonable opinion: immigration is a structural trend; it must be managed through an articulate strategy that, first of all, promotes legal entry. The answer from Grillo, dripping with vulgarity and incompetence read: “Italy cannot accommodate all the world’s misery; if all the “young people” in search of a job emigrate to Italy, how many Cpt centers would we need to put them up? Is the minister’s house large enough?”

¹⁸ Council of Europe, *Report by Thomas Hammarberg*, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, following his visit to Italy from 26 to 27 May 2011, cf. wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1826921

¹⁹ Amnesty International *Annual Report 2011. State of the world’s human rights*.
cf. 50.amnesty.it/rapportoannuale2011

are revealed to be “two sides of the same coin”, as Slavoj Žižek writes. Even though “liberal” politicians reject “populist racism, ‘unreasonable’ and unacceptable for our democratic standards”, they still believe that “the best way to avoid violent outbursts against immigrants” is to practice a “reasonable” brand of racism.²⁰

Giuliano Amato has made an indelible mark in this respect. His lesson, like that of similar preceptors, continues to yield results. On 9 October 2010, for example, the national assembly of the Democratic Party in its entirety voted in a document on immigration, integrated by a text presented by Walter Veltroni’s followers, containing the “innovative” proposal of a points-based immigration system. On closer inspection, this is actually nothing but a variation on the old myth of *immigration choisie/intégration réussie*, at one point also revived by Nicolas Sarkozy. The whole assembly declares the “need to take on board the concerns of Italians” and therefore “to select immigration according to criteria of quality”.²¹

“Dying like dogs”

At the very beginning of December 2009, in Zumaglia, near Biella, Ibrahim M’Bodi, a 35-year-old Senegalese construction worker, was stabbed to death by his employer, Franco D’Onofrio, who then disposed of the body by dumping it in the drainage channel of a rice paddy.

At the root of the crime lay the repeated, insistent requests on the part of the worker for the three months’ outstanding salary he was owed. The main newspapers fleetingly referred to the news in a few lines of text, among the shorter articles. “Il Manifesto” alone considered it worthy of the front page.

The only acknowledgement from civil society in general came in the form a sit-in organized by Biella trade unions (the victim’s brother was a Fiom leader). The outrage felt when faced with such a heinous murder, aggravated by racist contempt, died down almost instantly, with the exception of few echoes on anti-racist websites and blogs.

On 10 April 2010, newspapers reported the arrest of Vincenzo Nappi, owner of a garage in Piedimonte San Germano, in the Frosinone area. The man was charged with murder, aggravated by cruelty and the attempt to dispose of the corpse, for the killing, three years previously, with the help of an accomplice, of one of his employees, the 42-year-old Romanian Ivan Misu. The businessman and his accomplice, Fortunato Cusano, supposedly kidnapped the Romanian labourer, proceeding to beat and torture him and cut off his ear before murdering him and, finally, melting his corpse in acid.

All the biggest newspapers, particularly the local ones, devoted a fair amount of space to this murder, perhaps because it was more gruesome than the previous one and carried out in typical *mafioso* style. All the media lay a particular emphasis on one detail which was, in fact, impossible to substantiate, as if, one might almost say, to detract from the importance of the event itself: the victim had, allegedly, stolen a few litres of

²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Le radici dell’odio e della convivenza* (The root of hatred and of cohabitation) (Translated by Bruna Tortorella), “Internazionale”, 19 August 2011, cf: internazionale.it/opinioni/slavoj-zizek/2011/08/19/le-radici-dell%E2%80%99odio-e-della-convivenza/

²¹ (The Italics are ours). This document was introduced by Jean-Léonard Touadi. Cf: Partito Democratico, Assemblea Nazionale, 8-9 ottobre 2010, Commissione Politiche d’immigrazione, report, (Democratic Party, National Assembly, 8-9 October 2010, Commission on Immigration Policies): cf. partitodemocratico.it/gw/producer/dettaglio.aspx?id_doc=109239

petrol from his employer. We are not aware of any reaction as far as civil society is concerned. As Alina Harja²² writes, this murder, like other, similar ones, did not deserve any form of TV coverage laced with touching, moving statements and reactions from the victim's relatives, nor any form of public condemnation on the part of politicians, much less an urgent Cabinet meeting to discuss possible emergency measures.²³

These two are not the only cases of immigrant workers murdered by their employers: we witness an increasing number of them. Among the most recent instances is the murder of Desenzano, where a 19-year-old Moroccan youth was murdered by the owner of the restaurant where he worked, on 28th June 2011.

It might be possible to argue that the racist motive of these crimes remains unproven; that, for the most part, they appear to be an expeditious way of solving conflicts in the workplace or of disposing of excess or superfluous workforce. Some may claim that what killed these workers was exploitation rather than racism: as if the two terms were not inexorably linked, or rather, as if the former did not represent a way of describing the latter. Others will remind us that murder used to be one way, in Italy, of disposing of "native" farm hands who proved too antagonistic or assertive, and will draw the conclusion that racism has very little to do with it. They forget that the farm hands of Southern Italy were called "Zulus" and "Bedouins" so as to leave no room for doubt as to their subhuman nature. The legacy of colonial racism, employed to put a label on the foreigners of yesterday, is kept alive in the social practices – conversational, behavioural, legislative and political – that affect foreign individuals today.

At this juncture we must observe that the age of triumphant neo-liberism and globalized capital has done nothing to overcome "archaic" work relations and conditions, but has, instead, embraced the "non-contemporary", as Ernst Bloch puts it, adopting its forms of slavery and exploitation. In this context, the foreign worker is often dehumanized, treated and perceived simply as a low-cost workforce that can be discharged even in the most extreme manner.

Some might object that we also, although rarely, it must be said, hear of murders where the victim is an Italian employer, male or female and the murderer an employee of foreign nationality: for example the recent killing (2011) of Ludovico Corrao, stabbed to death by his carer, the Bangladeshi national Islam Saiful, who pleaded guilty to the crime.²⁴

²² On 11 April 2010, in: [alinaharja.wordpress.com/2010/04/11/romeno-vittima-e-%E2%80%99-colpa-sua%E2%80%A6/](http://alinaharja.wordpress.com/2010/04/11/romeno-vittima-e%E2%80%99-colpa-sua%E2%80%A6/)

²³ The reference is to the Reggiani murder, which occurred in Rome on 30 October 2007, which caused, mainly thanks to the efforts of Walter Veltroni, an urgent meeting of the Council of Ministers to be called, in order to tackle the misconduct of the Roma, resulting in two decree laws, known as anti-Roma acts. This happened at the time of second Prodi Government.

²⁴ Ludovico Corrao was a highly influential public figure: lawyer, intellectual, politician with a catholic background, mayor of Gibellina, former MP as a left-wing independent politician and finally candidate Prc candidate for the Senate in 2001. Here is how the Adnkronos press agency released the news: Trapani, 7 August 2011, "the murderer of former Communist Party MP Ludovico Corrao, 84, stabbed to death this morning, contacted the Carabinieri himself and confessed to the murder of his employer. The young man from Bangladesh, Islam Saiful, gave himself up to the Carabinieri, claiming that he had killed the former MP and president of the Orestyadi foundation after an "work-related altercation". The young man is being questioned by the Carabinieri of Gibellina (TP), where the premises of the Orestyadi foundation are located and where the murder occurred; he recounts, with tears in his eyes, how he stabbed Corrao in the chest in the heat of the discussion. It was a sort of momentary *raptus* that led him to stab his employer. Islam worked for his employer for over a year as housekeeper and carer".

Another brutal crime, dating back to the end of 2010, had as its victim a famous Camorra member, “a cruel and violent racist” the press reports, and as the murderer, possibly involuntary, Kevin Akua, a 29-year-old farm hand, forced to break his back in the fields for ten hours each day in exchange for a pittance. Ferdinando Caccavale was stabbed to death during a riot between members of the Camorra and a group of Ivorian workers, fed up with the abuses, threats, aggression and racism they were subjected to every day.²⁵

The key difference lies in the fact that most immigrant workers “die like dogs”. They are killed more or less “barbarically”, so to speak, not as a result of impulse or passion: the intolerance of homosexual tendencies displayed in work relations is said to be the driving force behind the Corrao murder; the sense of humiliation and anger for the abuse suffered, and perhaps also the perceived need to protect himself, in the case of the murder of the Camorra member. For them, this is not the case: the underlying aim is that of silencing a ‘working machine’ who attempts to speak up and assert his rights.

They “die like dogs” in another sense as well, which we will attempt to expound. “Man’s best friends” can be put down in dog kennels, be abandoned in the street and die a painful death of deprivation, be killed intentionally by their “masters” or accidentally by drivers or other individuals: in any case, they die amid general indifference, without generating any *pietas*, any indignation.²⁶ A judge can rule that the killing of a dog is a “trivial motive” and therefore an aggravating circumstance for one of the people who beat up a taxi driver to seek revenge for the death of the animal (an episode which ended in the worst possible manner).²⁷

Likewise, we barely even bat an eyelid at the death of a foreigner, it disappears without a trace, it does not arouse indignation nor merit in-depth coverage by the media, not even in the sensational and voyeuristic tone normally reserved for events that the general public is likely to find particularly gripping. This even happens when the murder of a foreign citizen presents traits that have the potential to satisfy the widespread taste for the macabre and the darker side of vaudeville, encouraged by the “serial and pervasive” attitude with which the Italian media treats crime reports. Indeed, these “have become, in Italy a ‘genre’ unto themselves” that has no counterpart in other European countries.²⁸

²⁵ *Napoli, fratello di un boss di Afragola ucciso in una rissa da africano salvo dal linciaggio, ma è assedio del clan*, (Naples, brother of Afragola’s boss killed in a skirmish by an African, saved from the lynch-mob; the gang decide a stake out) “Il Mattino”, 27 December 2010, in: ilmattino.it/articolo.php?id=132172. In 2011 another hypothetical murder “With roles reversed” is recorded. Ansa reports: “One man has been detained for the murder of a 70-year-old shepherd, Sabatino D’Onofrio, yesterday night in the neighborhood of Quarto Miglio in an eastern suburb of the capital. The man is a Romanian, who allegedly killed D’Onofrio for failing to pay for his sheep-shearing service, 20 June 2011.

²⁶ On this subject, those with steady nerves can take a look at: youtube.com/watch?v=SiPIa6DA2us

²⁷ We refer to a crime story that unfolded in Turin on 9th October 2010. A taxi driver, who involuntarily ran over and killed a young woman’s dog, is brutally beaten up by a group of her friends. As a result of the fall caused by the assault he goes into a coma and dies. One of three killers, who chooses to plea-bargain, is sentenced to 16 years for voluntary manslaughter with trivial motives as an aggravating circumstance.

²⁸ Paola Barretta and Fabio Bordignon, *I Tg italiani voyeur del delitto. In Europa non abbiamo rivali*, (Italian TV news voyeuristic towards crime. We have no equal in Europe) in European Watchdog on Security, *Report 3/2010*, October 2010, see website: demos.it/2010/pdf/1452report_-focus_sui_crimini_violenti.pdf. and the aforementioned *Report 1/2011* of the same watchdog fully confirm this trend.

By contrast, this trend makes it all the more shocking that, for example, the death of a 37-year-old Moroccan man (12 March 2011), murdered by an Italian of 43, Alessandro Zari, a minor league drug dealer, did not feature in the headlines at all (it is significant that no newspaper actually printed the victim's name). And yet it was an atrocious crime: after repeatedly stabbing the Moroccan (supposedly in the course of a quarrel linked to small-scale drug dealing) the Italian cut the body up into small pieces which he then scattered around his house.²⁹

The complete lack of interest displayed towards the violent deaths of these "outsiders" becomes ever more apparent, except in cases where the crime is committed by other "outsiders" (such as that of Hina Saleem, which received a great deal of coverage). All we need to do is compare two instances: in 2001, the murder of Ion Cazacu³⁰, carried out by his employer, saw displays of emotion, an acceptable amount of attention on the part of the media and protest marches promoted by trade unions and anti-racist organisations. Songs written about him still touch us today.³¹ Conversely, the murders of Ibrahim M'Bodi and Ivan Misu, very similar to that of Cazacu, went almost entirely unnoticed.

This indifference shown by institutions and, indeed, by most Italians, also triumphs when it is the foreigner himself who decides to put an end to intolerable working and living conditions by taking his own life, publically, in the street, as an act of rebellion. Georg Semir, a 33-year-old Albanian citizen, died after ten days of agony on 26th March 2011. On 16th March 2011 he had set fire to himself in the bustling city centre of Vittoria, in the province of Ragusa. He worked as an agricultural labourer, completely in the black and in pitiful conditions; he had not received any compensation for several months. This desperate act of rebellion against his employer will inspire some decent articles, but no political reaction, with the possible exception of the local section of Flai-Cgil.

More public attention was paid, at least at local level, to another 'protest suicide', that of Nouredine Adnane, a Moroccan man of 27 who worked in Palermo as a street vendor in order to feed himself, his parents and seven brothers. Although all his documents were in good order, he was constantly harassed, fined and blackmailed by the local policemen, a "gang" that enjoyed victimising immigrants. After the last in a series of abuses, on 10th February 2011, he doused himself in petrol and set fire to himself. He died, after nine days of agony, on 19th February. Three months later, ten local police officers and inspectors were charged with libel, injuries, abuse of position, forgery and falsification. This is also the result of a series of local initiatives promoted by associations and other organs of civil society: first of all a complaint submitted to the Public Procurator's Office, then a fundraising initiative, a torchlight procession to

²⁹ *Vendetta per una partita di droga. Marocchino ucciso e fatto a pezzi*, (Revenge for a consignment of drugs. Moroccan killed and cut into pieces) "Il Giorno", 13 March 2011, cf. the website: ilgiorno.it/milano/cronaca/2011/03/13/473265-vendetta.shtml

³⁰ Ion Cazacu, 40-year-old Romanian engineer, died in Genoa hospital on 16th April 2000, after more than a month of agony. After emigrating to Italy he worked as a bricklayer and tiler for Cosimo Iannece, a minor businessman in Gallarate. On the evening of 14 March, during an argument to assert his rights, Iannece showered him with petrol and set fire to him. Initially sentenced to thirty years, his penalty was reduced to 16 years on appeal. The sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

³¹ For example, the one written by Renato Franchi for the *Orchestra Suonatore Jones*, also performed with Gang.

express solidarity, an open meeting... Adnane's sacrifice will therefore be instrumental towards revealing a despicable instance of institutional racism and pursuing those responsible. yet, although strikingly similar to the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, this is not destined to be the fuse that will spark the uprising against our very own despots and the racist policies of their government.

The "human tsunami" and State cynicism.

An important event marked the two-year period we are taking into consideration: the exodus of immigrants and refugees from post-revolutionary Tunisia and war-torn Libya. The response on the part of Italian institutions, faced with such a frankly foreseeable turn of events was marked by chaos, administrative irrationality, social alarmism, anti-European persecution complexes, concentration camps, mass repatriations and boats being turned back at sea, even those carrying refugees and potential asylum seekers: in other words, by appalling violations of international law and of the most basic moral obligations. We witness equally reprehensible conduct on a more general, day-to-day scale – from "spontaneous" vigilante patrols to the hunting down of fugitives – despite its being countered by the active solidarity of parts of the population and civil society.

Here too, comparison with the past reflects poorly on the present: we need only recall that in a single night, back on 7th March 1991, a grand total of 27,000 Albanians landed in Brindisi, a town of under 90,000 inhabitants. At first, and for several days, the State floundered. However, even though in this case the landings had come as a bolt from the blue, in the space of a few hours, a spontaneous network of reception and support had been set up, mainly by private citizens, but also by municipal structures and charitable organisations, both secular and catholic.

Today, the declaration by the Italian government of a state of "humanitarian" emergency on national territory and in North Africa, and the taste for the spectacular and the alarming, skillfully kindled³², are permanent features, particularly of the first wave of immigrant landings in Lampedusa, consisting mainly of young Tunisians in search of employment. Many of them were left without employment after the upheaval and the consequent collapse of the tourist industry and its various satellite activities. For all of them, the initial relaxation of police control offered the perfect opportunity to carry out their migratory project or simply to take advantage of the freedom acquired as a result of the uprising.

Although the arrival of Tunisian immigrants – and, later, of refugees fleeing from war stricken Libya - was relatively contained given the historical significance of the Tunisian uprising, members of the Italian government, foremost among them the Interior Minister and the Prime Minister, wasted no time in using it to serve their own ends, describing it as "a human tsunami". All this in the hope of not only gaining consensus by playing on the fear and on the rejection of "outsiders", but also of pushing through, in the name of urgency, measures that are even stricter and less respectful of human rights.

³² In the aforementioned *Synthetic Report 1-2011* from the European Observatory on Security we read that "during the first four months of this year", immigration "has an attention-rate of 6% (against a European average of 2%) concentrated on a single phenomenon: the migrant landings in Lampedusa and on southern shores".

By riding this wave of emergency, the Italian government managed to renew cooperation agreements for the contrasting of “irregular” immigration with the Tunisian transitional government and with the Libyan Cnt. These agreements include measures such as the emigration ban and the turning back of boats, both of which are in serious breach of fundamental human rights. The state of emergency also helped to make Italian legislation on immigration even more draconian than it already was: on 14 July 2011, a decree was passed in Parliament that, among other things, established immediate deportation for “irregular” migrants, *EU citizens included*, for reasons of public order, and extended the maximum detention period in Cie to 18 months.

And it does not end here: the widespread scaremongering was used as an excuse to double the number of detention centers and to extend the “custody” of immigrants and refugees far beyond the deadlines prescribed by law, without the consent of judicial authorities.³³

Even some of the tent cities and other temporary structures, initially passed off as reception centers,³⁴ were later turned, by decree, into new detention centers, protected by walls, meshes and barbed-wire fences. In these new centers, where inmates often include refugees and potential or current asylum seekers, the hygiene, health and dietary conditions are, as a general rule, abysmal. Every new day brings with it instances of abuse, rioting, self-harm, suicide attempts and acts of violence on the part of the police authorities against those who protest or try to escape. Moreover, lawyers, activists, journalists, cultural mediators, even members of Parliament are often denied admission to the centers, as a result of a targeted decree signed by the Interior Minister. Lastly, the Tunisian transition and, above all, NATO’s armed intervention in the Libyan civil war, without the previous establishment of humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of refugees – mainly escaping sub-Saharan countries – had the effect of doubling the number of tragedies at sea (cf. part 3, chapter 7: Grazia Naletto *a cruel diary*).

The tragic deaths of men, women and children, most of them on the run from unsustainable situations, persecution or certain death, were in some cases precipitated by ham-fisted rescue attempts, or indeed by deliberate failure on the part of ships belonging to the NATO fleet.

We have not yet witnessed any significant display of emotion, *pietas* or solidarity in Italian public debate and opinion, in the statements of government ministers and politicians or in media reactions. Even when journalists, politicians or the general public express grief over the tragedies at sea, it is usually done with a certain degree of detachment: as Naletto points out, it often goes hand in hand with “the conviction that Italy cannot provide for this ‘biblical exodus’”. Needless to say, there are exceptions to be found within Italian society: activists from immigrant communities, secular and religious anti-racist organisations and those promoting human rights, leaders and members of trade unions and extreme-left parties, protestant churches, various

³³ For more precise documentation on the “new concentration camps” and the urgent legislation following the “landings emergency”, cf.: *L’oxygène de la liberté. La Guantanamo italiana si allarga. Viaggio nei nuovi lager per immigrati*, (The oxygen of freedom. The Italian Guantanamo grows more vast. A journey through the new concentration camps for immigrants) “Senza Censura”, n. 35 (July 2011).

³⁴ In Kinisia (Trapani), Palazzo S. Gervaso (Potenza), Manduria (Taranto) and other towns in the country.

manifestations of the Catholic Church and, lastly, some of the less mainstream media outlets. The letter from President Giorgio Napolitano addressed to Claudio Magris in the “Corriere della Sera” after the massacre of Kerkennah,³⁵ inadvertently reflects and legitimizes the most widespread common conviction. Despite agreeing with Magris’ assessment of the danger of becoming accustomed and thus indifferent to tragedies at sea, a tendency against which we must “react with moral and political fortitude”, the Head of State seems to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of “unscrupulous speculators unchallenged by the local authorities” who organize the journeys from Libya “on old, high-risk vessels, carrying desperate crowds of men, women and children”. He requests that they receive exemplary punishment and urges politicians to prevent new departures from occurring.

Napolitano seems to fail to see that for sub-Saharan refugees trapped in Libya, this departure is a matter of life and death. He also neglects to mention that the greatest share of responsibility lies – at sea, but equally on the mainland – elsewhere: European prohibitionist policies, the harsh procedures put in place to “fight illegal immigration”, the failure to evacuate all refugees from Libya by the international community and NATO’s military intervention that he (Napolitano) supported without the slightest hesitation, are the true culprits. It pains us to acknowledge it: his position differs greatly from that of the Northern League Ministers only in its general tone and style; Calderoli, for example, states that: “At long last they will cease to embark on these journeys, which do not bring hope, but desperation, and have caused many people to die in the Strait of Sicily”.³⁶

A less pessimistic conclusion.

One positive element lights up the bleak landscape we have so far outlined, acting as a beacon of hope. More and more frequently, today’s “Zulus” and “Bedouins” tend to collectively rebel, thus revealing their humanity and displaying awareness and personal initiative: From Castelvoturno to Rosarno, from the crane in Brescia to the former Carlo Erba tower in Milan, from the Domitiana highway to Nardò. Rising up, in each instance, against masters, the Camorra and its foremen, pogroms and the Interior Minister’s acts of revenge, they assert their rights, above all to life and dignity, and reject their status of outcasts. They do this by adopting extreme methods of resistance, such as the occupation of the crane or the tower, or by literally digging their heels in, as in the case of the strike on the Domitiana.

On this road, on 9th October 2010, the first strike of foreign seasonal labourers was called: farm hands, construction workers, temporary workers in the service and craft sectors, regular and irregular worker from a wide range of countries. From Baia Verde to Afragola, they peacefully occupied sixteen “roundabouts”, the ones where, every day

³⁵ *No all’indifferenza, tutti debbono reagire. Napolitano: ‘Occorre stroncare questo traffico e prevenire i viaggi della morte’*, (No more indifference, everybody must react. Napolitano: we need to put a stop to this trafficking and prevent the journeys of death) “Corriere della Sera”, 6 June 2011: corriere.it/politica/11_giugno_06/lettera-napolitano_c268e1b4-8ffe-11e0-bd7e-24c232303fed.shtml

³⁶ Cf. article *Immigrati, scontro Vaticano-Lega. ‘Il ministro Calderoli ci offende’*, (Immigrants, Vatican vs. Northern League. ‘the minister Calderoli insults us’) “la Repubblica”, 25 August 2009: repubblica.it/2009/08/sezioni/cronaca/immigrati-10/vaticano-calderoli/vaticano-calderoli.html

at dawn, the workforce marketplace took place. Signs erected in every roundabout read: “we will not work for less than 50 euros a day”.

How does all this fit in with a White Book on Racism? We will attempt to provide a brief answer. Racism is a system of social relations characterized by inequality, be it economic, judicial, status-related, and by an imbalance of power among the social groups involved. This system fosters the tendency to de-humanize the downtrodden by depicting them as an amorphous mass, to discredit, discriminate, set apart, render them inferior and vulnerable. If this is indeed the case, the first thing needed to disrupt the “racism system” is the uprising of its victims and their ability to put themselves forward as active and assertive individuals. This prerequisite may, in turn, set off the process that leads us to deconstruct the “community” established by racism, as Etienne Balibar put it.³⁷ We do not mean to underestimate the struggle against racism on the part of national and international organizations, but we believe that, in the end, it is up to the oppressed to decide their own fate.

³⁷ Etienne Balibar, *Esiste un 'neorazzismo'?*, (Does neo-racism exist?) in E. Balibar, I. Wallerstein, *Razza nazione classe. Le identità ambigue*, (Race, nation, class. Ambiguous identities), Edizioni Associate 1991, pp. 29-40.

Immigrant workers during the crisis and institutional racism

Enrico Pugliese

Introduction

In the course of the last two or three years the condition of immigrants and their role within Italian society have grown progressively worse for two reasons, extremely different by nature but both leading in the same direction. The first, of a strictly economic variety – and thus, hopefully, temporary – is linked to the current economic climate and to the effects the downturn has produced, even in the wealthier areas of our country. The second, mainly institutional, lies in the aggressive attitude shown towards immigrants on the part of political parties with a clear xenophobic leaning, for example the Northern League, but also of high-ranking politicians, such as ministers currently in office, even on official occasions. We must not therefore speak of personal leaning but rather of government policy.

Furthermore, what we are able to detect today, with the crisis still in full swing, is the result of initiatives undertaken in the past that are now producing effects. A good example of this phenomenon is the case of the Egyptian worker (mentioned in the study carried out by Elena De Filippo and Salvatore Strozza on immigrants in Campania) victim of the “combined provisions” that lie at the heart of the Bossi-Fini law, namely the scrapping of residence permits in favour of residence contracts, and of the more recent ruling that established “illegal immigration” as a crime in our country”.³⁸

Before the crisis started, the Egyptian worker had achieved a good degree of integration into the community through the most effective means: work, in this case in a factory. Like other hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers, he had managed to bring his family out to Italy to join him and to settle down in a fairly stable environment. The 2008 crisis, still ongoing, put an abrupt end to this process. The Egyptian worker lost his permanent job and started to scout around for any kind of occupation, even temporary employment, and, with this in mind, moved to Campania. In the meanwhile he remained unemployed – at least officially – and, based on the clauses of the “residence contract” he risked losing, and eventually lost, his regular residency status in Italy. With no job, and thus no prospect of keeping his family in Italy, he scraped a living by accepting a number of irregular jobs (the only ones available during the crisis for men with his employment history) and lived under constant threat of deportation and arrest for the crime of “illegal immigration”, which had by then been included in our legal system.

The labour market and institutional racism

As a general rule, studies carried out on temporary work in the 60s and 70s in the US focused on a type of “institutional racism” that perpetuated the disadvantaged, marginal status of workers belonging to minorities (with a particular emphasis on black people). Institutional racism was presented as a relatively complex mechanism: it began with the educational disadvantage of children from the ghetto, forced to attend

³⁸ Cf. N. Ammaturo, E. De Filippo, S. Strozza (edited by), *The lives of immigrants in Naples and in the Vesuvian area (La vita degli immigrati a Napoli e nei paesi vesuviani)*, Fondazione Ismu 2010.

substandard schools which offered fewer opportunities of vocational training; next, the study analysed inequality from the point of view of housing, and the negative effects of urban segregation (such as the lack of useful connections and relationships, no exposure to cultural opportunities, et cetera) and similar matters. These enquiries into the disadvantaged state of minorities were carried out at a time when new legislative measures against racial segregation and for the promotion of equal opportunities were being debated. Institutional racism was based on a general socio-economic (as well as cultural) framework of implicit discrimination that continually perpetuated the oppression of black people in US society, regardless of progressive legislative measures. It is common knowledge that from Nixon (40 years ago now) onwards, this sort of initiative progressively petered out or became a mere façade. The situation is even more dire in Italy today: institutional racism – as the story of the Egyptian worker and the two legislative measures (approved by the second and third Berlusconi governments) prove – is indisputable fact.

One might believe that of the Egyptian worker to be a borderline case, as indeed it is. Thanks to immigrants' astonishing ability to react to difficult and adverse situations, they manage to keep their heads above water even in the present climate of economic crisis and institutional discrimination. And, by doing so, many of them manage to avoid the disastrous outcome of the story outlined above. Yet similar cases remain a direct result of what our legislation on immigration – along with the pitfalls in labour law – prescribes: workers who have lost their jobs must leave and, if they fail to comply, risk being arrested and deported.

But let us now examine the specific condition of immigrants during the economic crisis. The literature on the role of immigrants in the labor market – I refer to Castles and Kosack's study of 1970s Europe – concludes that immigrant workers are the first to feel the effects of short-term economic crisis in wealthier countries: they are those with less protection, and therefore they are the first to be culled.³⁹ This means that indicators of employment and unemployment levels should reveal an obvious and immediate imbalance when it comes to immigrant labour, namely less employment and more unemployment. A potential corollary is the progressive reduction in arrivals from, and increase in departures towards, the country of origin. This is more or less what happened during what can be described as 'Fordism', which saw a development based on stable and subordinate employment. But this is not the situation that we are dealing with in Italy.

At present, the state of the labour market has undergone a considerable shift due to the increasing incidence of fragmentation in the job market: in other words, there are types of demand that are fulfilled by a specific offer with specific characteristics (such as gender, area of origin, professional experience) and not by others. The most obvious example is provided by carers. In the present crisis the number of immigrant female carers has increased, rather than dropping. This is to be expected. It is true that the type of demand expressed by families' need for care assistants could conceivably be conditioned by the economic situation in view of the overall reduction in family

³⁹ Cf. S. Castles, G. Kosack, *Migration and Class Structures in Western Europe* (Immigrazione e Struttura di Classe in Europa Occidentale), Franco Angeli Editore 1976.

incomes. But, at the same time, this demand depends on various factors, most important of which is the demographic situation: in essence, families cannot do without this kind of help, which is paid for in part by the state and in part by the families themselves (often using the savings of the elderly person in question). This explains the apparent contradiction represented by the increase in employment of female immigrants during the economic crisis.

Employment and unemployment during the crisis

This is why, when we are studying the effects of the crisis on immigrant, we need to go beyond the basic statistics on the labour market (employment, unemployment, economically active population rate). A detailed analysis of the different employment components and sectors is also required in order to gain a comprehensive idea of workers' predicaments. The fragmentation in the job market is not restricted to gender-based oppositions, or those between domestic and care work and employment in the agricultural or industrial sector. We also come across it on a far more subtle level. Moreover, the number of migrant workers who are officially quantifiable – or namely the regular ones – is partly dictated by institutional decisions, unrelated to the economic situation, and mainly pertaining to the issuing of residence permits. As a result of regularization mechanisms linked to the so-called “*decreti flussi*” (a kind of discriminatory and partial “amnesty” Italian governments have made extensive use of in the last few years), the number of people in possession of a residence permit has increased regardless of the economic situation and even of actual immigration levels. This is why the immigrant population has continued to increase even in the course of the crisis.

Let us begin by examining the aggregate data, which reveals a definite decline, both in absolute and relative terms. The comparison between foreign and Italian workers shows that activity rate and employment rate of foreigners are systematically higher than those of Italians. In other words, we observe a higher percentage of foreigners among the economically active population in the labour market, but also a higher incidence of the employed, those who directly participate in the Italian productive sector. As a study conducted by Mattia Vitiello (an Irpps-Cnr researcher) reveals, the higher rate of foreign residents can not only be attributed to the particular age range of this population, made up, for the most part, of individuals in their prime, meaning that it tends to be more active compared to Italian residents. Neither it is purely owing to the fact that the main reason for leaving their countries of origin in favour of Italy is the quest for some form of employment. The higher rate is mainly triggered by one factor: compared to the Italian population, immigrants have a greater need to get into the job market in order to make a living. The unemployment rate is also higher among immigrants than in the Italian population. Immigrants, in other words, are compelled to enter the job market, but are more frequently discriminated against than Italians and therefore run a higher risk of losing their jobs. To make things even more complex, we have to take into account a further alternative to both employment and unemployment. This is work in the black economy, which often eludes statistic observation given that the individuals involved are down as being unemployed. Of course, we are taking into

account only those immigrants regularly residing in the country (as they are the only ones who can be properly quantified).

Lastly, still on the subject of institutional figures – and, therefore, bearing in mind the limitations listed above – the relative decline in immigrants' condition is manifest. If we consider the unemployment rate, it increases both for Italians and for immigrants. However, for Italians it goes from 6,7% to 8,2%, whilst for immigrants it goes from 8,2% to 11,7%. Along with the growth of unemployment, we see a dip in the rate of involvement (people leaving the job market). The rate of involvement (or of activity) continues to be higher for immigrants than for Italians, but the decline registered in the first two years of the economic crisis is higher for immigrants, with rates dropping from 73.3% to 71.4%.

The crisis and immigrant workers' "descent" into worse forms of employment

What we have just said concerning the high incidence of immigrants in the labour market is also relevant in light of the present crisis. A puzzling effect of the crisis on the labor market and employment is that we have witnessed a sort of reversed migratory phenomenon within immigration itself. In the last few decades, the flow of immigrants has moved steadily from the southern regions of Italy towards the industrialized North. Since the beginning of the crisis, the flow has changed direction. From an employment perspective this is because companies, and particularly industries, were forced to fire regular (from the point of view of residence permit and work contract) employees, both Italians and immigrants. The latter were also frequent victims of atypical or temporary contracts that had not been renewed. The unavoidable urgency of finding a job (particularly considering their lack of welfare support) drove immigrant workers to look for irregular jobs in the South. If the Egyptian worker represents a borderline case when we look at the phenomenon as a whole, he is instead typical insofar as the North-South shift is concerned.

This does not, of course, help us to better understand the events of Rosarno, but it goes some way towards explaining some relevant data as well as a few general aspects of the occurrence. Based partly on irresponsible official statements, most of the immigrants in Rosarno were labeled as "clandestine". Not long after, it emerged that that the vast majority of them were working regularly, a fact stressed by Laura Boldrini in her book⁴⁰. It is evident that not all the immigrant workers in Rosarno were former factory employees who had lost their jobs,, but, as far as we can gather from various field surveys (also mentioned by Grazia Naletto) it would appear that most of them were. The others were simply agricultural labourers living in the South who somehow managed to regularize their employment. Concerning the institutional racism that the Rosarno events brought to light, not much needs to be added to what Naletto has already written. Instead, it would be useful to think about the connection between riots, living conditions and employment status. One of the reasons behind the deteriorating conditions of agricultural labourers in Rosarno and the more-or-less serious tension that had been accumulating in the preceding months was the gathering of an ever larger number of people in the one place at a time when the agricultural crisis produced a

⁴⁰ Cf. L. Boldrini, *Everybody back* (Tutti indietro), Rizzoli 2010

substantially reduced demand for workers. The provocative acts committed by local thugs and criminals and the immigrants' overflowing rage should be viewed from this perspective. Rosarno is not the most racist city in Italy or in Europe, as it has often been portrayed by the press, but the social conflict it witnessed must be viewed and understood within the context of the crisis. Racist episodes in the workplace should not be interpreted as a result or a feature of the "poor man's war", but as an expression of the progressive weakening of the stable position of immigrant workers during the crisis. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that these events rarely involve immigrant carers, but are mainly concentrated within the demographic of less stable male employment, which is also more strongly affected by the abuse and exploitative methods of corrupt foremen. From this point of view it would be helpful to endorse an active effort, on the employment front, to counter the effects of institutional racism, in particular the variety expressed by the Interior Minister. I refer, first of all, to the initiative which proposes a new law on the "*foreman system*" that would brand this kind of Mafia-style management of the labour market, where the best jobs are distributed to friends and followers, as a crime. It is an extremely important initiative inasmuch as it could help to empower immigrants and endow them with a stable and regular status, crucial in the struggle for fairer salaries and decent working conditions. Not all the foremen can be traced back to criminal organizations. On the contrary, in many cases they are utterly distinct from them. Yet, the Mafia methods are probably also determined by the complete immunity enjoyed by these foremen. However despicable, these figures have to be viewed as a cog in the mechanism of institutional racism. Employers, particularly the more powerful ones, are the main beneficiaries of this system. Small and very small cottage industries – although they also tend to heavily exploit their employees, as is the case in Rosarno – do not necessarily make use of foreign or Italian *foremen*, but instead deal directly with immigrant workers.

To conclude this study of the connection between racism and labour I would like to stress the distinction between institutional racism and racist and xenophobic statements issued by institutional representatives that also end up by affecting immigrant workers by portraying them in a negative light or leading to their dismissal. One of the most striking examples listed in this publication is the parliamentary question concerning the possible dangers deriving from the employment of Muslim workers in firms manufacturing military material. This may well bring a smile to our faces: it seems frankly folkloristic. Still, it provides an excellent example of the kind of persecution immigrant workers have to deal with.

Institutional racism in the welfare system

Grazia Naletto

From national borders to school canteens and the guarantee of social services: the politics of refusal and discrimination transcends the confines of immigration policies and crosses into the realm of more general ones. It is visible in the budget measures and, more and more frequently, inspires the choices of local administrators in the field of housing and general welfare provisions. Moreover, the global economic crisis has supplied wide-ranging discriminatory ideologies and practices with yet another rhetoric argument: given the *need* to rein in public spending, reducing funds allocated to local administration, it is not enough to make our welfare system more *selective* and obstruct the arrival of new immigrants: it is also necessary to impose restrictions on the rights of those who have resided regularly in our country for a long time.

The rhetoric of “invasion” creates, or at least attempts to create, new internal boundaries, finding different ways of representing the foreign threat, in order to feed the collective imagination: as well as the images of boats landing in Lampedusa, we find those of the mayor and citizens of Adro, ardent supporters of the “us first” motto with regard to social services and school meals, or those of the African labourers of Rosarno, literally kicked out of the fields of the Piana. The various local manifestations of institutional racism were, for the most part, ignored by public debate until a few years ago. Conversely, in recent months, thanks to systematic attempts to enforce legal protection, promoted mainly by Asgi but also by local organizations and trade unions, the intensification of case law in this field has rendered them more visible, allowing an in-depth assessment of the extent of their influence.

As this is being written (September 2011), the institutional affairs committee of the Veneto regional council has passed three bills that introduce 15-year residency in the region as one of the criteria necessary to gain priority in the access to childcare services, education grants and housing benefits, in keeping with the “locals first” slogan that dominated the Northern League’s campaign for the regional elections.

Institutional racism has so far revealed three preferred areas of influence on a local level: policies in support of the family barring or limiting foreign citizens’ access to subsidies for parents of newborn babies (Brescia, Palazzago, Adro, Latisana, Tradate, Regione Lombardia), to unemployment benefits (Villa D’Ogna) and to grants supporting low-income families (Milan); the right to education with the introduction of restrictions in foreign children’s access to childcare services (Adro, Ciampino, Montecchio Maggiore, Goito) and in students’ access to university accommodation (Sondrio); housing policies limiting foreign citizens’ access to public housing (Milan) and to rental grants (Alzano Lombardo, Adro, Majano, Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia).

The outlining of qualifying requirements is a key element of discriminatory behaviour in situations where citizenship, seniority of residence and living permits are necessary to access certain services or benefits. It is no accident that some municipalities choose, on top of this, to restrict public records office registration (Calcinato, Ospitaletto,

Lissone, Biassano, Seregno, Lazzate, Cogliate, and Lesmo) and the release of certificates that declare buildings to be fit for human habitation (Montecchio Maggiore).⁴¹

The decrees introduced at a local level, be they regional laws or municipal rulings and regulations, were preceded by a series of laws on a national scale that restricted the near equality of treatment in the field of social services between Italian and non-EU citizens residing regularly in our country, guaranteed by art. 41 of Consolidated Law 286/98.⁴²

We must remind readers of the restricted access to maternity grants for non-EU women who hold a regular residence permit, introduced by the government budget of 2000, which also established the exclusion of foreign nationals of tertiary countries from the subsidies intended for larger families⁴³; the restriction, decided by the budget of 2001⁴⁴ of access to benefits to residence permit holders only, further aggravated by Decree 112/2008⁴⁵, better known as the anti-crisis decree, with the establishment of a ten-year-residence obligatory qualification. Again Decree 112/2008⁴⁶ reserved the chance of obtaining the so-called “purchase card” to destitute Italian citizens, while a ten-year-residence requirement is also in place to access housing support grants. When we add to such legislative measures the attempt, which, fortunately, fell flat, to exclude irregular foreign citizens from accessing basic health services⁴⁷ and the introduction of a 30% cap on the presence of foreign pupils in primary and secondary school classrooms, we begin to comprehend the institutional strategy that has emerged in recent years, which tends to progressively whittle away at the social citizenship rights of foreign citizens who reside in our country.

Growing inequalities

Legal protection against institutional discrimination has undergone a definite process of bulking up in the past two years.

In the aforementioned context, whereby “selective temptation” in the field of welfare characterises both the governing parties and the opposition, and indiscriminately affects all citizens, appealing to the judiciary power is the most effective tool in

⁴¹ As an example, we wish only to call attention to the cases of certain administrations who adopted discriminatory behaviour in the eyes of judges. For an in-depth analysis we refer readers to the contribution by Ilaria Traina in chapter 2 and to the section devoted to appeals and sentences against discrimination on the Asgi website: www.asgi.it

⁴² Detailed information on the legislative process in the field is provided by W. Citti, P. Bonetti (edited by), *Accesso alle prestazioni di assistenza sociale. Scheda pratica*, (Access to the social services) available on the Asgi website: www.asgi.it

⁴³ Law n. 488, 23 December 1999 “Disposizioni per la formazione del bilancio annuale e pluriennale dello Stato (Legge finanziaria 2000)”, (Arrangements for the drafting of the annual and multi-annual State budget ‘Budget Law 2000’), art. 49.

⁴⁴ Law n. 388, 23 December 2000 “Disposizioni per la formazione del bilancio annuale e pluriennale dello Stato (Legge finanziaria 2001)”, (Arrangements for the drafting of the annual and multi-annual State budget ‘Budget Law 2001’), art. 80 p. 5.

⁴⁵ Decree n. 112, 25 June 2008 “Disposizioni urgenti per lo sviluppo economico, la semplificazione, la competitività, la stabilizzazione della finanza pubblica e la perequazione Tributaria”, (Urgent measures for economic development, simplification, competitiveness, stabilization of public finances and tax equalization), art. 20 p. 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem* respectively art. 81 c. 12 e art. 11 c. 13.

⁴⁷ We refer to the parliamentary debate on Law 94/2009 in the course of which an article that lifted the ban on reporting on citizens without a residence permit was included and scrapped several times.

responding to discriminatory behaviour on an institutional level. However it would be a mistake to believe that the judiciary alone can contrast a trend that takes an ever firmer hold among Italian citizens. The spread of episodes of discrimination against foreign nationals goes hand in hand with growing social and economic inequalities that affect not only Italian society, but the western world as a whole⁴⁸. Now, more than ever before, it is difficult to outline a political, cultural and social as well as juridical strategy to fight institutional discrimination, whatever the grounds (nationality or national origin, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and so on), without tackling the broader issue of the struggle against social inequalities.⁴⁹ Although we have in several places mooted our doubts on the theory that tends to simplistically explain the spread of racism and xenophobia on a social level with the mounting poverty of whole swathes of the population, a model that legitimizes a *tout court* increase of inequalities is one of the most fertile grounds for deteriorating social relations and burgeoning clashes between foreign and native citizens.

We wish only to cite a few significant figures. The Bank of Italy reports that 10% of wealthier families owns almost 45% of the net assets of the entire country and that this level of concentration has remained largely unchanged for the last fifteen years.⁵⁰ Moreover, a glance at the distribution of incomes reveals that 33,9% of taxpayers earns under 10 thousand euros, 31,5% earns between 10 and 20 thousand euros and 27,36% fits into the band between 20 and 40 thousand. As a whole 92,84% of taxpayers have a total income of under 40 thousand euros. The remaining portion (7,16%) is for the most part included in the income band of between 40 and 100 thousand (6,21%) while only a very small percentage slots into the higher bands (0,95% over 100 thousand euros).⁵¹

What's more, these inequalities in income and wealth are not offset by any form of state redistribution in terms of social services, given that the latter make up an infinitesimal percentage of Italian public expenditure.

Politicians and institutions should therefore consider it a priority to rectify this uneven distribution of wealth with adequate tax policies, the guarantee of workers' rights (rather than their disassembling), the relocation of available public resources from items of spending that do not promote well-being, such as military expenses, to those which serve a social objective and to the development of economic sectors able to create new jobs without negatively impacting the environment (green economy).⁵²

Without revolutionizing the priorities of public spending and stepping in to reduce inequalities, it seems more than likely that the easiest solution for those who find

⁴⁸ Cf. on this issue the excellent volume by M. Franzini, *Ricchi e poveri. L'Italia e le diseguaglianze (in)-accettabili*, (The rich and the poor. Italy and 'un'-acceptable inequalities) Università Bocconi 2010.

⁴⁹ Among the latest studies on the evolution of contemporary racism we draw attention to A. Burgio, *Nonostante Auschwitz. Il ritorno al razzismo in Europa*, (In spite of Auschwitz. Racism returns to Europe) DeriveApprodi 2010; S. Palidda (edited by), *Il razzismo democratico. La persecuzione degli stranieri in Europa*, (Democratic racism. The persecution of foreigners in Europe), Agenzia X 2009; A. Rivera, *Regole e roghi. Metamorfosi del razzismo*, (Rules and pyres. The metamorphosis of racism), edizioni Dedalo 2009.

⁵⁰ Banca D'Italia, Supplement to the Statistic Journal, *I bilanci delle famiglie italiane nell'anno 2008*, (The household budgets of Italians in 2008) New series XX, 10 February 2010, N. 8, p. 7.

⁵¹ These numbers are taken from the statistics on tax declarations in the year 2010 (thus referring to income declared for the year 2009) available on the website of the Finance and Economy Ministries. finanze.it/export/finanze/Per_conoscere_il_fisco/studi_statistiche/dichiarazioni.html

⁵² A platform for alternative proposals in the field of public finances was developed by the Sbilanciamoci! campaign: www.sbilanciamoci.org

themselves holding the reins in times of crisis is to find a scapegoat (in this case foreign citizens) at which the general public's resentment and malaise can be directed. This is precisely what came to pass in Adro, to cite one of the more widely known cases, where the failure to pay the fee for school meals on the part of a few families gave rise to a bitter conflict not only between native and immigrant citizens, but among the former, between those who recognized the need to provide public support for low-income citizens and those who contested such a need.

Adro represents the most notable example, but we must bear in mind the fact that, in all probability, most of the aforementioned discriminatory decrees passed by municipalities are backed by the consensus of part of the population. If the public debate spent more time focusing on the structural limits of social policies in general, perhaps the contrast between native and foreign citizens would be less sharply defined. In other words, the problem in Adro and elsewhere is not the excessive presence of foreign citizens, but rather the pressing need to revise institutional choices that have, for many years, been tending towards a reduction in public social services, transferring responsibility onto families themselves.

In a society which is able to recognise its polycultural composition, the *issue* should not be the defining of "thresholds" for foreign citizens wishing to access childcare services, social services or rental grants, but the focus should instead rest on finding devices and resources that can bring the offer of services and ministrations closer to the national levels of demand.

Obviously such a shift in perspective implies the willingness, first and foremost on the part of political and institutional actors, to relinquish to the old and obsolete model of citizenship based on nationality and right of blood, inherited from the French revolution. As we will see this is an irrational utopia only on the surface..

"Sustainability" and utilitarian misunderstandings

Among the latest trends, we wish to draw attention to that which increasingly privileges the analysis of the economic impact of the presence of foreign citizens on state finances. It is a complex study, not easy to undertake, so much so that all it can do is propose an *estimate*, rather than precisely quantifying the costs and benefits of immigration with regard to our finances.

This estimate is drawn up on the basis of the official data at our disposal on salaries, tax returns and taxes that foreign citizens must pay in order to complete the paperwork for residence and citizenship (from the point of view of income), on government spending in the field of education, health, social security and support (from the point of view of spending);⁵³ or on the basis of data collected in the course of several sample studies.⁵⁴

⁵³ Cf.: G. Naletto, *L'immigrazione*, (Immigration) in F. R. Pizzuti (edited by), *Rapporto sullo stato sociale in Italia 2008*, (Report on social conditions in Italy) pp. 284-296; Isae, *Politiche pubbliche e redistribuzione*, (public policies and redistribution) October 2009, pp. 69-119; Inps-Dossier Statistico Immigrazione Caritas-Migrantes, *Diversità culturale, identità, tutela. III Rapporto su immigrati e previdenza negli archivi Inps*, (Cultural diversity, identity, protection. Third report on immigrants and social security in the Inps archives) 2009, pp. 167-168; A. Stoppini, *Il contributo finanziario degli immigrati*, (the financial contribution of immigrants) in Caritas-Migrantes, *Immigrazione Dossier Statistico 2010*, (Statistic dossier on immigration) pp. 309-314 ; Inps, *Idos-Dossier statistico immigrazione* (in cooperation with), *IV Rapporto sui lavoratori di origine immigrata negli archivi Inps. La regolarità del lavoro come fattore di integrazione*, (Fourth report on migrant workers in the Inps archives. The regularity of employment as an integration factor) 2011, pp. 43-67 e 174-184.

For example, the Caritas Dossier estimates that the cost of welfare services rendered to foreign citizens amounts to ten billion euros, compared to the approximately 11 billion euros contributed by the latter in the form of tax revenue and financial contributions.

Although the methods of analysis are extremely diverse, all the studies mentioned agree in concluding that the composition of our welfare model, inclined to give precedence to pension expenditures, and the demographic distribution of the foreign population, comparatively younger than the Italian one, have conspired to ensure that foreign citizens “give” the State considerably more than they receive.

More specifically, the survey introduced by the 2010 Ismu report clearly shows that the lower incomes of foreign citizens and the reduced contribution that follows are fully “compensated” by less financial aid on the pensions front than is reserved for Italian citizens. In other words: “the survey shows that the institutes for taxation and public spending being considered are effectively transferring resources from immigrants to Italians”.⁵⁵

Others chose to dwell, once again not achieving any thorough quantification,⁵⁶ on the disparity between public resources destined to the social inclusion of immigrants and those invested in policies aimed at keeping immigration in check.

A tentative estimate sets the minimum resources that our country invests in containing immigration (control of external borders, building and managing of Cie, carrying out of repatriations) at about 178 million euros a year, an amount that does not include the resources allocated for cooperation with tertiary countries contrasting illegal immigration, nor the cost of the staff employed in surveillance activities in the centers and in implementing deportations. Bearing in mind that only 34,2 million euros a year are dedicated to social inclusion policies.⁵⁷

For a detailed analysis we refer readers to the studies in question. Here we wish to observe how an economically-oriented reading (that is in terms of a costs/benefits assessment) of immigration can be useful in deconstructing several clichés that are deeply ingrained in public opinion and among political and institutional figures, concerning the alleged strain placed on public finance by the presence of foreign citizens. However, in the long term, this cannot be a winning strategy for those who wish to promote equal opportunities in our country.

Now that immigration has become a stable phenomenon, the demand for services and ministrations is destined to increase and to re-adjust the positive balance between taxes and services that we can observe today; for the number of foreign children, youths and elderly people who will need childcare and social, health and security provisions will inevitably increase. In order to avoid that the rivalry between Italian and foreign citizens in accessing welfare services becomes any more heated, it is necessary to act

⁵⁴ C. Devillanova, *Immigrazione e finanza pubblica*, (Immigration and public finances) in Fondazione Ismu, *Sedicesimo rapporto sulle migrazioni*, (sixteenth report on migrations) 2010, 2011, pp. 195-205.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, pag. 208.

⁵⁶ The reasons behind this difficulty, in this case like in the analysis of the impact of the foreign presence on the welfare system, lies in the high number of variables that need to be considered, in the lack of available data, ordered chronologically or in a way that would, in any case, allow us to analyze all the relevant variables in reference to the same period, and in the fragmented and opaque nature of the administrative data.

⁵⁷ G. Naletto, *L'utopia razionale*, (the rational utopia), in I. Peretti (edited by), *Schengenland*, Eds 2011, pp. 267-280.

simultaneously on two fronts: directing general policies toward a reduction of inequalities and putting a stop to the idea of immigrants as individuals set apart from our social sphere. If the 'us and them', 'national and non-national' distinctions continue to direct our national and local policies, xenophobic behaviour will spread and the business of government will become ever more difficult, particularly on a local level.

Reception buckles under the weight of “emergency”

Maria Silvia Olivieri

*In memory of Nuredin Mohamed,
summoned to rest by the sea.*

“Everything” is traced symbolically back to a suicide. That of a young man, Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit and vegetable street vendor in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, who set fire to himself after failing, once again, to stop the police from seizing his merchandise. Bouazizi died on 4 January 2011. This is the day that marks the beginning of “the Jasmine Revolution” or the “Arab spring”, as the international media dubbed it. Rioting breaks out in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and, following an imaginary fuse, spreads to Yemen, Jordan and Syria.

The protest marches associated with this “wind of change” are violently suppressed, reaching the most dramatic climax in Libya with the outbreak of civil war and the beginning of the bombardment carried out by an alliance of the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy (the so-called *Odyssey Dawn*).

These reprisals shocked the European audience, who found it hard to picture those lands packed with tourist resorts, archaeological heritage sites and cruise-ship destinations under harsh dictatorships, generally ignored by the media. However, it was not a surprise for those who work with immigrants in Italy, given that the goings on in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are well known to people who gather together the stories of those who fled from economic crisis and the trampling of their universally recognized rights, from the inhumane and degrading treatment received in prison and, in general, from the various systematic forms of repression, in place long before 2011. In the same way, the sea landings in Italy should not have come as a surprise: they began to succeed one another with a rhythm and frequency that hark back to the happenings of 2008, when the Italian-Libyan agreements that effectively closed off Mediterranean routes had not yet been drawn up. Conversely, what occurs in Lampedusa does take us by surprise. From the beginning of February all those who gradually arrived in Italy started to gather on the island. The reception centres, built to temporarily host up to 800 persons and kept shut during the first four days of arrivals,⁵⁸ were full to bursting point with thousands of Tunisian citizens for several weeks. Once it became impossible to try and cram any more in, some makeshift shelters were erected outside, even along the seafront.

Why do the relevant authorities not immediately set in motion a plan to transfer immigrants to other detention centres?

In the meantime landings continue with alarming frequency, and the reports broadcast by every TV channel shower a stunned audience with images of an island “on the brink of collapse” (this is the turn of phrase repeatedly employed), in a climate of growing tension between those who cannot wait to finally start a new life, similar to that of their European neighbours, and those who actually live in Lampedusa and feel powerless in

⁵⁸ The building reopens on 14 February 2011, four days after the landings in Lampedusa begin.

the face of unfolding events. The images also show young Tunisians who express to the crowds of journalists their wish to take advantage of the opportunities that Mother Europe offers her offspring: traveling from one country to the next, finding a job and building oneself a new future. Many of them plainly state that they have no particular desire to remain in Italy: France seems to be their destination of choice. Unfortunately in the interim they are detained on the island and, in days to follow, are joined by those fleeing from Libya. Among them are several unaccompanied minors, who have come to Italy without their families and are kept in the Loran structure, where no human being should be forced to stay for more than an hour, never mind children.

The migratory journey of the island's guests is told through these televised screen shots: thousands of them crammed in like animals, crouched by the seafront to eat their meals, filthy due to the lack of shower facilities. It is an indistinct crowd of people. With no faces, no names, no stories. Individuals who are anonymous and, as such, perceived as a threat.

The comments on these images are those we can immediately observe in newspaper headlines:

There will soon be a biblical exodus⁵⁹; 300 thousand immigrants will shortly reach Italy⁶⁰; Exodus of 300 thousand⁶¹; Illegal immigrants out of control. And Italy fears an invasion⁶²; A sweeping tide of refugees⁶³; A migratory wave of catastrophic proportions due to arrive from Libya⁶⁴; Boats, planes and fear: Lampedusa geared for war⁶⁵; Palazzo Chigi and the tide of immigrants: a country unprepared for emergency⁶⁶; Warning concerning illegal immigration from Libya. Refugees will cost us 500 million a month⁶⁷.

The language is biblical, aggressive, apocalyptic (to the point of the unfortunate coining of the expression "human tsunami"⁶⁸), and instills the audience with a feeling of being under siege, gravely threatened and in state of danger. It same sort of language employed by the leaders of the government. During one of his first interviews given on this issue⁶⁹ the Interior Minister Roberto Maroni himself uses expressions bound to spread panic, outlining an "apocalyptic scenario", brought on by an "unprecedented biblical exodus" with "tens upon tens of thousands of individuals" due to arrive, without any "end in sight". Alarmism is made worse by the fact that the Italian government has declared itself to be isolated, having no one to discuss the issue with: it is once again the Interior minister who complains of "a dramatic silence on Europe's part". And this is only the beginning of a bitter controversy between the Italian government and EU institutions. European Commissioner Cecilia Malmström gives a dry response, point by point, to the Italian government's request to enforce the European directive on temporary protection, to involve the other member States in the

⁵⁹ "Il Tempo", 15 February 2011.

⁶⁰ Adnkronos, 22 February 2011.

⁶¹ "la Repubblica", 22 February 2011.

⁶² "La Stampa", 22 February 2011.

⁶³ "Il Giornale", 23 February 2011.

⁶⁴ "Il Sole 24 Ore", 24 February 2011.

⁶⁵ "La Stampa", 24 February 2011.

⁶⁶ "la Repubblica", 24 February 2011.

⁶⁷ "Il Giornale", 25 February 2011.

⁶⁸ Più testate, 1 April 2011.

⁶⁹ Che tempo che fa, Rai Tre, 14 February 2011.

reception process and to allocate further funds. Immediate support to Italy is offered but promptly refused; a Frontex mission is also made available as well as support, funding and cooperation for the repatriations. The same Commissioner points out that Italy also disposes of structural funds that might be employed to organize reception on arrival. However, the bone of contention centers on the concept itself of “emergency”. The migratory influx that assumes biblical and apocalyptic features in the eyes of the Italian government, for the rest of Europe, used to very different numbers, is undoubtedly worrying, especially in light of its possible consequences, but not enough to kickstart procedures of temporary protection at an EU level nor to declare a state of emergency in the Union. Comparisons with the past are made, and we recall how in the mid-90s, during the war in former Yugoslavia, Germany received and offered protection to more than 500,000 individuals from the areas involved: ten times more than those who arrived in Italy in the first seven months of 2011, with 48.036 foreign citizens having landed on the Italian coast.⁷⁰

In the interim, Unhcr, NGOs and other similar associations, call attention to the need to guarantee protection to those who flee from crisis-stricken areas and ask us to consider individual status and history, issuing a strong appeal in favour of the respect of the right to asylum.

The media’s response is immediate and irrevocable: economic immigrants (those who come to Italy to seek job opportunities) are simply labeled as “clandestine”, with all the inevitable negative connotations of the term; all others, those fleeing from persecutions and human rights violations, are given the more polite description of “asylum seekers” or “profughi” a uniquely Italian term, difficult to translate into other languages.

The NGO episodes, the terminology used, the fictitious, mindless distinction between good and evil, between “illegal immigrants” and “refugees” are all a reflection of the attempt to represent what is colloquially defined as a mixed migratory influx of people who cross the Mediterranean together, driven by very different reasons and personal goals. As has already been noted, the young Tunisians who took advantage of the “Jasmine Revolution” to try their luck and start building a new future elsewhere are part of this tide. Potential asylum seekers also feature, but in far smaller numbers.

When the uprising began to spread to Libya as well, many people decided to flee. Almost 500,000 people moved towards land borders,⁷¹ escaping the civil war, trapped in between the government army loyal to Qaddafi and the rebels and, to cap it all, overwhelmed by the western alliance air raids. Others, under 30,000 people, attempted to make the crossing by sea: they were mostly people who originally came from other countries (Bangladesh, Ghana, Senegal, and Mali), who had been living and working in Libya for years. They too chose to flee from the current conflict and, under different circumstances, would probably never have left the country. We must also mention all those who – during the years of strict border control – were long denied any chance of escaping, by land or sea. Unhcr counted, in Tripoli and other cities, about 8,000 refugees

⁷⁰ Among whom 24.769 people from Tunisia. Numbers provided by the Interior Minister during a press conference organized on 15 August 2011. On 12 June, undersecretary Viale had already presented a report to the Parliamentary Commission on Constitutional Affairs, giving an account of the numbers associated with the first five months-worth of landings: 42.807 was the number of immigrants who reached the Italian shores during that time.

⁷¹ Source Unhcr, April 2011.

and 3,000 asylum seekers, from the Horn of Africa, the Sudan and Iraq, in search of protection from their countries and Libya itself. Men and women who spent years waiting for the right moment to cross the Mediterranean; men and women who, from the very first stages of the conflict, lived hidden away, scared by the prospect of being the object of a “foreigner-hunt”; men, women, children who experienced the unmentionable in Libyan jails and detention centers. With the outbreak of civil war, check-ups have become less frequent and rigorous and human traffickers have been able to resume their regular activity. In all likelihood it is the governments themselves who oversee the latest departures, using the migratory tide as a weapon pointed – as threatened more than once by Col. Qaddafi himself – at the heart of Europe, and Italy in particular, where immigration has always laid bare the limitations and contradictions of national politics.

In spite of the appeal launched by the *Tavolo Asilo*, the Italian umbrella organization of associations and NGOs, for “the refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the Horn of Africa, who are trapped in Libya and under threat from all sides” the only way out – with the possible exception of one isolated case⁷² - remains the Mediterranean, with the terrible risks that such a crossing entails. According to Unhcr and Fortress Europe estimates, 1,200 people disappeared into the sea in the first half of 2011, one dead out of each 17 individuals who chose to set out. Years ago, Andrea Camilleri wrote that there were “bodies blooming over the Mediterranean”⁷³; to whom even the final, piteous rite of burial is denied almost as if to definitively quell any last glimmer of humanity.

Away from Lampedusa

The immigrants who survive the crossing and reach Italy, are stuck in Lampedusa for several weeks. Not until March do the first sporadic relocations begin: either to the Cara (government reception centers for asylum seekers) or, for those who do not wish to ask for protection, to other structures, even temporary ones, such as the inhospitable tent cities of Manduria and Trapani, from whence many will escape, with men on horseback hard on their heels, like escaped prisoners in 1930s America.

The turning point for Lampedusa came at the end of March, when the Prime Minister paid a personal visit to the island where thousands of people are still residing. He promised that, within 48 hours “only the inhabitants of Lampedusa will be left on the island”: this was enough to set the relocations, which had, up till then, been sporadic and not pre-planned, in motion. The immigrants’ destinations, in addition to those already mentioned, were the Mineo centre and other collective structures (mainly former barracks) in Venice, Civitavecchia, Santa Maria Capua Vetere and Bari-

The “Residence degli Aranci” in Mineo is a village once intended to host the families of staff of the nearby NATO⁷⁴ base and now devoted to the shelter of asylum seekers. It is built along the road that connects Catania and Gela, 7 kilometers away from the town,

⁷² On 8 March, 58 Eritrean citizens left from Tripoli airport for Crotone. They were a portion of the 2.000 refugees under the protection of the Archbishop of Tripoli, in possession of a safe-conduct released by the Italian embassy.

⁷³ Ics, Foreword to *La protezione negata*, (Protection denied) Feltrinelli 2005.

⁷⁴ A similar operation was carried out in 1999, after the conflict in Kosovo, when the former NATO station of Comiso was reopened for the reception of Kosovans.

with no access to public transportation. Temporarily entrusted to the Red Cross (until the contract is awarded⁷⁵), it has a potential capacity of 1,900. The opening of the residence was accompanied by a heated debate, both among the local population, ill-disposed towards this particular use of the village and among protection societies, opposed to the idea of a similar structure to house immigrants: too big, badly organised and isolated; in essence, unsuitable for guaranteeing individual attention. Initially, it is unclear which foreign citizens should reside in the centre. After deciding to house newly arrived Tunisians, it was later deemed preferable not to allow a concentration of people of the same nationality and gender (male). It was finally agreed that asylum seekers, alone and in family groups, should be relocated there from other Cara centres, in many cases brusquely interrupting ongoing procedures to obtain a hearing with the Territorial Commission, or even halting progress towards a “second reception” within the Sprar system.⁷⁶ Finally, after the outbreak of the Libyan crisis, asylum seekers were shipped there directly upon arrival in Italy: among them also unaccompanied minors. Immigrants are conveyed from Lampedusa to Mineo and other such structures by sea: at first in Navy vessels, then in private ships at very high costs. The transferrals are not pain-free. In view of the urgent need to respect the timing of the “island’s emptying”, situations occur that exacerbate the condition of those who have already lived through harrowing experiences. The dramatic landing on Italian shores, the shipwrecks and the deaths of loved ones and fellow travellers, the protracted stay in Lampedusa and, finally, yet another separation of family units: a series of traumatic events that forms an incessant chain of violence. This is the case for a mother transferred to Civitavecchia with her 6 children, while her husband and another child are taken to Agrigento. Similarly, a father with two of his children is relocated to Tuscany from the tent city in Manduria, desperate because he has lost track of his wife, sent to hospital, never to reappear. In these and other cases the families are reunited in the end, but only after tortuous events and thanks to kind-hearted social workers, who manage to find loopholes that are positive, but certainly not preconceived.

The emergency package: a work in progress

On 12th February a decree passed by the Prime Minister’s Office declared “a state of emergency in the whole country in relation to the exceptional influx of North Africans” and introduced a series of regulations that come together to form the package of laws with which the government tackles what is described, even in official documents, as “The North African emergency”.

These regulations are put in place over the course of various months and define, step by step, the strategies for dealing with a pattern of foreign arrivals that – after a relatively uneventful three years – have returned to the frequency and style of 2008 and previous years.

On 18th February, the Prefect of Palermo is appointed as Relief Envoy “in charge of implementing all the procedures necessary to deal with the state of emergency”.⁷⁷ The

⁷⁵ The management of the structure was assigned by means of an open competition with the deadline on 17 August 2011. After the results were announced, a dispute arose that has not yet been resolved at the time of writing.

⁷⁶ Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, see below for further in-depth information.

⁷⁷ Decree PdCM n. 3924, 18 February 2011.

Commissioner is given broad powers of intervention, with the basic goal of registering “the immigrants who have landed” and finding areas and structures in which to put up the incoming individuals. The appointment of the Prefect of Palermo – and with it the task of liaising with the Interior Ministry, which the Prefect must report to– last just under two months.

At the end of March, in conjunction with the relocations from Lampedusa, during an extraordinary meeting of the regional assembly, an “equal and immediate distribution” of the “refugees” in every region is agreed upon, bolstered by funding that the government commits to providing.⁷⁸

On 5th April, the Prime Minister’s Office passes a decree that awards temporary protection to citizens “belonging to North African countries, who reached Italian shores between the first of January and midnight on 5th April 2011”. The EU views this move as a device to equip Tunisian nationals, many of them not asylum seekers, with a residence permit that could regularize their position and allow them to leave Italy. And this is indeed what comes to pass. From the temporary centers and the tent cities, hundreds of Tunisian citizens – having obtained their documents – move rapidly towards the Franco-Italian border.

On 6th April another meeting of the Unified Conference resolves the planning, within ten days, of a reception program carried out on a regional basis, a strategy strongly supported by the Regional Assembly. The response is immediate: on 12th April the “Plan for the reception of immigrants” is introduced and, the following day, with decree n. 3393 of the Prime Minister’s Office its enforcement is entrusted to the Protezione Civile (emergency management agency), whose Head of Department is appointed as Relief Envoy in charge of “tackling the state of emergency”.

This is a landmark date, essential to any reconstruction of emergency immigrant reception. Thus, the Protezione Civile takes over the role held by the Prefect of Palermo, and in doing so introduces substantial innovations to its remit. The Interior Ministry (and more specifically the Department for civil freedoms and immigration) plays a constant part in, and is directly responsible for, the reception of forced immigrants. Now however, both in the everyday running of Cara centers and in the activities of the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (Sprar), it is deprived of any possibility of extraordinary intervention that it had exercised during the previous “landings emergency” in 2008: the leap between emergency measures and everyday management now seems an even more distant prospect.

The basis of a similar strategy is to be sought above all in two elements: the infinite availability of Protezione Civile funds, which can draw directly on funds levied as a percentage of excise duties, and the government’s choice to tackle immigration, like any other emergency, with the participation of all the branches of Regional government, without the direct involvement of a department responsible for mediating with regional presidents who tend to oppose reception measures, in order to guarantee their availability.

The Strategy for the reception of immigrants

⁷⁸ PdCM, Press office and spokesperson, n. 134, 31 March 2011

The plan pursues three main aims – “to ensure an initial reception; guarantee an equal distribution throughout the country; provide assistance” – and is divided into three phases: “initial reception; distribution of immigrants throughout the country; assistance within regional territory”.

The initial reception is enacted on arrival in Italy to support the efforts of police officers and covers the basic need for sanitary assistance and meal-distribution. This phase represents the point of departure for the other two. Whereas these primary, basic services are offered to all immigrants, regardless of their individual status, the other measures are reserved exclusively for those entitled to temporary protection⁷⁹, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. For the others, economic migrants, repatriation awaits.

The “distribution throughout the country” is based on a “modular approach that consists in dividing the predicted number of immigrants into multiples of 10 thousand units to assign to the various regions on the basis of the d factor [the so-called quota for a balanced distribution]”. In other words the plan details the division of immigrants among the various regions in proportion to their population.

In Italy a reception system for asylum seekers and those eligible for international and humanitarian protection is already in place when this reception plan is introduced. It has been running for ten years and sets the individual at the center of each decision, making sure they are treated as human beings, not as numbers to crunch. It is undoubtedly a system that is limited in numbers and in need of improvement with respect to its standards and functionality; in short, it needs revising. Nonetheless, it is in place. It is well tested and has proved it can adapt to change.⁸⁰ This is the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (Sprar), the network of grass-root projects of integrated reception,⁸¹ which has access to the public resources set aside by the Finance Bill and managed by the Interior Ministry. For the past ten years, this system has been structured on a regional basis with reception measures proportional to the local population, managed by local administration who coordinate with private socially-oriented organisations and receive the support of stable, functional and diverse regional networks.

If a reception system is already in place, what is the point of creating another? Why not use the Sprar as a starting point, increasing the number of available places and improving it with lighter structures that make for a better initial reception stage?

The Sprar system already entails a regional distribution of duties, with provisions that go well beyond basic health services and the involvement of local organisations (institutional and non-governmental). Most of all, it provides the chance to optimize

⁷⁹ Temporary protection under art. 20 Consolidated Law on Immigration (D.Lgs. 286/1998), with DPCdM 5 April 2011, applied only to those who had reached Italy from the beginning of the year until 5 April.

⁸⁰ Cf. M.S. Olivieri, *L'integrazione nel Sistema di protezione. Un'analisi dei percorsi di inserimento socio-economico a partire dalle esperienze sul campo*, (Integration in the Protection System. An analysis into socio-economic inclusion projects stemming from first-hand experience) in *Rapporto annuale del Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati*. (Annual report of the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) *Years 2007/2008*, p. 153 e foll. (Rome 2008).

⁸¹ By “integrated reception” we mean basic services, underpinned by the delivery of services aimed at the (re) acquisition of autonomy on the part of the individuals in question.

economic resources on a long-term basis, because, if the aim is to grant autonomy to individuals – in order to facilitate their social inclusion – the beneficiaries need to be in a fit state to walk on their own two feet, without falling back into the social services circuit. Moreover, all this, in terms of local government spending, leads to considerable savings (thousands of euros).

Why then not use this as a starting point?

This is what municipalities, NGOs who make up the *Tavolo Asilo*, anti-racist organisations and movements ask themselves. They have on multiple occasions demanded the extension of the Sprar system as the only viable alternative to the plan that has already been implemented.

The reception measures put in place by the Protezione Civile are coordinated on a regional level by “executive organs” nominated by the Department itself, who negotiate agreements with various institutions, who in turn prepare to make their structures (preferably sizeable ones) available, so as to carry out relocations of numerous individuals at once.⁸²

As well as the associations and organizations that include immigrant reception in their agenda, structures such as hotels, ‘agriturismi’ and bed and breakfasts offer their services to the Protezione Civile: some of them have extremely good commendations, but definitely not in this field. The per-person-per-day cost is fixed at 46 euros and the Protezione Civile covers the cost of the vacant (or rather reserved but not yet occupied) rooms as well, ranging from 5 to 8 euros per person.⁸³

As of the beginning of August, 20,000 immigrants had been “assigned” to the individual regions within this national scheme, but the effective presence was of 16,788 individuals.

Relief Envoy from the Protezione Civile declared himself open to dialogue with the Sprar, from which he acquired guidelines, operational handbooks and work tools. He also indicated that it is possible to refer to Sprar standards in order to deliver the appropriate reception services, although no organisation can be forced to adopt them, as they can, for the most part, opt to stick rigidly to the original specifications for the running of the Cara centres⁸⁴ or, “in accordance with the current state of emergency” for other, even lower-profile, roles. It obviously makes a big difference if the 46 euros only cover food and accommodation or if they also include orientation, assistance and support services. A difference that needs to be understood not only from an economic perspective but above all in terms of the quality of reception and of individual care. What does it mean for a person to live cooped up in a hotel waiting for the outcome of their asylum request, without being able to access an Italian language course, without being inducted into the professional world, without the possibility of knowing and understanding their new environment, without having any clue of what resources and services are available in the local area, kept in the dark as to the opportunities that might help them to kickstart their lives and take important decisions? Besides, to what

⁸² Differently from the Sprar system, where the structures mainly consist of apartments – which facilitate socio-economic inclusion – and the procedures necessary to access housing involve case-by-case assessment, by crossing individual needs and characteristics with the possibilities offered by the available projects.

⁸³ Decree PdCM n. 3948, 20 June 2011.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

extend do people realise that reception cannot be improvised, that there is a need for targets, planning, delivery of services, models of intervention, all of which need to be defined while taking into account the resources available in the areas where said reception is carried out?

In 2008, we witnessed a similar situation when around 37 thousand people arrived in Italy. The Interior Ministry set aside extraordinary funding to buttress the Sprar network and to improve the reception capacity of government-backed facilities, by opening new structures if necessary. Even though the operations were undertaken under the aegis of the ministry and every possible measure to connect the initial operations and the various stages of the Protection System was put into place, the difference in number between the spaces available in each phase (government structures with twice the availability guaranteed by the Sprar) did not allow for equal treatment to be provided for every individual, because the Cara centers provide more basic services than the Protection System.

These emergency government-run centres (functioning as Cara centres but lacking their official status) were progressively shut down in the two years following their introduction, releasing people into society with residence permits that in theory could allow for their socio-economical inclusion, but without providing them with sufficient instructions.

The data collected by the coordinating office of the Sprar system (the central service) which brings together the requests of organizations that ask to be included in the Protection system for asylum seekers and individuals under international protection, speaks volumes.

The so-called reporting organizations are the Cara centers, Prefects' offices, local government and protection groups (associations, NGOs and privately-owned social organizations). The Cara indicate those who come out of government centers and show the greatest signs of vulnerability; the Prefectures keep tags on asylum seekers residing in the area under their jurisdiction; the remaining organizations supervise all those who have not been offered any form of support on arrival.

In 2010, for the first time, the number of those entitled to protection as reported by local government bodies and aid organizations was far larger than at any previous time, with 3,608 cases accounted for.⁸⁵ These statistics can only be explained as the final repercussion of the 2008 emergency, with individuals allowed to leave the special temporary centers without having received the necessary instructions in order to achieve an independent existence in Italy and, therefore, still in need of assistance even after several months. In addition, we must take into account the fact that, at the end of 2010, the Sprar system still had a waiting list of 2,500 people wishing to access the reception system. And to think that 2010 was the year with the lowest number of landings ever recorded.⁸⁶

These numbers only represent the tip of the iceberg of an ongoing humanitarian crisis in Italy; far from the spotlights, resulting from a disorganised approach to the 2008

⁸⁵ 2,492 reports from the Cara centers, 752 from prefectures.

⁸⁶ According to the Interior Ministry, 4,000 people arrived in Italy by sea in 2010.

landings, in spite of attempts to deal with them by means of operations already in place. This experience should have taught us that facing an “emergency” (be it real or otherwise) without a proper strategy or plan inevitably has long-term negative repercussions.

The greatest fear is, therefore, that in under a year, we may encounter many individuals wondering the streets who are ill-equipped, or even completely unable, to face a process of socio-economic integration.

This is what is becoming ever more apparent at the time when this report is being written. The administrative organs in charge of bestowing international protection are beginning to make decisions based on individual requests, and those who obtain said protection are obliged to leave reception centres the instant they receive their residence permit. They cannot even rely on a subsequent inclusion in the Sprar system, as the 1,500 extra places that the system has made available cannot be used as a “secondary reception” facility given that the Protezione Civile, although acknowledging the high quality of the service provided, puts them on a par with other hotel and non-hotel accommodation options.

Currently ⁸⁷, 16,788 people are included in the emergency reception scheme undertaken by the Protezione Civile and to this we must add 3,000 further immigrants in Lampedusa, Mineo, Manduria and Campochiaro. In the large, collective centers the discomfort is palpable; occupants complain about the lengthy procedures required in order to be awarded international protection and, above all, about the poor living conditions in centers that begin to resemble refugee camps where human values struggle to make themselves heard. Last spring the asylum seekers of Mineo participated in a protest along the Catania-Gela highway. In the following months the Cara centres in Bari and Crotone (which host large numbers of people but are not overcrowded) saw bitter riots break out that cannot be written off as “the work of troublemakers” but raise questions as to the effects of the lack of personal prospects in an endless protracting of the precarious uncertainty of the future and even of the present.

If we do not immediately set in place a series of measures to stop the emergency from getting out of hand (improving capability by, among other things, more closely monitoring the interventions carried out, coordinating the standard measures to adopt, reinforcing the regional coordinating bodies, allowing the delivery of services for socio-economic inclusion, collaborating with the Sprar system and the territorial networks) the risk of vulnerability and social exclusion will be extremely high and involve thousands of people who will prove a heavy burden for local welfare systems, already hit hard by cuts to their funding. At that point we really will have a social emergency on our hands, and it will be too late to do anything about it.

⁸⁷ Department of Civil Protection, August 2011

The country of forced evictions (and detention centres) Local policies on Roma and Sinti communities in Italy

By Sergio Bontempelli

*"The ones whom we loved and lost
Are not where they were,*

They are where we are,

*Every time and everywhere"
(St Augustine)*

To my father

In October 2000 the weekly magazine "Carta" published a dossier on the condition of the Roma community. Its title was fated to enter into common use: "The country of detention centres".⁸⁸ The European Roma Rights Centre, who edited it, accused Italy of perpetuating an *institutional segregation* of Roma and Sinti communities through the establishment of *travellers' camps*.

The matter of the camps, in fact, was - and still is - an all-Italian saga: built between the mid 80s and the beginning of the 90s, based on regional laws that took for granted the presumed *nomadic* nature of the Roma people, "temporary camps" (also called "travellers' camps" or "provisioned camps") represented the conventional government response to Roma and Sinti immigration.⁸⁹ Most of the population of these camps came from former-Yugoslavia and had never been "itinerant" in their own country but had come to Italy as refugees escaping from a war (and not with a view to "wander").

From the "country of detention centres" to the "country of forced evictions".

Human Rights organizations strongly criticized the "temporary camps", considering them a form of "urban contempt" (another successful expression that became popular among experts and activists, originally taken from the title of a 1996 book⁹⁰). The camps

88 European Roma Rights Center (Errc), 'The country of detention centres. Racial segregation of Roma in Italy' (*Il paese dei campi. La segregazione razziale dei rom in Italia*), supplement to the weekly publication "Carta", Rome 2000.

89 For more information on the history of "travellers' camps" in Italy see, among others: N. Sigona, Children of the ghetto. Italians, the camps and the invention of 'gypsies' (*Figli del ghetto. Gli italiani, i campi nomadi e l'invenzione degli zingari*), Nonluoghi-Libere edizioni 2002, p. 32 and foll.; N. Sigona, The boundaries of the "Roma problem" . Policies on travellers' camps in Italy (*I confini del "problema zingari". Le politiche dei campi nomadi in Italia*), in T. Caponio e A. Colombo (edited by), Foreigners in Italy. Global migration, local integration (*Stranieri in Italia. Migrazioni globali, integrazioni locali*), Il Mulino 2005, pp. 267-296; L. Bravi, Caught between inclusion and exclusion. The social history of Roma and Sinti education in Italy (*Tra inclusione ed esclusione. Una storia sociale dell'educazione dei rom e dei sinti in Italia*), Unicopli edizioni 2009, p. 83 and foll.

90 P. Brunello (edited by), Contemptuous town-planning. Roma camps and Italian society (*L'urbanistica del disprezzo. Campi rom e società italiana*), Manifestolibri 1996.

were deemed to be places where social segregation was perpetuated: they were not just reception facilities, but proper “ghettos”.

Like all other ghettos in recent history, they gave rise to more “problems” than “solutions”: for their inmates, forced or otherwise, and also for municipalities, local politicians and the organisations running them. It soon became all too clear that the decision to create settlements for (alleged) “nomads” would cause friction with local residents (conflicts fuelled by local political “scare-mongers”). A local administrator building a “temporary stay centre” would lose consensus and, therefore, votes.

Thus the system of “provisioned camps” gradually died out and the municipalities’ management of the Roma issue began to revert to more conventional eviction methods: forced evictions, bans on settlement, deportations and so forth. In recent years, from 2007 on, the increasingly aggressive style of the media’s *public safety* campaigns paved the way for even more restrictive policies on the part of local mayors and administrators: in a general climate of Roma and Sinti *criminalization*, evictions *give the greatest yeild*, in terms of consensus, more so than building new accomodation facilities.

It can be said that Italy has passed from being a *country of detention centres* to a *country of forced evictions*.

Evictions: number crunching.

The numbers – often released by independent bodies, occasionally “showcased” by local administrators themselves – concerning forced evictions carried out in recent years convey the idea of a proper *persecution* that can turn into a sort of “manhunt”.⁹¹

For example, on 26th April 2011 Riccardo de Corato, the former deputy mayor of Milan, announced that he had performed 500 evictions in under 4 years (an average of 10 evictions a month).⁹² In yet another public statement, at the beginning of January, De

91 There are many eye-witness accounts of Roma groups repeatedly evicted and ‘chased’ by the police. In Milan, on 17 February 2010, the Comunità di Sant’Egidio claimed that one Roma community was evicted 5 times in one day (P. Foschini, Roma evicted 5 times in one day - *Rom sgomberati per cinque volte in un solo giorno*, “Corriere della Sera”, 17 febbraio 2010). Remaining in Milan, Anna Brambilla and Paolo Agnoletto’s lawyers spoke of awhat was “effectively persecution, as *the families were evicted many times in the space of a few years or a few months*” (M. Melley, *Roma camp eviction: volunteers expose mayor and deputy mayor*, in “Milano Today”, 9 November 2010, milanotoday.it/cronaca/sgomberati-campi-rom-denunciati-moratti-de-corato.html).

In Genoa, a councillor in charge of issues of public safety wrote, regarding a group of Roma from Romania, that “*we have already evicted them more than once*” (Redazionale, *Roma, settlement on the river: “Immediate eviction”* “Il Giornale”, ed. Genoa, 7 July 2011).

On the subject of the death of Roma children in a fire in Rome, on 6th February 2011 Carlo Stasolla of the “21 Luglio” organisation declared to the press that “in the past those families *had been evicted a number of times*, without being offered [...] any adequate housing alternative” (Press release, 21luglio.com/comunicati_stampa/com_06feb2011.htm).

In Pisa, Africa Insieme reports that “communities of Romanian Roma *have been sent away wherever they went and repeatedly evicted*, using bulldozers to destroy their shelters and personal belongings” (Africa Insieme, *Roma and Sinti: the situation as it stands in Pisa*, November 2009, in: osservazione.org/documenti/lettera_ong_pisa_it.pdf).

92 The original press release is published in ‘Roma, De Corato: “3 shantytowns shut down, more than 500 evictions. Milan has reduced the number of squatters by 80% in 4 years. With Pisapia the city would plunge back into the alarming state of 2007, from Riccardo de Corato’s blog, news dated 26 April 2011, on the web page riccardodecoratoblog.net/2011/04/26/rom-de-corato-%E2%80%9Csmantellati-3-baraccopoli-superati-i-500-sgomberati-milano-ha-ridotto-abusivi-dell%E2%80%9980-in-4-anni-con-pisapia-la-citta-tornerebbe-all%E2%80%99emergenza-del-2007/’. The news was then reported by newspapers: cf. Zita Dazzi e Massimo Pisa, De Corato’s 500 evictions, in “la Repubblica”, ed. Milano, 27 April 2011. The numbers refer to the period between 2007 and spring 2011.

Corato explained his rate of evictions in the time-span considered: 152 in 2010 (one every other day), and 75 in 2009.⁹³

According to an investigation published by the newspaper “Il Messaggero” in 2010, the municipal administration of Rome, in approximately two years, ordered 158 evictions, 45 of which in the first semester of 2010 alone.⁹⁴ According to the 21 Luglio organization, in spring of 2011 – and therefore in the space of about 3 months – the Municipality carried out 154 forced evictions of around 1,800 Roma individuals.⁹⁵

At the opposite end of the spectrum we find the accounts relating to the *cost* of evictions. Many human rights organizations have begun to look into the *human and social cost* of evictions, as well as the *economic strain* connected to this kind of repressive policy.

One investigation, conducted by the “Terre di Mezzo” magazine jointly with Milanese Municipal Councilors Patrizia Quartieri and Giuseppe Landonio, revealed that the 250 evictions carried out between January 2007 and April 2010 cost the state approximately 5.4 million euros, meaning that the municipality of Milan spends an average of 21,600 euros on each eviction.⁹⁶ According to the provisional costs calculated by the 21 Luglio organization, the average cost of a forced eviction in Rome ranges between 15 and 20 thousand euros.⁹⁷ If we consider smaller cities, the cost does not vary greatly: in Pisa, according to the information provided by a local newspaper, the forced eviction of a large settlement in 2011 came to around 18,000 euros, while for smaller camps the administration allocated about 10 thousand euros at a time.⁹⁸ Although there have been no investigations at national level and there is no clear, approved criterion concerning the expenses to be included in a similar study, it is reasonable to assume that every forced eviction costs the municipalities, and, consequently, taxpayers, between 10 and 20 thousand euros.

“It’s not my problem!” where do evicted Roma go?

What purpose and what type of person do forced evictions serve? And, more importantly, where are the families removed from unauthorised campsites told to go? The most comprehensive explanation was provided by the former Deputy Mayor of

93 *Roma community. In Milan about 152 evictions in 2010: almost one every other day*, in “Redattore Sociale”, 17 January 2011, in: redattoresociale.it/Detail/Notizie.aspx?idNews=337013.

94 Cf. Germano Baldazzi, *Roma:evicted 45 camps in 6 months, another 200 micro-settlements detected*, in “Il Messaggero”, 28 August 2010. Data refer to the period between 30 April 2008 – the day of Gianni Alemanno installation as mayor of Rome – and 28 August 2010.

95 Cf. The social policies in the Municipality of Rome and a Roma childhood (*Le politiche sociali del Comune di Roma e l’infanzia rom*), in:

csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Human_Rights/Dialogue_Seminar_Roma/Le_politiche_sociali_del_comune_d_i_Roma_e_l_infanza_Rom.pdf. Data refer to the period between 1 March and 30 May 2011.

96 Cf. Dario Paladini, *Gypsy’s derby*, Terre di Mezzo blog, May 2010, magazine.terre.it/notizie/rubrica/17/articolo/1576/il-derby-degli-zingari.

97 Cf. Delia Cosereanu, *Roma people? Prefer houses. Houses cost less than provisioned camps*, in “Lettera 43”, 9 February 2011, in: lettera43.it/attualita/8186/i-rom-convengono-le-case.htm; Michele Camaioni, *A high prize for Rome*, in “Popoli. Mensile dei gesuiti”, n. 2, February 2011.

98 Evictions cost 40 thousand euro, “Il Tirreno”, news from Pisa, 10th September 2011. Figures provided by the Municipality of Pisa.

Milan, De Corato, when he stated: “They have gone and this is all that matters to us. Once they have left Milan, it is no longer my problem”.⁹⁹

Many local administrators are not interested in *managing the phenomenon*: their aim is to find *scapegoats* (in this case Roma and Sinti communities) in order to turn them into *enemies* and make a spectacle out of the *war against them* (with evictions, check-ups, forced removals, etc.). From this point of view what is important is to send the *we kicked them out* message to the general public, regardless of where the evicted Roma end up.¹⁰⁰

“Move to another city!” the head of the municipal police in a small town in Tuscany was heard to shout at a group of Romanian Roma, unaware that he was being recorded on mobile phones.¹⁰¹ His words reveal, in a nutshell, the real aim of evictions: forcing people and families to move on, with no concern as to their prospects, without providing an alternative, just to jump on the consensus bandwagon.

It is not hard to imagine the outcome of a similar approach: Roma communities, evicted from their settlement, simply move to another settlement; progressing from one camp to another, chased away by repeated evictions, they will end back where they started, in what has been described as a senseless game of “snakes and ladders”.¹⁰² The *official* aim of evictions – to send Roma packing – is therefore largely ineffective. From many points of view, in fact, they tend to achieve the opposite effect: according to 21 Luglio, evictions carried out in Rome caused Roma to disperse and, as a consequence, the number of irregular settlements to double.¹⁰³

The *real* purpose of evictions – or their only concrete result – is not so much to send Roma away, but rather to keep them in an extremely alienated state, bestowing on them a “sub-human” *status* of “second-class citizens”.

State of emergency

The fact that Rom individuals are reduced to a *sub-human* status, of individuals without basic rights, is perhaps the key to interpreting the most recent developments. Many signals reveal a progressive dwindling of eviction-based policies: as we will see, Italy, from *the country of evictions*, is slowly turning into the *country of settlements* once again, although in a new and different way.

If we wish to comprehend these changes, we have to consider the *judicial framework* most of the local and national initiatives concerning Roma and Sinti minorities refer to.

On 21st May 2008, Berlusconi’s government issued a decree that declared a “state of emergency” in relation to the “travellers” settlements in Campania, Lombardy and

99 Roma community. Milan, 152 evictions in 2010: almost one every other day (Rom. Milano, 152 sgomberi nel 2010: quasi uno ogni due giorni), quot.

100 With regards to this shift towards “security”-based policies of local governments see also: S. Bontempelli Mad regulations. *The grotesque face of racism. (Ordinanza piazza. Il versante grottesco del razzismo*, in G. Naletto (edited by), *Report on racism in Italy (Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia)*, Manifestolibri 2009, pp. 113-122.

101 This event, reported by the organization Africa Insieme, occurred in Pisa on 13 October 2010. A wide documentation and the original audio can be consulted on www.denuncia.africainsieme.net/.

102 As claimed by Antonio Sciortino in *See you soon kids, at school (A presto bambini, a scuola*, in “Famiglia Cristiana”, 28 February 2010.

103 Delia Cosereanu, Roma? We’d rather have houses (I rom? Meglio le case), quot.

Lazio.¹⁰⁴ With three Protezione Civile orders the government gave indications for the implementation of measures concerning Roma and Sinti communities.¹⁰⁵ Then, with further rulings, the *state of emergency* was extended to 31st December 2010 and to Piedmont and the Veneto.¹⁰⁶ But what does *state of emergency* mean in concrete terms?

It means that the Prefects of the regional capitals, appointed as commissioners, are given wide-ranging extraordinary powers. As Manuele Bonaccorsi and Rocco Vazzana explain in an interview for the weekly magazine “Left”, “the Prefect is assigned a wide power of waiver: no commitment to follow through with public calls for bids [...]; suspension of a number of regulations on civil cases and the publishing of sentences [...]; discontinuation of almost the entire rulebook on bids for contracts: the Commissioner can purchase a variety of goods and services [...] similarly to a private citizen. Furthermore, the Code for Cultural Heritage and Landscape protection is suspended, particularly as far as permissions issued by the Sovrintendenza (Board of the Ministry of cultural heritage and environmental conservation) are concerned, exemption being granted for the Highway Code, to Consolidated Law on health and to environment protection regulations”.¹⁰⁷

A new segregation and the “Roman blueprint”¹⁰⁸

On the basis of this special authority the Prefect of Rome Giuseppe Pecoraro, together with Mayor Gianni Alemanno, on 31 July 2009, published the “Roma Scheme for the Capital”.¹⁰⁹ Although it reiterated, with minor amendments and tweaks, some features of the “Agreement for a safer Rome” issued by the office of the former mayor, Veltroni,¹¹⁰ the new Plan included some significant original items. It established the

104 DPCM 21 May 2008, State of emergency declared in relation to travellers’ settlements in Campania, Lombardy and Lazio. (*Dichiarazione dello stato di emergenza in relazione agli insediamenti di comunità nomadi nel territorio delle regioni Campania, Lazio e Lombardia*) (published in the Official Journal GU n. 122, 26 May 2008).

105 OPCM 30 May 2008, n. 3676 for Lazio; OPCM 30 May 2008, n. 3677 for Lombardy; OPCM 30 May 2008, n. 3678 for Campania.

106 DPCM 28 May 2009, Extended deadline of the state of emergency until 31 December 2010, to allow for the continuation of initiatives concerning travellers’ settlements in Campania, Lazio and Lombardy; and DPCM 17 December 2010, Extended deadline of the state of emergency to allow for the continuation of initiatives concerning travellers’ settlements in Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto. Concerning the extension of the state of emergency and its consequences see the relevant comments by Costanza Hermanin, ‘Roma Emergencies, the inequality of special authority’ (Emergenza rom, la disuguaglianza dei poteri speciali), in “La Stampa”, 8 February 2011.

107 M. Bonaccorsi and R. Vazzana, *Making Millions out of Roma Sui rom si fanno i milioni*, in “Left” n. 7, 18 February 2011. The authorization to deviate from existing laws is granted in articles n.3 of the Prime Ministers’ Office Orders (OPCM) OPCM 30 May 2008 n. 3676 (Lazio), OPCM 30 May 2008 n. 3677 (Lombardy) and OPCM 30 May 2008 n. 3678 (Campania).

108 I wish to thank Antonio Ardolino, expert on the situation in Rome, for his precious advice and for the copious information he provided. All the conclusions reached, as well as all possible mistakes are to be considered, of course, as entirely my responsibility.

109 Cf. Associazione 21 Luglio, Excluded and gathered together. Report from a research on the situation of Roma minors in the provisioned village in via di Salone in Rome (*Esclusi e ammassati. Rapporto di ricerca sulla condizione dei minori rom nel villaggio attrezzato di via di Salone a Roma*), Roma 2010, http://www.21luglio.com/ESCLUSI%20_E_AMMASSATI.pdf, pag. 7.

110 The *Agreement for a safer Rome*, subscribed by Municipality, Province and Prefecture of Rome and by the Regional government of Lazio establishes “the construction of 4 *solidarity villages* [...] that could host approximately one thousand people”, and the implementation of an “*irregular settlement eviction program*”. See the

construction, outside the urban area, of 13 “solidarity villages”¹¹¹ – another way of saying “temporary camps” – that could host about 6 thousand people at a time. Families evicted from settlements in the city were to be made to “gather” in those “villages”: more specifically, the document ordained the shutting down of the Casilino 900, Tor de Cenci and La Martora settlements, deemed unlawful.

The “villages” were to be run according to the provisions of a ruling passed in February 2009,¹¹² that prescribed, among other things, the presence of security guards and surveillance cameras and the identification of people coming in and out of the camp (including residents). The “villages”, therefore, were (and still are) conceived as akin to *ghettos*: places where communities can be segregated, far away from the city, kept under control by surveillance cameras and policemen.

The project also includes a number of innovations that are worth dwelling on.

The *first innovation* is that a strict *eviction* policy against Roma and Sinti is dropped. Whereas elsewhere evictions are carried out without offering any alternative, in this case one is provided: Roma communities evicted from their “illegal” settlements are often – though not always¹¹³ – offered places in the “provisioned villages”. By using this strategy the municipal administration is able to put pressure on the Roma community and, on occasion, obtain partial or temporary consensus.

The shutting down of Casilino 900 camp on 14th February 2010 is representative in this respect. When the gates were finally shut many Roma residents applauded Mayor Alemanno:¹¹⁴ in the interviews conducted afterwards by the 21 Luglio organization, the Roma explained that they “accepted the move to the Via Salone camp [one of the 13 villages in the Roma Scheme, *ed.*] believing that they *had no choice* and that it represented a merely temporary solution *in view of a general improvement of their living conditions*”.¹¹⁵ In a combination of promises (“your conditions will improve”) and blackmail (“you have no other choice”), Roma people were forced to accept the relocation to outside the urban area.

Agreement for a safer Rome, 18 May 2007, in http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/13/2007_05_18_Patto_per_Roma_sicura.pdf.

111 Namely: Nuovo Villaggio A, Nuovo Villaggio B, Salone, Gordiani, Camping River, Candoni, Castel Romano, Cesarina, Lombroso, Ortolani, Salviati, La Barbuta, Struttura di Transito. See: Associazione 21 Luglio, *Excluded and Gathered Together (Esclusi e ammassati)*, quoted, p. 7.

112 Police Commissioner for the Roma emergency in Lazio, the ‘Regulations for the management of travellers’ provisioned villages in Lazio (Regolamento per la gestione dei villaggi attrezzati per le comunità nomadi nella Regione Lazio), 18 February 2009, can be downloaded from the Interior Ministry website on: [interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/16/0767_Regolamento_campi_nomadi_pref_Roma.pdf](http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/16/0767_Regolamento_campi_nomadi_pref_Roma.pdf).

113 As pointed out by 21 Luglio, given that the plan states that about 6,000 Roma can be hosted in the “villages” and, considering that the estimated number of Roma in Rome verges on 7,000, the “Roma Scheme” seems to indirectly suggest a “threshold” to the number of Roma presences (see. Associazione 21 Luglio, *Excluded and massed - Esclusi e ammassati*, quoted, p. 7). Also Amnesty International made some remarks on this issue in *The Italian mistake: the “Roma scheme” violates Roma right to housing (La risposta sbagliata. Italia: il “Piano nomadi” viola il diritto all'alloggio dei rom)*, Rome 2010, in: [amnesty.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeAttachment.php/L/IT/D/2%252F8%252Fe%252FD.f82d9d6398fd945e4131/P/BLOB%3AID%3D3175](http://www.amnesty.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeAttachment.php/L/IT/D/2%252F8%252Fe%252FD.f82d9d6398fd945e4131/P/BLOB%3AID%3D3175), p. 5.

114 See the video posted on the personal blog of Gianni Alemanno, in: duepuntozero.alemanno.it/2010/02/16/chiusura-casilino-900-il-video.html.

115 21 Luglio association, Casilino 900 report. Words and images of a diaspora of the dispossessed (Report Casilino 900. Parole e immagini di una diaspora senza diritti), Rome 2010, in: [21luglio.com/locandine/Report_Casilino900.pdf](http://www.21luglio.com/locandine/Report_Casilino900.pdf), p. 34.

The *second innovation* is contained in the rules and regulations of the thirteen villages.¹¹⁶ All the “guests” are issued a card known as Dast (Temporary residence authorization document) that gives them the right to reside in the Rome area for two years. It represents a true judicial abnormality: the Dast was issued to many Roma individuals with Italian citizenship who, according to the Constitution (article 16, paragraph 1) have a *full right to circulate freely* throughout national territory. Conversely, according to the statute, the Dast can also be issued to immigrants not in possession of a residence permit.¹¹⁷

The Dast therefore represents a unique case of “authorization of residence” *limited to the municipal area and separate from the State residence permit* issued by police headquarters. Its purpose is to *keep visitors’ behaviour in check*. It includes a clause stating that the Dast can be withdrawn and the individual can be evicted from the village when he fails to comply with a series of conditions: keeping the area assigned to him and all communal buildings in order, paying all consumption rates and monthly fees, signing children up for school and ensuring their regular attendance, making himself available for any job, cooperating with social workers, not hosting (not even temporarily) any relatives or friends who don’t have a Dast, no owning of pets. Violating these rules can lead to the *entire family unit* being evicted from the village.¹¹⁸

Compared to the policies exclusively based on eviction, the “Roman blueprint” is based on *gathering together* Roma who are not (only) “forced out”, but – according to an expression that gives the title to a dossier published by 21 Luglio – are also “excluded and rounded up” in semi-detention and correctional structures, where reception becomes supervision and exclusion.

Cost (and effectiveness) of the “Roman blueprint”

The dismantling of existing “illegal” settlements and the segregation of Roma people in 13 villages outside Rome are both extremely costly operations. According to the 21 Luglio organisation a sum of 34 million euros was set aside for the implementation of the “Roma Scheme”.¹¹⁹

Each of the Roma hosted in one of the villages costs the Municipality about 500 euros a month.¹²⁰ Bearing in mind that, according to a recent investigation into settlements in the Capital, about 70% of Roma families are made up of five or more members, in the large majority of cases the Municipality spends about 2,500 euros a month on each

116 Police Commissioner for the Roma emergency in Lazio, the *Regulations for the management of travellers’ provisioned villages*, quoted.

117 Article 3.1 of the aforementioned Regulations for the management of villages establishes that access to the villages is restricted to citizens of tertiary countries with regular residence permits, Italian and EU citizens with a valid identification document, and “people who can prove a 10-year permanent residence in Italy”; furthermore, point d), declares that “the Municipalities can issue special permits to people outside the *aforementioned categories*”. These provisions pave the way to the issuing of Dast to immigrants who don’t have a residence permit.

118 Cf. 21 Luglio organisation, *Excluded and gathered together (Esclusi e ammassati)*, quoted., pp. 11-13.

119 21 Luglio organisation, *Casilino 900 report*, quoted, p. 13.

120 M. Camaioni, *A high price for Roma (Roma, un prezzo salato)*, quoted (that amount is provided by Carlo Stasolla).

family:¹²¹ a similar sum would easily cover the rent of an ordinary apartment at market prices. When we see these statistics we can easily comprehend what Carlo Stasolla means when he says that “with half of the money spent on the *Roma Scheme* we could do away with camps altogether”.¹²²

Nevertheless, this remarkable deployment of economic resources creates a wide network of direct and indirect *beneficiaries* of the Roma Scheme: cooperatives in charge of providing assistance, owners of the areas where the “villages” are built;¹²³ companies supplying control equipment (a 13 million euro contract awarded by special procedure due to the “emergency”¹²⁴), the management of social and health-care units (entrusted, with a memorandum of understanding, to the Italian Red Cross¹²⁵).

Even if we do not postulate – as many respected commentators did¹²⁶ – speculative interest on the part of estate agents, who used the *Roma emergency* to turn large areas into building sites, or by the prefects with extraordinary powers, the Roma Scheme remains a huge business enterprise that feeds the interests of private companies, gives employment to hundreds of people and thus creates consensus toward the activity of the municipal administration.

Controversies

Roma and Sinti communities, however, did not remain passive in the face of the widespread enactment of policies based on contempt, exclusion and racism: it is worth concluding this short roundup by mentioning a debate in which these kind of policies were shot down (or, at least, put off indefinitely). We are referring to the events, which captured the attention of the national press for a very long time, of the “Aler houses” that were supposed to be allocated to the Roma community of the via Triboniano camp in Milan. Let us proceed in an orderly fashion:¹²⁷ on the basis of the provisions for a *state of emergency* (as described above), the Interior Ministry set aside, for the year 2009, a

121 The figures are taken from a study conducted by the team “The Roma Project – Guidelines for the resolution of the Roma community housing emergency”, working within the scientific projects of the Ateneo Federato dello Spazio e della Società at the Sapienza – Rome University, and they are mentioned in Roma Capitale – Assessorato promozione dei servizi sociali e della salute, *A new Social Plan for the Capital – working tools for matching data and new proposals*, Municipality of Rome publication, 25 October 2010, web page: retesociale.it/pdf/piano-regolatore-sociale-2010/piano-regolatore-sociale-documento-di-sintesi-aggiornato-25-ottobre.pdf, pag.140.

122 Ibidem.

123 According to an inquiry conducted by “Left”, a weekly magazine, only the Salone e Gordiani camps lie on municipal ground, all the others are of private ownership (see M. Bonaccorsi e R. Vazzana, *Making millions thanks to the Roma - Sui rom si fanno i milioni*, quoted).

124 Ibidem.

125 Ibidem.

126 “The lingering suspicion”, we read, for example, in the Jesuit magazine “Popoli”, “is that behind the forced Roma shifts from one side of the city to the other we might be able to catch a glimpse of property speculation, aimed at increasing or decreasing economic value of an area” (M. Camaioni, *Roma, un prezzo salato*, cit.).

“We have to be careful”, says Paolo Berdini, a town planner interviewed by “Left”, “due to the emergency status, a commissioner can change the destination of use of a piece of land, or render binding contracts void. The owners of a portion of agricultural land could be persuaded to host Roma communities with the promise of changing the destination of use of the land into a building plot and, in the future, use it for this purpose” (M. Bonaccorsi e R. Vazzana, *Making millions from Roma - Sui rom si fanno i milioni*, quoted).

127 Most of the following information was taken from the Caritas Ambrosiana dossier – Area Rom and Sinti, *Short note on the conditions of Roma and Sinti in Milan - Breve nota circa la situazione dei gruppi rom e sinti a Milano*, Milano 2010, in: caritas.it/Documents/26/4592.pdf.

special fund for initiatives to improve public safety. The Municipality of Milan was allocated approximately 13 million euros for a “plan for the reconversion, implementation of safety measures and clearance of areas dedicated to travellers' camps, the social integration of the Roma population and the elimination of certain areas”.¹²⁸ Known as the “Maroni Proposal”, the project entails the rebuilding of some regular “provisioned settlements”, “social activities” in the main settlements, and the shutting down of four camps: via Bonfadini, via Negrotto, via Novara and via Triboniano. In the via Triboniano camp, in order to make the departure of families and the “evacuation” of the area somewhat easier, the municipality and the prefect’s office asked Aler – the board which runs council-owned housing – to open up 25 empty flats. The request came as part of a standard procedure – included in regional legislation¹²⁹ – that allows some houses belonging to the Aler real estate to be released and used for public benefit.

In the aforementioned example, Aler provided the municipality with 25 vacant and uninhabitable flats: the funding for the Maroni Proposal was meant to be used to effect the necessary renovation work before handing the premises over to the Roma families. We wish to point out that these “Aler flats” were empty and could *not* be given to any of the families on the waiting list for housing. Without the funding guaranteed by the Maroni Proposal the flats would have remained vacant. In light of this fact, we can safely state that the Roma community of via Triboniano did not “leap to the top” of any waiting list.

In August 2010, once the flats had been fixed up, rental contracts were signed with the Casa della Carità, the organization in charge of social assistance in the Triboniano camp¹³⁰. In the course of the following weeks the Casa della Carità – jointly with the municipality and the prefecture of Milan – decided which families were to be assigned the flats and, having done so, signed contracts with them. Everything was in place for the closing down of the camp in via Triboniano and the apartment handover.

On 28 September 2010, the Interior Minister Maroni decided to go back on his word: with a *coup de main* he chose to turn the tables and effectively cancel all the agreements reached, telling the press that “no public housing is going to be handed over to Roma communities”. The Northern League started an aggressive media campaign to convince people that Roma wanted to “usurp” citizens who had signed up regularly for the housing waiting lists. The outcome? No flats for Roma families.

The families, at this juncture, decided to file an appeal in court, which, in December 2010, recognized that Minister Maroni’s “suspension” constituted a discriminatory act and ordered that the flats be handed over to the Roma families before 12 January 2011. The Roma community came out victorious.

128 Directive dated 19th November 2009 of the Commissioner for the Roma emergency in Lombardy (Prot n. 9b1/200900398).

129 Lombardy, regional regulations 10 February 2004 , n. 1, General criteria for assigning and managing council housing - *Criteri generali per l'assegnazione e la gestione degli alloggi di edilizia residenziale pubblica* (art. 3, comma 41, lett. m) L.R. 1/2000), BURL n. 7, 1° suppl. ord. 13 February 2004 , art. 26.

130 Cf. Fondazione Casa della carità, The Casa della carità, Triboniano camp and the Plan to do away with travellers' camps – La Casa della carità, il Triboniano e il Piano di superamento dei campi nomadi, 7 ottobre 2010, Milano, on the website: casadellacarita.org/sites/casadellacarita.org/files/2010_10_07_Documento_Casa_della_carita_Triboniano.pdf.

Getting to know yourself. Language tests: turning a blind eye

Giuseppe Faso Alan Pona

Exams are a test for teachers, not students.
*von Foerster**

Since 9th December 2010 those who apply for the residence permit (now “EU residence permit for long-term residents”) must sit a “Italian language proficiency test, necessary in order to obtain a residence permit”.¹³¹

The decree that covers these measures derives from Law 94 of 15th July 2009 and the amendments that this Law introduces to Art 9, of Consolidated Law on Immigration. Art. 7 of the decree specifies that “the enactment of the rulings of this decree must not imply new or greater burdens for the public finances”. It is evident that his measure does not form part of an inclusion project; rather it constitutes “an impediment to the exercise of a right for those who are already in possession of all other prerequisites”.¹³²

From the Law to the test: tracking back the pattern

Here is the legislative and operational procedure surrounding the Italian language test. It opens with

- a. *Law 94/2009* on public safety, after which
- b. the *decree 4 June*¹³³ 2010 is passed, entrusting recognized certificatory organizations with the drafting of
- c. a *Reference Syllabus*, which is “revised” in
- d. a *Handbook* elaborated by “a Directorate General and a Miur office”¹³⁴; this is assigned to
- e. *Prefectures*, who select the structures in which the tests are to be held. In practice, tests are offered by
- f. *Permanent Territorial Centers*.

Behind this operation lies a *law* that represents the “apex (or at least an important step) of the ongoing project, not restricted to our country, of social and institutional reorganization based on the replacement of the welfare system with repressive control

¹³¹ D.M. 4 June 2010, art. 1.

¹³² A. Mastromarco, “Written” Italian language test for foreigners (*Il test di lingua italiana “scritta” per gli stranieri*), in “Bollettino Itals Febbraio 2011”, Year IX, n. 38,

http://venus.unive.it/italslab/modules.php?op=modload&name=ezcms&file=index&menu=79&page_id=606

¹³³ Interior Ministry Decree 4th June 2010,

http://www.marche.istruzione.it/news/2010/122010/allegati/DecretoMinInterno_4giu10.pdf

¹³⁴ Mastromarco 2010, ironically asking himself “what administrators, and/or experts on *language testing* – it is not revealed – have come up with the technical-operational guidelines”.

and on the eradication of the principle – and even of the concept itself – of equality”.¹³⁵ As far as immigrants are concerned, this law adds “further restrictions and more draconian laws”¹³⁶ to their already precarious judicial condition. Among the possible examples of these restrictions Pepino points out the fact that it has become much harder to enter the country, the increased limitations to reunifications of families, a mandatory “integration agreement (*sic!*)” and the aforementioned Italian language proficiency test. Whatever the compliant “opponents” may say,¹³⁷ herein lies the first seed of doubt concerning the decree in question: it fits into a system of measures that pushes Italian legislation to perform the leap in quality from the heinous process of conferring an inferior status on immigrants to the “enemy’s criminal code”.¹³⁸ In the same vein, we can observe the recent “integration agreement”, a points-based residence permit. In order to obtain credit, immigrants must pass the same test required for long-term permits and be acquainted with the Italian Constitution as well as the organization and workings of public institutions and civic life in Italy. It is a brand of civil awareness that the general public will tend to take for granted, but the practicality of which is definitely up for debate. We need only consider, on the one hand, the number of Italian politicians and administrators who would not pass similar exams (particularly in the case of the more practical tests) and on the other the intricacy and difficult nature of assessment criteria, especially considering the substantial lack of state-run courses, with the exception of a 10-hour course on “civic education” that must be completed within 60 days (where? In what language? At which level? With which civil goal? On what basis? And so forth).¹³⁹ A glance at the decree reveals how its propagandistic intent eclipses any other administrative concern: it is evident that we are dealing with an obstacle on the path to exercising one’s civil rights rather than an assessment of linguistic and socio-cognitive competences aimed at facilitating the inclusion, in the workplace and in everyday life, of those who have come from another country. Sure enough:

a) No mention is made of the ability to communicate but rather “the knowledge of

¹³⁵ Pepino 2009, p. 9. A few articles of this law, regarding the possibility for mayors to enforce regulations against “urban decay”, the impossibility of marrying without possessing a residence permit and so on, have been declared anti-constitutional by the Consulta.

¹³⁶ *ivi*, p. 11.

¹³⁷ The degree to which this law was underestimated and the Democratic Party’s approach (PD) as illustrated in the 2010 document <http://www.polser.wordpress.com/2010/10/19/documento-discusso-e-approvato-dal-pd-all%E2%80%99assemblea-programmatica-di-varese-dell%E2%80%9998-9-ottobre-2010-in-materia-di-immigrazione> are particularly striking. The document contains questionable judgements on the “quality” of immigrants, as does the 2011 leaflet “I learn Italian therefore I am a citizen” (<http://www.immigrazione.forumpd.it>). Despite being aware of the differences between Maroni’s ministerial decree and the Democratic Party’s “program”, we remain conscious of a shared pandering to the backward common credences. In particular, the leaflet’s authors show a limited awareness of historical precedent, in unified Italy, for the relation between the possession of education certificates and the exercise of citizenship rights. A more detailed analysis could have provided other possible examples of the relation between knowledge of the language and access to rights. But it is hard to avoid the tendency to give a mythical slant to the foolish excesses and the violent behaviour of the right wing; a number of people who feel a particular loyalty towards the Celtic cross stated, crudely but without beating about the bush, on the web site stormfront.org/forum/t770667/ that the measure represented “yet another obstacle for immigrants, and excellent news for Us”.

¹³⁸ L. Pepino, *Migration, Rights, the Enemy. Considerations about L. 96/2009 (La migrazione, il diritto, il nemico. Considerazioni a margine della legge n. 96/2009)*, in *Diritto e cittadinanza*, XI, 4-2009, Franco Angeli, pp. 9-20, p. 13..

¹³⁹ We may recall, for instance, the substitution of “Constitution” with “Charter of Values”, cf. the “Values” entry in G. Faso, *Lessico del razzismo democratico. Le parole che escludono*, DeriveApprodi 2008..

Italian language” is discussed; the title of the “framework” is reviewed and repeated five times as “Common European framework of reference¹⁴⁰ for language *knowledge* (with this insertion in italics) and, in an unprecedented move, “levels of knowledge” replace “levels of competence”.

- b) Along with the “muscle-flexing” (“under penalty of inadmissibility”, “the prefecture summons the foreigner”, “pending identification of the foreign subject” and similar obsessions), the decree choses to set, at art. 3 par. 3, the pass-mark at 80/100; this threshold would no doubt leave citizens of proven descent and questionable abilities smiling, as the score required of them to pass any test remains 60/100.

This threshold was no doubt less appreciated by the certification boards, designated, by the aforementioned art. 3, as guaranteeing the assessment parameters adopted for the tests. The decree went on to state that “the content of the tests [...], the marking criteria and the duration of are fixed jointly with the certificatory board [...], in view of a specific agreement [...]”.

These boards have furthermore been required to come up with a *Syllabus*, which attempts to mediate between the decree’s specifications and the Cefr, and to place the latter within “the specific current situation” adapting its levels in order to pass from an educational path for EU citizens to a selective assessment for non-EU workers. This comes with some inevitable drawbacks: many aspects of the *Syllabus* could be questioned on linguistic and ethical-political grounds. A few observations should suffice:

The migratory process is stereotypically described with nuances that play on the more alarmist chords of public opinion: “in recent years, the growing presence in Italy of foreigners has attracted the attention of those who are directly invested with the task of tackling problems linked to the social and linguistic integration of immigrants in our country”. Regarding the term *integration*, a quote from Kofi Annan is used, in order to stress that it is a “two-way system”; but this statement is soon forgotten and “integrate” is used transitively, restricting the reflexive use, even more significantly,¹⁴¹ to the weaker part of the local population: “Integrate in order that we can in turn feel integrated. Because the fear of the other, in some cases, can create new and dangerous forms of alienation; namely the self-alienation of those who, *almost as if they were foreigners in their own homes, feel surrounded by crowds speaking unknown languages, who they instinctively shy away from. Crowds destined to grow ever greater in number [...]*” (*Syllabus*, p. 3, italics are ours). Different languages, ghastly idioms, surround the

¹⁴⁰The distortions go so far that the Common European Framework of Reference is turned, in the Maroni & Gelmini rewriting, into “Common Framework of *European* reference”. the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages (Cefr), otherwise known as Framworke, approved by the Council of Europe and published in an electronic version in the years 1996-97, was successively revised, integrated and published in French and English on paper in 2001. The first version translated into Italian dates back to 2002. The document was prompted by the need to promote better language skills within the European community by standardizing the levels of linguistic-communicative ability achieved in the classroom. For the deformations of Cefr objectives, see below.

¹⁴¹ As stressed in the entry “Integrazione”, in G. Faso, *Vocabulary of democratic racism. Words that exclude (Lessico del razzismo democratico. Le parole che escludono)*, DeriveApprodi 2008. The shift from the politically correct phrase “Social integration” to the verb “integrate, integrate oneself”, leads us to define the new arrivals as the objects of a forced adaptation, in the first instance, or, in the second, as a subject that, in order to be accepted, must adjust to the rules of an alleged majority in the host country.

hapless native who feels like a stranger in his own home, like a member of the Northern League who wishes to go back to being a *master in his country* and, therefore, *instinctively* reacts.

We come across the transitive use (one-directional, from active locals to passive immigrants) of *integrate* from the very first page, together with a naturalistic metaphor, pointed out by Jessica Ter Waal as representative of this kind of prejudice: “Our future as Italian and European citizens will *inevitably* depend, in part, on how well we manage to integrate immigrants in the years ahead. Migratory *tides have been submerging* Europe in ever greater numbers since the mid-eighties [...]”. Further on, in keeping with the most fashionable kind of discrimination, we find the claim that “on the contrary we could do with some more wide-ranging projects able to make the contact between different cultures and mentalities less traumatic (or at least less problematic)”: as if the impact of suffering and abuses and social and civil inequalities undergone stemmed from “the contact between different cultures and mentalities” rather than ministerial rulings that are rarely questioned.

The confusion in arguments reaches a peak when, on page 2, we read that “a solution and answer to the phenomenon of immigration [...] can be found in the collation by the Council of Europe of the Common European Framework of Reference (Cefr)”. Leaving aside the triumphant description of the Cefr as a *solution*, it is untrue that the latter was put together in answer to the migratory phenomenon: it was, in actual fact, compiled for completely different purposes and it is not enough to state that the move to increase the ability of European citizens to communicate with each other, declared aim of the path that led to the Cefr, “ought to also be applied to those who, though non-European, share the same duties and rights as European citizens”.

The creators of the *Syllabus* may well *imagine* that immigrants share the same rights and duties as European citizens, but they cannot automatically infer a smooth progression from the implementing of the move to increase plurilingualism and a test carried out without any concern as to the learning path.

During a conference organized by Perugia University for Foreigners in May 2006, Piet Van Avermaet who works at the Language Policy Division – Migration Division of the Council of Europe, stated that the Cefr “was developed with an eye to the teaching, learning and assessment of *foreign* languages rather than of second languages in migratory contexts and it cannot be used for this purposes (A. Ciliberti, *Presentazione*, in A. Ciliberti (edited by), *The world of Italian language - Un mondo di italiano*, Guerra edizioni 2008, pp. 5-10., p. 7).

Part of the work undertaken in the *Syllabus* can be of some interest for those who deal with L2 learning and assessment. However, an earnest discussion on the judicial and political context that such an assessment would require is lacking, except for one futile proposal: the decree establishes that it is necessary to reach an 80% threshold in order to pass the test, whereas the *Syllabus* fixes it at 60% (*Syllabus* p. 53).

In spite its high degree of sycophancy, the *Syllabus* evidently did not satisfy one of the ministerial departments, given that its instructions were revised and amended in an

anonymous *Handbook*¹⁴² where it is stated that “the parameters described in the forementioned documents [Cefr and *Syllabus*] have been adapted in part to the specific target group” (p. 3) In fact, the *Syllabus* had already been adapted to the specific etc., but this was not enough for the efficient (and little acquainted with the concept of L2) bureaucrats of the Ministry.

The test proposed in the *Handbook* centres exclusively on writing ability: no space is given to oral interaction; a unique case in Italy, if we consider official certificates (cf. M. Barni, *Italian as L2 Certificates - Le certificazioni di italiano L2*, in P. Diadori (edited by), *Teaching Italian to Foreigners - Insegnare l'italiano a stranieri*, Le Monnier 2011, pp. 308-319).

The only assessed “listening” (audio) is one-directional, the understanding of such a listening challenge is examined through a written exercise and the score for this test is lower (30%) than that given for the reading/writing tests (35% each). We offer a comparison between the tables included in the two documents:

Syllabus (p. 52)

Handbook (p. 14)

| SKILL | SPECIFIC WEIGHT | SKILL | SPECIFIC WEIGHT |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Reading comprehension | 25% | Oral comprehension test (listening) | 30% |
| Listening comprehension | 25% | Written comprehension test (reading) | 35% |
| Written Production/Interaction | 20% | Written interaction test | 35% |
| Oral Production/Interaction | 30% | | |

Already, the *Syllabus* proposes a questionable assessment grid: adding together the score of the so-called oral tests (that in any case require reading/writing abilities, seeing as the “listening comprehension” includes, among other things, techniques of detection such as multiple choice and finding information, p. 41-42) the total sum is 55%; given that the threshold envisaged by the *Syllabus* is 60%, we might encounter an individual who is illiterate but linguistically competent, so as to achieve 100/100 in the oral test, but who is turned away because he could only hope for 55% in the test overall. Does this make him unfit to live among us?

¹⁴² Interior Ministry, *Handbook. Technical–operational guidelines for the definition of the contents and duration of the test and the criteria for the assigning of marks* http://www.marche.istruzione.it/news/2010/122010/allegati/test_italiano2010_Handbook.pdf

The assessment of oral production and interaction abilities starts from scratch in the *Handbook*.

Linguistic ability reveals itself, first and foremost, orally: ¹⁴³ this does not mean, as established by the *Handbook* (and applied in the tests) that one listens to a passage and then – in the listening test – answers a series of questions *in writing*. This would bypass the chance for a communicative adaptation that can be carried out only through a process of cooperation and construction of a common space with the interlocutor.

As for the three abilities set out by the Cefr, the decree only deals with two of them, comprehension and interaction: the tests exclude oral interaction (main mode of communication between native and non-Italian speakers), restricting (as many Italian certifications do, especially in relation to some levels of ability) “oral comprehension” to multiple choice answers; lastly, for the written interaction test, they include two-way scenarios unlikely to materialise for an immigrant, such as the “answer to a postcard”. Also, in relation to the communicative needs of an adult immigrant (on which the *Handbook* claims to have based the specifications for the test), a first analysis of the tests so far observed proposes an original interpretation: it ranges from “let’s go to the gym” to “how about a swim in the pool?”

We asked some of the *collaborators* to tell us why they agreed to cooperate on tests built on such a basis, and, more specifically, their opinion about the exclusion of spoken assessment from the tests. “Objectivity” in the marking of tests and a “spartan approach” to the construction and submitting of the test are the answers most frequently given. The alleged objectivity of the multiple choice tests is purely the result of irregular questions; ¹⁴⁴ As for the spartan approach (“a balance between assigning and available resources”), there are plenty of grounds for dismay at the hesitant approach of the *Syllabus*, when it states: “In the case of the A2 level test included in the decree, it will be appropriate to offer the chance to those who sit the test to show their abilities *considered* relevant and to take into account timing, location, instruments supplied and the people who produce, set and assess the tests” (p. 31). Zero costs, inadequately qualified individuals and an unfortunate public and “scientific” debate: decorum is not financially viable.

Unable to certify – unable to assess

After having proved that the Italian “tests” were set up with a view to creating an

¹⁴³ “Writing (and reading) skills are incidental with respect to linguistic knowledge” and “writing and reading are “secondary” and “external” skills with respect to language” (L.M. Savoia, B. Baldi, *Languages and societies. Language and speakers - Lingua e società. La lingua e i parlanti*, Pacini Editore 2009, p. 169 e p. 163, respectively).

¹⁴⁴ “A question is illegitimate when the answer is already known” (H. von Foerster, B. Pörksen, *Truth is the invention of a liar - La verità è l'invenzione di un bugiardo*, Meltemi 2001, p.69). Claiming that among various possible answers, only the one proposed by the person who comes up with the question is “correct”, both the question and the addressee are trivialized and the latter becomes reliable (to those who propose illegitimate questions), choosing among the answers only the one that the person who sets the test supposedly has in mind. This perfect correspondence between questions and answers allows a rapid “assessment”, diametrically opposite to any cognitive process (not only of a certain issue but also a mutual one). This trivialization, through illegitimate questions, does not bring with it objectivity, but rather “rewards standardized behaviour”, as von Foerster explained in *Letology. A theory of learning and knowledge - Letologia. Una teoria dell'apprendimento e della conoscenza vis-à-vis con gli indeterminabili, indecidibili, inconoscibili*, in P. Peticari (edited by), *Knowledge as education (Conoscenza come educazione)*, Angeli 1992, pp. 57-78, p.68.

obstacle to the basic rights of citizenship, we will try to evaluate whether the tests provided by the centers in charge are able to convincingly assess the linguistic, communicative and social skills of individuals to whom no opportunity for training is offered by the decree.

Tests, drafted according to the instructions provided by the *Handbook*, as experience and common sense dictate, assess not so much those tested, but rather the testers themselves. And they speak volumes about the roles of the Interior and Education Ministries.

The task of “certifying” people’s abilities is skillfully side-stepped: the term “certification” is never used in the decree, which at art. 5 par. 1, merely mentions “assessment of the degree of knowledge of the Italian language, through the verifying of the positive outcome of the test as registered on electronic resources”;¹⁴⁵ indeed, as we find written on the Ministry website¹⁴⁶, “Prefectures send the test results to the police headquarters” and they are typed into a data bank, “which can be consulted online by the foreigner”.¹⁴⁷ No written certification, to be handed over to the people involved, is provided. Certification would involve two responsibilities that the Ministry is not keen to take upon itself:

1. In Italy there are four recognized boards¹⁴⁸ for the certification of linguistic skill in Italian as foreign language”;¹⁴⁹ to assess ability would be more time-consuming for the Ministry than demanding (without any significant effort) a document from the aforementioned authorities.
2. The *Syllabus* lists the obligatory requirements for a “good” test (p. 30):
 - (a) Reliability, that is the stability and consistency of the scoring at different times and under different administrators;
 - (b) Validity, that is the ability to carefully assess what we meant to assess;

The minister is certainly not able, through the Prefectures, at no cost, to ensure the slightest reliability and validity to the tests set; therefore they *cannot give any indication about the Italian language skills of those who are forced to sit them*. In fact the test

¹⁴⁵ Please note the extremely involuted ministerial prose.

¹⁴⁶ Interior Ministry, *Italian language test: procedures and subjects (Il test di lingua italiana: il procedimento e i soggetti*

coinvolti), http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/20/0827_Il_test_di_lingua_italiana_il_procedimento_e_i_soggetti_coinvolti.ppt

¹⁴⁷ Please note the slip in the sentence: the result can be consulted *by the foreigner* (and not by others?): in this case the “agent” is completely unnecessary (see M. T. Guasti, *Italian syntax - Aspetti della sintassi dell’italiano*, in L. Haegeman, *Handbook of Generative Grammar - Manuale di Grammatica Generativa*, Hoepli 1996, pp. 589-639, p. 628) as it is evident and obvious (see. F. Sabatini, C. Camodeca, C. De Santis, *System and text. From valence-grammar to text experience - Sistema e testo. Dalla grammatica valenziale all’esperienza dei testi*, Loescher 2011, p. 238). Therefore, we can surmise that it is mentioned with the specific aim of drawing attention to it. The word “foreigner” appears several times in the ministerial powerpoint, using a language that is rather unusual in bureaucratic communication (“the *foreigner* has access to ... the *foreigner* includes ... the *foreigner* sends electronically ... the *foreigner* goes, etc.): standard ministerial language uses passive or impersonal forms, without mentioning the “agent”. The obsessive repetition of the agent *foreigner* can, therefore, only be interpreted as a way of stressing the divide between “us” and “them”..

¹⁴⁸ Certification boards for Italian language as L2, *Syllabus for Italian L2: level A2 (Sillabo di riferimento per i livelli di competenza in italiano L2: livello A2)*, http://www.edavarese.it/test_italiano_L2/sillabo_4_enti_certificatori.pdf

¹⁴⁹ M. Barni, *Italian L2 certificates (Le certificazioni di italiano L2)*, in P. Diadori (edited by), *Teaching Italian to foreigners (Insegnare l’italiano a stranieri)*, Le Monnier 2011

- (a) *It is not reliable* because created and assessed by different officers, not necessarily qualified¹⁵⁰, with generic instructions;¹⁵¹
- (b) *It is not valid*, in light of the complete absence of any form of oral production/interaction assessment, essential¹⁵² within the realm of linguistic-communicative skills.

Unsuitable weapons: the Cefr

The reference to the Cefr to justify an assessment on which the conferral of civil rights is based, is possible only in view of the mystification of the aim and characteristics of the document. The Cefr was born to “overcome communication barriers” among European citizens with the end game of “favouring European mobility”¹⁵³, in the *perspective of an enduring education*. The detailed description of the six levels (A1 to C2) of communicative ability, geared at application,¹⁵⁴ implies a possibility of assessment that is never used for purposes of certification in the Cefr. The levels are not conceived and described as barriers to reach, certify and employ on a rights-basis.¹⁵⁵

In Italy, before the discriminatory use on the government’s part, the need was felt to tackle the question of certification of skills; evidently, as the number of Europeans to

¹⁵⁰ Undoubtedly unqualified. In order to teach in the Ctp centers it is not necessary: (a) to have certified knowledge of learning, teaching and assessment of L2 Italian ; (b) to have undergone training in order to run the process of assessment through similar tests. Among the feeble (and unheeded) *Syllabus* requests, there was the need for a continuous training of those who set the test, the failed implementation of which may have contributed to the “malfunctions” in the assessment process (p. 46).

¹⁵¹ “Different tests produced and later assessed in different Ctp centers by different teachers cannot be confused with certification tests, because they do not fulfill the requirements that a certification test must meet as a guarantee of reliability and veracity of the statements it makes and thus of its ethics” (M. Barni, *If language and its assessment become instruments of power - Se la lingua e la sua verifica diventano strumenti di potere*. Interview to Prof.ssa Monica Barni, director of the Centro CILS, Università per Stranieri di Siena, <http://www.meltingpot.org/articolo16086.html>).

¹⁵² We keep in brackets the phrase which came into use during a period of fruitful discussions on language and was ratified in the school syllabus of 1979, even if we would prefer to speak of “oral ability”. See the extract from Savoia-Baldi, quoted in footnote 11.

¹⁵³ “The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe. [...] By providing a common basis for the explicit description of objectives, content and methods, the Framework will enhance the transparency of courses, syllabuses and qualifications, thus promoting international co-operation in the field of modern languages. The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts, and accordingly will aid European mobility.” (Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division, *Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue: insegnamento, apprendimento, valutazione*, trad. it. sull’originale inglese di F. Quartapelle, D. Bertocchi, La Nuova Italia 2002, p. 1)

¹⁵⁴ *ib*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ Subsequently, thanks to the “pioneering” work that some Italian organizations claim for themselves (S. Machetti, *Level A1 and A2 in the CILS for adult immigrants: the issue of the social use of contact - I livelli A1 e A2 della CILS per immigrati adulti: il problema della spendibilità sociale del contatto*, in E. Jafrancesco (edited by), *Adult immigrants learning Italian as L2 Proceedings of the XIII National ILSA Convention - L’acquisizione dell’italiano L2 da parte di immigrati adulti. Atti del XIII Convegno nazionale ILSA*, Edilingua 2005, pp. 60-81, p. 63), in order “to ensure that all those in Europe who produce language tests apply procedures aimed at detecting the connection between the declared knowledge of a language and Cefr levels” (M. Vedovelli, S. Machetti, *Certifying Italian competences for beginners: between science, ethics and politics - La certificazione di italiano per i livelli iniziali di competenza: tra scienza, etica e politica*, in F. Caon (edited by), *Caught between languages and cultures. For an intercultural language education - Tra lingue e culture. Per un’educazione linguistica interculturale*, Bruno Mondadori 2008, pp. 202-214, p. 206 n.1), an effort was made by experts with questionable motives and results; an outcome we should not be too proud of in Europe is the Council of Europe, *A Manual. Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)* http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/manuel1_en.asp.

certify did not seem high enough, soon the classificatory anxiety and the interest in certification were extended to the broader audience of non-EU immigrant workers. A second shift thus occurred: not only was the Cefr used for a purpose for which it was not initially intended, but it was also applied in a new setting (no longer to “educational systems”) and a different type of learner: not the dynamic European citizen, but the immigrant labourer.

This gave rise to an educational and assessment-based employment network, devised and created for a foreign language and now extended to the formal evaluation, mainly spontaneous – and for which no adequate education plan¹⁵⁶ had been drafted – of the learning of L2 Italian¹⁵⁷.

The limited debate on the civil implications of the learning-teaching-assessment approach for the L2, shielded Italy from the doubts rising from the improper extension of the use of the Cefr, which, however, emerged elsewhere and were analytically expressed by Piet Van Avermaet. In a well-informed contribution¹⁵⁸, he:

- (a) denies that the Cefr can be used in a L2 learning context;
- (b) points out that the description of the initial levels in the Cefr implies written ability; which is problematic for the profile of an immigrant worker, as well as for natives with low levels of literacy but who are nonetheless linguistically competent;¹⁵⁹
- (c) shows how the higher levels detailed by the Cefr mainly refer to highly educated individuals;
- (d) suggests that, in view of its being conceived for adult learners, it is not appropriate to use the Cefr on the new arrivals, and particularly their children, who are occasionally assessed (and often held back) on the grounds of Cefr scores at school, for reasons such as a higher degree of scientific impartiality;¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ We do not wish to conceal the numerous initiatives, often free of charge and occasionally brightened by well-respected voices, carried out all over Italy; compared to which the lack of an institutional project for the widespread facilitating of learning of L2 Italian stands out even more.

¹⁵⁷ We speak of L2, when the learning of a foreign language occurs in a context where it is practiced as a language of daily communication (for example Italian language learnt in Italy through regular contact and conversation); we speak instead of LS (*lingua straniera* - foreign language), when the learning occurs solely in a context of guided learning (for example Italian language learnt in language school abroad).

¹⁵⁸ P. Van Avermaet, *Multilingual spaces in Europe and the use of the CEFR*, in A. Ciliberti (edited by), *A world of Italian - Un mondo di italiano*, Guerra 2008, pp. 49-60, pp. 56-7.

¹⁵⁹ “In order to sit an A1 or A2 level exam one does not need to possess any particular educational certificate, but one is required to [...] be acquainted with the Latin alphabet ” (S. Machetti, *Level A1 and A2 in the CILS for adult immigrants: the issue of the social use of contact - I livelli A1 e A2 della CILS per immigrati adulti: il problema della spendibilità sociale del contatto*, in E. Jafrancesco edited by), *Adult immigrants learning Italian as L2 Proceedings of the XIII National ILSA Convention - L’acquisizione dell’italiano L2 da parte di immigrati adulti. Atti del XIII Convegno nazionale ILSA*, Edilingua 2005, pp. 60-81, pag. 63; the same lines in M. Vedovelli, S. Machetti, *Certifying Italian skills for beginners: between science, ethics and politics - La certificazione di italiano per i livelli iniziali di competenza: tra scienza, etica e politica*, in F. Caon (a cura di), *Caught between languages and cultures. For an intercultural language education - Tra lingue e culture. Per un’educazione linguistica interculturale*, Bruno Mondadori 2008, pp. 202-214, p. 213). A similar awareness does not, however, seem to render the two more scrupulous.

¹⁶⁰ For example, the passage from level A2 to B1, consists, according to the Cefr descriptions, of the acquisition of the capacity to communicate in areas of less immediate relevance, moving on to more interactive communicative functions and displaying a certain level of autonomy, particularly in the public and professional areas. This is likely to imply socio-cognitive growth rather than linguistic acquisition. The choice, operated by the decree, of the A2 (survival) level over the B1 threshold, that establishes an extension of the social sphere of influence, typical of those

- (e) points out that there is no empirical correspondence between what a person can do and the criteria outlined for a given level of the Cefr;
- (f) takes issue with the fact that citizenship can be denied on the grounds of failure to pass a language test based on the Cefr.¹⁶¹

Plurilingualism by hook or monolingualism by crook?

The social acceptance of a symbolic, punitive law was rendered easier – as well as by the ethic-civic conditions in which we live – by the typically backward attitude of Italian culture on the subject of communicative skills. One imagines that, in order to achieve social cohesion, it is necessary to impose a strongly structured language, free of internal tensions and of diastratic, diatopic and diamesic differences. There is a tendency to underestimate the plurality of dialects, strata and registers of what we know as the “Italian language”. We find it hard to accept that “[...] the normal linguistic status of any speaker will be bilingual [...]. Next to bi/(multi)lingualism corresponding to the *code-switching* between two (or more) languages by the same speaker, linguistic variation and the knowledge of other languages also relates to the alternating between style-, register- and situation-based varieties which is characteristic of any speaker. From this we can infer that there are, strictly speaking, no monolingual speakers”.¹⁶² We do, however, attempt to impose this forced monolingualism on those who come from abroad and already interact with natives, adapting their own habits and helping to enrich well-established ones.¹⁶³ The tenacity with which other institutions try to flatten any hint of variety in language, thought and behaviour is extended to these new arrivals, making them sit tests that are not able to assess their communication skills, but rather offer boxes to tick, in order to prove that we know what is required by the people in charge of marking who are sadly underqualified, thanks to the decree: the latter, in order to continue in his badly-paid job, will grow to hate it more and more and with it any obstacle that might get in the way and that would lead him to question its unsubstantiated assertions. The knowledge of a limited, flat language cannot be a condition for social inclusion: on the contrary, within the linguistic sphere of communication a plural, adapted language will be born, more as a result than as a premise of a good inclusion process.¹⁶⁴

It is worrying that academic experts in search of a social mandate (or an assignment),

who go to work everyday, queue behind a counter, etc, remains largely inexplicable. In a collective intercession, Van Avermaet points out that “an apparently friendly, direct and simple approach, actually entails the choice of a level without any obvious basis or validation” (G. Extra, M. Spotti, P. Van Avermaet, *Introduction*, in G. Extra, M. Spotti, P. Van Avermaet (edit by), *Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship: Cross-national Perspectives*, Continuum 2009, p. 17).

¹⁶¹ This is equally true for recognition of “lesser” rights such as the “long-term permit” paper.

¹⁶² M. R. Manzini, L. M. Savoia, *Work Notes on Romance Morphosyntax. Appunti di morfosintassi romanza*, Edizioni dell’Orso 2008.

¹⁶³ “[...] the CEFR, which is essentially meant as a tool to promote plurilingualism, is used by some policy makers as a scientific justification to promote monolingualism in official state languages and to focus more on what newcomers lack than on what they might be able to contribute and add in terms of resources to a more diverse society.” (G. Extra, M. Spotti, P. Van Avermaet, *Introduction*, in G. Extra, M. Spotti, P. Van Avermaet (a cura di), *Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship: Cross-national Perspectives*, Continuum 2009, p. 18).

¹⁶⁴ “Language is crucial for integration but not necessarily a condition for integration, sometimes a result. Language and integration are intertwined, go hand in hand.” (P. Van Avermaet 24/25-06-2010, *Language requirements for adult migrants. Results of a survey. Observations and challenges*, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/ConfMigr10_P-VanAvermaet_survey.ppt)

despite showing themselves to be critical, in their writing and in the course of conferences, towards *this* use of *these* tests to guarantee more stable contracts for immigrant workers, seem anxious to prove that a form of certification, not corresponding to the government's distorted one, but unmindful of the doubts surrounding the discriminatory use of the Cefr, can contribute to the appeasement of "conflicts among social, semiotic and linguistic identities". They are over-emphasized conflicts among alleged entities, such as *linguistic* identity: nothing new for those who study the *discriminatory* emergency that offers many *educated* insights into the spread of new forms of racism.

The will to certify contributed to the construction of common-sense images, according to which a "linguistic identity" without internal tension would help to avoid social conflict: "certification [...] reassures native citizens, ensuring that the foreigner interacts with them in their own symbolic manner; it also reassures the foreigner, ensuring that the natives interact with him in the new symbolic manner that he is able to achieve in the measure allowed. Certified assessments vouchsafe this ability"¹⁶⁵.

We must hope that critical judgement will soon be restored, as it is the only way of justifying intellectual activities, and that we start to think rationally about linguistic tests and cease to state, with no fear of sounding ridiculous, that they might constitute a practical solution to important social problems; it would be less arrogant and more productive to try to reflect on the suspicion that [...] the use of such tests is unjust, unethical, and discriminatory and leads to the marginalisation and expulsion of people, the suppression of diversity, and forced monolingualism".¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ M. Vedovelli, S. Machetti, *ib.*, pp. 202-214, pp. 203-204..

¹⁶⁶ E. Shohamy, *Tests as Power Tools: Looking Back, looking Forward*, in J. Fox, M. Wesche, D. Bayliss, L. Cheng e C. Turner (edited by), *Language Testing Reconsidered*, University of Ottawa Press 2007, pp. 141-152, p. 141.

The future of citizenship and participation

Filippo Miraglia

In recent years, the topic of citizenship has undergone, in public debate, a shift that we could describe as politically determined, in other words closely linked to the way politics generally tackles the issue of the presence of immigrants in our society.

Instead of defining a space within which to promote the emancipation of individuals and progressively extend the civil rights to all, citizenship has gradually come to identify the demarcation line that defines us by excluding others. In other words, we are used to speaking of citizenship as the field that marks the distance between “us” and “them”. A “them” that, according to the situation, is represented by foreigners, minorities, above all Roma and Sinti communities, religious minorities, particularly Muslims and by any other minority that, not included in the definition of “citizen”, can help to better define our identity. This interpretation of citizenship finds practical application in the increasing distance created between people of foreign origin and Italian citizens. A distance that contravenes Art.3 of our Constitution inasmuch as it introduces obstacles to the achievement of constitutional equality, rather than eliminating them.

It is this very principle of equality that has progressively worn away over the past two decades, starting with the public debate on immigration, which undermines the basis of our democracy.

Citizenship, more and more frequently interpreted as right of blood and “ethnic belonging”, becomes a source of discrimination rather than inclusion in the workplace, in dealings with public administration, in private relationships and, to an even higher degree, in legislation. This discrimination finds many vindications, many supporters and, consequently, widespread consent: in order to contrast it, therefore, a successful strategy and effective and reasonable methods are needed.

We must begin by trying to reverse the long-established perspectives of Italian men and women on immigration, by promoting initiatives aimed at giving a positive slant to the public debate. In order to achieve this goal, it is first of all necessary to overcome the constant emergency and instability that plagues the world of immigration. Today, without a stable set of regulations, healthy relationships and a civil debate, it will not be easy to alter the negative public portrayal of immigration. For this reason there is a need for preparatory measures discrediting and dismantling clichés and rhetoric platitudes on immigration. At the same time, it is important to introduce arguments and devices aimed at constructing a positive image for immigrants, rebuilding relationships and links at a grass-root level and introducing elements that could make structural changes to public debate, moving the forum in which it takes place.

Today, campaigns and projects to counter racism can help to regain the ground taken up in recent years by assumptions that criminalize immigrants and promote socially accepted clichés. This is why there is the need for a broad alliance, including the most diverse elements of society, who can boast a certain amount of credibility and a direct relationship with the general public and middle management in each sector of society. The desired goal is to build or rebuild certain taboos, unbreachable barriers of civilization that receive wide consensus. Let us, for instance, consider the reaction

produced by Interior Minister Maroni's attempt to keep records on Roma individuals, underage children included. In that case, society still appeared to firmly believe that the interests of children should not be bartered in the political "marketplace". This certainly was not enough to sway the xenophobic right wing in power; but the reaction, though insufficient, was widespread, and represented a solid obstacle against the spread of a racist culture. An equally strong reaction would have been desirable in the case of the first vessels forced to turn back at sea during the spring of 2009, resulting in many deaths as well as the denial of basic human rights. Yet in this case, the rhetoric of invasion and the widespread conviction that "we need to stop them at all costs" prevailed, even at the cost of sacrificing the right to life (Art. 3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the inviolability of personal freedom (Art. 13 Italian Constitution). In order to promote a different image of the world of immigration, first of all it is necessary to give foreign individuals centre stage and allow them a certain degree of freedom.

A series of initiatives and projects to facilitate social interaction and participation in public spaces must be promoted in order to involve millions of immigrants and their families to whom such opportunities have so far been denied.

Speaking up and having a say in decisions concerning society as a whole must be a priority for those who wish to render an inclusive meaning to the idea of citizenship and to extend the scope of civil rights.

We need to reopen the public debate, partly by promoting campaigns for cultural awareness on citizenship, such as that set up by the committee for "L'Italia sono anch'io" (I am Italy as well); this could help to move the discussion on this subject onto another plain. Another rare opportunity could be represented by the collection of signatures for two popular initiative laws that would help, at least formally, to bridge the distance between Italians and foreigners. A way of asking people to state openly which side they are on and a chance for them to choose the sphere of civil rights instead of the rhetoric of emergency, public safety and discrimination.

Some arguments refer directly to people's everyday experience and social responsibility. For example, the paradox of a country where every year thousands of baby boys and girls are born as foreigners in a society that victimizes them for years in a variety of situations, leaving them to face discriminatory laws and practices alone. When children are told they cannot take part in a school trip because their parents are waiting for the renewal of their residence permit, as often happens to the offspring of immigrants, it is like being suddenly plunged into a world which considers them different and pushes them towards the society of their peers: except these peers are not their schoolmates, but those who are trapped in a similar predicament.

However it is not enough to attempt to introduce elements of truth and civilization into the public debate on immigration. It is necessary, as stated above, that foreigners become important players in society. Today we still observe extremely limited forms of participation on the part of immigrants, with a corresponding weakness of the anti-racist movement. Initiating a real move towards integration, not superficial or with any ulterior motive, is a lengthy, complicated process that comes up against the political crisis affecting all sectors of public life.

However, some of the events of the last two years reveal, even in their most dramatic manifestations, that the participation of the immigrants themselves in the fight for their rights is a key element, without which it would be hard to achieve any satisfactory results. Just consider, for instance, the agricultural labourers' riots in Rosarno, Nardò and Castelvoturno ("the uprising of immigrants against the Mafia" – "One of those jobs that Italians no longer want to do" exclaim the two characters of a representative cartoon by Ellekappa), against exploitation, the foreman system and new forms of slavery. Equally significant are the protests carried out by immigrants in Brescia and Milan, in a manner that seriously threatened their safety, against the corruption of, and within, the act of indemnity¹⁶⁷. And it is worth bearing in mind the many uprisings (as well as the instances of self-mutilation, that can be considered as desperate forms of protest) against injustice and acts of violence in detention centres.

From the employment world, which, it is important to remember, is the main driving force behind people's movements, we receive clear indications that migrants want to, and can, free themselves from the state of alienation and persecution that they are subjected to in our country.

Considering that after at least 40 years of struggle for female emancipation, our country is still one of the most backward in the world in the field of gender equality, we must be aware that the empowerment process for immigrants can be neither short nor painless. This awareness obviously must not induce us to give up the essential struggle to construct a more inclusive and open idea of citizenship.

If it is true that democracy is participation and citizenship is the sphere in which the principles of democracy are put into practice, clearly the concept of democratic citizenship cannot be enacted without participation.

Today we are therefore confronted by the need to promote every form of participation, starting from the political and institutional kind, which culminates in the right to vote. In bigger cities like Rome or Milan, hundreds of thousands of people who work and pay taxes (we recall the American "no taxation without representation" saying) do not take part in the choice of mayor and city council. Thus we live in a limited democracy, where it is unthinkable that a growing percentage of people who, regardless of their nationality, live and work in our country (amounting to more than 8% of the population) are not allowed to take part in the elections.

Political and social representation, however, does not stop here and cannot be limited to participation in elections at local and regional level (as demanded by a bill, also adopted by Anci, drafted by the "I am Italy as well" campaign¹⁶⁸). There is a pressing need for a wide-ranging commitment to promote all forms of representation and, at the same time, to allow immigrants to participate and take control of their own lives.

We need to be aware of the fact that the state of discrimination and persecution that immigrants are, sadly, subjected to, does not allow them to emerge as independent entities or within pre-existing social milieux. Immigrants' forms of association are, in the present day, more fragmented and less durable than in the past and those based on

¹⁶⁷ On the one hand the act of indemnity, as had already happened in the past, gave rise to widespread, diverse instances of fraud while on the other, thanks to the ambiguous and unreliable attitude of the Interior Ministry, it represented a true case of State fraud.

¹⁶⁸ See the full text on the website: litaliasonoanchio.it

nationality still prevail over others, such as mutual assistance within a group of people from the same country.

In the past, particularly during the '90s, this manner of communal living seemed like it might evolve into more mature and diversified types of association (cultural, political, athletic, based on voluntary work and so forth). The rapid transformations that have characterised the world of immigration in recent years, together with the downturn which has affected immigrants' living conditions and the failure of many projects that marked the first phase, between the end of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s, ensured that the spread of opportunities remained contained within certain limits.

However, several meaningful initiatives arose in newly devised areas of intervention. Readers may recall, for example, the foreign youth who, referring both to their countries of origin and, more frequently, to their status of Italians in every way except by law, initiated various communal experiences, albeit fragile, as is the case with most associations built up around young people. It is necessary to pay close attention to this ever-changing world, promoting its growth and development by means of specific projects and resources. We need only think, for example, of the initiative carried out by the Emilia Romagna region to allow young people of foreign origin to participate in the regional civil service scheme.

Strong commitment is also essential in the field of women's associations, which already operate today but have not so far proved hugely successful, to prevent female emancipation and the condition of foreign women, young or otherwise, from remaining trapped between a public portrayal linked to cultural anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic stereotypes and a forced isolation, fuelled by the social and institutional discrimination that impacts foreign families.

The projects undertaken recently or in the past, as well as the various forms of assembly that can be encountered within the social environments already frequented by immigrants (places of gathering, either formal or informal, with all their possible ramifications), must be encouraged with targeted policies and the use of public resources, in such a way as to invest in the future of our democracy.

Social organizations, at least in part, are also trying to assist the process of participation and association undertaken by immigrants, admittedly with many limitations and contradictions. We are dealing with a complex task that requires a structural change in the manner in which individual initiative is promoted and community leaders are selected. In this like in other areas, immigration gives rise to questions that concern all of us, because the space for participation, independence and personal achievement within social organizations is often limited and regimented.

It is necessary to promote initiatives aimed at revitalizing the area by creating dynamic and pluralist relationships and, in this way, inventing new outlets for the personal development of foreigners, within collective projects aimed solely at achieving these goals.

In order to reach such important targets, it may also prove necessary for the organizations to shed some of their old habits and, above all, to revise procedures, timing and mechanisms that help to create the spaces which can be filled by new community leaders.

To begin with the familiar, with complex social organizations that have a firm base in our country, can be a good way of test-driving new types of participation and personal achievement. This can occur only if we follow up on our promises of targeted initiatives and projects. If it is true that immigration is a complex social process and thus needs the support of public policies, it is equally true that the specific juridical and social conditions we are dealing with, together with a distorted and exploitative public portrayal, require specific undertakings and provisions; if we fail to meet these conditions, any real change is out of the question.

SECTION 2

REGULATIONS AND CASE-LAW

Emergency as the norm.

Institutionalized racism in the legislation on immigration from 2008 onwards. Andrea Callaioli

1. Does safety have a nationality?

Over the years, Italian legislation on immigration has become progressively more severe and unyielding, its detachment from constitutional values growing more marked, with excessive enforcement of emergency decrees and use of “rule of law” as a deterrent against immigration. Furthermore, this stricter legislation has not only had an effect on foreign citizens hailing from tertiary countries, but also on those from the EU, often in open contrast with European community legislation.¹⁶⁹ The key idea behind this tendency has been the equating of migration issues with matters of public safety, mainly dealt with by means of emergency procedures. In other words, all the laws passed in this field during the 2008-2011 period were advanced not so much in view of adapting Italian legislation to European directives or of solving, with adequate planning, the problems encountered during this time; instead, they were used as instruments that would help guarantee public safety¹⁷⁰ and, in particular, “the safety of Italian citizens, compromised by foreigners” understood as separate, indeed, totally opposed to, that of all the individuals who inhabit the country, regardless of their citizenship or the stability of their condition. With these aims in mind, the methods used have been, among others, a ban on marriage for unauthorized immigrants, limited opportunities for stable integration for underage foreigners and restrictions applied to family reunification. These laws clearly have little to do with public safety. It seems obvious that the latter should represent a social value which may be applied in general to the civic cohabitation of all human beings rather than a negative value built exclusively on one's personal predicament as a foreigner. In other words, while recognizing the legitimacy of our Republic's concern with controlling immigration, it is necessary to bear in mind that the safety of a community, in both its effective and its perceived aspects, cannot be enforced by means of legislation that proposes penalties against illegal immigrants as the main instruments in the fight to keep the migratory influx under control; on the contrary it should be done by instating a more realistic regulation of the influx, by introducing a standard procedure in which foreigners may shed their illegal status and by backing measures that favour effective social integration.

The adjustments made to the Consolidated Law on Immigration since 2002 (namely the 189/2002 Law, better known as the Bossi-Fini) had, in most instances, as a goal, or at least an outcome, the introduction of more rigid measures for (or, depending on how

¹⁶⁹ Aside from the content of the 2008-2009 safety package, the most important decree is n. 32/2008, too lengthy to be expounded here.

¹⁷⁰ The names themselves of the laws better known under the heading ‘safety package’ are significant: 2008 (*Urgent measures in the field of public safety*); 2009 (*Rules in the field of public safety*)

you look at it, against) foreigners, increasing their level of insecurity and their reliance on some form of employment. In recent years, furthermore, with the rulings passed in the last decade concerning public safety, this regulatory strategy was “enriched” by an overuse of crime-fighting methods that often pushed foreigners into a life of delinquency and revealed themselves to be completely counter-productive both as far as concerns the rational supervision of the migratory influx and the goal of guaranteeing legitimate safety requirements to each individual, regardless of his or her nationality.

On top of this, new financial policies have entailed the suspension of many programs that dealt with the reception and social integration of immigrants. In this far from reassuring landscape we also come across government initiatives such as the declaration of a state of emergency with reference to settlements of the Roma community¹⁷¹ concentrated in some regions¹⁷². These are measures that, by transferring responsibility into the hands of the Protezione Civile (the Italian Emergency Relief Service), appear to transcend the limits set by extant legislation. And it has, sure enough, been declared a state of emergency, with the conferral of extraordinary powers, with reference to a situation that does not present any hint of a threat, nor any particularly exceptional or extraordinary quality. The malaise and neglect of Roma and Sinti communities have been structural for decades and have, for this very reason, prompted criticism towards our country from several international organisations¹⁷³.

However, let us proceed methodically, if schematically, and with no further ado, in order to guarantee the necessary concision.¹⁷⁴

2. Law n. 125/2008

Law n. 125/2008 was the first regulation to be introduced. It included the following innovations:

a) An amendment to the criminal code with regards to deportation as a guarantee of public safety, prescribing its mandatory enforcement in cases involving a prison sentence of two years or more or crimes against the State.

b) Introduction of so-called “clandestinità” (illegal immigration) as an aggravating circumstance, with respect to crimes committed by those who are found to unlawfully reside in the country (art. 61, par. 1 num. 11-bis, penal code). This measure would have the effect of using the guilty immigrant's irregular status as an excuse to increase the

¹⁷¹ For an analysis on this issue see the contribution of S. Bontempelli, in *Il paese degli sgomberi (e dei campi)*, (The land of forced evictions – and of settlements), chapter 1.

¹⁷² The Decree from the Prime Minister's office dated 21 May 2008 did not set out any specific measures as it made reference solely to the precarious nature of Roma settlements and focused on issues of public order; the three subsequent rulings of the Prime Minister's Office on 30 May 2008 delegate authority on the matter to three designated extraordinary Commissioners.

¹⁷³ We do not have the time to dwell on said ruling nor on the criticism aimed at Italy for its discriminatory policies against immigrants. We only call to mind the censure on the part of the European Committee of Social Rights in a decision dated 7 December 2005, as well as the contents of the recent report from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg.

¹⁷⁴ Both measures contained in the so-called safety package feature amendments pertaining to different legislative areas; from measures concerning the criminal code to those relating to the highway code; from the amendments of legislation concerning prevention to those on jurisdiction of and procedure before a Justice of the Peace. Among these, we encounter laws on immigration that we will rapidly skim over, without tackling the amendments to legislation on the recognition of the status of refugee and on international protection.

severity of the sentence, in other words allowing the judge to impose stricter sanctions when faced with crimes committed by illegal immigrants. It is important to note how this particular ruling raised serious doubts from the very fist as to its constitutional legitimacy, bearing in mind the supposedly equal status of all men in the eyes of the law that should not leave room for discriminatory considerations based on individual circumstances (cf. art. 3, par. 1 and art. 25 of the Italian Constitution). These doubts found official confirmation in ruling 249/2010 of the Constitutional Court, which censored it for being incompatible with art. 3, par. 1, and 25, par. 2 of the Italian Constitution.

c) Amendment to art. 656 of the criminal code, which monitors the implementation of custodial sentences, in cases which allow the suspension of shorter sentences with a view to a possible application of different forms of sanction. The above article, in the section that lists the crimes to which a suspended sentence may not be applied, was then supplemented with a reference to misdeeds compounded by the irregular status of the guilty party; in other words whoever was sentenced with this aggravating circumstance could not hope for a suspension of their sentence nor to commute it into an alternative to imprisonment. As with the previous measure, however, the amendment was revoked by ruling 249/2010 of the Constitutional Court.

d) Introduction of paragraph *5bis* of art. 12 of the Consolidated Law (Testo Unico) that punishes whoever provides shelter or sells real-estate to an immigrant residing unlawfully on State territory with the aim of making an unfair profit; this crime may also result in the requisitioning of said property.¹⁷⁵

e) Change of appellation for Temporary Stay Centers, which become Identification and Deportation Centres. This restyling has not been accompanied by any discernable change in the detention routine of the centres themselves, which to this day function on a strictly administrative level, with no legal regulation, often resulting in serious consequences for the basic rights accorded to detainees.

f) Establishment, in the Consolidated Law of local government bodies (decree 267/2000), of new functions and areas of competence accorded to the mayor's office, with increased powers of intervention in the field of urban peace-keeping and "orderly cohabitation". Although this innovation does not, in itself, refer exclusively to foreigners, it is undoubtedly safe to assume that it will affect this area in particular. In practice, this amendment seeks to extend, setting no precise or established limits, the mayor's ability to pass extraordinary decrees in the name of "serious threats to public safety and urban peace-keeping". The evident lack of concrete directives and the excessive discretionary power accorded to local authorities lies behind another intervention on the part of the Constitutional Court that censored the amendment (ruling 115/2011) for being incompatible with articles 23, 97 and 3 of the first paragraph of the Italian Constitution.

¹⁷⁵ This rule is destined to affect the fundamental right to housing, obstructing or negating it, in spite of its representing a fundamental right of the individual that should therefore also extend to illegal immigrants, ex art. 2, par. 1 e 2, Consolidated Law. We should furthermore bear in mind that the law could be easily circumvented through the use of intermediaries or figureheads, Italians or regular foreigners, or of a rent-free agreement which in fact conceals a rental.

3. Law 94/2009

The following year a new law in the same field, n. 94/2009, is enforced. In spite of the usual tendency towards generalization, it touches on many aspects of the legal status of immigrants. Alongside various instances of restyling and adjusting, mainly concerning amendments introduced the previous year, the most important rulings can be summarized as follows:¹⁷⁶

a) Extension of the time necessary for the foreign or stateless spouse of an Italian citizen to acquire Italian citizenship subsequent to the marriage itself. As a result of this amendment, in place of the six months previously required, one must now reside in the country for a period of at least two years, or count three years from the date of the wedding if the foreigner lives abroad (halved if children born to, or adopted by, the couple are involved), provided that at the moment when citizenship is conferred there has been no instance of discontinuation, annulment or termination of the civil effects of the marriage, and that the couple is not legally separated.

b) Amendment to art. 116, par. 1 of the Civil Code after which a foreigner, in order to obtain a marriage contract in Italy, must submit a document attesting to the regularity of his or her residence status to the civil authority. This decree, strongly criticized from the very first for being in contrast with articles 2 and 29 of the Constitution as well as with international legislation (art. 16 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and art. 12 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms), has since been declared constitutionally illegal in ruling 245/2011. At the root of this decision lies its incompatibility with articles 2, 29 and 117 of the Italian Constitution in as much as it would impact the exercise of basic human rights which, without room for doubt, include the freedom to enter into a marriage contract, not just for a foreigner but also for the Italian citizen whom they intend to wed.

c) Establishment of the crime of illegal entry and residence on Italian territory (art. 10bis T.U.), signifying a criminal status for the foreign national who enters the country or chooses to remain there, in contravention of the law. As its consequence, it has become a felony punishable by means of a fine ranging from 5.000 to 10.000 euros, prompting many experts to express strong doubts concerning its effectiveness as a deterrent. On the contrary this measure strikes one as being patently counterproductive both in rationally monitoring the migratory phenomenon and in insuring the legitimate safety requirements of each human being, regardless of their nationality. Indeed, not counting the fact that it steers away from several fundamental constitutional principles that govern criminal issues,¹⁷⁷ its implementation gives rise to interpretative issues:

¹⁷⁶ In this case the limited space at our disposal again obliges us to give a very brief summary of the main amendments. A deeper reflection is necessary concerning the rules on registration procedures for the homeless and urban patrols, namely the “associations of non armed citizens” that can be set up by mayors “in order to report local events that may pose a threat to urban security or identify situations of social disadvantage”; This regulation was censored with ruling n. 226/2010 by the Constitutional Court. Equally worthy of note is the law on ‘money transfer’ services that enforces the acquisition and retaining of a copy of residence papers for non-EU citizen, and states that persons not in possession of such documents must be reported to the relevant authorities.

¹⁷⁷ It is common knowledge that, in a democratic state, criminal law must protect the fundamental values of orderly cohabitation amongst human beings and of their equality. In other words, considering the complexity of immigration issues, the institution of a similar criminal offence runs the serious risk of punishing not the active behaviour but rather the status of an individual especially in a system scarcely able to guarantee efficient procedures for entering

previously, the immigrant who was the object of human trafficking was seen as the victim of a crime, someone who, in order to escape the harsh realities of poverty, famine, war, persecution, ethnic cleansing or natural disasters, was forced to lay his trust in criminal organizations who would then arrange his travel. However, when this law comes into play, the whole picture begins to change, given that the same individual – within the same framework of criminal exploitation – must himself also be punished for having attempted to enter the country illegally. But the key aspect of the example in question is to be found in its “extra-criminal” repercussions. Indeed the designation of “irregularity” as a criminal offence inevitably results in the loss of any sort of legal contact for immigrants lacking a residence permit, which in turn promotes the heightened involvement of criminal organizations not only in providing a way into the country but also in allowing continued stay. In other words, immigrants, fearing that contact with sanitary structures, volunteers, legal officers, law-enforcement officers, associations devoted to reception may get them into trouble with the law, may be driven, more so than ever before, to seek refuge in illegal organizations in order to obtain the necessary guidance and care. Thus, the establishment of illegal immigration as a criminal offence will most likely entail an increase in the rate of exploitation of unauthorised foreigners, particularly in the field of unskilled labor, making them even more vulnerable and open to abuses and exploitation.

e) Stricter mechanisms of “criminal hindrance”. One of the key features of Italian legislation on foreigners is that which relates to the concept of ‘hindrance crimes’, that is to say a system which blocks the release of entry visas or residence permits in the event of certain crimes being committed. As is widely known, Law n. 189/2002 reintroduced the concept of ‘hindrance crime’ into legislation regarding the legal status of foreign nationals. This provision proposes to bring back the administrative impediment to the release of entry visas or the release/renewal/upkeep of residence permits for those who commit certain crimes, irrespective of any assessment of the concrete and immediate threat posed by the individual, with the only limiting factor being the safeguard of the right to familiar unity. The amendment implemented by Law 94/2009, on the one hand broadens the reach and impact of this type of offence by extending its effect to sentences that have not yet received definitive approval, and on the other lengthens the list of criminal offences that may lead to the aforementioned hindrances. This mechanism, structured in such a way as to leave the administration with very little room for maneuver, has expanded further still over the years to include, among these ‘hindrance crimes’, not only the more serious instances, but also those of scarce social impact which are, however, frequently committed by foreigners¹⁷⁸; and this with little regard for the final ruling, the hypothetical suspension of the sentence or the possibility of its being commuted. This is the major factor that causes those who had previously obtained a residence permit to plunge back into an illegal status.

f) Institution of a compulsory fee for the release and renewal of residence papers as well as for other certificates and declarations pertaining to issues of nationality. In other

and remaining in the country. The question of constitutional legitimacy that was raised was rejected by the Court, with ruling 250/2011, but at least the matter was looked into.

¹⁷⁸ For example crimes related to copyright infringement and the selling of counterfeit products established by L. n. 94/2009.

words, this law introduces a new tax aimed exclusively at immigrants which adds to the numerous other expenses sustained in the course of the lengthy procedural process required to obtain a living permit.

g) Plans to implement a generalized requirement for the foreigner to provide his residence permit not only during police checkups but also in public administration offices, in order to obtain the release of any type of document or certification.

h) Introduction of obligatory Italian language assessment tests as a prerequisite in order to obtain an EU residence permit and for proposed long-term residents.

i) Extension of the maximum detention period in the CIE (Identification and Deportation Centres): up to six months in order to assess the availability of an identification document valid for expatriation.¹⁷⁹ As a result of this amendment detention periods can be extended indefinitely, with absolutely no reference to the reasons that lie behind it or the nature of the procedures that must be undertaken, and with absolutely no incentive towards collaboration being provided, at least for those foreigners deported merely for irregular entry or continued stay.¹⁸⁰

l) Limiting circumstances envisaged with respect to the law forbidding the deportation of relatives of Italian citizens. Following the amendment introduced by art. 19, the restrictions applied to forced expulsions will no longer pertain to relatives of Italian citizens within the fourth degree of kinship but only within the second.¹⁸¹

m) Reduced opportunities for family reunification and for the continued stay of unaccompanied minors who are regularly resident in our country when they come of age. In essence, it will become more complicated to conduct the reunification, with ones parents in particular, and the procedural aspects will be drawn out for longer. With regard to the conversion of the living permit when an unaccompanied minor turns 18, a further condition of issue is introduced: the verdict of the Committee for underage foreigners, which in turn requires the participation, for a minimum of two years, of the young subject in a social and civil integration project managed by a public or private body that is represented on a national scale and included in a special list drawn up by the Prime Minister's office. Moreover it is also possible to predict restrictions in the field of 'reverse reunification', namely that which allows a minor in possession of regular residence in the country to be joined by one or both of his parents, if they are still residing elsewhere.

¹⁷⁹ The reasons for extended detention are quite vague and this makes it virtually impossible to question the legitimacy of the restriction of individual freedom. In any days if 180 days elapse without constructive results, the foreigner must be released and can expect to receive a new order of deportation.

¹⁸⁰ In order to encourage the foreign immigrant to respect expulsion orders, many incentives have been suggested: these include, for example, an easing of bans on returning to this country, priority inclusion in entry quotas for seasonal labour with regular contracts, or cash incentives issued by private or public government bodies or international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration. To this end the reflections and proposals put forward by De Mistura in the 2007 report remain immensely relevant as they highlight not only the very serious living conditions of the CPT centers but above all their virtual inefficiency and unsustainability.

¹⁸¹ We are left in the dark as to what relationship there could possibly be between a person's degree of kinship to an Italian citizen and his or her perceived dangerousness. Clearly no such connection exists; hence we understand the only possible reason behind the amendment introduced lies in the attempt obstruct regularization for foreign citizens without a residence permit: and this by means of the establishment of an alleged 'threat' linked to the degree of kinship to an Italian citizen.

n) Presentation of the so-called “integration agreement”, a document which must be signed by the foreign national when he is issued his residence permit. The ruling, which also provides a definition of the concept of “integration”¹⁸², defers the establishment of criteria and procedures necessary to sign the agreement to yet another decree: the structure is that of a credit system based on the commitment to pursue and achieve specific targets during the period for which the residence permit remains valid.¹⁸³

Moreover, it is worthy of note that, in order to avoid the escalating difficulties that inevitably follow this recent designation of continued residence on national territory as a criminal offence, the enforcement of Law 94/2009 was flanked by the approval of yet another decree for the regularization of illegal employment,¹⁸⁴ with a similar structure to the one that accompanied the Bossi-Fini Law. As in the latter instance, an employer who takes on a non-EU citizen not in possession of a residence permit as a cleaner or carer, is granted the opportunity to legally declare the form of employment by paying a one-off fee of 500 euros to INPS.¹⁸⁵ This declaration will allow the suspension for both parties involved of all administrative and criminal procedures for the violation of the regulations concerning entry to, and extended stay in, Italy and the proper method of employment for workers. This postponement remains valid until the end of the procedure: should the latter be successful, the records are wiped clean of any criminal offence, whereas, should it have a negative outcome, the enforcement of the usual measures and sanctions would be allowed to proceed. However this regulation envisages some circumstantial impediments, all centering on the individual status of the worker; for instance, foreigners issued with a forced expulsion order for serious breaches of public order and State security or on counter-terrorism grounds are denied access to the procedure, as is also the case for black-listed individuals who have been denied entry to the country and those who have been convicted, even when the sentence is not final, including in the instances envisaged, even after the sentence has been applied, by art 444 of the criminal code for one of the crimes described in art. 380 and 381 of the same code.

As had already occurred in 2002, many of the applications submitted referred to non-existent domestic employment statuses. In many instances they concerned existing employment, but reshuffled the roles and relationships, in order that the parties involved might take advantage of the procedure, thus gaining a regular status by

¹⁸² Defined as “a process aimed at promoting the cohabitation of Italian and foreign citizens, thus respecting values endorsed by the Italian Constitution, with a mutual commitment to participating in the economic, social and cultural aspects of society”

¹⁸³ According to new legislation, referred to by the media as “points-based living permit”, losing all ones points entails suspension of all ones residence permit and deportation, with the possible exception of those issued with a residence permit for asylum, subsidiary protection, humanitarian and family reasons, including holders of long-term EU residence permit or residence permit as foreign relative of a EU citizen or any other residence document held on grounds of family reunification. So far, only a blueprint of the decree has been drafted by the Cabinet (last August); this blueprint is awaiting the required approval, though a lot of its repressive tone has already provoked a fair degree of criticism.

¹⁸⁴ Art.1ter of Decree 78/2009 converted into Law n. 102/2009, included among the anti-crisis regulations adopted during summer 2009 and operative at the same time as Law n. 94/2009.

¹⁸⁵ The rule actually forecast the possibility to regularize the employment for Italian, EU and Third Countries citizens, but the almost totality of applications referred to employments with Italians.

declaring a domestic relationship that on closer inspection proves either completely non-existent or partially fabricated with a view to amiably offering the foreigner an opportunity to gain legal endorsement. Furthermore, there have been numerous instances of exploitation of foreigners on the part of individuals who will offer to submit false applications, often far exceeding the accepted number, in exchange for a fee amounting to thousands of euros. In this case we are dealing with episodes of genuine fraud affecting people who find themselves residing in the country illegally and have no choice but to take advantage of this opportunity to come clean, even though the working conditions required do not actually exist.

Lastly, there were problems of interpretation concerning the supposed impediment represented by convictions for the crime of failure to comply with the police commissioner's order to depart from Italian soil. This proceeding sparked a lengthy debate between the Interior Ministry and the persons involved, which ended favourably for the latter, initially thanks to the mediation of the Judicial Review Court (TAR) and the State Council and more recently in view of the issues arising from failure to conform to the established terms of the EU directive on repatriations 2008/115/CE¹⁸⁶, which will be dealt with further on.

In any case, two years down the line, many applications still go unprocessed in the Immigration service offices, resulting, as is to be expected, in the greatest possible disruption and discomfort for the foreigners concerned who are forced to remain in the country but at the same time cannot hope to find a new job or obtain a more stable and regular living status. It was, therefore, yet another "amnesty act" not so much aimed at providing foreign nationals with a regular status, but rather geared towards "replenishing the coffers" by taking their money, while at the same time discriminating between them on the basis of their employment.¹⁸⁷

4. Italian regulations and the EU: how to ignore while pretending to endorse.

The deadline for including into one's own legislation EU directive 2008/115/CE on repatriation for nationals of tertiary countries, better known as the repatriation directive, expired on 24 December 2010. Our legislator, intent on enforcing the various rules in the field of public safety, must have forgotten (?) all about this deadline which has, however, inexorably arrived, and with its arrival overturned one of the mainstays of Italian immigration policy, namely the compulsory implementation of deportations and associated criminal convictions. In a nutshell, this directive, by outlining a totally different system from the one contained in the Consolidated Law (T.U.), and its key role being to lay down principles that may be enforced directly, without the need to adapt them to individual national legislations, rendered the laws on expulsion contained in

¹⁸⁶ There is insufficient room to dwell on all the legal aspects of this interpretative *querelle*. We would just like to recall how the whole question centered around whether or not to include the crime dealt with by art. 14, par. 5ter, Decree 286/1998 among those that get in the way of regularization.

¹⁸⁷ There appears to be precious little rationale in only allowing the regularization of housework and excluding other categories and employments; this is made even more serious by the fact that the regulation seems to depict the procedures for regularization of employment merely as a possibility rather than an obligation for the employer, thereby going completely against the rest of the legislation in the field of forms of employment and undeclared work. In fact, while those who employ an illegal immigrant commit a series of administrative, fiscal and social security violations and the offence stated at art. 22, par. 12, Decree 286/1998, the worker is not viewed as a guilty party but rather as a "victim" of the unlawful behavior of others.

Italian legislation obsolete. Indeed, the ruling states that in cases involving the deportation of a non EU citizen, decisions must take into account individual circumstances rather than simply acknowledging unlawful residence. This is in stark contrast with the periodic, almost mechanic regularity of the deportation orders issued by the Interior Ministry. Moreover, still on the subject of the contrast between this EU directive and Italian legislation, it is important to emphasize the fact that “*recourse to detention [...] should be restricted, and at all times proportionate to the means used and the target pursued [...] if the enforcement of less coercive measures should prove insufficient*”, while Italian regulations focus on forms of immediate compulsory deportation. To this we must add that the required approval of the police commissioner, apart from being far from proportional, is automatically called for by national legislation for the sole reason that the deportation may be impossible to carry out or there may be lack of availability in the CIE. It is also necessary to bear in mind that, according to the directive, Member States can refrain from granting a period set aside for voluntary departure (even one lasting under a week), but only if there is a concrete risk of flight on the part the foreigner in question, if his application to obtain a living permit was rejected on the grounds of being either clearly unfounded or fraudulent, or, lastly, if the foreigner is perceived as being a threat to public order, safety or national security. Therefore deportation orders issued before the 24th of December 2010 cannot be further enforced nor legitimately prevent a foreigner from settling in the country, particularly when he has expressed an interest in applying for a regular living permit, for instance under the jurisdiction of Law 102/2009. In substance, given that the deadline for the acknowledgement on the part of EU countries of the ruling has been and gone and considering that the effects of the clear, detailed and unconditional measures involved are immediately discernible, once this deadline has passed¹⁸⁸ it becomes necessary to do away with the national laws deemed incompatible with the European ones.

The provision, in Italian legislation, of a criminal sanction that guards against the flouting of a deportation order lies behind the inclusion in the administrative procedure of a criminal conviction that leads to the loss of personal freedom. The premises and characteristics of this measure are worlds apart from constraints on freedom that might occur during a deportation as envisaged by the European directive, in both its abstract and applied forms. Such a mechanism would end up entirely evading all guarantees imposed by the directive for the safeguard of individual freedom for foreigners undergoing a repatriation process, and thus invalidate the useful effects of the ruling with regard to the establishment of mandatory conditions that allow a Member State to deprive a foreigner of his or her individual freedom during repatriation procedures.

¹⁸⁸ On this matter, with sentence n. 170/1984 the Constitutional Court had observed that “*EU legislation operates on another plain, different from the national one. According to art 11 of our Constitution, the rulings enforced by it, are applied directly in our country, but stand apart from the intricacies of internal legislation: and if this holds, they cannot logically be judged by the same standards outlined for conflict resolution internal to our legislation*” thus repeating what had already been established by the European Court of Justice with sentence 183/1973 that states: “*Fundamental demands of equality and legal certainty demand that EU regulations – not to be interpreted as sources of international, foreign or internal law – must have complete and compulsory effectiveness and direct application in all Member States, without the need for further rulings, as acts having the resonance and validity of laws in each EU country, so as to be simultaneously enforced and have equal and uniform power over all addressees*”

The European Court of Justice¹⁸⁹, consulted on the subject of the controversial relationship between the ruling on repatriation and Italian legislation, expressed a similar point of view, pointing out that Italian deportation procedures differ substantially from those established by the EU ruling and are structured in such a way as to compromise the achievement of its goals. This Court further states, therefore, that directive 2008/115 must be interpreted as putting in check any legislation of a member state which envisages, as the Italian one does, the detention of a foreign citizen who is residing irregularly in the country purely on the grounds that the latter, for no identifiable reason, ignored a specific injunction to leave the country by a certain date.

This European standpoint, therefore, has done away with one of the mainstays of Italian legislation, which looks to deportation as the standard practice, to be applied to each instance of misconduct immediately and in an identical manner – at least in theory – that is to say by forcibly escorting the individual in question to the national border.

This rendered previous legislation on the subject of deportation effectively obsolete, impelling the lawmaker to adopt a different one, on paper at least. Thus, though the government had two whole years to put the directive into effect and seven months have now passed since its “direct application”, the government has only just realised that it is facing an exceptionally urgent and pressing situation and has passed Decree 89/2011, converted into Law 129/2011. In this case also, the law includes an assortment of different regulations; it consists of two units, one dedicated to EU citizens¹⁹⁰ and the other to nationals of tertiary countries. It is worthy of note that this new legislation does not bring us much closer to the sentiment of the European directive. The new set of regulations states:

- The need approach deportation by the police authorities on a case-by-case basis, evaluating the individual status of each foreign national.
- The cessation of the deportation order if the foreigner is already leaving the country.
- The continued exercise of forced expulsion for deportation cases ordered by the Ministry on account of their posing a serious threat (including that of terrorism), of there being a risk that the foreigner might attempt to evade justice¹⁹¹, of failure to comply with an express order to leave the country or, indeed, when the request for a living permit is rejected for being blatantly unfounded;
- That, in any case, the terms for voluntary departure can only be settled upon by explicit request on the part of the party involved;
- The effective broadening of the situations that can lead to detention in a CIE, as well as the extension of the maximum detention period to 18 months. Such a drastic increase seems to have affected the nature itself of these structures, turning them from simple stepping-stones in deportation procedures which involve being escorted to the national borders, into a period of potential and repeated long-term internment, carried out under special conditions and outside the regular penitentiaries; foreign detainees are,

¹⁸⁹ It is the sentence of the European Court of Justice C-61/11/PPU on 28 April 2011 on the case El Dridi. After this sentence, several other decisions of the Supreme Court, the Council of State and the other involved Courts confirmed this orientation.

¹⁹⁰ In this case, likewise, attempt to delve into these rulings; suffice it to say that, in general, they bring Italian legislation into stricter compliance with EU directives.

¹⁹¹ See also the regulation included in the new paragraph 4*bis* of art.13 defining the concept of ‘risk of flight’.

consequently, kept in a state of awkward (to say the least) suspense that could easily spark episodes of unrest jeopardizing the centers' internal security, or wreak serious havoc on the physical and psychological wellbeing of interned immigrants.¹⁹²

Despite this new organisational framework, several unchanging factors remain: immediate implementation of deportation orders (which continue to be labeled in this manner, rather than being re-branded "displacement" as called for by the repatriation directive), endorsement of the measures restricting individual freedom, adopted when terms for voluntary departure (largely speculative and with no attempt at genuine mutual discussion between the parties involved) are agreed upon, and lastly an established criminal sanction against the violation of said terms.

5. The sweeping tide from Northern Africa and the human rights emergency.

To conclude, events linked to the tide of freedom that has lately swept thorough Northern African have provided inspiration for a series of measures ¹⁹³ aimed at "tackling the state of humanitarian emergency in our country in relation to the exceptional influx of North African citizens". Indeed, in February 2011 the government declared a state of national emergency with reference to said exceptional influx and approved, as a proviso, ex art. 20 T.U., the release of temporary residence permits, for humanitarian reasons, to all North Africans who had reached Italian shores between the 1st of January and the 5th of April 2011. What appears odd is that, in April 2011, the Italian government, exceeding its own mandate and constitutional restrictions declared a state of humanitarian emergency in North African countries in order to enable "an effective handling of the exceptional influx of individuals to our country".

In actual fact, this declaration of a state of emergency allowed collective rejections of many immigrants to become common practice, and it remains unclear on what grounds 5 April was chosen as the date to mark out those who will be granted a residence permit and those who will not. On top of this, as many activists belonging to humanitarian organizations point out, we often find failure to comply with the correct procedures that confirm the detention of these persons, insurmountable difficulties encountered by lawyers attempting contact them when they are detained in the reception centers, failed enforcement of the current legislation regarding access to international protection.

Thus we are faced with a true emergency, not humanitarian in nature, as the government would have us believe, so much as *democratic*, given the failure to observe basic constitutional principles and unassailable human (and individual) rights thereby putting thousands of immigrants at risk.

¹⁹² Most recently with a decision dating to April 2011, the Interior Ministry denied journalists access to immigration centres of any sort.

¹⁹³ The most recent of these ruling is designated as number 3958 and dated 10 August 2011. Before this came the Decree of the Prime Minister's Office dated 12 February 2011 that declared a state of national emergency until 31 December 2011 with regards to the exceptional influx of North African citizens, and, subsequently, various decrees and rulings again linked to said urgent situation.

Discrimination and access to the welfare system: lower court rulings

Ilaria Traina

In the past couple of years we have witnessed an increase in the number of lower court rulings (particularly in northern Italy) relating to cases of discrimination described as “ethno-racial”¹⁹⁴ or at any rate based on nationality,.

The recurrence of sentences issued, in the majority of cases, in favour of victims of discrimination, reveals on the one hand a mounting awareness on the part of public opinion and local bodies (associations, trade unions and the judges themselves) regarding the need to oppose the spread of discriminatory behavior and to advocate active legal protection for the people involved; on the other the troubling proliferation of episodes of discrimination concentrated particularly in northern regions such as the Veneto, Lombardy and Friuli Venezia Giulia. Particularly concerning is the fact that 90% of reported acts of discrimination are perpetrated by local government authorities (municipal and regional) and occasionally by the State itself, and therefore by the very institutions that should play a key role in promoting equal opportunities.

As a result, the only path left open to the victims of similar episodes of discrimination remains a legal one, which yields results that will be discussed later.

One of the domains in which discrimination is most keenly felt on an institutional level is access to welfare benefits. Many social services run by local governments – and by town councils in particular – benefit Italian citizens only (utterly disregarding our membership of the European Union that should at least entail the respect of the principle of equal treatment towards all EU citizens).

Lower court ruling on this subject are manifold. The most significant examples are examined below¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹⁴ The words “ethnic”, “race” and their derivatives are used here in the same form as in national and international legislation.

¹⁹⁵ The following represent rulings in the field of the social services not examined here:

SUPPORT GRANTS for FAMILIES

a) Court of Bergamo, ord. 28 November 2009, est. Cassia. The ruling concerned the case of the Municipality of Brignano Gera d’Adda that established the concession of a grant to support the cost for dental operations and eye check-ups for Italian children only.

b) Court of Bergamo, ord. 17 May 2010, est. Cassia. The municipality of Palazzago established a “baby bonus” reserved for new-born children with at least one Italian parent. The Court in Bergamo ascertained the discriminatory nature of such a decision, instructing that the administration award the grant irrespective of citizenship.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_bergamo_ordinanza_17052010.pdf

c) Court of Bergamo, ord. 8 July 2010, est. Finazzi. The case concerned an unemployment subsidy set up by the municipality of Villa d’Ogna for Italian citizens only (the municipality, after the complaint was lodged, repealed the order in order to protect its own interests; however, the Court decided to uphold the discriminatory nature of the disposition regardless).

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_bergamo_ordinanza_477_2010.pdf

SUPPORT GRANTS TO HOUSING

d) Court of Bergamo, ord. 15 July 2010, est. Bertoncini. The attention of the Court was directed on the regulations drafted by the Municipality of Alzano Lombardo that forecast the subsidized access to housing for young couple under the condition that they included at least one Italian citizen.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_bergamo_475_2010_15072010.pdf

Case Study: the municipality of Brescia.

Among the social services reserved for Italian citizens most commonly granted by our municipalities (especially in Lombardy) is the so-called “baby bonus”, namely a one-off subsidy towards new-born or newly adopted children

Brescia is one of the first municipalities to face legal action for introducing a discriminatory “baby bonus”.

Said municipality instituted (by decree of its council) a 1.000 euro subsidy for every new-born child, with the explicit goal of addressing the problem of low birth rates among poorer families, setting as an entry requirement, alongside income- and residence-based factors, Italian citizenship of at least one parent.

The Court in Brescia, called upon by a group of non-Italian individuals supported by Asgi, ascertained, first in the trial and later on appeal, the discriminatory character of the municipality’s behaviour, and ordered an amendment of the contested decision that would extend its beneficial effects to children born to non-Italian persons.

As a result of this ruling, however, Brescia saw fit to revoke subsidies for all families (including those that were already benefiting from them) stating that “extending the contribution [...] would be at odds with the main priority of assisting Italian families with new births...”

The group that had previously initiated legal action, condemning the retaliatory nature of this new ruling, decided to appeal again, this time under art. 44 of Consolidate Law 286/98 and art. 4 of Decree 215/03 to ask the judge to ascertain whether the decision to repeal the subsidy represented a “retaliatory act”, under art. 4, par. 5 of Decree 215/03 and art. 9 of EU Directive 43/78, against individuals who had taken legal action to affirm the principle of equal treatment for all. The judge was further requested to declare that said repeal constituted a discriminatory act in as much as it claimed to lay the basis for adopting “financial support reserved exclusively for Italian families”, debarring people of any other nationality.¹⁹⁶

e) Court of Brescia, ord. 22 July 2010, est. Mancini; Court of Brescia 15 October 2010, est. Azzolini (appeal to the previous one).

These rulings concern two regulations from the municipality of Adro, which instituted a fund to support rental expenses and a “baby bonus” devoted to EU citizens only.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_brescia_1348_2010_22072010.pdf
SUPPORT GRANTS for EDUCATION

f) Court in Brescia, ord., 4 March 2010, est. Sanpaolesi; Court of Brescia ord. 9.04.2010, pres. Massetti est. Mangosi (appeal to the previous one). The municipality of Chiari set up “awards for academic achievement” reserved for Italian citizens.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_brescia_ordinanza_19012010_4536.pdf and
in http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_brescia_04032010.pdf

g) Milan Court, ord., 01 August 2009, est. Gattari; Milan Court, ord., 9 February 2010, pres. Vanoni est. Dorigo (appeal to the previous one). These sentences establish the discriminatory nature of the behavior held by the province of Sondrio that launched a competition to assign university accommodation in Milan listing Italian citizenship as one of the requisites.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_milano_ordinanza010809.pdf and
in http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_milano_ordinanza_04022010.pdf

¹⁹⁶ See the rulings of the Court of Brescia to be found at these links:

1) Court of Brescia, ord. 26 January 2009 dott. Onni.

In http://www.asgi.it/home_asgi.php?n=documenti&id=775&l=it

2) Court of Brescia, ord. 20 February 2009 pres. Tropeano est. Mancino.

In http://www.asgi.it/home_asgi.php?n=documenti&id=777&l=it

3) Court of Brescia, ord 12 March 2009 dott. Alessio.

In http://www.asgi.it/home_asgi.php?n=documenti&id=778&l=it

The municipality of Brescia, not well-pleased (just consider the amount of public money involved in these trials...), backed a standard lower court ruling (ex art. 669 octies c.p.c.) in the hope of having the case referred to an 'administrative' judge (as opposed to an 'ordinary' one), and filed an appeal to determine legal jurisdiction before the Court of Cassation (supreme court).

But, the Sezioni Unite (appeals division) of this court stated that "the transparency of extant legislation does not admit any doubt as to the jurisdiction of the 'ordinary' judge over matters concerning the protection against actions and behaviour that contravene the principle of equality"¹⁹⁷

Therefore, the jurisdiction of the 'ordinary' judge having received official confirmation, we can but wait for the continuation of the trial in Court, which is, unfortunately, taking a long time to get underway.

The baby bonus as established by the municipality of Tradate

Another episode to make the headlines was the subsidy for newborns instituted by the Municipality of Tradate, unusual inasmuch as it represents a case of "discrimination against foreigners" but also, concurrently, of "discrimination on the grounds of ethnic or racial identity and descent" as defined by national and international legislation.

The peculiarity of the *bonus* in question (unique, in this respect, in the field of municipal regulations)¹⁹⁸ was the inclusion of the Italian citizenship of "both parents" as a requisite. This entailed two obvious consequences: a) a number of Italian children were also excluded from the subsidy in view of alleged "ethnic" attributes owing to the different nationality of one of the parents; b) a "financial disincentive" to the union of mixed couples was introduced by guaranteeing a greater degree of financial support to those who married a fellow countryman than to those who chose a foreign national as their partner.

This inevitable outcome found resounding and unforeseen confirmation in the elucidations appended to the decree, stated in the lower court ruling. In an attempt to justify the decision to limit the bonus to children with two Italian parents, the local council claimed that the subsidy was rooted in Europe's demographic decline, intrinsically linked to "the death of individual cultures" and that it had stemmed from considerations surrounding "the future of European culture as firmly linked to European populations" and it therefore represented a "special incentive towards cultural conservation".

A Milan Court, in the course of the trial and on appeal, ascertained and asserted the discriminatory nature of Tradate's conduct and requested an amendment of the municipal ruling. Moreover, in the course of the appeal hearing the court ordered that

4) Court of Brescia, ord 27 May 2009, pres. est. Tropeano.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/brescia_bb_27maggio09.pdf.

¹⁹⁷ Supreme Court, Appeals Division, 15 February 2011, n. 3670. This ruling confirms that the anti-discrimination judicial action under art. 44 of decree n. 286/98 was identified by the legislator as a prototype in the legal battle against discrimination, to be applied whenever the act in question is contested as discriminatory, regardless of whether said discrimination was carried out by private parties or public administration and therefore whether involves legal positions defined as subjective rights or legitimate interests. See:

http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/cassazione_sentenza_3670_11_15022011.pdf.

¹⁹⁸ With the possible exception of subsidy instituted by the Municipality of Adro establishing a "baby bonus" reserved for children with both parents in possession of EU citizenship. Cf. footnote 1.

the bonus be granted to all children of foreign parentage born between the date when the decree was first implemented (2007) and the date of the ruling.¹⁹⁹

The pronouncements of the Milan Court are furthermore worthy of note in view of the fact that they looked into the relationship between articles 43 and 44 of the T.U. 286/98 and Decree 215/03. This decree integrates ruling 2000/43/CE, which deals with the ban on forms of discrimination based on “race and ethnic origin”. Article 3 of this ruling states that “This present directive does not concern itself with differences in treatment based on nationality”. In integrating the ruling, the Italian legislator took the liberty of effecting a slight addition, asserting that:

“This present directive does not concern itself with differences in treatment based on nationality and does not affect national legislation and provisions made regarding the entry, residence, access to employment, social care and social security of citizens of tertiary countries and stateless individuals on national soil, nor any other form of treatment prescribed by law in response to the legal status of aforementioned individuals”.

Decree 215/03 does not, therefore, seem to apply to cases of discrimination based on nationality (unless one interprets said discrimination as indirectly based on “race and ethnic origin”)²⁰⁰; leaving a conspicuous blind spot filled by discriminations perpetrated in situations not envisaged by the Consolidated Law (T.U.) on immigration (like the one on social services: art. 43 of the Consolidated Law, par. 2, letter “c”, refers to social services only fleetingly) and hindering the active legitimization of associations that represent the interests of victims of discrimination, legitimization that is in fact determined by art.5 of decree 215/03.

Nevertheless, the Court in Milan deemed ruling 215/03 to be applicable to this specific instance (which in any case, as seen above, constituted discrimination on ethnic and racial grounds), adducing the following motivation:

“If the first ruling (art. 2 c.1, Decree 215/03) introduces a considerably narrower concept of discrimination, as it does not incorporate discrimination by nationality, the second (art. 2 par. 2) confirms the notion stated in Decree 286/98 that includes discrimination on grounds of nationality, and thus of citizenship²⁰¹ [...]. Such a restricted interpretation

¹⁹⁹ Court of Milan, Sent. 29 September 2010, pres. est. Ravazzoni.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_milano_ordinanza_29092010_tradate.pdf

²⁰⁰ This solution was decided by the Court of Milan in the affair of the Province of Sondrio cited in footnote 1. The Milan Court (where the province presented their appeal) decreed that in situations such as the Italian one, where the majority of “foreigners” boasts different ethnic origins, discrimination by nationality always necessarily entails discrimination by ethnic origin, and therefore, under this perspective as well, it is necessary to take the two rules jointly into account.

²⁰¹ On the question of nationality vs. citizenship it is necessary to note that some administrations (among which the municipality of Tradate), involved in anti-discriminatory legal procedures based on the exclusion of non Italian citizens from access to services of various descriptions, in order to asset the alleged irrelevance of art. 4 of Decree 215/03 (which precisely refers to “race” and to ethnic origin only) and art. 44, Consolidate Law on Immigration (which refers to nationality), debated the difference between the concepts of citizenship and nationality. However this thesis cannot be upheld. For at least two centuries Europe has been founded on “Nation States” based on the assumption that the majority of citizens (native or acquired) belong to one nationality centered around a common

would not be viable, if we agree that par. 25 directive 2000/43/CE, implemented by decree 215/03 establishes a clause restricting retroactive changes which alter previously enacted regulations in order to make them more discriminatory.”

Furthermore the directive included in art.3, par.2, Decree 215/03

“cannot be understood in the sense of a narrowing of the forms of protection outlined by Consolidated Law on Immigration, with regard to which the enactment of European directives did not include any drive towards negative amendment or abrogation [...] Also on this point we endorse the [...] view that “the detailing of art. 3 is above all aimed at the safeguard of a series of national regulations on specific subjects pertaining to the status of citizens of tertiary countries”.

Indirect discrimination: the case of the municipalities of Latisana and Majano

The ruling of the Court in Udine pertaining to the case of the Municipality of Latisana²⁰² should also be singled out, due to its peculiar nature, as an example of indirect discrimination perpetrated against an EU citizen.

The Court was called to account by a Romanian citizen who had been denied the payment of the regional subsidy for new born children by his municipality because he failed to meet the requisite of ten years of residence in Italy and five in that particular region (as prescribed by art. 8 bis, Regional Law of Fvg n. 11/2006).

language and common cultural traditions. This seems to apply, if anything, even more strongly to Italy where legislation on citizenship is traditionally based on *jus sanguinis* with a purely residual occurrence of *jus soli*. From this point of view, the concepts of “nationality” and “citizenship”, even if formally different, already begin to overlap.

But it is even clearer that legislation, on occasions when it was intended to guarantee equality to a “foreigner”, did not consider his sense of cultural belonging so much as his objective status of foreigner, using, to this end, the two terms interchangeably.

Suffice it to say that:

- Art.18 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE) prohibits, within the range of application of the treaty, “any discrimination on grounds of nationality” and this ruling has always been interpreted by the European Court of Justice as referring to citizenship (cf. as an example European Court of Justice 16 December 2008 C-388/01 Commission v. Italy; European Court of Justice 13 April 2010 C-73/08 Bressol v. Gouvernement de la Communauté française)
- Art 43 (Consolidate Law on Immigration) includes, in the first paragraph, a reference to “nationality”; in the second paragraph (letters a – d) a reference to the “foreigner” – unequivocally an individual devoid of citizenship – and at the same time to discrimination “by nationality”; and finally at letter e) of the same paragraph a reference to citizenship: the interchangeable use of the terms is evident.
- Numerous international regulations (cf. art. 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; art. 2, par. 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966; art 14 of the CEDU) and art. 43 itself, par. 1, refer to “*national origins*”: thus if we do not admit an indistinct use of the various expressions, we would be forced to assume yet another different meaning which would be impossible to define.

In conclusion the idea that the legislator in 1998, after having guaranteed with art. 2 Consolidated Lawe 286/98, the equal treatment “of the foreigner”, meant to do away, with art 43, only with discrimination perpetrated against “non nationals” is frankly hard to substantiate.

²⁰² Court of Udine, sent., 30 June 2010, est. Chiarelli and Court of Udine, sent., 15 November 2010, pres. Venier est. Zuliani.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_udine_ordinanza530_2010.pdf and in http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_udine_ordinanza_15112010.pdf

The Udine Court, in the course of the trial and on appeal, decreed that the minimum required length of residence prescribed by regional law constituted an indirect discrimination against EU citizens residing in Friuli Venezia Giulia, as it could be more easily satisfied by Italian citizens than those of other EU countries.

Moreover, according to this Udine Court, no reasonable grounds can be adduced for said discrimination since the service in question was intended for the support of families, minors and those in loco parentis, all of which intrinsically hark back to universal values, and must therefore be addressed without distinction to all residents.

The characterization of this discrimination as stated by the Court in Udine is interesting in that the judge deemed that he was dealing with an episode of discrimination not based purely on citizenship but also on “ethnic-racial” considerations. The choice of residence as a criterion, in his opinion, aims at promoting “a native community characterised by a fairly uniform brand of cultural and ethnic cohesion”; this is made evident by the fact that seniority of residence is not required of Italians who return to the region after having lived abroad for any length of time: “for the latter the residence criterion is not necessary, because the regional legislator has already made a prior evaluation, viewing them as part of that homogeneous ethnic group that he wishes to protect”.

This ruling provides further positive evidence, stemming from the application of anti-discriminatory legislation: the court ruled that art. 43 and 44 of the Consolidated Law (T.U.) 286/98 also pertained to discrimination undergone by EU citizens. The fact that art. 1 of the Consolidated Law can no longer be applied to EU citizens after the amendments introduced in 2008, does not however prevent us from taking into account, as the judge pointed out, the last paragraph of art. 43 which states: “this article and art. 44 also apply to racist, xenophobic and discriminatory acts perpetrated against Italians, stateless individuals and citizens of other member states of the EU living in Italy”. Furthermore, according to the interpretation given by the Court, Art. 18 of TFEU, in prescribing a ban on discrimination relating to any of the areas covered by the Treaty, actually establishes equality of treatment which is not only implemented on the ground but also legally binding, given that effective equality is guaranteed not only by ensuring equal rights but also by providing the legal tools necessary to assert said rights. The judge therefore concludes that, in order to effectively guarantee those rights which are recognized by European legislation it is necessary to apply art 43 and 44 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration to EU citizens, who would otherwise find themselves without an adequate way of asserting their right to not be discriminated against, as well as to Italians.

Among other episodes of discrimination brought before judges in the province of Udine, we wish to draw attention to the case of the municipality of Majano.²⁰³ An Udine Court, on the 17th November 2010, issued a ruling declaring the discriminatory nature of a public competition launched by the Town of Majano for the awarding of housing

²⁰³ Court of Udine, sent. 17 November 2010, est. Calienno. In: http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_udine_ordinanza_17112010.pdf; and Court of Udine, sent 07 March 2011, pres. Venier est. Zuliani. In: http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/ordinanza_tribunale_udine_asgi_comune_majano_reclamo.pdf

benefits, as established by art 12 of regional FVG Law n. 6/2003. Eligibility for these particular grants was restricted to those who had resided in Italy for at least ten years of which at least one in the region itself, as prescribed by art. 4 and 5 of regional FVG Law n. 18/2009, with the exception of relatives of former residents who, having emigrated abroad, had chosen to come back and settle in the region, and of members of the police and the armed forces.

The case resembled that of Latisana. The judge, after affirming the principles stated above on the subject of indirect discrimination, declared that said discrimination was being perpetrated not just against EU nationals, but also against other categories of foreign citizens of tertiary countries equally protected by specific European legislation (holders of EU long-term residence permits, refugees and those entitled to subsidiary protection). The judge furthermore stated that the ban on discriminations against foreign citizens protected by EU law necessarily entailed the protection of those Italian citizens who could also be impaired by the regulation on seniority of residence (for instance, an Italian citizen just returned from a foreign country and descended from an emigrant from an Italian region other than Friuli) inasmuch as Italian legislation forbids so-called “backwards discriminations”, which occur when an EU citizen, as a result of the enforcement of European law, receives a better treatment in Italy than that reserved for an Italian in the same situation.²⁰⁴

Grants for large households ex art.65 L.448/1998: ruling of the Court in Gorizia.

Remaining in the field of family subsidies, we draw attention to a ruling of the Court of Gorizia²⁰⁵ which allowed the appeal of a long-term EU residence permit-holder and thus for the first time ever recognized the right to access grants set aside for large households to a member of this category, ex art. 65 L.448/1998. This is a subsidy aimed at large families made up of Italian citizens (and EU ones after Law 388/2000), including at least three underage children and not exceeding a certain income determined by the household income index.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ With reference to the welfare system in Friuli Venezia Giulia, we draw attention to ruling n. 40 of the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2011 declaring art. 4 of the regional law n. 6/2006 as modified by art. 9, par. 51, 52 and 53 of regional law n. 24/2009 to be constitutionally illegitimate for violation of art 3 of the Italian Constitution. The article in question, which establishes the individual requisites for beneficiaries of regional services, unequivocally introduces a clause destined to discriminate, among those who avail themselves of the social services offered by the regional government, against non-EU nationals as such, as well as EU ones that have been resident for under 36 months. This exclusion is in direct defiance of principles of equality, inasmuch as it supplements legislation with arbitrary forms of distinction. Indeed, there is no reasonable correlation between positive conditions of eligibility for the benefit (European citizenship combined with residence for at least 36 months) and other specific requisites that allow access to benefits, which due to their very nature do not admit distinctions based on nationality or on particular categories of residence aimed at excluding precisely those subjects who are most susceptible to situations of need and discomfort which such a social system aims at overcoming.

²⁰⁵ Court of Gorizia, sent., 01 October 2010, est. Gallo In: http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_gorizia_lavoro_ordinanza_01102010.pdf
Court of Gorizia, sent. 07 December 2010, pres. Venier est. Russo. In: http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_gorizia_ordinanza506_2010_07122010.pdf.

²⁰⁶ With decision n. 9 of 22 January 2010, INPS recognized the right to access the aforementioned grant to citizens of tertiary countries holding the status of political refugees or entitled to subsidiary protection, on the grounds that art. 27 of decree 251/07 implementing EU directive CE 2004/83 (relating to the assignment of the status of refugee or person otherwise in need of international protection to citizens of tertiary countries or stateless individuals) recognized the right of these individuals to enjoy the same treatment accorded to Italian citizens in the field of health

This ruling reaffirmed the principle of equal treatment in the access to social services for Italian citizens and long-term EU residents introduced by art. 11 of directive 2003/109/CE, implemented by Decree n.3/07 which modified art. 9 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration.

The problem stemmed from the fact that aforementioned art. 11 allows Member States to limit equality of treatment exclusively to the delivery of essential services. Thus the question was whether or not Italy had availed itself of this particular waiver.

The answer delivered by the Gorizia Court appears fairly straightforward: as the implementation of the ruling had not operated any distinction between the different services to be granted or denied to long-term EU residents, Italy had chosen not to avail itself of the waiver. Nor it is possible to interpret the phrase “unless otherwise determined” contained in art. 9, Consolidated Law on Immigration, as referring to any law issued prior to this ruling that (as in the case of support to large families ex art. 65, Law 448/1998) excluded foreigners as a whole from accessing certain benefits and was therefore passed without taking into account the principle of equality prescribed by EU legislation for a specific group of foreigners.

Hence the expression cannot but refer to regulations introduced in order to implement the directive, or (at any rate) subsequent to its implementation, when national legislation assessed whether or not the exception could meet the standards set by the EU..²⁰⁷

The decree on “holiday vouchers”

Another episode which falls within the category of the availability of social services and which received a certain amount of media coverage, is that of so-called “holiday vouchers” (not strictly a social service but aimed nevertheless at poorer sections of society).

This affair centered on the institution by Ministerial decree, on 21 October 2008, on the part of the then-Cabinet undersecretary holding the tourism portfolio (now Minister for tourism) of a holiday grant to “to be used to fund acts of solidarity towards the more disadvantaged sections of the population” (cf. art. 1 of the 21 October 2008 decree). This grant consisted (and still consists) in the introduction of a percentage discount on the value of the requested holiday vouchers – which can be redeemed in specific accommodation taking part in the scheme - up to a maximum amount linked to the number of family members. The Official Gazette of 25 November 2009 then published the decree, which listed Italian citizenship among the qualifications necessary to obtain these vouchers. Two appeals were submitted to the Brescia and Milan Courts to contest this ruling.

and social assistance. Inps, inexplicably, did not make the same arrangement for citizens holding a long-term EU residence permit.

²⁰⁷ The application of the principle of equality to long-term residents constitutes the most resounding proof of the degree of irrationality that can be reached by such a disorderly system: long-term residents can claim equality in light of directive 2003/109, but once the contributions have been extended to long-term residents, the foreigners who see themselves cut off from them can assert the principle stated by the rulings of the Constitutional Court 306/08, 11/09 and 187/10 that automatically bypass the requisite of a residence permit at least as far as income and housing are concerned.

Thus this particular service broadens its reach, but only by repeatedly knocking down barriers in a process that should be more logically regulated by means of an adequate legislation or by simply reverting to those principles stated in art. 41 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration.

The Court in Brescia declared, in first instance, that these particular grants did not appear to be endowed with “the same indispensable traits as the fundamental human rights that national and international anti-discriminatory legislation seek to defend and protect” given that “the decision to support families or individuals, relative to their low-income status, in the purchase of holiday packages represents a social objective that is not included among those situations [...] that are typically central to the type of cover offered by the social services” (Court of Brescia, 26 June 2010, est. Alessio).

Fortunately, this ruling was reviewed on appeal (Court of Brescia, ord. 5 August 2010, pres. est. Onni), when the Court stated that “the protection against discriminatory behaviour is absolute and unbounded, not conditional on the nature and quality of the instance of neglect or abuse nor limited to fundamental human or civic rights”. In spite of this statement the Court eventually rejected the appeal on the grounds that, in the meantime, the Ministry had drafted the blueprint for a decree that extended eligibility for holiday tickets to foreigners; the Court deemed that this would do away with the instance of discrimination, in spite of the fact that for months, the benefit had been available to Italian citizens only.

Conversely, the appeal was upheld by the Milan²⁰⁸ Court, which ascertained the discriminatory nature of the behaviour demonstrated by the administrations in question, despite the fact that The Prime Minister’s office had in the meantime extended the benefit to both EU and non-EU citizens with regular residence in Italy.

Access to welfare system and enrolment on the public register

Given that on many occasions access to welfare (particularly the services provided by local government bodies) is conditional on residency, it seems appropriate to bear in mind that discrimination can also be perpetrated by barring foreigners from officially registering their residence in a specific municipality.

The lower court rulings of the past two years have been impacted by various decrees passed by mayors of Northern Italy municipalities demanding that foreigners meet different criteria than those expected of Italian citizens in order to enroll on the public register (thus contravening art. 6, par. 7 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration).

We call particular attention to:

- a) The ruling from the Court in Brescia on 11 December 2009 est. Sanpaolesi, relating to the case of the municipality of Ospitaletto (BS), which, in a decree dating from 2009, demanded that foreigners wishing to apply for residence present a “self-certification stating that the applicant is not due to serve a prison sentence or undergo any form of detention on Italian soil. With regards to the country of origin it is compulsory to produce some form of certification either in the original or in a certified copy duly translated and endorsed corresponding to the criminal record from the country of origin”²⁰⁹
- b) The ruling from the Court in Brescia on 9 April 2010, est. Massetti,²¹⁰ concerning the case of the municipality of Montichiari requesting that non-EU citizens who

²⁰⁸ Court of Milan, sent. 17th August 2010 est. Casella.

In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_milano_ordinanza17082010.pdf

²⁰⁹ In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_brescia_ordinanza_111209.pdf

²¹⁰ In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/tribunale_brescia_09042010.pdf

apply for residence provide a series of documents not required of Italian citizens for the same purpose.

- c) The ruling of the Court in Bergamo on 28 November 2009 est. Cassia;²¹¹ on 07 March 2011 est. Ippolito;²¹² on 15 March 2011 est. Ippolito²¹³ and on 31 March 2011 est. Massetti,²¹⁴ relating respectively to the cases of the municipalities of Brignano Gera d'Adda (BG), Palosco (BG), Telgate (BG) and Calcinato (BS), which demanded that those wishing to apply for registered residence be in possession of a long-term EU residence permit (in addition to a series of conditions subject to the suitability of their housing arrangements, to a minimum annual income requirement and to the possession of a passport fitted with a regular entry visa).

²¹¹ Cf. footnote 1.

²¹² In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/trib_bergamo_ordinanza_07032011.pdf

²¹³ In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/trib_bergamo_ordinanza_15032011.pdf

²¹⁴ In http://www.asgi.it/public/parser_download/save/trib_brescia_ord_31032011.pdf

SECTION 3

IMMIGRANTS AND THE MEDIA

Immigrants and the media: one step forward, two steps back

Grazia Naletto

A careful analysis of the daily press from the past two years reveals light and shadows, one step forward followed by countless steps back. Among the improvements, we come across, first of all, a raised awareness of racist behaviour (particularly of a violent variety) compared to the past. This shift in attitude has chiefly affected the two main Italian newspapers, which often chose to feature articles pertaining to this subject on the homepage of their websites.²¹⁵

There is also greater variety among the topics addressed. Granted, the presence of foreigners and individuals belonging to ethnic minorities is still, on the whole, depicted as a destabilizing factor that “creates problems” for Italian society. However, we also come across articles that inquire into the living and working conditions of immigrants,²¹⁶ or stress their positive impact on the running of our economy and welfare system;²¹⁷ others still chronicle the immigrants’ demonstrations and protest marches, thus recognizing them as autonomous political and social subjects²¹⁸, and, if nothing else, bring to the fore the issue of the reform of citizenship laws and of the right to vote at local elections.²¹⁹

Within the same journalistic environment, initiatives are promoted to highlight the need for a more scrupulous observation of the dictums of professional ethics on the part of people working in the media.²²⁰ Besides continued support for campaigns of longer standing promoted by the Group of Journalists against Racism (www.giornalismi.info), further encouragement was provided by the President of the National Press Federation who, in May 2011, chose to publicly condemn the poisonous language employed by the

²¹⁵ In the course of the investigation carried out by the media between 15 July 2009 and 31 August 2011 into cases of racism and discrimination, “La Repubblica” was the source of information in 148 cases, while “Il Corriere della Sera” in 66 cases, out of a total number of 851. Cf. the database available on www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org.

²¹⁶ The journalistic inquiries about the exploitation of immigrant labour in the countryside are accompanied, particularly in 2010, by in-depth evaluations of the impact of the economic crisis on the foreign workforce.

²¹⁷ Mainly to be found in “Il Sole 24 ore”

²¹⁸ For example in the case of the immigrants strike called by the “1 Marzo” committee in 2010 (receiving an extraordinary amount of coverage compared to that devoted to similar episodes in previous years) or during the protests of immigrant workers in Brescia and Milan carried out in November of the same year or the farm-workers’ strike in Nardò at the end of July 2011.

²¹⁹ A great deal of air time is taken up, for example, no doubt because of its political implications, by the conflict between the Lower House speaker and both Northern League and the Prime Minister between the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010. But interest is also stirred by the launch of the campaign “L’Italia sono anch’io – (I am Italy as well)” promoted by 19 organizations civil society on citizenship and right to vote, www.litaliasonoanchio.it. Cf. for example V. Polchi, “L’Italia sono anch’io”: due leggi per la cittadinanza degli immigrati, (“I am Italy as well”: two bills on citizenship for immigrants) La Repubblica, 22 June 2011; M. Gerina, *Cittadinanza e stranieri: 50.000 firme per una nuova legge*, (Citizenship and foreigners: 50.000 signatures for a new bill) “L’Unità”, 23 June 2011; C. Gubbini, *Cittadini e votanti: due leggi dal basso*, (Citizens and voters: two laws coming from below) “Il Manifesto”, 23 June 2011.

²²⁰ The Journalists’ Association National Council signed the ethics protocol on asylum seekers, refugees, victims of slave trafficking and immigrants better known as the *Charter of Rome* on 12 June 2008; this document had already been signed by the Fnsi upon solicitation by Acnur. The Charter aims concern circa “the information provided on refugees, asylum seekers, victims of slave trafficking and immigrants”; Italian journalists are invited to “exercise the highest degree of tact and caution” when dealing with these issues; “to use suitable legal terminology”; “to avoid the spreading of inaccurate, incomplete or distorted information” and to offer protection when they chose to speak to journalists.

leader of the Northern League Bossi during the electoral campaign in Milan.²²¹ The Federation also decided to back, together with other associations, a day of protest, on 25 July 2011, against the Interior Ministry's decision to permanently deny journalists access to Cie and Cara centers.²²² These are all signs of a trend, the importance of which, in view of the general context that we plan on introducing below, must not be underestimated as it demonstrates a growing awareness (still in its early stages, but at least present in media circles) of the need to abandon the imprecise, simplistic, stereotyped and largely negative representation of immigrants living in our country. At some point during 2009, crime reports featuring foreign citizens as real or alleged criminals were slowly edged out of the limelight as far as information on immigration is concerned.²²³ Maybe because there haven't been as many opportunities to point the finger of blame at a "foreign monster", as happened with Doina Matei and Nicolae Romulus Mailat (both convicted of murder), or of Alexandru Loyos Isztoika and Karol Racz (later proved innocent).²²⁴ Or possibly on account of the global financial crisis, which began in 2008 but made its effects felt on the Italian economy only in the second half of 2009, prompting the media to focus their attention on the socio-economic distress of the population, rather than on their "fear" of others.

That said the "steps back" by far outnumber the more positive signals. The tales of everyday racism carry on regardless, following patterns only marginally different from the past. The "immigration-criminality" pairing definitely does not disappear from the press, but instead comes to represent an echo of the political debate and of statements made by institutional representatives rather than the result of independent initiative on the part of the media. From this point of view, we believe that the trend highlighted by Marcello Maneri in the first White Book has become ever more marked:

"Media rely on official sources (police authorities and political think-tanks) in terms of productive material and are eager to make room for their voices and those of 'experts', or to claim them as their own. That which appears in newspapers or on TV broadcasts incorporates, therefore, the point of view of the institutions and at the same time dictates their way of speaking, translating their ideas into everyday language, putting words into their mouths. The closer these statements are to current public opinion, for instance when they can be employed to validate the latest scaremongering story, the more successful they will prove to be".²²⁵

The main contents

²²¹ Cf. the press release *No alla parola Zingaropoli, è carica di disprezzo*, (No to the term 'Zingaropoli', as it implies contempt) launched on 19 May 2011.

²²² The decision of 1 April 2011 reserves access to the "Immigration Centers" to international organizations such as Unhcr and Oim and to associations carrying out projects jointly with the Interior Ministry.

²²³ At the same time, opinion polls on the "perception of public safety" are less frequently carried out than in the previous two years.

²²⁴ In reference to the murder of Vanessa Russo (26 April 2007), to that of Mrs Reggiani (30 October 2007), to the violent attack in the Caffarella park (14 February 2009) to which we devoted an in-depth article in the first white book: cf. G. Naletto (by), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, - (Report on racism in Italy) manifestolibri, 2009, pages 59-68 e 83-87.

²²⁵ Cf. M. Maneri, *I media nel razzismo consensuale*, in *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, - (The media and the endorsement of racism, in Report on racism in Italy) op.cit. page 50.

Public safety remains the main frame of reference within which to structure media coverage on immigration. We believe that, in the period in question, the dialogue follows four main guiding principles:²²⁶

The first is represented by the study of the consequences of law 94/2009, and of the package of safety measures as a whole (as well as subsequent regulation), following its enforcement: the introduction of illegal entry and residence as criminal offences, to be found in the so-called “integration agreement”; “selective” regularizations, the turning back, en-masse, of potential asylum seekers arriving from Libya in 2009; the fixing of a 30% cap on the presence of non-Italian pupils per classroom²²⁷; the many rulings from Italian and European courts on some of the most important regulations introduced, as featured in news stories between mid-2009 and mid-2011.²²⁸ At the heart of all these strands lies the well-known and completely fabricated distinction between immigrants lacking documents (so-called “illegal” individuals) and those in possession of a living permit (“regular” ones), with ensuing stigmatization of the former and patronizing benevolence towards the latter.

The second deals with the series of measures introduced by various mayors in order to “evacuate” Roma settlements, to restrict immigrants’ access to certain social services and in general to make it difficult for them to settle in the area. Roma settlements have, sadly, long been associated with issues of public safety and urban decline, particularly in instances of forced evictions and internal unrest²²⁹. But this “safety-oriented” perspective also comes into play when considering mayors’ decrees on matters of social welfare. In this instance, the debate focuses on the “sustainability” of immigrants in terms of numbers and the *controversial* relationship between Italians and foreign nationals, which, they claim, *inevitably* stems from the “rivalry” linked to the access to certain social services. Some of the articles concerning the case of Adro are quite enlightening in this respect.²³⁰

Islamophobia features prominently in all newspapers, for instance in the guise of reports on crimes such as the murder of Sanaa Dafani in 2009, to explain the complex and long-drawn out issue of the building of the mosque in Genoa, during the debate on

²²⁶ As well as the data provided by Annamaria Rivera in her article, we recall that which was analyzed by the Centro d’ascolto dell’in-

formazione radiotelevisiva (Media News Studies Centre) in the course of a survey carried out over the first 10 days of the second half of 2010. 58,6% of the news containing references to minorities deals with immigration. This presence is strongly felt in legal bulletins crime reports (36% of references). 24% of cases concern social issues, 11% deals with politics while only 1.28% tackles the theme of immigrant labour. Cf. *Primo rapporto Mistermedia sulla rappresentazione delle minoranze sui mezzi di informazione italiani, luglio 2011* - (First Mistermedia report on the depiction of minorities in the Italian media, July 2011), available on www.mistermedia.org.

²²⁷ On 8 January 2010, the Education Ministry approves the introduction of a 30% cap on foreign students in each classroom for all grades (not including foreigners born in Italy who therefore possess adequate “linguistic competence”); widely anticipated in previous months, this decision sparks an intense political debate. The MP Cota motion approved by Parliament on 15 October 2008 and “inspiration” for the Gelmini ruling had a similar aim: ensuring that the cultural hegemony of the majority grouping in the class room is asserted.

²²⁸ For an analysis into the development of rules and regulations in the field of immigration, see the article by A. Callaioli in the second chapter.

²²⁹ The most grievous accident which received the best media coverage is undoubtedly the one that occurred in Rome on 6 February 2011. Four Roma children of 4, 5, 8, and 11 die after a fire breaks out in the makeshift shack where they live, in a settlement on the Via Appia Nuova.

²³⁰ See further the *Creativity of the Municipality of Adro*.

the so called “anti-burqa” bill²³¹, or following the terrorist attack in Norway on 22 July 2011. The many anti-Muslim statements on the part of institutional and political figures find echoes in the articles of several highly regarded journalists.²³² In this case, the “clash of civilizations” represents the most widely followed interpretative trend, as conclusively illustrated here by Annamaria Rivera and the in-depth inquiry we provide into the murder of Sanaa Dafani.²³³

In conclusion, crime reports offer countless opportunities for the press to periodically reawaken the “invasion” syndrome: the Rosarno riots in January 2010, the events of Via Padova the following month,²³⁴ the influx of immigrants during the first months of 2011 provide a backdrop for the long-standing (and entirely unsuccessful) debate on the excessive presence, in our country, of immigrants without a residence permit, a fact which is purportedly directly proportionate to the incidence of crime, organised or otherwise. Coverage of the Rosarno episode and of the arrival of immigrants from Tunisia and Libya are, in our opinion, a clear example of the bias and misrepresentation typical of a certain brand of media coverage.

Communication strategies

Numerous elements, as is frequently noted, contribute to the creation of discriminatory communication strategies. We have chosen to illustrate a few of these in the examples that follow.

The selection and positioning of news stories undoubtedly plays a decisive role: *omissions* and *emphasis* are two frequently employed communicative devices employed by the media when dealing with the question of immigration. We have chosen to devote an in-depth paragraph to a murder case, that of Petre Ciurar, virtually ignored by the media; but other significant omissions could easily be brought to mind. Among them: Identification and Deportation Centers (CIE) should, by law and according to the statements of the various Interior Ministers in power since 1998, see to it that expulsion orders are enforced. What we are seldom told by the high-circulation press is that less

²³¹ We refer to the bill approved by the Committee of Constitutional Affairs of the Parliament on 2 August 2011, n. 627.

²³² For example, Lucia Annunziata writes, on 23 July 2011, the day after the massacre in Norway: “Islamophobia has been constantly growing in recent years under the surface in this very quiet country where about 150 thousand Islamic individuals, out of a population of five millions, have managed to create a *permanent element of cultural friction*, a very concrete example illustrating how Islam *cannot easily be integrated*, even in such a deeply secular country. Within the framework of this tension, within the collapse of a system, a reaction from the violent and racist right wing, especially on the Internet, has been felt in recent years in this like in other Nordic countries. They are spurred on by nostalgic references to the past that have similar features to those expressed by the many Nazi sympathizers active before WW2 in all the Nordic countries”. Cf. *Addio a un paese perfetto*, - (Farewell to a perfect country) “La Stampa”, 23 July 2011.

²³³ Cf. A. Rivera, *Due anni di scena razzista in Italia. Protagonisti e comprimari, vittime e ribelli*, - (Two years of racist events in Italy. Main players and minor actors, victims and rebels) in the first chapter and P. Andrisani, *L'uccisione di Sanaa Dafani – (The murder of Sanaa Dafani)* in the third chapter.

²³⁴ Hamed Mamoud El Fayed Adou, a 19-year-old Egyptian, after bandying insults with three Latin-American youths on a bus, is followed out of the vehicle and stabbed to death on 13 February 2011. The murder drives some of the victim’s fellow countrymen to riot, smashing cars and windows. The episode, needless to say, sets off yet another security alarm with extreme stances taken by the League leaders who ask for “house by house” inspections while Mayor Moratti introduces new decrees to fight urban “decay”.

than a half of the immigrants detained in these centers are actually deported.²³⁵ The reconstruction of the Rosarno riots and of the numerous immigrant landings that occurred in the course of spring 2011, on the other hand, represent two excellent examples of how facts can be overstated in order to present a misleadingly alarming picture of immigration.

The *reversal* of the order in which information is presented, often combined with omissions of various sorts, is one of the more consolidated practices, especially when headlines are taken up by the politics of immigration and the arrival of boatloads of immigrants. The opinions of certain columnists regarding the Rosarno events and the so called “landings” provide an insight on this matter. In both these cases a critical reflection on the injustice and incompetence of national and European migration and reception policies is attempted only by a handful of, left-wing, analysts.

The *simplification* of narrative, with a view to giving a hurried, perfunctory interpretation of events or a dichotomous representation of the public debate developing around them, is another recurring feature. The reconstruction of the media coverage of the murders of Sanaa Dafani and Maricica Hahaianu exemplifies the former instance, while the in-depth account devoted to the creative activism of the mayor of Adro sheds light on the latter.

Finally the *terminology* used clearly plays a key role in the production and reproduction of stigmatizing and denigratory depictions of immigrants and minorities. There are many examples that could be put forward, and multiple critics have chosen to dwell on them, so we will attempt to steer clear of repetition.²³⁶

Six exemplary cases

Muslim, violent, stranger, suspicious, invisible, “clandestine”: the cases that we report could all be called to mind by means of these words even when they are not explicitly used. Sanaa, the young woman (23 years old) murdered by her father on September 2009, is identified above all as a Moroccan citizen and belonging to a *Muslim* family, rather than as a young, female worker. The very fact that she belonged to a different religion (the extent to which she was a practicing Muslim remains unclear) confers a national relevance on her death and allows many to dust off a superficial, simplistic, twisted and manipulative debate about the a priori incompatibility between different religious practices and traditions. The portrayal of the Rosarno riots, despite not conforming to the simplification hinted at above, is nonetheless deeply affected by the articles, photos and images devoted to the immigrants’ protest on 7th January. The

²³⁵ Reversals and omissions referring to CIE are, in fact, numerous: starting with the concealment of their true nature – from their misleading description as “reception centers” (cf. A. Rivera, *Regole roghi. Metamorfosi del razzismo* - (Rules and pyres. The metamorphosis of racism) edizioni Dedalo, pp.144-149, to the complete ‘cluelessness’ of the media as to the consequences they entail. Rare exceptions are the newspapers “Liberazione” and “Il Manifesto” as well as a few independent online publications such as www.altraeconomia.org and www.sbilanciamoci.info

²³⁶ Giuseppe Faso has frequently stressed the importance of the use of an appropriate terminology and helped us to understand the subtly discriminatory meaning of apparently “innocent” words: cf. his *Lessico del razzismo democratico. Le parole che escludono*, (Lexicon of democratic racism. Words that exclude. Derive Approdi, 2008. Also see the aforementioned work of Maneri, Rivera and Boldrini.

media impressed on our collective memories above all the notion of a *violent* demonstration rather than the account of the subsequent “witch-hunt against black people” carried out by a number of local residents in the course of the following days. The Adro episode of April 2010, represents one of the most unfortunate yet significant facts to be at the centre of public debate in the past two years. Adro is not the only municipality to have taken a “firm stance” against those families who failed to pay for school meals.²³⁷ However several factors, which we will deal with at a later juncture, brought it to the attention of the press meaning that, perhaps for the first time ever, a mayor’s discriminatory and non-inclusive political strategy attracted intense media coverage. The Adro case is an excellent example of how the local manifestation of institutional racism, supported by the self-centred, selfish attitude of part of the population can condemn men, women and children of foreign origin, who have been living in our country for years, to a state of ‘alienation’. However, it also illustrates how this ‘policy of exclusion’ can easily transcend the sphere of discrimination based on nationality: the unfolding of events allows the vilification to extend, in the course of the public debate, from foreign families to insolvent, and thus low-income, families as a whole.

The case of Maricica Hahaianu, a 33-year-old Romanian woman killed following a quarrel in the Anagnina tube station in Rome presents many parallels, in our opinion, with the murder of Vanessa Russo by a young Romanian Rom girl, again in Rome, in April 2008. The roles, however, are reversed: in this case Romanian nationality is an attribute of the victim rather than the perpetrator of the crime. As we shall see, this will be instrumental in shifting the narrative in a different direction to that that which led to the demonization of Doina Matei. In the former case, the reconstruction of events leaves room for a tale of repentance, suffering and desperation on the part of the murderer, 21-year-old Alessio Burtone. Concurrently attempts to denigrate the victim, a Romanian, and thus intrinsically *suspicious*, character, are allowed to circulate to a far greater degree.

The murder of Petre Ciurar a 20-year-old Romanian, shot dead with pistol and rifle in Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto in December 2010, falls into the category of non-news: only some local newspapers chose to report it, with the sole exception of an article in ‘La Stampa’. Yet the theory of a racist raid is advanced from the very first. Petre is a young, homeless, Rom, killed in an out-lying area of an out-lying town. Nothing could prove more simple than to ignore his death and render him *invisible*. The three women and one man who were with him during the shooting were also consigned to invisibility: five days after the murder they received a single interview from one of the few journalists who chose to take an interest in the case.

And, to conclude, the tragic tale of the hundreds who died at sea between February and August 2011 gives ample testimony to the schizophrenic approach of the media towards immigrants who land, or at least attempt to land, on our shores. Men, women

²³⁷ A few days earlier, a similar choice was made by the town of Montecchio Maggiore (VI) where eight primary school pupils (two Italians and six foreigners), because of the failure to pay for the canteen service, receive a sandwich instead of the meal. In another case, after a similar initiative by the municipality, four female teachers and two caretakers of the nursery decided to donate their meal tickets to an “insolvent” Senegalese girl in Fossalta di Piave on 4 February 2011.

and children die and cause indignation, but even after their death they remain *illegal* protagonists of the “biblical exodus” which is often predicted but never comes to pass.

Sanaa's murder

Paola Andrisani

On 15th September 2009 Sanaa Dafani, an 18-year old girl of Moroccan origin, is killed by her father, El Ke-tawi Dafani, a 45-year-old Moroccan citizen, who stabs her repeatedly in the throat. The murder takes place in a wood next to Grizzo, a small hamlet belonging to the municipality of Montereale Valcellina in the province of Pordenone. Her "Italian" partner Massimo De Blasio, 31, is driving Sanaa to the restaurant where she works as a waitress. Her father is lying in wait in a secluded road and attacks the young couple as soon as they get out of the car. Sanaa tries to escape but her father chases her down and kills her. Her partner, wounded during the confrontation, calls for help and informs rescuers that the murderer is Sanaa's father. El Katawi Dafani is arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment as a result of the trial held in June 2010; the penalty is reduced to 30 years in January 2011.

Sanaa's murder is a terrible and unacceptable crime. However, Sanaa's body is violated again and again after her death in the course of a public debate that uses indignant rhetoric to launch yet another Islamophobic campaign and back the theory of the supposedly incompatible nature of different "cultures".

From the very first, the media tends to interpret the murder as stemming from the alleged clash between different religions and cultures.²³⁸ And we are back to square one. Three years after the murder of Hina Saleem²³⁹ in Brescia, the death of Sanaa is exploited in order to recycle the idea that the social and cultural integration of

²³⁸ Cf. among the others: *Figlia musulmana ama un italiano, il padre la uccide (Muslim daughter loves an Italian. Her father kills her)* 16 September 2009, Ansa; *Pordenone: padre marocchino uccide la figlia, forse un altro caso Hina (Pordenone: Moroccan father kills his daughter. Another case like Hina's?)* 16 September 2009, Asca; *Marocchina 18enne uccisa dal padre. Viveva col fidanzato. Vietato dalla tradizione (Moroccan girl of 18 murdered by her father. She lived with her partner. Tradition forbids it.)*, 15 September 2009, "La Repubblica"; *Il padre di Sanaa: 'Era la mia vergogna'. La figlia uccisa perché conviveva con un italiano. Il pm: la pista dei motivi religiosi (Sanaa's father: she was my shame'. Daughter murdered because she lived with an Italian. Prosecutor follows the line of enquiry of religious motives)*, 17 September 2009, "Corriere della Sera"; *Uccide la figlia che ama un italiano. Gli amici: Era bella, voleva integrarsi (Murders daughter who loved an Italian. Her friends: she was beautiful and wanted to fit in)*, 16 September 2009, quotidiano.net; *Minigonne, lavoro e ragazzi. Sanaa uccisa perché occidentale (Mini-skirts, a job and men. Sanaa killed for belonging to the Western world)*, 17 September 2009, "Il Giornale"; *Giovane marocchina ama un italiano: il padre la uccide (Young Moroccan girl loves an Italian. Her father kills her)*, 16 September 2009, "Il Sole 24 Ore"; *Marocchino accoltella a morte la figlia (Moroccan man stabs his daughter to death)*, 15 September 2009, "La Stampa"; *Si fidanza con un italiano, marocchino uccide la figlia: le prime ammissioni (In a relationship with an Italian, Moroccan man kills his daughter: the first confessions)*, 16 September 2009, "Il Messaggero"; *Il fidanzato è italiano. E il padre la uccide (The partner is Italian. Her father kills her)*, 16 September 2009, "Avvenire"; *Amava un italiano "infedele". Sanaa, 18 anni, sgozzata dal padre a Pordenone. (She loves an Italian. "infidel". Sanaa, 18, butchered by her father in Pordenone)*, 16 September 2009, "Il Gazzettino"; *Musulmana ama italiano il padre la uccide (Muslim girl loves an Italian. Her father kills her)*, 15 September 2009, "Il Secolo XIX".

²³⁹ The murder occurred during the summer of 2006. Hina Saleem, just turned 20, was born in Pakistan and immigrated to Italy in 1999, aged 14, to be reunited with her family who lived in Sarezzo (BS). She quickly settled into Italian society, promptly learning the language, making friends, attending schools and showing a certain degree of independence from her family. She had later found a job in a pizzeria in Brescia and decided to move in with her partner, Giuseppe Tempini, a 33-year-old blue-collar worker. It would appear that it was this decision to choose an "Italian non-Muslim" partner that particularly clashed with the will of the family who wished to marry her off to a "Pakistani husband", and from that moment the relationship between Hina and her family became tense. The murder unfolded in her father's house where Hina is called on a pretext (the visit of a relative) while her father and some other male relatives lay in wait for her. Her mother (Bushra Begun, 46), brothers and sisters were on holidays in Pakistan. The final ruling of the court rejected the defense's request to reduce the penalty for "cultural and religious reasons". The verdict states that Hina was not killed by her father in name of "cultural or religious reasons or traditions" but because of a "twisted and pathologic relationship of parental possession" that made him unable to accept his daughter's desire for freedom and autonomy.

immigrants, particularly Muslims, in Italian society²⁴⁰, is a virtual impossibility. The media juggernaut sets out at once to prove that so-called “Islamic people” “are stuck the Middle Ages” and are not well-suited to the western world, forgetting that the Italian criminal code recognized, up until 5th August 1981 (art. 587), a specific extenuating circumstance for honour killings.

The arguments, so to speak, adduced in support of this theory are always identical: “the war of religions”, the “clash between civilization and barbarity” and the opposition between the “good” and the “wicked” bear witness, once again (after the Hina case that was almost unanimously interpreted from an anti-Muslim perspective), to the defensive, self-justifying attitude of our society which holds everything it perceives as foreign or different at arm’s length, instead of attempting to understand the true dynamics of events.

Likewise, all the various platitudes concerning the relationship between Italians and foreigners, Catholics and Muslims make a comeback.²⁴¹ Some even call attention to the simultaneous occurrence of Ramadan to support this religious reading.

The political manipulation of Sanaa’s murder also begins to take place immediately. The minister for equal opportunities Mara Carfagna makes known her desire to personally press civil charges against the “Islamic” murdering father²⁴² (would she do the same for the many Italian men who commit similar crimes?)

The day after the tragedy, Pdl MP Souad Sbai states: “Yet another cultural murder, resulting from a drive towards integration held back by the extremist propaganda of would-be Imams who slither like poisonous snakes through our cities, spreading hatred and ignorance and preaching a vicious intolerance”. The Northern League of Friuli Venezia Giulia demands a census of all the Muslim immigrants who live in the region (thus effectively cataloguing them).²⁴³ The province of Pordenone asks the President’s office to award a “commendation” to Sanaa’s partner, “our brave countryman and catholic entrepreneur, who risked his own life to defend his partner, of a different religion and nationality, from the homicidal and fundamentalist fury of her father”. According to her partner, religion was the motivating factor behind the murder and extremists like Sanaa’s father “should go back to where they came from”. Immediately prior to the

²⁴⁰ “It is impossible – the League’s Mayor of Azzano Decimo Enzo Bortolotti declares – to integrate with these Muslims. We are faced with yet another ‘Hina case’ that reveals how impracticable living with these people actually is. It is heinous that in a fit of pique, a father can murder his daughter. It is true that this happens among Italians as well, but if it is confirmed that there is a religious motive, it will mean we are dealing with people who do not wish to integrate. Extremists are among us, 16 September 2009, “Messaggero Veneto”.

²⁴¹ “Everyone has fitted into the slot assigned to them by stereotypes”, Manuela Cartosio comments on “Il Manifesto” in *Il corpo di Sanaa e gli stereotipi* – (Sanaa’s body and stereotypes), pointing out how the tendency to simplify and the “create opposing factions” (Islamic murder versus gender murder) prevails, in the public debate, over any desire to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the many factors that may drive someone to commit so terrible a crime, 18 September 2009.

²⁴² “A horrific murder, inhuman, unconceivable, byproduct of an absurd war of religion that has made its way into our homes. This is why I will request that the Attorney general’s office to allow me to press civil charges once the trial begins. Such terrible cases inspire us to continue along the path of an “Italian model” of integration for immigrants: everyone in Italy must have the right to follow their own religion, but the country can accept it only if it respects human rights, including those of women, and national laws”, *Sanaa: «Delitto orribile, ci costituiamo parte civile»* (Sanaa: ‘horrific murder, we’ll press civil charges’), 16 September 2009, pariopportunita.gov.it.

²⁴³ This question was put by Northern League Regional Leader Danilo Narduzzi who stated: “The death of Sanaa is yet another sign that all those who cluelessly talk about integration between Islam and the western world are dangerously deluded. Unlike the left, we are firmly against the indiscriminately welcoming everyone, because moderate immigrants, if indeed such a thing exists, sadly remain silent before these crimes. An opinion poll is needed to understand where Muslim communities are located, especially those linked to fundamentalist groups. We cannot feed a climate of uncertainty so we need our citizens to be informed about the identity of those who we interact with daily”. We will ask the relevant authorities to draft a “map of danger”, 17 September 2009, Asca.

funeral, following Sanaa's mother's statement in which she claimed to have "forgiven" her husband adding that "perhaps Sanaa made a mistake", the mayor of Azzano, the League's Decimo Bortolotti berates: "Forgive him? Did she say she had forgiven her husband after he murdered their daughter? This is absurd, inconceivable and extremely serious. We're hardly in the middle of the Sahara desert! What? Instead of sending out a strong and unambiguous message to other Muslim women *who are subservient to their husbands*, this lady... No I am sorry. I do not have the authority to drive her out, but I wish to be very clear about one thing: such a person is not welcome in my town".²⁴⁴

And of course there is the press. "throat-slitters are only the tip of the iceberg. Violence is deep-rooted in the Islamic faith" runs the title of a piece by Magdi Cristiano Allam on *Liberio* (17 September 2009) in which he claims that Islam is "an *inherently violent religion*" based on the "negation of non-negotiable values that lie at the heart of our European civilization."²⁴⁵ "He murdered in the name of Allah, when he could have chosen to be an Italian" reiterates Carlo Panella, also in *Liberio* (17 September 2009), who sustains that "Sanaa Dafani was butchered in the name of Islam rather than that of ancient traditions or the honour code. A *reactionary Islam* which strictly forbids marriage (to say nothing of sexual intercourse) between a Muslim woman and a Christian, Jewish or agnostic man, in the name of Allah". The journalist points a finger of blame at members of the Democratic Party (PD) and of the left-wing as a whole for refusing to acknowledge "the *Islamic motive* behind this murder", stating that:

"Sanaa is not the victim of a cultural conflict, but of a *religious one*, firmly rooted throughout Europe. Whoever puts this murder down to the tradition of honour killings, therefore, makes a deliberate mistake, pretending to ignore the fact that the Muslim father killed Sanaa not so much in obeisance of an ancient tradition, but rather in response to a *precise tenet of Sharia law*".

Giulio Menotti repeats the same concept in "Il Foglio": "In Pordenone like in Gaza. A European report sounds the alarm. Hina and the other girls killed in the name of Sharia

²⁴⁴ Cf. *Logica islamica: per la madre Sanaa se l'è cercata*, - (Islamic logic: Sanaa's mother thinks she was asking for it, 18 September 2009, "Il Giornale". The description of Sanaa's mother proposed by the author of the article is quite instructive: "Fatna Dafani, born Sharok, married at 17, is a corpulent, stocky woman, like many Muslim women in their forties. She wears a purple jellaba that only reveals her toes, her face broad, with marked features, encircled by a purple and black veil [...]. She says little; her eyes are full of suspicion and distrust: it's not hard to tell that she is repeating what she has been coached to say by her brother-in-law and the Imam Ouatik who watch over her. It's them, the men, who lay down the law. It was like this in Fatna's house, down there in Morocco. Men command, men decide. And, here too, it is men who argue, explain, suggest. She only repeats things "like a poor trained parrot". Anthropologist Annamaria Rivera makes the following remarks on the stereotypes dominating representations of immigrant women's bodies: "foreign women, more than others, seem to be stuck with two alternatives: the pathetic, submissive, docile figure and the highly unsettling woman with initiative, devoted to deception, whoredom or crime". Cf. Rivera A., *La bella, la bestia e l'umano. Sessismo e razzismo senza escludere lo specismo*, (The beauty, the beast and the human. Sexism and racism, and let us not forget specism). Ediesse, 2010, pag. 94.

²⁴⁵ The article expresses genuine anti-Muslim hatred: "What our country and our continent, utterly *dominated by the Islamically Correct* and plagued by do-gooders, refuses to acknowledge is that the Islamic fathers who slaughter their daughters consider this a sacred right and a social obligation, dictated by a male chauvinist, misogynous, bloodthirsty and violent ideology inspired both by Islamic religion and a primeval tradition. At its roots is the *negation of non negotiable values* that represent the heart of our European Civilization and are, at the same time, an integral part of the Christian faith: the inalienable right to life, the centrality of an individual's dignity and freedom of choice [...]. The true problem is that we are afraid to admit that there are Muslims among us who butcher their daughters because Islam demands it and because it is in accordance with their traditions. We are even more scared; terrified even, about the possibility of stating out loud that Islam is an *intrinsically violent religion*. We'd rather curip out our tongues. Even though we realise that the *Quran is full of verses that legitimize hatred, violence and death* for infidels, whether they are Christians, Jews, non-believers, homosexuals or , as is the case here, women"

law. A boom in honour killings (16 September 2009). The journalist refers to so-called honour killing and is anxious to “clarify” that

“We are not even certain how many occur in Europe. Often these religious executions are declassified and listed under the category of “domestic violence”. The victims of these honour killings fall prey to various ‘sins’: the refusal to wear the Islamic veil, the tendency to dress in a western manner, to associate with Christian friends (up to the point of converting to a different faith) or at least non-Muslim ones, the desire to study or read “impure” books, to ask for divorce or to lead too much of an ‘independent’, ‘modern’ lifestyle”.

The practice of honour killings would therefore appear to be a purely Muslim one. The author’s conclusion does not come as a surprise: “It is in this world of domestic submission and extremism, often marked by the removal of the clitoris, that *Islamic hatred* flourishes”

The statements of the various Imams and leaders of the Muslim world count for nothing²⁴⁶, though they condemn the murder on no uncertain terms, declaring that the Qur’an does not in any way claim that it is legitimate for a father to kill his daughter simply because she chooses to lead an “excessively westernised” lifestyle.

Sanaa’s murder is, without doubt, terrible and cruel, the second of its kind in Italy; however – without wishing to detract from its seriousness – this is a crime carried out by *one* man against one woman. Nobody mentions all those Muslim girls who live perfectly happily with partners belonging to other cultures and faiths. Many cases of wife-murder committed by Italian citizens in their own homes receive very little media coverage, but if the perpetrator is a Muslim, the case will certainly be on everybody’s lips.

First of all like in many other cases, Sanaa’s murder speaks of the violence of sexist patriarchal authority against a young woman who decided to live her life, making choices that her parents do not share or understand. It is a type of violence which is unfortunately common in every country, irrespective of specific religious and cultural practices and traditions. Secondly, it highlights the complexity of a generational conflict that, when combined with the experience of immigration, often also assumes a cultural tone. Fortunately, some observers break the mold and try to direct the debate onto this analytical plain. Sanaa’s case is neither “an Islamic crime” nor “a clash of civilizations” as Paolo Rumiz and Renzo Guolo write on “La Repubblica”.²⁴⁷ Religion, not to mention so-called “tribal traditions”, have little to do with it. Rather we can observe the “sense of failure on the part of the father-figures” of immigrant families, who, having let change in, have to deal with a second generation of children who find it hard to tolerate the constraints imposed by their community. As a consequence they experience the

²⁴⁶ Cf: *Il rischio di lasciar sole le giovani donne musulmane. Sanaa, giovane migrante di seconda generazione*, (The risk of abandoning young Muslim women. Sanaa, the young second-generation immigrant) 20 September 2009, womenews.net.

²⁴⁷ Cf: P. Rumiz, *Il padre-padrone* (The master-father), 17 September 2009, “La Repubblica” e R. Guolo *La rivolta delle figlie* (the daughters’ revolt), 17 September 2009, “La Repubblica”; see also L. Meandri, *Caso Sanaa: integrazione e xenofobia* (The Sanaa case: integration and xenophobia), 22 September 2009, “L’altro Quotidiano”.

growing feeling of helplessness of a male society that is swiftly losing its position of control over women's bodies.

"A daughter's rebellion, unacceptable and "subversive" inasmuch as it upsets the traditional order on an everyday, family level, speaks of a desire for self-determination on the part of young women who consider themselves in any case to be Muslims, whether or not they wear a veil. This proves that, when dealing with this type of occurrence, we should talk about Muslims, rather than Islam, acknowledging their different ways of interpreting their faith and the ways in which they choose to behave. Some of them are practicing and extremist; others live religion more as a form of culture, or are completely secularized. This internal plurality is fueled by those girls, in their combined roles of non-dogmatic believers and of women who want to make decisions about their own life, with their female individuality."²⁴⁸

Once the "honour" of the family is undermined, it weighs on the good name of the "father/master" and on the respect itself enjoyed by male authority in the community of origin. Igiaba Scego also labours this point in "L'Unità": "To simply state 'this is the same old story between Islamic people, it is none of our business', will never help us to gain understanding. As women, we need a believable explanation. Those who kill us want to eliminate, destroy, efface us. What they really want to do away with is our right to an independent life. As usual, the woman is considered to be the fruit of Adam's rib, an appendix. Those who kill do it in order to reaffirm the women's inferiority"²⁴⁹

Invaluable voices but still too isolated to make a dent in the tragic ad-hoc syllogism, devised by the media and political theorists, of the clash of civilizations: Sanaa's father is an "Islamic"; he killed his daughter because "it was required of him by his religion"; therefore we must conclude that all "Islamic people" would murder their daughters if their religion demanded it.

²⁴⁸ R. Guolo, cit.

²⁴⁹ I. Scego, *Sanaa, l'imam di Pordenone: «È un delitto dell'ignoranza»* (Sanaa, the Imam of Pordenone: 'A murder caused by ignorance' 17 September 2009, "L'Unità").

The Rosarno riots

Grazia Naletto

Rosarno, 7 January 2010. It is around 1.30 PM and two young African men are walking along state highway 18 that connects Rosarno and Gioia Tauro. A dark Volkswagen jeep approaches with two people on board, shots are fired from an air gun: one of the youths, an asylum seeker from Togo, is wounded in the chest. Around 2 PM another, identical, attack occurs: a 25-year-old man from Guinea is shot in the left hip while walking along the street with some friends, near the decommissioned factory “la Rognetta”. Once again, a dark car is involved. These are the facts leading up to the immigrants’ riots in Rosarno, but few will take the trouble to reconstruct the details, by interviewing the victims, for example.²⁵⁰

On 7 January, the first news bulletins, lifted almost entirely from the websites of the main national newspapers, focus their attention on the various signs of “urban warfare”: bins capsized, windows smashed and cars destroyed by immigrants:

“Armed with iron bars and sticks, the immigrants, mostly from Africa, invaded the main road that passes through Rosarno, wreaking havoc in some of the most important streets. The outbursts of violence left no stone unturned; they fell upon whatever was at hand: cars, some with people still inside, houses, vases and rubbish bins emptied onto the road.” (Ansa, 7 January 2010).²⁵¹

These are the images that spring to mind when we think of Rosarno, partly due to the videos and pictures that are still available online,²⁵² even though something far more serious occurred in the days to follow: violent or aggressive attacks with, as their targets, not objects but people, namely the entire group of African immigrants, giving rise to a true instance of ethnic cleansing.

We remember the broken cars and smashed windows, although the reports dedicated to this case by all the newspapers inform public opinion of what most of them, including local and national institutions, already know. In Rosarno and the surrounding area, every year during the citrus fruit-picking period, between 1500 and 2000 foreign farm hands are employed and exploited in inhumane living conditions: 20 euros a day for 12-14 hours of work, completely in the black economy with no help towards accommodation; Piana workers are forced to live in crumbling structures such

²⁵⁰ Il Manifesto, which devoted several articles to the Rosarno riots, and Human Rights Watch are among those who do. Cf R. Cosentino, *La caccia al nero con i fucili a pallini ‘Come animali’*, (Black men hunted with shotguns ‘like animals’) 10 January 2010. Victims are immediately joined in the hospital by volunteers from the immigration observatory Africalabria.org who have been supporting immigrant workers in Rosarno and surrounding area for years.

²⁵¹ The press bulletin “Africans shot spark urban warfare in Piana Gioia Tauro” is reiterated the very same day in: “A Rosarno la rivolta degli immigrati” (Immigrants riot in Rosarno), Corriere.it; “Rosarno, immigrati in rivolta centinaia di auto danneggiate” (Rosarno, immigrants riot, hundreds of cars damaged), Repubblica.it; “Immigrati in rivolta, caos a Rosarno” (Immigrants riot, chaos in Rosarno) lastampa.it; “A Rosarno immigrati in rivolta: scene di guerriglia urbana” (Immigrants riot in Rosarno: scenes of urban warfare”, ilsole24ore.it.

²⁵² See for example the photo gallery still available on the Corriere della Sera website: http://www.corriere.it/gallery/cronache/01-2010/rosarno/1/riolta-immigrati-rosarno_f63a92de-fbd6-11de-a955-00144f02aabe.shtml#3

as a decommissioned oil mill, the former Opera Sila, the former la “Rognetta” plant and several ruined, isolated farmsteads with no sanitary installations. And there is more. The gunshots on 7 January are not the first to be fired: attacking immigrants with stones, sticks or firearms is a popular local “game” dating back to at least 1990, when a young Maghrebian man, Mohammed El Sadki , was shot in the legs.²⁵³

Exploitation, disgraceful living conditions, trampled civil and human rights and gunshots: for twenty years this has been the life that immigrants who work in the fields of Rosarno have been leading.

The protest held on 7 January 2010 is not the first of its kind: on 12 December 2008, after yet another shooting at the expense of two young Ivorians who were seriously injured, immigrants organized a peaceful protest march, which did not, however, elicit any form of acknowledgement from the state.

On 7 January 2010, in the context of a crisis that heavily affected a local agricultural economy which found itself overwhelmed by the competition posed by Southern Mediterranean countries, disastrous EU policies and the Mafia’s constant speculating, all the rage and frustration accumulated by the foreign farm hands in the course of years of exploitation and abuses spilt out into open rebellion. At around 6 PM, four hundred immigrants organized two road blocks on highway 18 and in another part of the town, and then proceeded to march through the centre, destroying cars and shop windows and upturning rubbish bins. The protest continued the following day, this time with no material damage involved. The riots came as a surprise to everyone: the local population, police authorities, the media and the general public, perhaps precisely because this was the first time that the protest had progressed into a fully-fledged riot, despite the endless history of intimidation and violence directed against the immigrant workers. It is even more surprising in an area where the “ndrangheta” controls everything and nobody dares to speak up. The State’s influence simply does not reach as far as Rosarno: locals know this well and immigrants soon pick up on it. This is the key to understanding the reasoning behind the facts that occurred between 7th and 10th January. The real piece of news from those days concerned the pogrom carried out against African workers by groups of Rosarno citizens. “Vigilante patrols” of locals conducted a proper man-hunt against black people for several days: they managed to injure several immigrants with iron bars, truncheons, billiard cues, stones and firearms; the old farmhouses where some of them lived were burnt to the ground.²⁵⁴ A “delegation” went so far as to occupy the town council (replaced by a state-appointed official while it is investigated for bowing to mafia pressure since 2008) to publicly advocate the deportation of *all* the African workers. The spreading of utterly unfounded information, such as the news that a pregnant mother had lost her baby as the result of a blow suffered during the rioting, only served to escalate the tension.

²⁵³ Alessio Magro reconstructs the history of the attacks suffered by African and Maghrebian immigrants in Rosarno for Il Manifesto. Cf the article published on 16 February 2010 *Calabria infelix, 20 anni di violenze e di accoglienza*, (Calabria infelix, 20 years of violence and reception) also contained in the invaluable “Arance insanguinate. Dossier Rosarno”, (bloodstained oranges. Rosarno dossier) by Associazione Da Sud, <http://www.dasud.it>.

²⁵⁴ Later, Human Right Watch documented at least nine assaults that resulted in the injury of at least eleven immigrants. Cf. Human Rights watch, *L’intolleranza quotidiana. La violenza xenofoba e razzista in Italia* (Everyday intolerance. Racist and Xenophobic violence in Italy), 2011, pag.28. 21 injured foreigners were sent to Calabrian hospitals during those days according to the Interior minister.

Many immigrants chose to leave immediately, but those without their own means of transport were forced to leave the village under police protection: those who tried to make their way alone on foot ran the risk of being lynched.²⁵⁵ Even activists from local associations who always tried to help immigrants were scared to show their faces.²⁵⁶ According to the Interior Ministry, 748 immigrants were transferred in police buses to centers in Crotone and Bari. Around 330 managed to leave by their own means. Most of them without receiving the pay due to them.²⁵⁷ The Africalabria watchdog estimated that around 1200 immigrants either escaped or were sent away from Rosarno.

On 9 January some of the makeshift shacks around the former “la Rognetta” factory were torn down, even though they still contained all the personal belongings of the immigrants forced to hastily abandon them. Still not satisfied, on the 11 January, when the ethnic cleansing had been brought to completion, Rosarno citizens organized a demonstration to protest against the media for supposedly misrepresented Rosarno as a racist town. Incidentally, the anti-mafia banner sported by the local high-school students saying “hopefully one day we will be able to say: once upon a time there was the Mafia”, was very badly received and they were forced to fold it up. The images of the rioting in Rosarno traveled far and wide and “Le Monde” went so far as to publish a piece entitled: “*Racisme: le syndrome de Rosarno.*”²⁵⁸

Of course, the *whole* of Rosarno is not racist, but without doubt the insanity displayed in the course of these few days is.²⁵⁹ The theory of a “war of the disadvantaged” and of the unsustainable state of social “decay”, advanced by some in order to play down or deny the racist nature of the violence carried out by *part*, we must bear this in mind, of Rosarno’s population, does not convince. The use of weapons, the people being pursued in the streets, the beatings, the blockade around the structures where immigrants live, the explicit public request for a mass deportation, and the “bestialisation” of the enemy: what is all this if not racism?²⁶⁰ Evidently, the judges and prosecutors involved in the trial against Giuseppe Ceravolo, Giuseppe Bono e Antonio Bellocco, the only three people charged, to this day, in relation to the violent acts committed in Rosarno, must have thought differently, as they ruled out racism as an aggravating circumstance..²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ A description of what happened to the immigrants during those days can be found in L. Boldrini, *Tutti indietro*, (Moving backwards) Rizzoli, 2010 and in the archives of the Africalabria.org observatory available on www.terrelibere.org

²⁵⁶ Giuseppe Pugliese, contact for the local observatory Africalabria.org and well-known in Rosarno, is forced to hide in order to avoid reprisals. Indeed, one of the many unfounded rumours circulating during those hours pins the blame on the observatory for egging the rioters on.

²⁵⁷ Cf. The data is that given to the Parliament by the Interior minister. See: Senato della Repubblica, Legislature 16° - Main room – Stenographic report of session n. 309 on 12 January 2010. Some of the immigrants manage to obtain what is due to them thanks to the volunteers of Africalabria.org who contacted the employers before the workers left.

²⁵⁸ Cf. “Racisme: “La syndrome de Rosarno” (The Rosarno syndrome), 2 February 2010, “Le Monde”.

²⁵⁹ See, for example, some of statements gathered by Attilio Bolzoni among the Rosarno citizens who built a barricade on highway 18, for *il Corriere della Sera* on 10 January 2010: “We are not racists, but they are beasts”, which is also the title of his article. “Calabrian immigrants abroad have never behaved in such shocking way as these Bedouins are doing here”; “they ate cats and dogs, and probably mice too” and so on.

²⁶⁰ Association Cir, usually very careful in its use of the language, also talks about racism and pogroms in a document that, among other things, gets straight to the heart of the events of Rosarno: the feeling that people were entitled to “take the law into their own hands”, in a place where nobody trusted institutions, partly thanks to Law 94/2009 that effectively institutionalised “vigilante patrols”. See: *Rosarno: capolinea dello stato di diritto*, (Rosarno: here ends the rule of law) on www.cir.it

²⁶¹ The first one was sentenced to 6 years for voluntarily knocking over an immigrant with his car (who luckily was not seriously injured) on June 2010. The second, who drove a digger into a group of immigrants, was sentenced to 2 years, but only for obstruction of justice, on March 2010. The third (the son of an ‘*ndrangheta*’ member) attacked an immigrant, after grazing him

If the State's influence is felt little in Rosarno, in Rome, even though it is strong, it pretends not to understand what is happening. On 8 January the Interior minister goes as far as to declare, during a TV broadcast: "We have been too liberal. For all these years illegal immigration has been allowed to continue, without effective measures in force to counter it, and this has fuelled crime and created situations of serious urban decay like that in Rosarno".²⁶²

Sadly for him, both IOM and ACNUR ascertained that most of the Africans evicted from Rosarno were in possession of a residence permit and that among them were also many refugees and asylum seekers. Nonetheless, crowd-pleasing is stronger than evidence and, in Parliament, the Minister, although forced to admit that "the majority of the immigrants involved in the clashes holds a residence permit", insists: "The Rosarno incident also highlights all the negative consequences of illegal immigration against which, for precisely this reason, the Government is fighting and will continue to fight with no reserves. Illegal entry into our country lays the basis for the ostracising and exploitation of many foreigners (and of their labour), and often represents a breeding ground for the recruitment of a criminal workforce".²⁶³

Therefore, according to the minister, the African workers of Rosarno are not the victims of exploitation and violence, rendered necessary by an economically weak agricultural system, impoverished by competition on a global scale and controlled by the local mafia;²⁶⁴ on the contrary, it is "illegal" immigration that boosts crime levels. A reversal of reality that, fortunately, finds limited consensus even in sectors of the media less inclined towards critical autonomy.²⁶⁵ Among the less lucid (to say the least) articles, is one by Angelo Panebianco that unquestionably stands out. Posing as an expert on "integration", the best he can manage is to accuse local priests of being too welcoming, teachers and magistrates too democratic and intellectual "troublemakers" too "liberal", thus contributing to the shortcomings of immigration policies and losing sight of the distinction between illegal and regular immigrants. He is one of the few who endorses the Interior Minister's "interpretation": "last but not least there is the issue of illegal immigration, which brings with it the phenomenon of exploitation on the part of organized crime (as in the case in Rosarno)". The journalist goes as far as to legitimize the establishment of the crime of illegal entry and residence just introduced by Law n. 94/2009"²⁶⁶.

Leaving aside the exceptions, much of the daily press coverage portrays the immigrants' riots and the subsequent racist violence in a very different way, trying to

with his car at a very high speed, and then the Carabinieri who intervened to the foreigner He was condemned to three years for obstruction justice and assault. We still know nothing about the authors of the two aggressions carried out on 7 January. The text of the verdicts is published by Human Rights Watch cit. pag. 35.

²⁶² The TV program in question is *Mattino 5*, presented by Maurizio Belpietro.

²⁶³ Cf. Senato della Repubblica, cit.

²⁶⁴ See A. Mangano, *Gli africani salveranno l'Italia*, (Africans will save Italy), Rizzoli, 2010.

²⁶⁵ The reversal of responsibilities proposed by the Minister was discussed by Alessandro Dal Lago, Alessandro Portelli, Enrico Pugliese, Annamaria Rivera and even Eugenio Scalfari. Cf: A. Dal Lago, *Con loro*, (With them) 9 January 2010, "Il Manifesto"; A. Portelli, *L'amore dei bianchi*, (The love of the white) 12 January 2011, "Il Manifesto"; E. Pugliese, *Non è solo questione di 'ndrangheta*, (It is not an 'ndrangheta problem) 10 January 2010, "Il Manifesto"; E. Pugliese, *Le colpe rovesciate*, (The reversed blame) 29 January 2010, "Il Manifesto"; A. Rivera, *Dopo Rosarno*, (After Rosarno) 15 January 2010, "Liberazione"; E. Scalfari, *L'inferno di Rosarno e i suoi responsabili*, (The living hell of Rosarno and those responsible) 10 January 2010, "La Repubblica".

²⁶⁶ A. Panebianco, *La fermezza e l'ipocrisia*, (Firmness and hypocrisy) "Il Corriere della Sera", 8 January 2010.

document the living conditions that foreign agricultural labourers were forced to put up with, the impact of the current economic crisis on the local citrus-picking system, the lack of public intervention in organising reception structures to deal with the presence of a seasonal labor force, the pervasive presence of the *ndrangheta*. We see a great relevance in that which happens a few months later, when the investigation, set in motion by the reports filed by some of the immigrants transferred to Bari against a number of the men who exploited their labour, leads to the arrest of twenty-one agricultural bosses and nine foreign foremen. According to a witness account published by “Il manifesto”, some of the complaints were lodged not long before the 7 January, in December 2009. Seven immigrants filed a complaint with the Carabinieri in Rosarno against a landholder because they had not been adequately compensated for their work. “The officers gave us a piece of paper and told us that they would let us know, but they never called”.²⁶⁷ Those reports could have driven some to incite the reactions of the local population against immigrants in order to free themselves of a community which had started to get in the way.

Some of the immigrants who had run away from Rosarno came back to pick oranges the following year, but in a much reduced number. Others live in Rome or in Caserta, working for other farms in the south in situations similar to that of Rosarno. In the meantime the town elected a new mayor. In January 2011, a reception area was set up (accompanied by an inevitable protest letter signed by five hundred citizens), consisting of containers provided by the Protezione Civile accommodating up to seventy seasonal farm workers, strictly fenced and with regulations forbidding the guests to go out between midnight and 5 AM and to be involved in any form of political activity. Many other immigrants had to continue to fend for themselves. Activists belonging to the architects’ association Stalker pointed out, correctly, that the two and a half million euros allocated by the Interior Ministry to the creation of a training center and a reception structure for sixty people could have been put to better use by coming up with a project to fix up the unoccupied houses, less expensive and more suitable to the needs of seasonal workers, in order to ensure decent living conditions to as many people as possible.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Cfr. R. Cosentino, *Ci dicevano sempre: domani ti paghiamo*, (They always assured us: we will pay you tomorrows) 27 April 2010, “Il Manifesto”.

²⁶⁸ Cfr. A. Mangano, *Rosarno, Proibita la politica, non gli sgomberi degli africani*, (Rosarno. Political involvement is not permitted. The eviction of Africans is.) 22 March 2011, www.terrelibere.org

The creativity of the Municipality of Adro

Grazia Naletto

2 April 2010. We are in Adro; a town of about 7.000 inhabitants in the province of Brescia that would have remained largely anonymous had its mayor, Oscar Luigi Lancini, not become conspicuous for his bizarre decisions.²⁶⁹

In the run-up to the Easter holidays, 42 children from the nursery and primary school receive an envelope to deliver to their parents, aimed at those families who have neglected to pay for school meals. The letter contains a note from the headmaster: "The school does not have the adequate structural and economic resources to be able to guarantee assistance to the pupils, particularly with regard to providing an alternative meal to that which is supplied by the municipal administration in the form of the school canteen service". This is why the children of non-compliant parents "must be picked up from school at 12:10 and brought back by their parents at 14:10 for afternoon lessons". Basically: those who do not pay do not eat. Among them are many foreign children.

The piece of news is reported on the website bresciaoggi.it on 2 April, but only a week later is it picked up by the national press, mainly because a businessman from Brescia decides to donate 10.000 euros in order to allow all children to continue eating at school. The episode is more complex than it first appears. Many people and concepts are involved: the 42 children who risk being excluded from school meals (after the letter is circulated the number will drop to 26), the school, the mayor, the parents whether in debt or otherwise and the Association for the promotion of school activities that runs the service, become the main players in a story where cynicism, racism and obtuseness are densely entwined with political and economic interests that will be fully revealed only several months later. In the background is a public debate that tends to simplify the object of discussion and the parties involved reducing them to diehard "supporters of solidarity" and those "with an undying devotion to rules and legality".

Many articles and news reports dedicated to this case by newspaper and local and national TV stations give priority to one or other of these categories. As if the problem really lay in the incompatibility between the basic right of children to be fed and the respect of rules and regulations, rather than in the risk of alleviating institutional responsibilities with regard to the difficulties encountered by low-income citizens. Completely absent, with rare exceptions, is any kind of discussion about not burdening the consumer with the expenses for an essential service such as school meals (particularly when a social and economic crisis that has already had a huge impact in the North is in full swing), and about creating stronger public policies, particularly for the more disadvantaged section of society. The debate takes a dichotomous approach: are insolvent families really poor or simply 'devious'? Should a sense of humanity or respect for the rules prevail? Solidarity or legality? Public or private intervention? Did the businessman from Brescia do well to weigh in with his donation? Phrased thus, the whole debate cannot but support and fuel the image of an unsolvable conflict between

²⁶⁹ In recent years, the mayor of Adro is only one of the League mayors to stand out for their initiatives aimed at limiting the rights of foreign nationals and those belonging to minorities. For an in-depth survey of statements and political initiatives promoted by the Northern League, both on a local and national level, see the book by W. Peruzzi, G. Paciucci, *Svastica verde. Il lato oscuro del va' pensiero leghista*, (Green Swastika. The dark side of the league's *Va Pensiero*) Editori Riuniti, Rome 2011.

ensuring equal opportunities for all and the concept of “us first”.²⁷⁰ From this point of view the mayor and part of the population of Adro gave one of the cruelest and most unfortunate demonstrations of the possible interaction between social and institutional racism as witnessed by the shocking report by Sandro Ruotolo for the TV program Annozero broadcast on 22 April 2010.

Let us attempt to recreate the details of these events.

The aforementioned letter actually stems from a report on missing payments submitted to the mayor by the head of the association in charge of school meals (she will immediately regret it) and from a disagreement between headmaster and mayor. The school lacks the funds to cover missing payments and the headmaster turns to the town council for help. He is turned down, in a statement asserting that the administration will not be available to “cover debts”. The same mayor had already distinguished himself for introducing rulings that denied foreign citizens access to certain social services (rental grants and financial support for low-income families or individuals).

The distribution of the letter immediately elicits an angry reaction from some of the parents involved for the way it is delivered (by the children, in the classroom right in front of their schoolmates); but also because it is sent to some families whose only mistake was to leave the payment for previous months a few days late.²⁷¹ On 7 April Cgil and Caritas protest against the decision, taking food, fruit and water to the school. That same day the headmaster decides to adjourn the enforcement of the decision for few days. Conversely, the mayor sticks firmly to his position, allegedly prompted by a number of parents who regularly paid the fees. “They kept on asking me: why are only us Italians expected to pay for school meals?” and uses the opportunity to guarantee town council transportation for the children who will have to return home for lunch.²⁷²

On 12 April the press publish an anonymous businessman’s letter condemning “the worrying, mounting intolerance towards those who have less”; he adds that he has provided the amount necessary in order to guarantee access to school meals to all children for the current academic year.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ This, for instance, is what Paolo Granzotto writes on “Il Giornale” on 8 April 2010: “We, Italian citizens enjoy many rights, to say nothing of foreign citizens. The only thing that is asked of us – and them – in exchange is to respect a few duties. One of these concerns the, more or less prompt, payment of the school meal fee for our beloved children. Four euros and few cents a day. It is foreseeable, nay certain, that so-called civil society, committed and vigilant journalism (Michele Santoro’s staff has already contacted one of the insolvent mothers) and part of the political world will passionately condemn the mayor of Adro’s initiative.

Focusing on the children’s tears (weak from hunger)[the italic is ours – ed.] humiliated because they cannot sit with their schoolmates. They will insist on the fact that Lancini belongs to the Lega and will thus read into the fact that the majority of the forty children concerned by the decree are immigrants’ children. They therefore imply – or clearly state – that we are facing another malicious and reproachable expression of racism. So, as predicted, the same old, farcical, story. The only option Oscar Lancini has is to resist, keeping in mind his behaviour as an upright public administrator”.

²⁷¹ One of the mothers writes a letter addressed to the mayor and the headmaster of the school: “What have I done wrong? Having paid the February and March fees ever so slightly late. Even if the municipality was bankrupt, I would expect more care, caution and respect before humiliating a ten-year-old girl in front of her teachers and schoolmates. As I am a single mother who works all day long, separated and with three children, I may in the future once again find myself unable to pay the bill on time. In this case I would prefer to be warned by mail before my daughter is turned away from the canteen. Obviously I can return the cost of the stamp to the municipality”. See *Mensa scolastica, niente pasti ai bimbi delle famiglie morose*, (School restaurant, no meals for the children of insolvent families) 2 April 2010, Bresciaoggi.it

²⁷² However, someone observed that the decision to send the children home is in contrast with compulsory attendance during meal times as established by art.1 Law n.176/2007.

²⁷³ The “Io non ci sto” (I will not stand for this) letter was published online by the main national newspapers; it is still available on the information website: www.sbilanciamoci.info

The letter causes an uproar: the author is not a left wing militant, but a centre-right voter who condemns his party, the Northern League the church and most of all his fellow town residents in no uncertain terms: “I feel ashamed that my village is championing this gradual moving of the intolerance bar one notch higher each year: firstly with the issue of the price put on illegal immigrants’ heads, then the cutting of regional support, now with children’s school meals, but I can think of many other instances.” [...] “Do they not wonder whether someone is attempting to distract their attention to a serve their own ends? Do they not wonder whether they are being used?” News of the donation triggers the protest of some “regularly contributing” parents who set up a number of very eloquent banners in front of the school: “as parents who pay we should not be obliged to support the children of those who don’t. We are not a bail-out board. We often struggle to make ends meet as well, but it is a service we must pay for”. “Stop the scavengers” “No more living off the Lombard workers’ backs”.²⁷⁴ Having called a meeting, around thirty of them state that they will refuse to pay the fee if someone is subsidizing the insolvent families’ share, describing the businessman’s contribution as an example of “charity work that does not get to the heart of the problem”. In the meantime the children and the insolvent families remain hidden in the background, especially on TV.²⁷⁵ That is until an episode of *Annozero*, broadcast on 22 April, introduces them to the general public. The report reveals the racist connotations of the city council’s decision, but most of all the violent nature of the intolerance shown by some of the Italian parents who took a stand against the businessman’s donation. That evening the TV displayed “a cross-section of a desolate county” as Mony Ovadia writes on *l’Unità*: “Constitutional society has imploded into mindless apathy thanks to the efforts of a populist and paternalistic right-wing while most of the opposition is feebly bleating or simply looking on from a distance. The Adro affair is an indicator of a heated climate, poisoned by xenophobia and racism disguised as common sense, where even the critical solidarity of a right-wing businessman is identified as the dangerous sedition of someone who does not know how to stay in his rightful place”.²⁷⁶ Sandro Ruotolo, reporting from Adro, gathers some of the families involved into a room with the mayor present. On one side are the insolvent mothers, mainly foreigners, on the other the ones who have paid up. The mayor aligns himself with the latter, physically as well as in terms of opinion. The confrontation between Giovanna, one of the Italian mothers and Samira, a Moroccan mother who has lived in Adro for twenty years, immediately turns into a vicious discussion. The tone is high-pitched and aggressive, underscored by the continual heckling and applause that mark the various stages of the debate. Giovanna immediately hastens to declare that in Adro “there is no racism, only rules that must be respected, and the parents who do not pay are being crafty”

²⁷⁴ Cfr. *Mensa scolastica: debito saldato*, (School meals. Debt settled) 12 April 2010, tgcom.mediaset.it; *Anonimo benefattore paga la mensa ai bambini di Adro e attacca la politica*, polemiche, (Anonymous benefactor pays for children’s meals in Adro and takes a stand against policies, uproar ensues) 12 April 2010, sole24ore.it; *Il sindaco minacciava di lasciarli a digiuno*, (The mayor threatened to leave them without food) 13 April 2010, Corriere.it

²⁷⁵ Only *Il Manifesto* and *L’Unità* publish an article. Cf: G. Salvetti, *Se il razzismo si siede a tavola*, (When racism sits at our table) 15 April 2010, “*Il Manifesto*” and M. Zegarelli, *Adro, la vera storia dei “bimbi morosi” e le bugie leghiste*, (Adro, the true story of the “defaulting children” and the lies of the League) 23 April 2010, “*L’Unità*”. The articles clearly show that the involved families are all but “cunning”: their heads of household are laborers; some of them are under redundancy payment, who unsuccessfully asked for support to the social services.

²⁷⁶ M. Ovadia, *L’Italia si è fermata ad Adro*, (Italy stopped in Adro) 24 April 2010, “*L’Unità*”.

(applause); she lashes out against the “benefactor” because he “insulted and brought discredit to our town” and doesn’t spare Cgil, suggesting a political manipulation on the part of the left. When the journalist tries to point out that, unlike Italian families, foreigners encounter greater difficulties because in most cases they lack an extended family network that can offer protection, his words are drowned by a disapproving murmur from those present in the room.

Though Samira is among those who regularly pay their fees, she maintains that it is necessary to offer support to the insolvent families, bearing in mind that their requests for help to social workers were left consistently unheeded and that, as foreigners, they do not even have access to rental grants. She also reminds her listeners that these are people who used to work and pay their taxes and national insurance contributions but now they have been left jobless because of the crisis. Her words are accompanied by a constant stream of background heckling. The mayor’s speech marks the definitive descent into chaos of the discussion. He accuses Santoro of using the children as a weapon (“it is hard to look into their eyes” the presenter replies); he adds that no child has had to go without food (thanks to the businessman’s donation, *ed.*) and that he has made an appearance in order to defend his village from accusations of racism (thunderous applause); he inconveniences a mayor as far away as Australia in order to state that immigrants “must adapt”; he becomes indignant when Democratic Party MP Civati, a guest on the programme, lists all his previous discriminatory decrees (the price put on the heads of illegal immigrants in 2004; the exclusion of immigrants from rental grants and subsidies for insolvent individuals). Words pile up on top of each other confusedly until the reporter realises that it is impossible keep the situation under control and exclaims: “in twenty years of work I have never witnessed such hatred and intolerance”.

Thirty minutes of TV that it would be useful to broadcast in schools display the very real and violent face of racism in the day-to-day administration of our country.

For a few months, Adro is not longer in the spotlight, but the chapter is far from being closed. In the following months, under pressure from those parents “who follow the rules”, the president of the company that provides canteen service is forced to step down and propose its scrapping to the new board.²⁷⁷ It emerges that the percentage of users in arrears does not exceed the national average and that the company is not in debt but instead has 80 thousand euros in the bank: they are left as an endowment to the school “in order to guarantee the service equally to those who cannot pay their fees for financial reasons”. The canteen service is once again run by the municipality. On 2 September the mayor takes the trouble to announce that the menu will be typical of the Pianura Padana and that “only those who pay will get to eat”.

Not long after, on 13 September, Lancini comes under scrutiny again because the new school building, dedicated to Gianfranco Miglio, is riddled with Northern League iconography.²⁷⁸ The Sun of the Alps is everywhere: on desks, ashtrays, rubbish bins and

²⁷⁷ For a detailed reconstruction of the last days of the association cf. C. Gubbini, *Adro, piatto molto ricco*, (Adro, a very expensive plate) 12 June 2010, “Il Manifesto” and G. Spatola, *La mensa di Adro diventa leghista*, (School meals in Adro fall into the hands of the League) 2 September 2010, “Il Corriere della Sera”.

²⁷⁸ The mayor acted in a way that says it all about the future of “Padania”, should the Northern League remain in power. He made a deal with a private company offering them the old state school buildings in exchange for the construction of new ones. To

the roof, flanked here by two Celtic crosses. The President is forced to issue a public statement requesting their removal. The estimated cost is of about 2.500 euros. This sum would have fed at least two children in the canteen for a year.

buy the furniture, he invited citizens to make a donation: according to the mayor this would allow him to use the private funds in whatever way he chose.

The death of Maricica Hahaianu

Grazia Naletto

Rome, Friday, 8 October 2010. Maricica Hahaianu, Romanian nurse of 33, resident in Italy for five years and mother of a three-year-old boy is at the Anagnina metro station. While she is queuing at the newspaper kiosk inside the station to buy her ticket, a trivial argument breaks out with Alessio Burtone (20) concerning respective places in the queue. The quarrel seems to peter out after the tickets are purchased, but instead it resumes in the station concourse; surveillance cameras document the whole episode. Maricica approaches the young man while walking towards the train: they argue, push each other about until the young man suddenly throws a punch at the woman's face; she drops lifeless to the ground. About ten people pass next to the inert body without stopping. Then, finally, one of the passers-by sounds the alarm and runs after Burtone, stopping him and handing him over to a policeman. Maricica is admitted to Casilino general hospital where she undergoes a difficult surgical procedure: she has suffered a serious brain injury. The doctors decide to keep her in a state of induced coma for four days. On 12 April the coma treatment is interrupted after a slight improvement but she remains in a critical condition. Two days later a further lapse heralds her death, on 15 April.

Alessio Burtone is detained and initially charged with grievous bodily harm. The preliminary hearing judge allows him to remain under house arrest, revoked after the death of Maricica when the charge is commuted into "involuntary manslaughter aggravated by a trivial motive".

A story that, like many others, proves how easy it is for a trivial discussion to rapidly progress into tragedy and for aggressiveness to degenerate into gratuitous violence, partly due to the endless 'security' scares. But there is more. As is commonplace when an incident involves an Italian and a foreign citizen, the tragic affair goes hand in hand with a distorted public debate that tends to lose sight of the key issue: a woman's absurd and incomprehensible death. A sort of "football-game clamor" builds up around the aggressor's possible fate²⁷⁹ especially in the many readers' comments published by the online press, but which also encompasses the political world and the witnesses at Anagnina station.²⁸⁰

The press takes an approach that is only superficially neutral. A more in-depth analysis reveals many differences with respect to the media's portrayal of a similar, but

²⁷⁹ This expression is used by Roberta Carlini in an article published on the website www.ingenero.it, *Maricica*, 21 October 2010.

²⁸⁰ It is not possible to give an account here of the many online contributions still available on the websites of the main national newspapers that each tend to side with either the victim or her aggressor. Instead, we can give some examples of witness accounts put together by journalists. "I was behind them when they left the shop. The young man was walking ahead and the woman was following him, hurling insults at him and later punching and kicking him. The young man turned around and said "Lay off it" and inadvertently struck her with his hand. She dropped to the ground like a sack of potatoes". This is the account given by a shopkeeper who works in the underground station: he defends the aggressor by claiming to have witnessed the whole episode. He adds: "I have never seen anything like it in sixty years: a woman so intent on hitting a man. That woman really asked for it. She even called him a pig", cf. "La Repubblica", 12 October 2010, cit. "Sorry, sorry, sorry, I didn't mean to pass in front of you... She repeated that three times, but the young man, probably after having that realized she was Romanian, continued to provoke and insult her: 'Filthy Romanians, go back to Romania'", this is the very different account given to the police by the owner of the shop in question, published on the website of "il Messaggero" *Testimoni divisi, una barista: 'Gli ha chiesto scusa e lui: tornatene in Romania'* (Disagreements among witnesses, a bartender: "She apologized and he replied: go back to Romania") 13 October 2010.

“reversed” case: the killing of 23-year-old Italian woman Vanessa Russo at the hands of the young Rom girl Doina Matei in another metro B station in Rome on 27 April 2007.²⁸¹ Not only because, unlike in 2007, the nationalities of the perpetrator and victim of the crime are not mentioned anywhere in the headlines (this time the victim is foreign), but, more importantly, because the event is described in a completely different way. Though the trial is not yet over, it is more than likely that, as was the case with Doina Matei, the young man did not hit the woman with intent to kill. Fortunately, Alessio is not turned into a “monster” by the media, as Doina Matei was.²⁸² Plenty of room is set aside for his grief, repentance and to the statements through which he and his lawyer try to lay the blame for the incident on Maricica.²⁸³ Unlike Alessio, Doina is portrayed as a cold, unfeeling girl, the embodiment of that heightened propensity towards crime that characterizes the entire Romanian community.

Some articles go as far as to find justification for the shocking indifference displayed by the passers-by who did not stop to assist Maricica in the “sense of social degeneration and insecurity”. “People are afraid to react because – a woman admits – they risk their own life by getting involved. We cannot live like this”. (Il Messaggero, 13 October 2010). Anagnina metro station is a “free port”; you need to pass through it every day [...] in order to really understand the level of (in)security felt by people”. (Il Corriere della sera, *La gente non reagisce, impicciarsi è pericoloso*, (People do not react. Poking ones nose into other people’s business is dangerous.” Alessandro Capponi, 13 October 2010).

Everyone (his lawyer, the media, investigators, political leaders who express their opinions on this case) excludes racism as a possible motive, though more than one witness refers to it, including Burtone’s mother, and the charges also mention it: “Don’t they teach you how to queue where you come from?” Burtone allegedly said to Maricica, giving rise to the argument. And yet Burtone’s apologetic letter addressed to Maricica’s family and the “the entire Romanian people”, and its publication on the Romanian newspaper *Evenimentul zilei* leaves some room for doubt. Conversely, the nature of the expressions of solidarity towards Burtone and the objections raised by his friends the day he is taken to jail allow little doubt as to their sentiments. On the gate of his house hangs a poster urging to “Free Alessio”. The protests against his arrest are made colourful by racist slogans: “For all he knew, that woman could have had an umbrella in her bag (in reference to the case of Doina Matei)”; “What should we say,

²⁸¹ We included an article on this case in the first white book on racism: Cortellesi G., “L’uccisione di Vanessa Russo” – (The murder of Vanessa Russo) in *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia*, (Report on racism in Italy) Manifesto libri, 2009, pag. 59-63.

²⁸² This even though the young man had already become known for his aggressive behavior in the past. On 6 January 2010 Burtone had kicked and punched another woman in the face as well as issuing threats both to her and her husband had intervened on her behalf. On 18 June 2010, while riding his scooter, he had grazed a boy who was using the pedestrian crossing; when the latter protested, Burtone got off his moped and threw a punch at him.

²⁸³ “She provoked me and hit me in the face. Can I go now?” These are the words that Alessio supposedly spoke to Manuel Milanese, the navy officer who ran after and stopped him after the aggression. Cf.: *Lite alla biglietteria del metrò, donna aggredita in coma* - (quarrel at the underground ticket office, woman attacked and in a coma) 12 October 2010, Corriere.it and *Colpita con un pugno nel metrò, esce dal coma* (Punched on the underground, comes out of the coma) 12 October 2010, Repubblica.it. “If the woman hadn’t followed him, this probably wouldn’t have happened”: this is the statement issued by Burtone’s lawyer as reported in the article *Picchiata nel metrò: ‘Chiederò scusa con una lettera’*, (Beaten up in the underground: I will ask for forgiveness in a letter) 13 October 2010, Corriere.it. In this article the lawyer explains: “The owner of the shop claims that the woman started to kick and punch Alessio after a quarrel occurred concerning the ticket purchase, driving the young man to tell her that he didn’t know her and she had to stop. The shopkeeper and Alessio himself both claim that the latter came out of the shop with Maricica running after him and insulting him”. [...] “Clearly the young man did not realize at the time the extent of the injuries he had caused to the nurse and he has been crying at home ever since. He is distraught, repentant and concerned for the state of health of the women he harmed. Yesterday he formally apologized, through the media, to the woman who came out of the coma”.

when the Romanian women's husbands rape our girls?" About two hundred people inveigh against the mayor, Gianni Alemanno when he announces that the Municipality of Rome will press civil charges against the young man: "From today forward he is the mayor of Bucharest: he only defends Romanians", "I hope Romanians burgle Alemanno's house"; against the press: "Journalists are terrorists, journalists are jackals..." and against the police officers who check their attempts to approach the cars: "Carabinieri pieces of s...". Someone tries to deprecate the victim: "Maricica was a troublemaker; she was always looking for some excuse to start an argument on the tube". The Carabinieri vehicles taking Burtone to jail depart amid enthusiastic applause. The incident is described as shocking by the Romanian language website ziar.com, while Video News in Romania broadcasts a video of the demonstration entitled "applauding the criminal". Unfortunately, as observed in her blog by Laura Boldrini, UNHCR (UN refugee agency) spokeswoman, no attempt to condemn this behaviour is made in the course of the public debate in Italy.²⁸⁴

The trial begins on 19 May 2011. The judge rejects the request for a fast-track procedure that would entail, if approved, a reduced sentence. In the meantime a sit-in organized in Piazza Santi Apostoli by relatives and friends of the accused young man demands "a fair trial without political manipulation". Sadly, Fiamma tricolore's Roman secretary Stefano Tersigni is also present in the square and a few days later, on 22 May, the Patria Nostra movement publishes an article on www.atuttadestra.it that seems geared solely at proposing a politically manipulative reconstruction of Maricica's death.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Laura Boldrini, *E se il romeno fosse stato Alessio?*, "What if Alessio had been the Romanian?" boldrini.blogautore.repubblica.it, 19 October 2010. The sole exception: a statement from Pd MP Paola Concia referred by Adnkronos agency, on 20 October 2010:

Maricica's death: Concia (PD), shocked by the insults hurled at the Carabinieri. We must not write them off as simple expressions of solidarity on the part of Burtone's friends.

²⁸⁵ "I ask why the death of an Italian in his own country causes less uproar than the death of a foreigner, and an arrogant and insolent one at that. Why does a foreigner receive all the attention and the protection from our country's institutions while citizens who pay their taxes, born and raised in Italy, are always treated like third-class citizens? We would be curious to discover the obscure designs that tell or politicians to not lift a finger to defend an Italian citizen, unjustly attacked." [...] "Who knows whether there is still a wreath where poor Sinigaglia died and whether some political activist will have the brilliant idea of naming the street where he was killed after him...! And above all, who knows if Burtone will be awarded a substantial remission or if he will have to serve out his life sentence, "guilty" of reacting to an attack carried out by someone who feels Italian just by virtue of walking on our soil!". See *Movimento Patria Nostra sul processo a Burtone*, - (Patria Nostra Movement on the trial against Bortone) 22 May 2011, www.atuttadestra.it.

The murder of Petre Ciurar

Giuseppe Faso

Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, 5th December 2010. Petre Ciurar, “A homeless 20-year-old Romanian, living in Italy for just over a year”²⁸⁶, is killed “by shots fired from handgun and rifle”, in Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, in the province of Messina. The incident dates back to Sunday 5 December and, at first, attracts very little interest, probably because, as “La Stampa”, the only national newspaper to report the murder (although two days after the event), points out “at first it appeared to be the tragic result of a quarrel between fellow countrymen”: a conditioned response, although whether on the part of investigators or reporters is unclear.

Soon a different theory emerges, “it may be a murder with a racial motive”, the bureaucratic prose of the reporter states, adding: “The State Prosecutor *himself* admits it”. Meaning “*Even the Prosecutor is forced to acknowledge it...*” As we do not know the Prosecutor, it hard to judge whether this “admission” comes from him, the journalist or some form of hearsay. One passage is particularly embarrassing: “Investigators state that, so far, no serious instances of intolerance have been recorded in in Barcellona. Someone did set fire to a house where a group of eleven Romanians lived last year, but only because one of them had, some hours previously, exposed himself to a young girl, *thus* it can be interpreted as a punitive expedition”.

It is not easy to understand, when reading the newspaper coverage, whether this punitive expedition is a serious crime, or whether its gravity is somehow lessened by the aforementioned motives,. The “Corriere del mezzogiorno”²⁸⁷ reads: “The death of Petre Ciurar may well have been the result of a xenophobic raid [...] Investigators are adamant in this respect [...] Carabinieri do not rule out any scenario, but they give prime importance to that of a punitive expedition against immigrants [...] The murder *may* have resulted from a quarrel with an Italian, that *may* have broken out by the traffic lights where Petre was selling lighters”. *Maybe*.

The theory of a “punitive expedition” with futile motives (an aggravating circumstance on a judicial level, which media speak often plays down) features on all newspapers, as well as on blogs and websites, as early as Monday the 6th, immediately following the press release,²⁸⁸:

“(AGI) – Palermo – Yesterday night, a 20-year-old Romanian immigrant was shot several times, and killed, in front of the shack where he lived with his family, next to the railway track in Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (Messina). According to the reconstruction of events operated by the Carabinieri, who are conducting the investigation under the supervision of Deputy Prosecutor Francesco Massara, the shooter is an unidentified individual riding on the back of a moped driven by an accomplice, which they then used to make their escape. Three Romanian women living

²⁸⁶ *Romeno ucciso a fucilate. Raid razzista*, (Romanian shot dead with a rifle. Racist raid) “La Stampa”, 7 December 2010.

²⁸⁷ <http://corrieredelmezzogiorno.corriere.it/napoli/notizie/cronaca/2010/7-dicembre-2010/romeno-ucciso-si-fa-strada-ipotesi-raid-xenofobo-18126403682.shtml>

²⁸⁸ http://www.delittiimperfetti.com/show_vitt.php?id_vitt=3005

in the same settlement witnessed the whole episode and were brought in for questioning”.

Shorter, but more analytic, the ANSA agency²⁸⁹:

“(ANSA) – Messina – At least two persons armed with gun and rifle fired shots at the makeshift shacks on the outskirts of Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (Messina), located 200 meters from the railway station, killing Petre Ciurar who was inside. The man, who belonged to the Rom community, had arrived in town only few days ago. According to investigators, it is likely that those who fired the shots did not intend to kill, hence the theory of an anti-Rom raid rather than a targeted attack against the victim”.

On the same day, the online version of “La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno” immediately reassures its readers: “Investigators say: the shooter might not have intended to kill”, adding: “the theory of an anti-Roma raid rather than a targeted attack on the victim has emerged”.²⁹⁰

The next day, more of the press chooses to focus on the story.

The local Tg3 news broadcasts a report lasting one minute and fourteen seconds by Orazio Aleppo²⁹¹ who paraphrases the brief agency dispatch, adding, as a personal touch, the “mystery” surrounding the murder, the “utmost discretion” of the investigators and “the climate of fear among the Romanians living in the settlement”; a short interview with two of the victim’s fellow countrymen follows; a third of the time is given over to a barely relevant interview with a priest involved in the care of immigrants.

More details are provided in an article by Leonardo Orlando, in the “Gazzetta del Sud”²⁹²: the murder of Petre Ciurar “would appear to be the result of a veritable punitive expedition carried out by youths who managed to elude the “social control” of organized crime in order to “ward off” the group of Romanians camped out in that piece of “no man’s land” left to decay [...]”

Nothing can be attempted without the mafia’s consent. The local journalist agrees with the slightly confused picture painted by La Stampa that insists on an “alleged gang of teenagers” who “many people in the village talk about”: they carry out “incursions”, “now that, after a series of arrests, the Mafia has lost control of the area”; unfortunately this circumstance is denied by the police authorities.

We then learn that the initial reconstruction, according to which a handgun was used, needs to be updated in view of more detailed investigations, because the autopsy revealed “the use of multiple firearms and, in particular, of a shotgun, possibly sawn-off as is customary in these parts”; the crime is put down, slipping, as ever, into the impersonal mode of speech, to a “general intolerance towards Romanian nomads who live by begging, already illustrated by the fire in the house in Pozzo di Gotto last year”.

²⁸⁹ <http://lombardia.indymedia.org/node/34291>

²⁹⁰ <http://lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/notizia.php?IDNotizia=387891&IDCategoria=2685>

²⁹¹ Cf. http://www.delittiimperfetti.com/show_vitt.php?id_vitt=3005.

²⁹² *Petre ucciso al culmine di un raid punitivo* – (Petre killed at the climax of a punitive expedition) (<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/NotiziaArchivio.aspx?art=163672&Edizione=13&A=20101207>)

The following day Orlando revisits the subject,²⁹³ stating that: “A bloodbath was narrowly avoided in the makeshift shacks. The aim of those firing the shots was to ‘get rid of’ the group of Romanian nomads”. He insists on the grave nature of the tragedy based on the new inspection carried out by the Carabinieri:

“We find the unmistakable traces of lead bullets lodged into a white panel, used as cladding, and, in the cardboard next to it, some larger holes most likely caused by handgun bullets. The widely scattered holes in the panel probably attest to the use of a 12-bore sawn-off shotgun loaded with buckshot. It could have been a bloodbath, because the assaulters fired random shots into the night [...]. The victim, who happened to be outside the shanty, was hit in the head by the deadly shower of bullets and died on the spot. By pure chance, none of the other people in the surrounding area were caught in the shots’ trajectory: the four women, the victim’s nine-month old daughter and a second man”.

On 10 December, after a third weary and repetitive article appears on the “Gazzetta”, Petre’s coffin leaves by plane. At last some of his relatives are interviewed, and one of them states: “Nobody came to our aid that night, we called to cars passing on the nearby road for help but nobody stopped. I had to run as far as the supermarket in Abate, where they know me...” The women offer confirmation: “When we rushed out to ask for help, we ran into the middle of the road with our hands raised to show that we were wounded, but nobody stopped and no one helped us until the Carabinieri arrived”.

The article leaves us hanging: “the investigation continues”.

From this point onwards, only five days after the incident, no more information regarding the murder is released. Daniele Barbieri²⁹⁴ includes it among news that has “vanished” off the face of the earth. Online research yields an entry on a Nazi blog²⁹⁵ that quotes the ANSA paragraph, commenting in block capitals: “We have much to learn from our Sicilian brothers!”. After ten days of silence, on 22 December, Riccardo Orioles refers to the case in “Il Fatto Quotidiano”²⁹⁶, but in order to discuss a politician rather than the young Romanian: this article is picked up by other bloggers who complain about the fact that nothing more has been heard regarding Petre Ciurar. No journalist has attempted to probe into it further.

Who knows when and how the Carabinieri and the Judiciary bench wrapped up the inquiry. And who knows whether the mafia carried its own investigation in order to regain effective control of the area.

In our opinion, the case of Petre Ciurar marks the effacement of the value of a human life: purely because he was a “Romanian”, and, what’s more, a member of the “Roma ethnic group”. Citizen of a recent EU member-state in the eyes of the law but, in those

²⁹³ *Usato anche un fucile a canne mozze Si cerca una banda di giovani* (A sawn-off shotgun also used. Police search for a gang of young men) (<http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/NotiziaArchivio.aspx?art=164168&Edizione=13&A=20101208>)

²⁹⁴ “Delitti razzisti e media distratti” (Racist crimes and inattentive media) (<https://danielebarbieri.wordpress.com/2010/12/12/delitti-razzisti-e-media-distratti/>)

²⁹⁵ <http://www.stormfront.org/forum/t761902-23/>.

²⁹⁶ <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2010/12/22/il-politico-e-il-ragazzo-rumeno/83251/>.

of the national press, member of a tribe that lives in “abject conditions”, the “extracomunitari (non-EU citizens)”²⁹⁷: utterly unworthy of any consideration, even when they die.

²⁹⁷ “if you go a bit further you’ll come across the old caravan where illegal immigrants occasionally live”: *Romano ucciso a fucilate...* (Romanian shot dead with a rifle) *La Stampa*”, cit.

A cruel diary

Grazia Naletto

6 February 2011

Press Agency Adnkronos announces the disappearance of a 45-metre boat with more than 200 immigrants on board in the Strait of Sicily.

10 February 2011

A boat sets off from Zarzis, a village situated in Southern Tunisia, headed for Lampedusa. About 100 immigrants are on board. After 15-18 hours of navigation, a Tunisian motor launch spots the boat, issues an order to stop and eventually rams into it. The boat does not absorb the impact and the immigrants throw themselves in the sea; many among them die.²⁹⁸

12 February 2011

A boat headed towards Europe sinks into the sea close to the city of Girgis, in southern Tunisia. In the course of the accident, a young man dies, another is lost at sea and 10 people are rescued.

4 March 2011

A boat with 30 North Africans on board goes under in the Strait of Sicily, about 40 miles off the coast of Trapani, between Marsala and the island of Marettimo. The immigrants are rescued by a fishing boat from Mazara, but during the rescue operations, four of them fall into the sea because of the bad weather. Two of them are immediately rescued by the boat's crew but the other two disappear into the stormy waters.

14 March 2011

Some of the 595 immigrants rescued by officers of the Guardia di Finanza, (finance police) report the sighting of another boat with about 40 immigrants on board in the process of capsizing, close to Lampedusa. Some of the immigrants manage to reach the safety of a larger vessel. An unspecified number of them does not.

25 March 2011

A 12-meter vessel sets sail from Tripoli on 25 March with 72 immigrants on board. Among them are 20 women and two children. They are of Ethiopian, Eritrean, Nigerian and Sudanese nationality. The room is so limited that they are forced to stand. On 26 March the boat runs out of fuel; a distress call is sent to the agency Habeshia that forwards it to the Italian coastguard. The satellite signal places them 60 miles to the north of Tripoli. The immigrants drift for two weeks without food or water until the current pushes the boat back towards the Libyan coast. Only 9 people survive. A couple of these report to Acnur that, during that time, they passed two military ships neither of which stopped to offer help. This is an extremely serious accusation which implies a

²⁹⁸ Unless otherwise stated, for this reconstruction we referred to articles published by Laura Boldrini on her blog boldrini.blogautore.repubblica.it/ and to those posted on the blog <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.com>.

breach of maritime law. The case is exposed by the FortressEurope blog and “il Manifesto”²⁹⁹ newspaper in mid-April but receives attention on an international scale when the Guardian deals with it on 9th May 2011. NATO, naturally, denies the accusations.

30 March 2011

A boat with 17 immigrants on board which had set forth from Libya sinks, on the night between 29th and 30th March, off the coast of Lampedusa. The 6 survivors talk of their ordeal, recounting how their 11 companions drowned during the voyage.

3 April 2011

70 corpses belonging to people who are likely to have died during an attempted journey to Italy are found washed up on the coast near Tripoli.

6 April 2011

A boat carrying 270 immigrants of various nationalities sinks 39 miles off the coast of Lampedusa. It had set sail from Sabrata, a Libyan village located between Tripoli and Zwara, on 3 April. The Italian coastguard is unable, owing to bad weather conditions, to transfer them to safety and the boat suddenly capsizes. Only 50 of those on board manage to survive, despite the presence of many military vessels in the adjacent area. 220 people are lost in the sea.

13 April 2011

A boat with 200 immigrants on board veers off course and sinks, due to stormy waters, a few meters off the coast of Pantelleria, in Arenella, very close to the harbor. The rescue operation manages to save the shipwrecked immigrants but two women and one man die while attempting to reach the rocks.

6 May 2011

According to the reports of some of the immigrants recently arrived in Lampedusa, a boat carrying approximately 600 people, which departed from Tripoli on 6 May, sank under its excessive load immediately after setting off. 16 bodies are found and 32 people are declared missing, but the death toll is much higher.

8 May 2011

In the middle of the night a boat with 528 immigrants on board registers a fault in the steering mechanism and approaches Cala Francese, behind the commercial port of Lampedusa. The boat gets trapped among the rocks in particularly choppy waters. Disaster is averted thanks to the swift response of the police, the Guardia di Finanza, coastguards and fishermen who quickly organize a human chain. Among those rescued are 24 pregnant women and various children. Sadly, the corpses of three men are found under the hull the following day.

²⁹⁹ Cf. G. Dal Grande, *Un'altra strage: morti 65 eritrei, i superstiti accusano la Nato*, (Another tragedy: 65 Eritreans dead, survivors accuse NATO) 13 April 2011, <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.com> and S. Liberti, *La Nato dov'era?*, (Where was NATO?) 14 April 2011, “Il Manifesto”.

2 June 2011

A boat with 850 people on board capsizes during rescue operations off the Tunisian Island of Kerkennah. 577 people, among whom women and children, are led to safety while between 200 and 250 people are declared missing, having fallen into the sea during the operation. According to the Tunisian press agency TAP, the break-down occurred in an area where particularly shallow waters prevent the use of military ships. Thus the boat is approached by dinghies and smaller vessels belonging to the Tunisian guard coast which commence the rescue operations giving precedence to women and children. At this point a general sense of panic sweeps through the remaining passengers, who, in an attempt to reach the dinghies, all move in the same direction at once causing the boat to capsize.

29 July 2011

The Egyptian coastguard retrieves the bodies of 30 Egyptian immigrants who had set sail from Alexandria on a fishing boat headed for Italy on 21 July. On 25 July, the police in Alexandria had received a report signaling the presence of a vessel drifting on international waters, with a broken-down engine.

1 August 2011

At dawn on 1 August a 15-metre fishing boat which had set off from Libya, arrives in Lampedusa with 271 people on board, including 36 women and 21 children. In the hold of the boat 25 corpses are found: they suffocated because, according to the account of some of the immigrants on board, they were forbidden from accessing the deck. A 26th immigrant, who somehow managed to hoist himself up, had been cast into the water. Two of the deceased immigrants reveal signs of bruising and contusions. The public procurator's office in Agrigento opens an inquiry.

4 August 2011

The Pantelleria coastguard receives an SOS call from a ship which had departed from the Libyan harbor of Zanzour with 400 immigrants on board, including women and children, on 29 July. The vessel had been drifting for two days about 90 miles off the coast of Lampedusa, in international waters, with a broken-down engine. The distress call is passed on to the nearest ship, a Cypriot tugboat which immediately responds by sending out some lifeboats. According to some sources, reported by Fortresseurope, the commanding officer of a NATO ship sailing within 27 miles of the vessel in distress refuses to go to its aid. The Italian coastguard, therefore, decides to send out a helicopter and four patrol boats. According to the 367 immigrants rescued, many of whom suffering from hypothermia, between 20 and 30 people died of dehydration and by throwing themselves overboard or suffocating, in the course of the journey.

14 August 2011

A dinghy with six Tunisian immigrants on board capsizes off Marettimo, in the Egadi Islands. Three immigrants are rescued by the coastguard, three more are declared missing.

19 August 2011

A boat with 111 Tunisian immigrants on board breaks down about 20 miles off Lampedusa. The coastguard initiates the rescue operations, but five people jump overboard before they arrive on the scene.. Three of them are picked up by a passing Tunisian fishing boat, while the other two are presumed missing.

15 September 2011

On 14 September a boat with 95 Tunisian immigrants on board, including two young girls, is spotted shipping water by a Guardia di Finanza airplane approximately 30 miles off the coast of Lampedusa. During the night a Guardia di Finanza patrol launch reaches the boat, manages to transfer the immigrants and get them to Lampedusa.

This is a terrible chronicle, which does not make for easy reading, but we think it is important to share it in the hope of revealing the cynicism of all those who persevere in describing the men and women who die at sea while attempting to reach the Italian shores as “illegal”.³⁰⁰ Many tragedies darken these waters in the first half of 2011, but here we have made mention only of those that were reported at the time. It's impossible to say how many more we know nothing about. According to the Fortress Europe blog, 1.674 people died in Italian waters between March and late July 2011.

These maritime tragedies have been constantly accompanied by a schizophrenic public debate where the indignation of the media and the grief expressed by representatives of the institutions have done nothing to put a stop to the alarmist representation of the immigrants' arrival on our coasts nor have they prompted the Italian Government to review its immigration policies.

Between 1 January and 3 August 2011, according the Interior Ministry itself, 51.881 immigrants arrived in Italy altogether, 44.369 of whom on the Pelagie Islands. Among these immigrants, 24.854 were Tunisians, 23.890 from Libya, belonging to various nationalities. The latter, in particular, arrived on just 84 boats, and therefore on vessels that were perilously overloaded³⁰¹

There are several considerations to be made.

Firstly, the number of immigrants reaching our shores by sea in the period following the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and after the start of the Libyan conflict is undoubtedly significant but far from the “biblical exodus” predicted by the Interior minister Maroni and other government officials on various occasions.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Also on 3 August Interior Ministry undersecretary Sonia Viale used this term in reference to the immigrants who had died in the hold of a fishing boat that arrived in Lampedusa on 1 August. Cf. Camera dei Deputati, session held on Wednesday 3 August 2011, *Informativa urgente del Governo sulla tragica vicenda della morte di venticinque persone a bordo di una nave di immigrati approdata a Lampedusa*, (Urgent information issued the Government about the tragic death of 25 immigrants on board a vessel that landed in Lampedusa) pag. 1-3.

³⁰¹ Ibidem.

³⁰² “If we go on like this, more than 80.00 of them will arrive”: this statement on the part of the Interior Ministry was issued when just over 5.000 Tunisian immigrants had so far landed in Italy: it also featured among the headlines of several national newspapers. See for example A. Custodero, *Immigrati, allarme di Maroni. 'In arrivo 80.000 persone' e sugli sbarchi scontro UE-Italia*, (Immigrants, Maroni warns: '80.000 on their way; EU-Italy controversy regarding the landings) 15 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; F. Nicastro, *Maroni, rischiamo 80.000 nuovi arrivi*, (Maroni, we risk 80.000 new arrivals) 15 February 2011, “Il Secolo XIX”; *Maroni: esodo biblico, Ue assente*, (Maroni: biblical exodus, EU absent) 14 February 2011, “La Repubblica”. Few days later, Minister of foreign affairs Frattini during an interview goes as far as talking about a “biblical exodus” of 300.000 persons: see “*Un'ondata di 300.000 arrivi. Il dopo Gheddafi è un'incognita*”, (Wave of 300.000 arrivals. Situation After-Qaddafi remains uncertain) 23 February 2011, “Il Corriere della Sera”.

Moreover, as has been rightly observed, the number of refugees who escaped from Libya and landed in Italy in the last few months is greatly inferior to those who sought refuge in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria and other African countries.³⁰³ The warnings issued since mid February are thus relatively unjustified.

Secondly, the official stances and initiatives, far from being geared towards welcoming the new arrivals with a proper respect for their dignity and human rights, and reassuring the general public as to the manageability of the migratory influx, have given priority to other considerations: yet another manipulation of the phenomenon for electoral purposes; the attempt to obtain additional resources from the EU; a further push towards privatization in the reception system.

There can be no other possible explanation for the choices and decisions made by the Government since the beginning of February 2011³⁰⁴: the shameful controversy initiated with the European Commission and the French and German governments about the division “of burdens and responsibilities” regarding the reception of immigrants; the completely unprecedented declaration of a state of emergency “in Italy and in North African countries”; the resolute conversion of Lampedusa into an “open-air reception center”, where immigrants end up living in disgraceful conditions of sanitation and hygiene, until exasperation leads them to the point of preventing the arrival of other boats; the decision to not immediately distribute incoming immigrants between various other ports and cities around the country; the attempt to impose the presence of Italian soldiers to patrol the coasts on Tunisia; the late adoption of a decree on temporary protection that arbitrarily and paradoxically grants permission for a residence permit only to Tunisian immigrants who reached Italy by midnight on the 5th April; the arbitrary detention of asylum seekers and immigrants in the same structures and the disorderly handling of the reception process, establishing centers with unspecified juridical positions; refusing the media, lawyers and associations not associated with the Interior Ministry admittance to CIE (‘identification and deportation centres’); the detention of unaccompanied minors in unsuitable structures and at close quarters with adults; the mass deportations carried out without guaranteeing the right to ask for international protection or the possibility to appeal; the approval of Decree n. 89 on 23 June 2011, that extended the period of administrative detention in CIE to 18 months.³⁰⁵

The portrayal of these sea voyages given by the media, furthermore, does nothing to reassure the general public after the warning issued by certain ministers.

When only 190 immigrants had arrived in Lampedusa, an article already alerted us to the impact that the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt might have on the the resumption of the migratory influx, under the all-too explicit heading “Revolutions & landings. Lampedusa quakes in its boots”.³⁰⁶ The use of dramatic and colourful vocabulary, the

³⁰³ According to Laura Boldrini, 686.000 have so far fled from Lybia towards other African countries. See: L. Boldrini, *La mozione e gli obblighi internazionali*, (The motion and international obligations) 4 May 2011, boldrini.blogautore.repubblica.it/

³⁰⁴ Precise observations on the government’s decisions have been made by Asgi through numerous press releases. Cf. in particular P.R. of 19 February 2011 *Urgent Adoption at EU level of measures for temporary protection. Warning as to the risk of unsettling asylum procedures in Italy*; P.R. of 31 March 2011, *The only rational way to manage the exodus from Tunisia is the establishment of temporary protection*; C.S. of 7 April 2011 *Tragedies at sea may and must be avoided*. In a document dated 11 August 2011, Asgi reported several violations committed during the detention, rejection and deportation of immigrants and asylum seekers in some CIE and CARA. Press releases and the document itself are available on: www.asgi.it

³⁰⁵ For a detailed of how the reception of Tunisian immigrants and refugees coming from Libya was run, see the contribution by Maria Silvia Olivieri.

³⁰⁶ The article from Laura Anello, was published on “La Stampa”, 2 February 2011.

echoes, in the headlines themselves, of alarmist statements made by politicians, the daily, obsessive calculation of arrivals, reinforced the conviction in the minds of the general public that our country was headed for an “emergency” that it would not be able to sustain. The terminology used was repetitive, emphatic, moving, at times even aggressive: the immigrants’ landings were repeatedly described as an emergency, an invasion, an assault, a wave, a siege, a human river or even a tsunami and therefore could not help but cause “alarm”.³⁰⁷

With few exceptions, historic memory proved utterly unreliable: very few observers thought to place the migratory influx from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya within the context of past relations linking Italy and the dictators of those countries, defined above all by the agreements on so-called counter-immigration policies. Equally isolated have been the criticisms of Italian and European policies on immigration, restrictive on paper but, in actual fact, the true culprits behind what is hypocritically defined “the voyage of desperation”³⁰⁸.

³⁰⁷ It is not possible to mention all the cases where this terminology has been used. However, in order to back our arguments, we have thought it useful to propose at least some headlines appearing in the daily press between February and March 2011: *Rischio invasione clandestini. Ma gli investimenti resistono*, (High risk of an illegal immigrant invasion. But the investments hold firm) 8 February 2011, “Il Tempo”; *Lampedusa, l’assalto dei barconi. 852 clandestini soccorsi nella notte*, (Lampedusa, assault by boat. 852 illegal immigrants rescued overnight) 11 February 2011, Repubblica.it; *Maroni: “Si rischia emergenza umanitaria. Problema legato a situazione della Tunisia”*, (Maroni: ‘we risk a humanitarian emergency. Problems resulting from the Tunisian situation) 11 February 2011, Repubblica.it; *Una nuova Lampedusa tra speranza e paura*, (A new Lampedusa between hope and fear) 11 February 2011, “La Stampa”; *Lampedusa, quattromila in quattro giorni*, (Lampedusa, four thousand in four days) 13 February 2011, Avvenire.it; *Stato di emergenza a Lampedusa. Affonda un barcone*, (State of emergency in Lampedusa. Boat sinks) 13 February 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Frattini: fermare la nuova ondata come facemmo per l’Albania; “Esodo biblico, l’Ue è ferma”*, (Frattini: stop the new wave we did with Albania; Biblical Exodus, EU motionless) 13 February 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Scoppia l’emergenza: già avvistati altri barconi*, (Emergency pending: more boats already spotted) 12 February 2011, “Il Secolo XIX”; *Stato d’emergenza per gli sbarchi*, (State of emergency due to the landings) 13 February 2011, “Il Sole 24 Ore”; *Il suk dei disperati ammassati sul molo*, (The souk of the desperate, crowding onto the quay) 13 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Migliaia pronti a partire, quattro morti su un gommone*, (Thousands waiting to leave, four die on an inflatable boat) 14 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Maroni: esodo biblico, Ue assente*, (Maroni: biblical exodus, EU absent) 14 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Sbarchi, stato di emergenza. Il governo: ora le tendopoli*, (Landings, state of emergency. The government: now the tent cities) 13 February 2011, “La Stampa”; *Sono 5mila. E non si fermano*, (5.000 of them. And they won’t stop coming) 15 February 2011, “Il Giornale”; *Immigrati, allarme di Maroni*, (Immigrants, Maroni sounds the alarm) 15 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Sbarchi anche dall’Egitto “Timori di una nuova ondata”*, (Landings from Egypt as well, “fears of a new wave”) 16 February 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Emergenza Mediterraneo*, (Mediterranean emergency) 16 February 2011, “Il Giornale”; *Ma la sinistra e la Ue tifano per l’invasione*, (Left and EU support the invasion) 16 February 2011, “Liberio”; *Il Viminale adesso teme un’invasione di clandestini*, (Viminale now fears an invasion of illegal immigrants) 21 February 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Emergenza sbarchi. Berlusconi stanza un milione di euro*, (Landings emergency. Berlusconi sets aside a million euros) 19 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Allarme immigrazione. al via la missione europea*, (Immigration warning. The EU mission starts) 20 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *“Un’ondata di 300 mila arrivi. Il dopo-Gheddafi è un’incognita”*, (Wave of 300.000 arrivals. The post-Qaddafi scenario remains uncertain) 23 February 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *L’allarme-immigrati del governo “Dal Maghreb arrivano in 300mila”*, (The government warnign over immigrants: ‘300.000 arrivals from Maghreb’) 23 February 2011, “La Repubblica”; *“Rischio 300mila profughi”*, (Risk of 300.000 refugees) 23 February 2011, “Il Sole 24 Ore”; *Il fiume umano che preme alla frontiera*, (the human flow that press on the borders) 2 March 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Lampedusa, è emergenza profughi*, (Lampedusa, refugee emergency) 4 March 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Lampedusa, assedio continuo diciassette sbarchi in 24 ore* Maroni: “È iniziata l’invasione”, (Lampedusa continually under siege, seventeen landings in 24 hours. Maroni: ‘The invasion has begun) 8 March 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Lampedusa, sbarcano più di cento al giorno*, (Lampedusa, over a hundred new arivals every day) 8 March 2011, “La Stampa”; *Lampedusa al collasso. I migranti a quota tremila*, (Lampedusa is collapsing. Migrants are 3.000) 16 March 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Bossi contro il governo: saremo invasi da immigrati*, (Bossi against the government: we will be invaded by immigrants) 20 March 2011, “Il Fatto Quotidiano”; *L’Isola che non trova pace. Ora gli immigrati sono pari agli abitanti*, (The Island without peace. Now there are as many immigrants as residents) 22 March 2011, “Corriere della Sera”; *Maroni: rischio di esodo di massa*, (Maroni: high risk of a mass exodus) 22 March 2011, “Il Sole 24 Ore”; *Ma la bomba immigrati cade solo qui*, (The immigration-bomb only falls on us) 23 March 2011, “Liberio”; *L’invasione*, (The invasion) 23 March 2011, “Liberio”; *Immigrato, Lampedusa sotto assedio*, (Immigrant, Lampedusa under siege) 28 March 2011, “La Repubblica”; *Allarme immigrazione*, (Immigration warning) 30 March 2011, “Il Giornale”; *Lampedusa è al collasso Berlusconi arriva sull’isola*, (Lampedusa is full to bursting point, Berlusconi visits the Island) 30 March 2011, “La Repubblica”.

³⁰⁸ Among the most useful articles: F. Vassallo, *Libia-Italia. Dopo tante menzogne rimane solo la memoria*, (Libya-Italy. After so many lies only memories remain) 20 March 2011, <http://www.terrelibere.org/terrediconfine/libia-italia-dopo-tante-menzogne-serve-solo-la-memoria>; F. Vassallo, *Fuga dalla Tunisia. Le responsabilità del governo italiano*, (Escape from Tunisia. The

Lastly, the simplistic (and misleading) laying of the blame for the “Journeys of Hope” on criminal organizations who deal with the trafficking of human beings has become commonplace, resulting in the identification of the “pilots” as the only guilty parties in the tragedies at sea. This process is anything but naïve, being perfectly functional towards legitimizing a prohibitory trend that immigration policies in Italy and Europe have been following for decades.

It is hardly surprising that the exchange of opinions on the street or at school shares in this “siege” syndrome.³⁰⁹ “We cannot provide for them”, “I am not a racist but there’s simply too many of them”, “The government spends more money on them than on us”, “We must think first and foremost of ourselves”.³¹⁰ On our coasts we find “illegal individuals”, “who - records show - commit more crimes than Italians”.

News which dominates the front pages and is at the centre of public statements, passes through the filter of these representation and is thus distorted. The people who continue to wash up on our shores vanish into thin air: photos, videos and headlines that speak of a an emergency of biblical proportions obliterate faces, stories, hopes and expectations. In the wake of tragedies involving immigrants, grief, regret and indignation advance inexorably and are felt, no doubt, by a large proportion of Italian citizens. And yet, more often than not, they go hand in hand with some inevitable caveats that somehow manage to make events less dramatic by putting them into perspective and making the victims invisible.

The emotional turmoil surrounding the death of so many men, women and children does not seem to lessen the conviction that Italy is not prepared to deal with the “biblical exodus” described by our Interior Minister. Hence the conclusion that the right course is to put a stop to these landings and “send them back home”, whatever the expense in terms resources and even human lives.

The warnings, the deliberate and disastrous lack of management with regard to the Lampedusa situation, the equally conscious and indefensible decision to bundle hundreds of migrants into tents or improvised structures in disgraceful conditions of sanitation and hygiene, are only the most recent cynical and twisted outcomes of an immigration policy based on the demonization foreigners, commonplace now for over twenty years.

Thus the 4,8 million immigrants who regularly reside in our country and, up until now, have “cost us” very little, become a “burden” that can no longer be endured. Not enough of an effort is made to explain how expensive it is to try and fortify national borders, build and run the CIE, enforce deportation orders, patrol our coasts.³¹¹ But most of all there are fewer and fewer people who are not prepared, at the drop of a hat,

responsibilities of the Italian government) 14 February 2011, <http://www.terrelibere.org/terrediconfine/fuga-dalla-tunisia-le-responsabilita-del-governo-italiano>; A. Rivera, *Un mare di guerra*, (A sea of war) il manifesto, 7 April 2011; G. Marcon, *La fortezza Europa contro i diritti umani*, (Fortress Europe against human rights) “Il Manifesto”, 9 April 2011.

³⁰⁹ This part is a revision of what was observed in the article *Il razzismo giorno per giorno* (racism day by day) published on www.sbilanciamoci.info, 8 April 2011.

³¹⁰ These are the comments Lunaria was able to collect in the course of a series of workshops on racism held in ten classes of Roman secondary school students between January and March 2011.

³¹¹ On this particular aspect, continually absent from public debate even when it concerns itself with Identification and Deportation Centres, Lunaria, in association with the Sbilanciamoci! campaign, carried out a prolonged study. Cf. G. Naletto, “Quanto ci costa essere cattivi”, (The cost of being wicked) in “Spaesati”, supplement to “Il Manifesto”, 23 November 2010; G. Naletto, “L’utopia razionale” (The rational utopia) in I. Peretti (edited by), *Shengenland*, ediesse, 2011 and the reports from Sbilanciamoci! about the finance bills of the years 2004-2010 available on www.sbilanciamoci.org

to waive the guarantees placed on fundamental human rights for both natives and foreigners, asylum seekers or “simply” immigrants.

SECTION 4

CHRONICLES OF EVERYDAY RACISM

Number crunching

The collection of statistical data on racist discrimination, acts and crimes is one of the long-standing problems faced by international organisations that attempt to monitor them systematically. One of the main difficulties resides in the nature itself of the issues to be monitored. Most racist acts, behaviour and attacks remain in the shadows because neither the victims nor witnesses choose to report them. However, the dearth of official statistics that we still observe in Italy even in reference to well known (because they were reported to the relevant authorities) episodes of racism and discrimination, far exceeds these limits. As well as the continued lack of a coordinated system of data collection on different types of discriminatory acts and racist crimes, there are issues of transparency: the few official statistics available are not freely available to the public and can be obtained, at least in theory, only upon request. This shortage of information is particularly relevant in relation to racist crimes. The data banks available online on the Ministry of Justice website and the statistics published by Istat in the field of criminal justice do not allow us to collect figures on this type of crime. Nor, for that matter, is it easy to access information on the complaints lodged with police authorities.³¹² In its annual report, ODIHR (the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) ascertained that, in 2009, Italian police recorded 142 complaints: 64 of them can be traced back to racist crimes, 31 to xenophobia and 47 to anti-semitic acts. Not even ODIHR was able to obtain information on number of ongoing procedures and their respective sentences.³¹³

UNAR, the National office against racial discrimination supplies more information thanks to its annual collection of data. The statistics published are based on cases reported to the hotline and the contact centre set up by the department. The latest available figures refer to the year 2010 when UNAR received 766 reports of discrimination, more than double compared to the previous year: 540 of them were deemed “relevant”, or rather related to “real” cases of harassment and discrimination, 200 more than in 2009.³¹⁴ As the department points out, the increase in the number of reports does not necessarily indicate a growing incidence of these episodes. It may be determined instead by the cementing of collaboration between the department, local government and nationally active associations, but it could also indicate heightened activity on the part of civil organizations in the protection of the victims of

³¹²In the reports on public safety and the incidence of crime published by the Interior Ministry, racist crimes are not examined, while much space is given over to statistics on crimes committed by foreigners. In the same way, monthly updates on foreign detainees are available on the Ministry of Justice website, but none on racist crimes. Human Right Watch, in its report *L'intolleranza quotidiana. La violenza razzista e xenofoba in Italia*, 2011 (Everyday intolerance. Racist and Xenophobic violence in Italy, 2011) has pointed out the impossibility of accessing the Interior Ministry's data, even after a formal request, and the inadequacy of the data provided by the Ministry of Justice that we will not reproduce here owing to interpretative difficulty. See pag. 22 and 66.

³¹³ ODIHR, *Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region-Incidents and Responses. Annual Report for 2009*, October 2010, pag.105-106.

³¹⁴ Prime Minister's Office, UNAR, *relazione al Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri sull'attività svolta nel 2010*, (Report to the Prime Minister's Office on the work carried out in 2010) available on www.unar.it.

discrimination.³¹⁵ In 41.1% of cases, the victims of discrimination reported the abuses themselves, in 20% the witnesses did, while 8% of the cases were filed by associations or organs of local government; 30.9% of cases of discrimination are recorded directly by UNAR. Most (405) of the documented cases of discrimination were solved by means of arbitration, 71 episodes were still under investigation at the time when the annual report was compiled, while 40 of them resulted in judiciary proceedings. Ten cases were sent to OSCAD³¹⁶, 11 to the communications fraud squad (Polizia Postale) and three to the National Equality Advisor. The media (20.2%), public life (17.8%), services provided by the local government (15.9%), work (11.3%), housing (8.9%) and leisure pastimes (8%) are the main settings in which discrimination occurs. In the other areas under scrutiny (public services, school and education, financial services, police, public transport and health) a limited number of cases were reported.

Some specific fields of discrimination deserve particular attention. Firstly, there is the world of the media. Here, the majority of the instances of discrimination recorded (80.7%) relate to the internet: this is a result that throws light on a relatively recent phenomenon. The use of the internet as a means of propaganda and incitement or instigation to racial hatred is a growing trend that proves difficult to counter.³¹⁷ Out of 96 cases of discrimination and harassment reported in the public domain, 47 are represented by physical assault and 19 develop in the world of politics. Around half the instances of discrimination recorded in the sphere of public services takes place in public registry offices (16.8%) and welfare services (27.9%). We must bear in mind that most anti-discriminatory undertakings refer to rulings issued by municipalities and branches of regional government in the field of housing and social services. If the official statistics on racist violence and discrimination are found wanting, a sample survey carried out by Istat gives useful and relevant indications as to the living conditions of foreigners. The "Income and Living Conditions" study was carried out on a sample of 6,000 families residing in Italy with at least one foreign member.³¹⁸ According to Istat, households containing foreign individuals live in "seriously sub-standard housing" more frequently than households consisting exclusively of Italians (respectively 13.3% and 4.7%).³¹⁹ One third of households with foreign members (34.5%) finds itself in a state of "material deprivation", compared to the 13.9% rate of all-Italian households; almost one quarter of the former found themselves in arrears with the payment of bills at least once in the last 12 months; among tenants, one household out of every four confessed to having fallen behind in the payment of rent and 64.9% were not able to afford unplanned expenses in excess of €750. In difficult times, 24.7% of foreign families were able to rely on some form of financial help, from friends (41.5%)

³¹⁵ The higher incidence of case laws in the field of institutional discriminations recorded in the last two years seems to lend support to this consideration. Many of the appeals were made with the backing of Asgi and the trade unions.

³¹⁶ The Watchdog for Safety against Discriminatory Acts was recently instituted by the Interior Ministry "to support those who belong to a minority in the effective exercise of their equality in the eyes of the law and to protect them against discrimination". Among its tasks, keeping an eye on discrimination in the field of public safety.

³¹⁷ See below, in the chapter dedicated to the spread of racism on Facebook.

³¹⁸ Istat, *Le famiglie con stranieri: indicatori di disagio economico. Anno 2009*, (Families with foreigners: indicators of financial difficulties) 28 February 2011, available in Italian on www.istat.it

³¹⁹ Housing disadvantage is defined as the combination of conditions of overcrowding and at least another living problem (lack of an internal toilet, lack of bath or shower; damaged roof, ceiling, windows or floor; humidity in the walls, floors, ceilings or in the foundations; lack of light).

more frequently than their extended families (28.5%) or associations and private organisations (17.6%).

The higher incidence of financial and housing difficulties for these households with at least one foreign member have their roots in the inequality of treatment that characterises the inclusion of foreign nationals in the labour market and their access to housing. It is common knowledge that even when a regular work contract has been signed, a foreigner will be most likely be paid less than an Italian who performs the same tasks; as, indeed, is the fact that foreign workers tend to be directed towards the areas of the labour market with a higher incidence of work in the black economy (agriculture, construction, the hospitality and catering sector). Lower incomes have a direct impact on the quality of housing in a country devoid of public housing policies, with consequent high rental prices. The presence of many individuals in the same apartment and the acceptance a poor quality of upkeep become a necessity for many foreign citizens. A necessity that all too frequently is seen as an excuse for large-scale speculation or as an opportunity for discriminatory behaviour on the part of landlords or estate agents who decide that they wish to rent their properties “to Italian citizens only”.

Instances of racist discrimination and violence recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| Acts | | | | | | |
| Total number of instances | 125 | 140 | 374 | 308 | 364 | 1311 |
| ACTS OF VERBAL VIOLENCE | 40 | 26 | 126 | 131 | 202 | 525 |
| <i>A1 Racist insults, threats or harassment</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>53</i> | <i>49</i> | <i>56</i> | <i>182</i> |
| <i>A2 Propaganda of which:</i> | <i>23</i> | <i>10</i> | <i>69</i> | <i>79</i> | <i>138</i> | <i>319</i> |
| <i>A2A Racist statements and speeches</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>28</i> | <i>40</i> | <i>73</i> | <i>145</i> |
| <i>A2B Racist graffiti</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>31</i> | <i>101</i> |
| <i>A2C Racist posters</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>29</i> |
| <i>A2D Racist publications</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>A2F Racist websites, blogs and social networks</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>11</i> | <i>19</i> | <i>39</i> |
| <i>A3 Public events</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>24</i> |
| ACTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE | 36 | 68 | 127 | 61 | 58 | 350 |
| <i>of which</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>B1 Act of physical violence</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>63</i> | <i>122</i> | <i>58</i> | <i>56</i> | <i>334</i> |
| <i>B2 Deaths caused by violence</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>16</i> |
| DAMAGES to PROPERTY | 23 | 12 | 20 | 5 | 10 | 70 |
| <i>of which</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>C1 Material damage</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>17</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>44</i> |
| <i>C2 Fires</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>26</i> |
| DISCRIMINATION | 26 | 34 | 101 | 111 | 94 | 366 |
| <i>of which</i> | | | | | | |
| <i>D1 Decrees</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>34</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>85</i> |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Motives behind acts of discrimination and violence recorded between January 1st 2007 and August 31st 2011

| | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| Motives | | | | | | |
| M1 Somatic features | 12 | 29 | 73 | 63 | 49 | 226 |
| M2 National or ethnic descent | 70 | 84 | 221 | 199 | 243 | 817 |
| M3 Religion | 22 | 8 | 47 | 40 | 56 | 173 |
| M4 Cultural practices | 7 | 3 | 15 | 6 | 10 | 41 |
| Not recorded | 14 | 16 | 18 | 0 | 6 | 54 |
| TOTAL | 125 | 140 | 374 | 308 | 364 | 1311 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Settings of instances of discrimination and violence recorded between January 1st 2007 and August 31st 2011

| Settings | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| D1 ROMA SETTLEMENTS | 22 | 11 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 80 |
| D2 HOMES | 2 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 31 |
| D3 CIE – IDENTIFICATION AND DEPORTATION CENTRES | 0 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 15 | 31 |
| D4 MEDIA | 0 | 0 | 11 | 15 | 24 | 50 |
| D5 WORKPLACE | 6 | 10 | 18 | 20 | 16 | 70 |
| D6 SHOPS AND SERVICES | 7 | 8 | 31 | 30 | 19 | 95 |
| D7 EDUCATION | 14 | 10 | 23 | 17 | 16 | 80 |
| D8 HEALTH | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 16 |
| D9 PUBLIC SERVICES | 2 | 12 | 14 | 20 | 12 | 60 |
| D10 RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS | 7 | 20 | 57 | 49 | 62 | 195 |
| D11 SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS | 18 | 32 | 47 | 36 | 32 | 165 |
| D12 PUBLIC LIFE | 38 | 24 | 117 | 63 | 102 | 344 |
| D13 SPORT | 9 | 4 | 18 | 24 | 37 | 92 |
| D14 OTHER | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 125 | 140 | 374 | 308 | 364 | 1311 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Perpetrators of acts of discrimination and violence between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| Type of perpetrator | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| P1 INDIVIDUALS | 27 | 39 | 105 | 128 | 97 | 396 |
| P2 GROUPS | 72 | 63 | 136 | 37 | 83 | 391 |
| P3 INSTITUTIONAL FIGURES | 15 | 34 | 114 | 118 | 146 | 427 |
| P4 PERSONALITIES AND SUPPORTERS IN THE WORLD OF SPORT | 9 | 4 | 17 | 21 | 34 | 85 |
| P5 MEDIA EMPLOYEES | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| P6 UNKNOWN | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 125 | 140 | 374 | 308 | 364 | 1311 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Type of groups involved in acts of discrimination and violence recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| Groups | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|---|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| G1 UNKNOWN GROUPS | 30 | 25 | 43 | 3 | 24 | 125 |
| G2 GROUPS NOT AFFILIATED WITH A POLITICAL PARTY | 28 | 32 | 58 | 16 | 19 | 153 |
| G3 EXTREME RIGHT WING GROUPS | 9 | 5 | 22 | 11 | 27 | 74 |
| G4 NORTHERN LEAGUE GROUPS | 5 | 1 | 13 | 7 | 13 | 39 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Age groups of the perpetrators of acts of discrimination and violence recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| Age ranges | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| E1A MINOR | 14 | 11 | 29 | 16 | 10 | 80 |
| E2A YOUTH | 13 | 29 | 49 | 34 | 35 | 160 |
| E3A ADULT | 32 | 52 | 107 | 129 | 147 | 467 |
| E4A ELDERLY | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Total of cases where the age is known | 60 | 92 | 189 | 179 | 193 | 700 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Age groups of the victims of acts of discrimination and violence recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| | Years | | | | | TOTAL |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| Age ranges | | | | | | |
| E1V MINOR | 17 | 18 | 33 | 24 | 26 | 118 |
| E2V YOUTH | 12 | 32 | 71 | 70 | 56 | 241 |
| E3V ADULT | 26 | 40 | 99 | 52 | 46 | 263 |
| E4V ELDERLY | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| UNKNOWN | 70 | 50 | 170 | 160 | 236 | 686 |
| TOTAL | 125 | 140 | 374 | 308 | 364 | 1311 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

Targets of acts of discrimination and violence recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011

| | Years | | | | | TOTALE |
|----------------|-------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | |
| Targets | | | | | | |
| G1 Roma | 27 | 24 | 23 | 34 | 39 | 147 |
| G2 Muslims | 14 | 6 | 28 | 19 | 30 | 97 |
| G3 Jews | 8 | 2 | 13 | 18 | 23 | 64 |

Source: Lunaria, www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

An 360° view

Paola Andrisani

This new “checklist of intolerance” spans the period between July 2009 and August 2011 and proposes to illustrate the process through which racist acts enter into common, everyday practice, following in the footsteps of the first White Paper.

On the one hand it is difficult to recount concisely what has come to pass in the intervening two years, because every single case has its own relevance and weight. On the other hand, we have attempted to give an overall qualitative picture in order to account for both the everyday racism of common people and the acts of violence and discrimination carried out by institutions, in order to avoid the process which sees cases of racism become commonplace, part of the daily routine.

One important innovation in this edition is the inclusion of a number of in-depth articles that lead up to the collection of tales of everyday racism. Our choice fell on some episodes that, in view of their gravity and exemplary nature, help us to illustrate what we set out in our case study. The murders of Nourredine Adnane and Abderrahaman Salhi, for example, are effective examples of institutional racism on the part of the police.³²⁰ Along the same lines, the case of Imad El Kaalouli is a classic tale of everyday racism in the labour market,³²¹ unfortunately recurring many times and resulting in a terrible murder. The story of Yussuf Errahali as well as being a notable example of racist violence inflicted by a group of young Italians, is also important in that, along with many other cases, it belongs to the list of occurrences completely forgotten by the media and the institutions³²², so much so that were not able to follow the outcomes. Foreign citizens are treated as “subhuman individuals” (like Jon Cazacu, Andrea Cosmin, Mohamed Saif and many others) whose deaths can be swept under the rug. The picture is rounded off by an in-depth article about the deplorable affair of the evacuations of Roma settlements carried out in the capital in April 2011, an analysis of the wave of racist statements made in the course of the mayoral elections in Milan and a look at the new spread of racism online, with particular reference to the increase of racist groups on Facebook.

³²⁰ A Moroccan boy aged 18, Aziz Amiri, is shot and killed by a Carabinieri officer in Mornico al Serio in February 2010. The Human Rights Report from the US State Department, signed by Hillary Clinton, lists Amiri’s death among “controversial murders” on grounds of “arbitrary or illegal loss of life” and of “disproportionate use of force” together with the cases of Federico Aldrovandi, Gabriele Sandri and Stefano Cucchi. This death was written peremptorily off as an “accident” (“La Repubblica”, “L’eco di Bergamo”), but in the Bergamo area it has at least one notable and unfortunate precedent (we are referring of course to the affair of the “Black Panda”, the group of Carabinieri officers and traffic policemen who went round viciously attacking foreigners between 2005 and 2007).

³²¹ Ibrahim M’Bodi, Senegalese national, brother of Adam M’Bodi, a leader of the local branch of the Cgil, was killed in similar circumstances, stabbed nine times by his employer Michele D’Onofrio in Biella on December 2009. The latter had refused to pay three months worth of outstanding salary (“La Stampa”, “La Repubblica”). the same thing happened in May 2007, even if we only come to know of it after three years of mystery and silence: the murderer of Ivan Misu, a Romanian labourer who had disappeared in the countryside near Frosinone, is arrested in April 2010. Here too it is his employer who is charged with murder. The man had beaten him up, tortured him and eventually melted his body in acid, purely because he suspected him of having stolen a few litres of petrol from one of his trucks (“La Repubblica”, “Corriere della Sera”). And again, in April 2010, another gruesome episode dating back to August 2006 comes to light: the murder of two Romanian labourers, working in the black economy, who only asked to be paid for the work they had done. Their employer, arrested in Bergamo, had shot them several times with a rifle and then hidden their bodies in a large basin (“Il Giorno”).

³²² Cf Pierre Ciurar’s exemplary instance of “non-news”, illustrated in chapter 3 “The media and racism”

Like in the previous edition, the inventory conserves chronological order, with the aim of stressing the almost daily incidence of these episodes. Unfortunately we were able to present only a limited and incomplete selection (255 entries) compared to the large number of cases collected (861 over the period considered) and made available on our database at www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org.³²³ The daily monitoring of “hate crimes” became more thorough and attentive: we studied different media outlets, national and local press and the internet, focusing as well on the methods they employ to construct the image *the other*.³²⁴ The result is the compilation of a greater number of instances of racism compared to the period previously considered (2007-2009),³²⁵ some of which stand out as being particularly serious. The greater visibility given to racist speeches and statements, to the discrimination and violence suffered by immigrants in the Cie (Identification and Deportation Centres) to the spread of racist propaganda online, no doubt offered a helpful contribution. We also asked ourselves whether the larger number of cases collected should be considered as reflecting an increase in racist behaviour or is instead the result of better, more thorough media coverage. Experience leads us to assume that both are true: migrants grow ever more aware of their rights and, at the same time, the media have become more attentive than in the past. But the incidence and analysis of the cases under scrutiny seem to suggest that the social and institutional validation of racism, already covered in the first White Paper, has by no means come to a halt. Moreover, the figures put together by international reports and unofficial surveys (the only ones available) confirm that racist violence in all its forms is an everyday occurrence. Now more than ever, xenophobic attacks go hand in hand with the discriminatory rulings of mayors or the racist statements of politicians. The most widespread racist acts of violence are probably those carried out by individuals or impromptu groups. This does not exclude the existence of crimes committed by purpose-formed groups or movements, often belonging to the extreme right. However the most worrying trend is, in our opinion, the increasing incidence of various forms of institutional racism.

In an effort to illustrate the different varieties of present-day racism, we have studied the cases according to a simple pattern of classification (reviewed and extended compared to the one used in the first White Paper), based on the important distinction between physical and verbal acts of violence. The instances of verbal violence include both written and spoken forms: hate-fuelled speeches, xenophobic rhetoric and racist statements on the part of politicians as well as insulting slogans, graffiti, posters³²⁶, publications, web pages and xenophobic groups operating on social networks. The acts of physical violence fall under two main headings: assault and murder. The category of discrimination includes not only discriminatory acts carried out by individuals or

³²³ A website for information and in-depth analysis devoted specifically to racism, set up by Lunaria in 2011 with the aim of contributing to the creation of a collective memory for racism in our country and fighting it by means of information and exposure. The online database puts together 1.311 episodes of racism recorded between 1 January 2007 and 31 August 2011.

³²⁴ Cf chapter 3 “The media and racism”.

³²⁵ Between 1 January and 31 August 2011 alone we recorded 364 cases, more than a third of those collected in the previous four years.

³²⁶ To this end, the website www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org proposes a vast gallery of racist “horrors”.

private organizations against foreigners, but also the countless local decrees issued by so-called “creative mayors”.

Among the most frequent cases of verbal violence, even if they do not feature prominently in the inventory, we must bear in mind those that occur in the world of sport, reported with relative accuracy by the media, whether they involve players or supporters. A special mention must be reserved to the racist incident concerning the black Italian footballer Mario Balotelli, who was, on several occasions, the butt of serious insults, online and on the part of supporters of opposing teams (“Balotelli is still African”, “Is he dating a white woman? It’s disgusting!”, “If his skin is black, he can’t be Italian...”, “A nigger in the national squad marks the end of the Italian football”, and so on...). We also come across a fair number of xenophobic banners: those directed against Jewish people³²⁷ are decreasing while those against migrants are becoming more popular, particularly on the part of extreme right-wing groups.³²⁸ The immigrant Muslim population is also an easy target of discrimination and violence, as well as of xenophobic slogans: in particular, we draw attention to the increased number of cases concerning insults and attacks against women wearing the veil.³²⁹ Islamophobia also inspires the decrees issued by a number of mayors belonging to the Northern League, as well as other parties: for example the Northern League Mayor of Azzano Decimo, Enzo Bortolotti, launched an “Islamic census” in November 2009, effectively keeping files on all Muslims resident in the municipality; in September 2010 the illustrious mayor of Adro established that the children attending the Gianfranco Miglio primary school will no longer be offered an alternative to pork, unless their families can provide “a valid doctor’s note”, thus effectively discriminating against all the Muslim children and excluding them from school meals. Conversely, in February 2011, it is the centre-left majority of the town council of Sesto San Giovanni (MI) who approve a motion proposed by the Northern League banning the wearing of burqas in public places. The violation of the human rights of Roma and Sinti minorities, already noted in the past, shows no sign of abating: emergency decrees and countless evictions go hand in hand with racist rulings³³⁰ and xenophobic statements issued by politicians (see the most famous cases of Aliprandi,³³¹ Lombardi,³³² Maiolo³³³ and Lussana³³⁴) so as to give rise to

³²⁷ We find an increase in the production of anti-Semitic graffiti every year in January in the days approaching the *Giorno della Memoria* (International Holocaust Remembrance Day).

³²⁸ Worthy of note is the execrable graffiti which appeared on Roman walls the day after the tragic death of four Roma children in the fire in the Tor Fiscale settlement: “Roma -4” and “Roma Raus”, spray-painted and rounded off with swastikas, 13 February 2011, “La Repubblica”.

³²⁹ For instance: a client complains because a woman is wearing a burqa in a supermarket in Pieve di Soligo (TV), 24 September 2009, “La Repubblica”; the case of the so-called “black teacher” in a Sonnino (LT) nursery school, 18 September 2010, vitadidonna.org; the young Moroccan cultural mediator in Padua whose veil was ripped off by a fifty-year-old lady, 27 May 2011, julienews.it; and, lastly, two more veils ripped off Muslim women in Milan, 7 August 2011, “Corriere della Sera”.

³³⁰ Two sentences, one issued some time after the other, are truly shocking because they use stigmatisation of the Roma people to justify the verdicts reached. There’s the case of Angelica V, a 17-year-old Roma girl, accused of having attempted to kidnap an infant in Ponticelli in May 2008. After a year and a half in prison, she was refused house arrest on the grounds that “she’s a Rom”: for the judges prison is the only answer because Roma people refuse to follow rules. The ruling rejecting house arrest states: “it is clear that the person appealing is fully ensconced in typical Rom culture. And it’s because of this total integration in that lifestyle that someone like her - ie lacking the wherewithal to analyse her own way of life - is likely to commit the same crime again.” *Apcom*, 3 December 2009. Then there’s the much-discussed case of the sentence from the Bologna appeals court in July 2011 in which it was decided not to order a 12-year-old Roma girl to attend school and to leave her in her camp because “this is a normal way of life for someone of her standing and her origins. Her nomadic lifestyle and the culture she has grown up in mean that we can see no possible harm to the child from this decision.” *La Repubblica*, 8 July 2011.

³³¹ December 2010, a Northern League Town Councillor in Padua, Vittorio Aliprandi, already infamous for his racist tendencies, posts some extremely insulting statements against Roma people on his Facebook profile, to the point of advocating a return to “concentration camps”. January 2011, still on his Facebook page, he remarks: “Best Wishes for a 2011 without those disgusting

a dispute between the Italian government and international institutions. Roma and Sinti invariably still represent a “source of anxiety” to the collective imagination and public opinion³³⁵; they are also a prime target of insults, attacks and highly discriminatory behaviour. Milan, and the Lombardy region as a whole, offer the most negative example. The regional leader of the People of Freedom party (Pdl) and commissioner in charge of the Protezione Civile and the local police, Stefano Maullu, proposed restricted entry for Roma back in August 2009. A month later, Davide Boni, head of the Northern League delegation, takes up this cause, pitching the idea of a “zero tolerance, Roma-free Milan”. The well-known affair of the relocation of a number of Sinti families from Brescia to Mantua³³⁶ inspired a series of racist decrees by several Northern League mayors as of January 2010. In April 2010, deputy Mayor Riccardo De Corato revelled in “his” five hundred evictions in Milan. Protests by civil society sadly do not seem to make much of an impact on the prejudice directed at Roma and Sinti communities.³³⁷ Rome also rose to the occasion. According to the figures provided by Mayor Gianni Alemanno himself, 154 evictions affecting around 1,800 persons were carried out between March and May 2011 alone. Thanks to a permanent monitoring of the situation undertaken by several associations “it was possible to gain an idea of the extent to which the authorities repeatedly violated the rights of the Roma community: most of the evicted families did not even receive an official notification of the pending eviction and, in the course of the operations, both houses and personal belongings were arbitrarily destroyed. Alternative solutions were not always offered and, when they

Roma who, in the last few days, have broken into the houses of many of our friends. I hope that the New Year will mark a wake up call for our prefect who evidently thinks he lives in a different city”. The Opera Nomadi association files a report against him for inciting racial hatred (“Il Mattino di Padova”, “Corriere Del Veneto”).

³³² December 2010, a Pdl Councillor in Prato, Clarissa Lombardi, also posts insulting statements against Roma people on her Facebook profile (“Corriere della Sera”).

³³³ February 2011, Tiziana Maiolo, Fli, interviewed by “La Zanzara” broadcast on Radio 24, states: “It is possible to integrate all the ethnic groups with the exception of Roma. It is easier to educate a dog than a Roma child” (“Corriere della Sera”).

³³⁴ April 2011, Northern League MP Carolina Lussana, interviewed by Radio Padania about the two Roma children who kicked a classmate in the stomach, remarks: “We must trace it back to the culture of their family. I don’t wish to pass for your average racist xenophobe, but we are dealing with Roma children here, and there is a culture of violence within the Roma ethnicity that we do not find anywhere else. This is undeniable”. (danielesensi.blogspot.com).

³³⁵ In January 2011, the news media report fresh developments in the investigation into the disappearance of Yara Gambirasio, a girl from Brembate (BG): Warning from Interpol: they’re searching for Yara in Roma camps.” Much attention has been drawn to this news across the Italian press, despite the fact that there’s no evidence to prove that searches for the girl from Brembate have been carried out in the very few Roma settlements remaining in northern Italy. This ‘news’ comes, moreover, after a young Moroccan man was accused – without basis in fact – of the kidnapping, only to be shown to be innocent.

³³⁶ Brescia City Council decides to close down the Via Orzinuovi camp on the banks of the river Mella, where 123 Sinti live, all from Mantua province. The relocation is handled by Brixia Sviluppo, a firm owned by the City Council. Brixia acquires some land in Birbesi di Guidizzolo (MN) and Gazzo Bigarello (MN) where it plans to move the Sinti families, who would be able to buy the land from the company via a twenty-year mortgage. But when the mayors of the two towns in question learn of the plan to transfer the Sinti families, they take the case to parliament. Claudio Busca, the public safety representative on Guidizzolo town council, is adamant: “Has Guidizzolo become what Madagascar was for Hitler? Does the mayor of Brescia want to turn our town into a ghetto? Shame on him, both morally and politically”. And in Guidizzolo, at the beginning of February 2010, the mayor signs an anti-Sinti ordinance, which forbids the parking of caravans and trailers within the town limits. Subsequently, in March 2010, five other Northern-League-led town councils (Ceresara, Bozzolo, San Giovanni del Dosso, Castelbelforte e Pomponesco) approve the same ordinance, outlawing the overnight parking of camper vans, caravans, mobile homes and similar vehicles within their towns’ administrative limits. ‘La Gazzetta di Mantova’, 12 February 2010.

³³⁷ For example the Support Group Forlanini together with a number of volunteers and leading members of the Milanese political and cultural world lodge a complaint to the Public Prosecutor’s Office against Mayor Letizia Moratti and Deputy Mayor Riccardo De Corato for the repeated evictions endured by Roma families. According to this group of citizens, there is a “tendency to persecute on the part of this administration against the Roma community, with more than 360 evictions of Roma settlements carried out without providing any alternative living solution (14 in the Forlanini/Cavriana settlement alone) and more than 5 million euros spent, with a comprehensive deficiency of inclusion and integration projects” (ilssole24ore.com).

were, proved inadequate in the vast majority of cases, consisting of temporary housing reserved exclusively for women and children".³³⁸

If this is the case for Roma and Sinti, who are European or even Italian citizens, rejected and alienated far beyond the limits of the respect of their fundamental human rights, the situation out at sea is far worse: a no man's land where it is hard to determine what actually happens to the many migrants who escape towards Europe. 2009 and 2011 are remembered as the years of landings and indiscriminate mass rejections,³³⁹ in open violation of humanitarian principles and of the rights of refugees. This sort of operation, the fruit of cooperation with our - at the time - ally Muammar Qaddafi, sparked the reaction of international institutions in 2009. In Strasbourg, Italy is still on trial in the European Court of Human Rights, as a result of the complaint lodged by 13 Somalis and 11 Eritreans turned back towards Libya on 6 May 2009. Now, the only difference is migrants are turned back "silently" and with cursory attempts at identification. As a consequence, the situation in the "deportation and identification centres" has become highly charged, not least because of the extension, firstly to six then to eighteen months of the period of administrative detention. These modern-day concentration camps were set up more than ten years ago. In them, a state of permanent emergency is always in force and, although humanitarian and anti-racist organizations criticized their methods from the beginning, immigrants' rights continue to be violated.³⁴⁰ Primary needs are barely satisfied, while indecent hygiene and health conditions, the forced administering of psychotropic drugs, the violent suppression of protests, even when women are involved, have been reported on countless occasions. On top of this, we find the hostile attitude of managers who do all they can to obstruct enquiries into the centres, to the point of backing a ruling from the Interior Ministry (n. 1305 dated 1 April 2011) that bans the press from the Cie and Cara premises. Episodes of self-mutilation, hunger strikes and attempted suicides³⁴¹ that pass under the radar are still too numerous and frequent. The violations and instances of violence recorded within these structures³⁴² are so habitual that can no longer be ignored;³⁴³ many of them go unreported because they fall under police censorship.

³³⁸ Joint press release signed by Associazione 21 Luglio and Errc to the mayor of Rome, Alemanno, 11 August 2011, 21luglio.com.

³³⁹ In August 2011, Cecilia Malmstroem, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, is invited to provide an explanation as to why Italy turned back boat-loads of immigrant at sea, in order to ascertain that no violation of the Geneva Convention on refugees occurred, on request of the Committee for Civil Rights, Justice and Civil Freedom of the EU Parliament (Adnkronos).

³⁴⁰ Cf. AA.VV., *Al di là del muro. Viaggio nei centri per migranti in Italia. Secondo Rapporto di Medici Senza Frontiere*, - (Beyond the wall. A journey through the migrant centres in Italy. Second Report from Doctors without Borders) Franco Angeli 2010.

³⁴¹ We recall the young Nigerian woman who, after having accused a police inspector at the CIE (identification and expulsion centre) in Milan of rape, tried to kill herself on 23 April 2010, swallowing liquid soap in the Modena CIE; or the attempted suicide of five immigrants being held in the Via Corelli CIE in Milan on 21 March 2011. Three Tunisians swallowed detergent, while two Moroccans used sheets to try to hang themselves in the bathroom (milanotoday.it). A few days later on 30 March 2011, an immigrant held in the Restinco CIE in Brindisi attempted to hang himself; on the same day, four other immigrants slit their wrists.

³⁴² The Cie in Gradisca d'Isonzo (GO) is, sadly, well known for the violence and beatings of migrant detainees: a video posted on Youtube in September 2009 bears witness to the police charges; in December 2009 a Moroccan detainee tells how he was brutally beaten. In the Cie in Ponte Galeria (RM), a Tunisian woman reports she received from police officers in July 2011.

³⁴³ We cannot keep silent about the deaths that occur within these structures: for instance, on Christmas day 2009, a Brazilian transsexual aged 34, registered as Diego Augusto Santos Costa, commits suicide by hanging herself from the bars of her cell in the Cie in Via Corelli in Milan; similarly, on 13 August 2011 Cinoso Evans, nicknamed 'Computer' for his computer skills, 'officially' dies following a heart attack in the Cara in Salinagrande (TP).

Young people³⁴⁴, lamentably, often play a leading role in this type of violent and racist crime. In many cases gangs of teenagers “decide” to attack and beat up a foreign citizen: gratuitous violence that finds strength in numbers. We could mention countless instances, some of which stand out for their highly violent nature: in November 2009, a 29-year-old Bangladeshi man was assaulted in the Arcobaleno park of Acilia (Rome) by five underage boys; another Bangladeshi individual was attacked by around fifteen Italian youths, three of them underage, their faces covered, in Rome once again, in March 2010; in June 2011, eight teenagers attacked and threatened two Filipino immigrants for no apparent reason in Naples; in the course of the same month, in Casarano (LE), seven teenagers attacked a 31-year-old Moroccan man in the middle of a square.

The leaders of extreme right-wing movements and Northern League groups are known, on the other hand, for their xenophobic slogans and banners (in the case of the former) and racist marches and statements (the latter). Police forces are often responsible for violent beatings.³⁴⁵

An important role in fueling the “vicious circle”³⁴⁶ of racism, as Annamaria Rivera described it, is played by the media who put together, amplify and often legitimize clichés, stereotypes and prejudices against minorities. In the period in question, the cases of physical violence do not go down in number, but they do not receive a great deal of coverage by the media and are, therefore, soon forgotten; conversely, the many racist statements seem to cause major uproar, especially when they are made by political and institutional figures: they undoubtedly feed the media debate and in most cases are followed by public condemnation.

During the second half of 2009, the tense negative climate, already perceived in the first half of the year, does not let up: outbursts of hatred against immigrants are endorsed by xenophobic and discriminatory public speeches and political practices which are the object of heated controversy.³⁴⁷ Though the targets are always the same, namely the

³⁴⁴ This scenario is confirmed both by studies carried out by Lunaria (from 15 July 2009 to 31 August 2011, 210 cases in which minors or young people were responsible for acts of discrimination and violence) and by the findings in a report presented to the Lower House of parliament in February 2010 called *The others and me: young Italians in a whirlwind of change*, compiled on behalf of the Conference of Regional Assemblies under the aegis of the Lower House's new watchdog on xenophobic and racist phenomena. A poll carried out by SWG on a sample of 2085 Italians between the ages of 18 and 29 showed that “more than 45% of young Italians are xenophobic or racist, with 15% of these biased against Romanian, Roma and Albanian people. Forty percent, on the other hand, are open to inclusion and the majority of these are from the centre and south of the country.”

³⁴⁵ Among others: the case of Abdallah, Algerian citizen attacked by a gang of policemen in Milan in August 2009 and the beating of four foreign citizens in the headquarters of the Carabinieri in Ferrara, reported in April 2010.

³⁴⁶ As pointed out on several occasions by anthropologist Annamaria Rivera. Cf. Annamaria Rivera, *Regole e roghi. Metamorfosi del razzismo - (Rules and pyres. The metamorphosis of racism)*, 2009 Edizioni Dedalo; *Il circolo vizioso del razzismo - (The vicious circle of racism)*, in Grazia Naleto (by), *Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia (Report on racism in Italy)*, 2009 Manifestolibri, pp.3-19; *La normalizzazione del razzismo (Racism as the standard practice)*, in Grazia Naleto (by), *Sicurezza di chi? Come combattere il razzismo (Whose safety? How to combat racism)*, 2008 Edizioni dell'asino, pp. 55-61.

³⁴⁷ It's worth remembering the racially motivated attack on two Albanian waiters at the 'La Bricola' restaurant in Venice's Calle degli Specchieri in September 2009, carried out by Northern League militants who were in town for a demonstration (Il Mattino di Padova). In October 2009, the Northern League mayor of Conegliano Veneto 'encourages' the expulsion of 'Muslims' during prayers for the end of Ramadan at Ponte della Priula, on the banks of the river Piave. 'The Piave is out of bounds for gypsies, drug addicts, hookers and bum boys. Now it should be ruled out for Muslims too. The Piave ordered: “Go back, foreigner!” [this last sentence is a quote from E.A. Mario's *Battle of the River Piave - ed.*] Perhaps they lauded the 11 September attacks in their prayers. There's definitely a whiff of terrorism. If the Muslims come back to the Piave, I will alert the authorities so that they are kept out'. (giancarlo-gentilini.blogspot.com). Still in October 2009, in Milan, the Northern League, the People of Freedom party (Pdl) and the Lista Ferrante party, together with the residents of Via Maserà, announce a 'security praesidium' in Corso Bueno

Roma community, Jewish or Muslim individuals, it is a widespread and indiscriminate hatred against immigrants of every nationality and ethnic group that characterizes this period. The increased severity of migratory policies and the tightening of border controls, as well as the criminalization of immigrants on an institutional level, with the introduction of Law 94/2009 on August 2009 (the last component of the “Safety Package”), no doubt contributed to this climate. The public debate beginning when the new government took office in May 2008, which dragged on until the end of 2009, was strongly influenced by the explicit racist and discriminatory nature of the regulations introduced. The “crime of illegal entry and residence” established by Law 94/2009, as well as the laws on documents of civil status and the infamous Northern League vigilante patrols, severely impact the unfolding of the chronicles until the end of the year, recording, at the same time, an increased number of cases of violence against immigrants. The year 2009 also witnessed the discussion lasting several days in Milan city council concerning the awarding of the Ambrogino d’Oro prize, handed over, in the end, to the special unit of traffic policemen, regrettably known for forced checks on migrants and evictions.³⁴⁸

In 2010 the issue of immigration is no longer at the centre of public debate, perhaps because the “Safety Package” has been approved, no pending elections are in sight and the economic crisis is still making its effects very much felt. However, cases of discrimination and fully-fledged racism do not fail to materialise: the living conditions of Roma and Sinti communities continue to deteriorate, constantly subjected to evictions and violence; several municipal decrees and public tenders conceived with discriminatory and xenophobic intent are, fortunately, rejected by the courts; intolerance and suspicion against Muslims, and anti-semitic attitudes are still widespread among internet users and institutional leaders. January 2010 opened with the uprising of immigrant seasonal labourers employed in the fields near Rosarno in Calabria and with the statements of the Interior Minister and the PM about the need to stem the flow of immigration to in order to reduce crime rates³⁴⁹ – completely inaccurate and irresponsible equation that adds fuel to an already tense atmosphere of widespread racist violence and intolerance. But 2010 was also marked by the first immigrants’ strike (1 March), by the four immigrants on top of a crane in Brescia and the five on the ex-Carlo Erba tower in via Imbonati, Milan. It was also, therefore, a symbolic year in the migrant workers’ struggle towards greater legality and the respect of their fundamental rights. The year 2011 saw administrative elections held in a number of important cities, and the renewed influx of migrants from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Thus, the tone of the public debate suddenly picked up in conjunction with a higher rate of racist violence and discriminations. We refer, first and foremost, to the public debate (both political and on the part of the media) surrounding the (appalling) way in which the so called “landings” were handled, to the latest bout of alarmism,

Aires. In the leaflet announcing the praesidium the 'intervention of the mayor and the prefect' is invoked before people 'decide to grab a few sticks and sort the problem out for themselves'. (Gruppo EveryOne).

³⁴⁸ The highest civic recognition in Milan is awarded to the unit of traffic policemen “in charge of the identification of illegal immigrants”, with the blessing of the centre-right administration. The same policemen made the headlines a few weeks before the award ceremony when a video pictured them literally “hunting down immigrants” on a so-called “jail bus”, the n. 15 (equipped with bars on the windows, a sort of travelling prison), September and November 2009, “La Repubblica”.

³⁴⁹ Cf the entry devoted to the Rosarno riots in chapter 2.

predicting an invasion of immigrants from North Africa³⁵⁰ and a Muslim incursion, to the explicit refusal of reception on the part of several mayors³⁵¹ and to the renewed activity of extreme right-wing groups and the hatred towards the Roma. With elections on the horizon, the public debate concerning the immigration/public safety/invasion relationship regains the centre of attention.

Institutional racism

The most striking element of the picture painted thus far is that, now more than ever, racism has a largely institutional dimension.³⁵² When institutional discrimination, however subtle and indirect, enters into the everyday routine, there is a risk that this negative image of minorities will extend to the general public. We believe that the highly pervasive nature of Italian racism is linked to the equally pervasive institutional and xenophobic rhetoric that, every day, fuels the process of criminalization and victimization of immigrants, epitomised by the worrying incidence of abuse and violence on the part of the police.³⁵³

In April 2011 the Court of Brescia determined the discriminatory nature of a decree of the municipality of Calcinato, which required a minimum income and a valid housing certificate from foreigners in order to be enrolled in the public registry office; the appeal filed by Asgi and the Guido Piccino Foundation was thus accepted. According to Asgi, this verdict “might well represent the first judicial precedent in Italy dealing with what in the Anglo-Saxon world is described as ‘ethnic profiling’”.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁰ In March 2011 there was a series of hate-filled statements by members of the Northern League and the Pdl (People of Freedom) party. Northern League whip at Friuli Venezia Giulia regional council Danilo Narduzzi announced the opening of an anti-immigrant helpline – a phone number (which is, in fact, the number of the Northern League group on the council) where anyone who feels that they have “suffered at the hands of” an immigrant can make a complaint (4 March 2011). Northern League leader Umberto Bossi, answering journalists' questions, said in Lombard dialect “immigrants, get the hell out,” preceded by a whistle and a hand gesture clearly meant to signify “we’ve got to get rid of them” (29 March 2011). Northern League Senator Piergiorgio Stiffoni, talking on the La Zanzara (the mosquito) programme on Radio 24, stated “these Tunisians coming to Italy just to pass on through, who turn up wearing Adidas trainers and designer-label t-shirts, aren’t asylum-seekers... and anyway, the political situation in Tunisia is such that they couldn’t seek political asylum anyway. These are healthy people, fit people, not emaciated people like true refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kurdistan, Iraq” (30 March 2011). MP Giancarlo Lehner, a member of the parliamentary group known as the ‘Responsabili’, stated: “to restrict the influx of Africans – who are mostly young, bold and male – we need a psychological deterrent. All we need to do is spread the following communique: to prevent demographic imbalances and sex crimes, the Italian authorities have set up clinics at all points of entry to administer chemical castration to immigrants. Of course, we won’t do it, but it wouldn’t be a bad idea to scare them off by giving the impression that this country is the region of Emasculated Arabs” (30 March 2011).

³⁵¹ At the end of March 2011, Prato's city and provincial councils refuse to host refugees from North Africa (La Nazione), while at the end of May 2011 the mayors of the towns in the Alta Padovana Protezione Civile (Emergency Relief) district – to be exact, those of Cittadella, Fontaniva, San Giorgio in Bosco, San Martino di Lupari, Carmignano di Brenta, Grantorto, San Pietro in Gù, Galliera Veneta, Campo San Martino and Tombolo, plus the deputy mayor of Gazzo – meet to discuss the taking in of refugees, and issue a unanimous joint statement reaffirming their unwillingness to accept in their territory immigrants of any kind, ‘either illegal or with refugee status’ (padovaoggi.it). In the same month, in Monza, mayor Marco Mariani declares ‘There’s no room in Monza, let those left-wing councils who make so much fuss about solidarity and hospitality take the strain’ - though more than 120 people needed roofs over their heads. (Il Giorno)

³⁵² The concept of institutional racism, developed in the sixties in the Afro-American environment, reveals how the structural inequality of minorities is not only the result of the prejudice and discriminatory behaviour of the majority, but it is also the result of the laws, procedure and routine practice of the institutions.

³⁵³ This has led many to talk about the spread of “ethnic profiling” in Italy as well. This expression describes the use or influence of stereotypes, generalizations or “racial-ethnic” or religious factors on the part either of the police or of public authorities, in the supervision of individuals, for no good reason. European organizations issued several warnings: ECRI presented a general policy suggestion (n.11) asking the member States to prevent and combat the phenomenon; The Open Society Institute published *Ethnic Profiling in the European Union: Pervasive, Ineffective, and Discriminatory. Executive report and Recommendations* on May 2009; more recently, in June 2011, ENAR added the *Supplemental report: Ethnic Profiling in Italy* to the *Shadow Report 2009/2010*.

³⁵⁴ Cf: *Prima pronuncia giurisdizionale in Italia sul divieto di ‘ethnic-profiling’. Discriminatori e vietati dalla legge i controlli della polizia municipale limitati a talune categorie di residenti o aspiranti tali, scelti in base alla nazionalità* - (First judicial

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. We have come across a large number of discriminatory rulings issued by municipalities and the regional government with a view to limiting immigrants' rights of access to basic services, as well as many appeals and sentences countering them. A notable example, from 2009, is represented by the Municipality of Alzano Lombardo (BG), which introduced a "Green Padania Clause", restricting access to public housing to "Italian citizens only"; or the municipality of Villa d'Ogna (BG) that offered a one-off unemployment grant only to Italian citizens who have lived in the town for at least five years. In 2010, the municipality of Adro (BS) limited rental grants to low-income families from the European Union. In Tradate, as in Ceresara, the mayor decided to "award" a "baby bonus" exclusively to Italian new-borns; while in Gavardo (BS) the town council decided to keep files on resident foreign nationals through a strict control of their "eligibility for council housing" and the "health and hygiene conditions of their apartments". In 2011, Poste Italiane S.p.A. set up an auction to sell off 22 of its properties, located in around ten different Italian cities. Unfortunately, Italian citizenship was required in order to participate. The same condition had to be met by those who wished to take part in the selection of Istat data collectors for several Italian municipalities.

In several cases the local authorities put up posters asking citizens to "report" the presence of immigrants (as occurred in San Martino all'Argine³⁵⁵ and Ceresara,³⁵⁶ both in the province of Mantua). The infamous "White Christmas" in Coccaglio³⁵⁷ also met with a shocked reaction, when the mayor invited his citizens "to turn illegal foreigners in".

These are political acts with the declared aim of inciting intolerance towards foreign nationals. After all, the spread of racism and the obsession with public safety are our right wing's preferred "weapons of mass distraction", which allow them to conceal their elitist policies. It is, furthermore, shameful to encourage Italians to participate in "active espionage" in a sort of modern-day "Wild West" and to report against individuals described as "clandestine", whose only sin lies in their lack of a residence permit. The incitement to inform on others, presented as the duty of an upstanding citizen, is, in itself, immoral, but it is even worse to associate it with the protection of public hygiene. What does promoting "health and hygiene controls in the apartments of foreign citizens" entail? What "sanitary dangers" might the immigrants pose? It is unsettling in itself that politics thinks it can draw the filth/immigration parallel, without even bothering to conceal it.³⁵⁸

Although several incidents are in theory punishable according to the Mancino law, in the vast majority of cases racist episodes are simply downgraded to "the same old news stories" (routine insults, routine attacks, routine murders). This is precisely what

sentence in Italy for the banning of "ethnic-profiling". The checks on the part of the local police aimed at certain categories of residents chosen on the basis of their nationality are discriminatory and forbidden by Law) 13 April 2011, Asgi.

³⁵⁵ The mayor encourages his constituents to inform on each other: "If someone is aware of the presence of illegal immigrants in the municipality, they are kindly requested to report it immediately to the mayor, the local police or the registry office in order that the necessary procedures be set in motion", 23 November 2009, "Gazzetta di Mantova".

³⁵⁶ Also in November 2009, mayor Enzo Fozzato, in his bulletin, invites the citizens – by virtue of the new regulations introduced by law 94/2009 – to report the presence "of illegal immigrants" to the authorities ("Gazzetta di Mantova").

³⁵⁷ Cf *Un bianco Natale senza immigrati. Per le feste il comune caccia i clandestini* - (A white Christmas without immigrants. The municipality gets rid of illegal immigrants in time for the coming festivities) 18 November 2009, "La Repubblica".

³⁵⁸ The Northern League in Arezzo promotes the initiative of distributing "anti-immigrant hygienic soap" on March 2010 ("La Stampa").

happened with the sentence given to the murderers of the young Abba,³⁵⁹ or the assault of the Chinese national Ton Hong Sheng.³⁶⁰ The cases in which the judge cites racism as an aggravating circumstance are few and far between (the Castel Volturno massacre³⁶¹ or the tinsmith from Sri Lanka mistreated by his employer in Milan³⁶²). The ongoing trial for the assault of Emmanuel Bonsu in Parma represents the exception that proves the rule.

Thus racism continues day after day, affecting politics, inspiring the choices of local administrators, appearing in news stories and on the internet. It defines our daily behaviour. The never-ending, systematic observation of everyday incidents suggests that we should not underestimate the widespread, deep-rooted nature of intolerance, xenophobia and racism in our country and advises us to build up and reinforce the tools with which to nip them in the bud or fight against them. It is in this field that we have registered one of the most encouraging signals. The many verdicts that permit the appeals promoted by Asgi and other local organizations against discriminatory decrees issued by local administrations tell us that it is possible to fend off racism, even the institutional kind. If the world of “democratic” politics and the media which has the greatest influence on the general public played their part, the struggle against racism would prove easier.

³⁵⁹ Abdul Salam Guibre, known as Abba, an Italian citizen born in Burkina Faso, is killed by blows from sticks and iron bars in Milan on 15 September 2008, by two barmen – a father and son – who grabbed the weapons and chased Abdul and two others after they stole a packet of biscuits. Although the aggressors shouted 'fucking niggers', 'where are you running to chocolate face?' and 'dirty black', the sentence rules out racism, handing down only 15 years for voluntary manslaughter, as 'aggravating circumstances of racial hatred' are not admitted by the public prosecutor. Back when the crime took place De Corato, the deputy mayor, had already stated that there was no 'racial motive' - an argument that was repeated live on the Porta a Porta TV current affairs discussion show by prime minister Silvio Berlusconi: 'The racial issue, the colour of their skin, has nothing to do with it'; if anything, the problem lay in 'open door policies that lead Italians to feel less safe' (though Abba was himself Italian - editor's note). When it came down to it, as the provincial secretary of the Romagna branch of the Northern League stated in the heat of the moment, those three kids 'broke the law - they needed to be taught a lesson', and the killing was an 'unfortunate mishap' which someone like Abdul who had put himself outside the law 'had no cause to complain of'. 20 luglio 2009, marginaliavincenzaperilli.blogspot.com.

³⁶⁰ The attack which took place in the suburb of Tor Bella Monaca on 2 October 2008 had nothing to do with racism, according to the preliminary hearing judge in the Rome juvenile court during the trial of Michele Fadda, a boy who punched a Chinese citizen in the face. The defence's argument was accepted by the judge who, after lengthy deliberation, sentenced Michele Fadda to one year behind bars for bodily harm. The judge ruled out any notion that the attack had been committed "for reasons of racial hatred." He also granted the accused a suspended sentence. (Affari italiani, 14 April 2011)

³⁶¹ Four life sentences have been handed down by the Assizes court to Giuseppe Setola, boss of the Casalesi clan, and three of his most faithful followers for the Castel Volturno massacre. All were found guilty of shooting indiscriminately, and having killed six young foreigners in the space of less than five minutes. The Camorra gang's sentence was adjusted for the aggravating circumstances of racism and terrorism. Strage di Castel Volturno: 4 ergastoli per Setola & Co. (Castel Volturo massacre, four life sentences for Setola & Co.) Corriere del Mezzogiorno, 14 April 2011

³⁶² For the first time, the manager of a firm is sentenced for mistreating an employee, Anton R., 47, from Sri Lanka, with the aggravating circumstance of racial motives. According to the investigation, the tinsmith, who had been working in the small firm in Segrate since 2001, was kicked and punched following a discussion about getting a day off work. And that is not all. The investigations revealed that the employee underwent constant humiliating treatment. On his work cart there was a sign on which a message had been left: “nigger, bad at working but good at taking money” 26 May 2011, TM News.

Facebook: racism on the web

Paola Andrisani

If the tide of intolerance has become more overwhelming everywhere in Europe, it is in part owing to the widespread popularity of the internet, which captivates hate-mongers with its immediacy and anonymity. The number of web pages, sites, blogs and forums with openly racist and xenophobic contents rapidly increased as a consequence of the snowballing success of Facebook and other social networks.

In most cases we are dealing with web pages dishing out the usual propaganda material and speeches of a racist and discriminatory nature, degenerating, more often than not, into incitement to hatred. The preferred targets are Muslim and Jewish people, as well as Chinese and Roma, and immigrants as a whole. The vast majority of these web sites celebrating hatred are planned and developed by followers of the extreme right, Christian fundamentalists, skinheads, negationists and members of the Northern League.

Although it is impossible to carry out any kind of statistical analysis, the information available leaves no room for doubt: the internet has become a frequently used medium for all those intent on spreading and reciting racist ideas, actions and forms of behaviour. This phenomenon should on no account be underestimated: it is extremely difficult to remove this material permanently from the web, for three main reasons. Firstly it's not always easy to tell whether the ideas expressed on these sites come under the label freedom of expression, or constitute criminal offences. Secondly, most of these web sites are hosted on overseas servers, which Italian law does not extend to. Finally, when these racist and xenophobic sites and forums are shut down, they are instantly reopened elsewhere, generally with the same content but slightly different names that allows their users to recognize them easily.

The case connected to the stormfront.org³⁶³ forum received the most coverage and is perhaps the most representative, although on Facebook the same phenomenon crops up in even more pervasive and subtle forms. In this White Paper, we chose to restrict our observations to six examples; however, by keeping a close eye on the daily press, we were able to identify around 25 instances where the use of Facebook for racist and xenophobic purposes attracted media attention. Sadly, the actual number of occurrences is a lot higher. Facebook already made headlines back in August 2009 by allowing the frankly appalling "Bounce back the illegal immigrant" game³⁶⁴, brainchild of Renzo Bossi, son of the Northern League leader. While yet another tragedy at sea is met with outrage and dismay, the League's devotees keep themselves amused with this

³⁶³ Stormfront is a nationalist, racist, neo-nazi forum reputed to be the top-ranking hate-mongering site. It was conceived as an electronic noticeboard in the early 1990s. In 1995 it became a website, run by nationalist leader and former Ku Klux Klan member Don Black. It came under public scrutiny in the US in 2000 when it was the subject of a documentary called Hate.com. It was subsequently removed from the indexes of Google in France and German. The site now consists of a number of discussion groups on various themes. It includes news stories and many links to other racist organisations. Its logo is a Celtic cross surrounded by the words "White Pride World Wide". The people who run the site describe themselves as an online community of "white nationalists" whose goal is to promote themselves through the site, in an effort to combat the thousands of sites which - they maintain - promote the interests of so-called "non-whites"

³⁶⁴ "Ma sul sito della Lega impazza il gioco 'Rimbalza il clandestino'" – (on the Northern League website, the 'Bounce the illegal immigrant back' game meets with huge success) (La Repubblica, 21 August 2009).

app that allows users to sink migrants' boats with a simple click: the higher the number of immigrants you manage to ward off, the higher the score.

The Arci association filed a complaint against Renzo Bossi for inciting racial hatred. A few days later, a number of Northern League leaders once again fell under scrutiny for their behaviour on Facebook. This time it is the self-styled "Northern League Mirano" (VE) group that, with its over 400 friends, chooses as profile picture the shocking appeal: "Torture for illegal immigrants! It's nothing but self-defense"³⁶⁵.

Racist groups on Facebook select a wide variety of targets: they oppose the scheduled construction of mosques, they demand that Roma settlements be closed down, they complain about the opening of so-called "ethnic shops", they fight against the perceived "Islamic invasion", they spread openly anti-semitic ideas, culminating in the refusal and hatred of immigrants as a whole. These are the subjects most frequently dealt with. Profiles and groups are often inspired by current events (for instance, after the murder of Yara in Brembate³⁶⁶ or the arrival of refugees following the north African crises) or act as magnets for nostalgic neo-fascist activists.

The situation is different when it comes to people's personal pages: various members of centre-right parties have been accused of using their profiles to spread racist and discriminatory ideas, simply through discussions published on their wall, or through pictures and posters the content of which leaves no room for manoeuvre (racist Forza Nuova posters, pictures of Mussolini, photos that capture them while they perform the Roman salute, etc.)

The case of the town of Grantorto gave rise to heated debate back in April 2010: a young 22-year-old who described himself as a "follower of the Northern League and a Christian" set up two groups: "Grantorto, 24 hours of free-for-all shooting at unarmed immigrants...Who's up for it???" and "People walking around Grantorto may well ask themselves: am I in Kabul?"³⁶⁷. Likewise, the anti-Roma statements made by Councillor Vittorio Aliprandi on his Facebook profile caused an uproar³⁶⁸. Lately, an old classic reared its ugly head on Facebook: "Squash the gypsy"³⁶⁹, a gruesome videogame promoted by a section of Forza Nuova in Rome's southern suburbs, based on the fire in which four Roma children - Raul, Fernando, Patrizia and Sebastian - lost their lives; much like in other violent videogames, it awards points to those who run over a

³⁶⁵ "Veltroni: "Via da Facebook lo slogan razzista della Lega di Mirano - (Veltroni: 'remove the racist slogan of the League in Mirano from Facebook'). "Tortura gli immigrati clandestini". Tra gli 'amici' anche Bossi. Cota: "Truffa, l'autore si spaccia per leghista - ('Torture illegal immigrants' Bossi among the friends. Cota: 'it's a fraud, the author is only posing as a League member)" (Corriere della Sera, 27 August 2009).

³⁶⁶ "Razzismo su Facebook dopo Yara Gambirasio e Clarissa Lombardi (Racism on Facebook after Yara Gambirasio and Clarissa Lombardi)" (facebook-italia.blogspot.com, 6/12/2010); "Yara: il fondatore del gruppo Facebook si dichiara fascista e razzista (Yara: the founder of the Facebook group describes himself as fascist and racist)"; "Yara: il gruppo Facebook promuove link con riferimenti alle Camicie Nere (Yara: the Facebook group displays links to fascist Camicia Nera (Black Shirt) movements" (newnotizie.it, 16 April 2009).

³⁶⁷ "Grantorto, Padova. Su Facebook pagina razzista contro gli immigrati (Grantorto, Padova. "Racist page against immigrants on Facebook") (blizquotidiano.it, 18 April 2009).

³⁶⁸ "Vittorio Aliprandi del PDL su Facebook: 'i rom fanno schifo, li prenderei a calci' ("Vittorio Aliprandi from PDL on Facebook: 'Roma make me sick, I would love to beat them up") (notiziefresche.info, 2 October 2010).

³⁶⁹ "Su Facebook scoppia il razzismo con 'Acciaccia lo zingaro'" (Racism runs wild on Facebook with 'Stamp on the Gypsy") (web20.excite.it, 10 February 2010).

“gypsy”. Yet another example is the Facebook page of the nationalist and xenophobic group “Resistenza Nazionale – National Resistance”³⁷⁰.

The Facebook groups “Put an end to racism on Facebook” and “Shed light on racism”³⁷¹ are the only ones that operate an almost daily monitoring of racist groups and profiles on this social network in Italy. Both of them have compiled different lists that always include at least a hundred groups to report to the administrator. These lists, sadly, never seem to get any shorter, as the groups are reopened the moment they get shut down. Lunaria in turn singled out around 120 Facebook groups and profiles for their racist and xenophobic content and signaled their presence to Unar and the communications fraud squad (Polizia Postale) in May 2011. Another such check-up undertaken by the same organization drew attention to 106 Facebook groups and profiles with a similar content.

In a joint statement in March 2010, ECRI³⁷², ODIHR³⁷³ and FRA³⁷⁴ commissions (belonging respectively to the Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union) sounded the alarm and recommended the adoption of decisive measures to counter racism and xenophobia with particular reference to the internet: “Our organizations are alarmed by “racist patterns of behaviour such as the ever-increasing use of the internet by racist groups for the purposes of recruitment, radicalisation, coordination and control, as well as for the intimidation and discrimination of opponents”, According to the European organisations these views must be firmly challenged while being careful not to jeopardize freedom of expression. The statements continues: “Nonetheless, we strongly believe in the internet’s huge potential for overcoming bias and prejudice based on attributes such as race, colour, language, nationality or religion. This potential should be fully exploited”.³⁷⁵ Civil society is asked “to explore ways of taking advantage of the popularity of social networks in order to fight racism” as well as keeping an eye out for expressions of racist and xenophobic hatred, while the internet industry “should play an active role in addressing the issue of hatred online, by developing and implementing effective solutions while respecting freedom of expression”.

The need to report and take down Facebook pages and other racist blogs and websites, prompts us to advocate a reflection on the need to adapt the Mancino law, dating back to 1993, to new investigative requirements, as well as a revision of the Convention on Cyber Crime (introducing the possibility of prosecuting the authors of racist or xenophobic messages on the internet but also extending it to servers and web providers). Greater cooperation between the Polizia Postale and the judiciary authorities is furthermore desirable, alongside an active involvement of the companies that run the social networks in the prevention of, and struggle against, racism.

³⁷⁰ This group is still open and very active, as is the personal profile of the owner. They work unhindered, posting new racist articles and images every day. (www.facebook.com/PROTESILAO and www.facebook.com/pages/RESISTENZA-NAZIONALE/207255759306262 and resistenzanazionale.com/)

³⁷¹ <http://it-it.facebook.com/pages/Segnaliamo-il-Razzismo/206498321130>.

³⁷² European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe.

³⁷³ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – ODIHR .

³⁷⁴ Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union.

³⁷⁵ 19/03/2010. *Joint statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – 21 March 2010* http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/library/pressreleases/62-21_03_2010_en.asp.

The death of Yussuf Errahali

Lunaria

It is 12 January 2010 in Piazza Cavour, in the centre of Naples, near the rione Sanità, the famously working class neighbourhood close to by the Museo underground station. At around 10am, the half-naked, soaking wet, lifeless body of Yussuf Errahali, a 37-year-old Moroccan immigrant, is found lying on a bench by the Fontana del Tritone. Yussuf dies after untold suffering, amid the cold indifference of passers-by, on a day like any other. "Yussuf, the homeless people who frequent the square say, was a well mannered man who had never got in anybody's way".

He was unable to rebel, stand up or find a way to keep dry and attempt to survive. Yussuf was a homeless man and you might even say he was "used" to sleeping out in the open, wherever he could. And to think that, had he remained in that "hospital for the terminally ill", where he was being treated for his drug and alcohol addictions until a few days before his tragic death, he could be still alive. At first, his death was swiftly dismissed by the few newspapers that reported the episode, as the classic "tragedy of alienation". However, thanks to the determination of a "Il Corriere del Mezzogiorno" correspondent and with the backing of the social cooperative "Il Camper", which offers assistance to the Naples homeless, the case was brought to the attention of the magistrature, who opened an enquiry against unknown individuals. Judge Massimo Fini wished to prove that they were dealing with a murder with racist motives: Yussuf's death was partly caused by the cold, but above all by the harassment and the violent treatment on the part of a group of youths who allegedly threw him into the fountain "for fun", leaving him to freeze to death. Concern and distress were expressed by local politicians, on the pages of the same Corriere del Mezzogiorno. "The death of the Moroccan Yussuf Errahali in Naples – Senator Anna Maria Carloni from the Democratic Party states – is a blow to the stomach that obliges us to first and foremost to locate and punish those responsible for such a brutal murder. This grave incident, brought to light by the young volunteers of the municipality of Naples' civil service who found several witnesses among the homeless, certainly speaks to the conscience of all democratic inhabitants of the city, but is sadly framed by a national context where the list of serious instances of racism and xenophobia is exceedingly long, as the Rosarno episode recently proved." According to councillor responsible for social policy for the Municipality of Naples, Giulio Riccio "the very fact that the judiciary authority did not write off the case as a "natural death" is a positive result that suggests an increased desire for truth and clarity. Our staff is at the complete disposal of the police to help them in any way possible, should the statements already made prove insufficient. It is now all too clear that the raids in Piazza Cavour, both of which ended in tragedy, have become a problem of public security."³⁷⁶

The statements of the homeless witnesses put together by the "Il Camper" volunteers paint a relatively unsettling picture: "It was them, the same people as usual: everybody heard their laughter and insults and saw their wild, unjustified violence". Moreover,

³⁷⁶ Cf: "Yussuf ucciso dal freddo e dall'indifferenza" - (Yussuf, killed by the cold and indifference), 16 January 2010, giornalettismo.com. A similar attack occurred in September 2009: another homeless person was set on fire by a group of unknown individuals.

although the theory that his death was brought about by this groups of young boys who attacked, insulted, humiliated and beat him before throwing him into the freezing water (“The game of ‘throwing the nigger into the Fontana delle Pappardelle’ had been going on for some time, the homeless people claimed), most of the media treat the episode in a cursory manner, in some cases underestimating the gravity of this act committed by the group of unknown individuals”.³⁷⁷

A few quite feeble initiatives follow the death of Yussuf: a sit-in called by the Comboniani Fathers and the Mani Tese association, with Father Alex Zanotelli (altocasertano.wordpress.com), and a letter to Mayor Rosa Russo Jervolino and Giulio Riccio, councillor responsible for social policy, sent by the “Sanità Network” a month after his death and published on the neighbourhood’s blog (quartieresanita.blogspot.com). Children from the T. Campanella school decide to set out a banner “Put an end to indifference: a flower for Yussuf” and place flowers next to the fountain, backed by associations, churches and schools in the neighborhood (shekina.it). A poem was also dedicated to Yussuf, “Senzatetto” (Homeless), which placed eighth in the Primo Concorso Letterario (First Literary Competition) “La Biblioteca d’Oro” (The Golden Library); (santinarusso.com).

Then everything suddenly came to an end. Nobody can give us any further information on the sad tale of Yussuf. No doubt the case was dismissed and Yussuf, like many other victims of racism, is still waiting for justice.

³⁷⁷ Cf “Barbone morto, sfilano i testimoni e negano il raid” - (Homeless man dies, witnesses speak up and discount the raid theory), 16 January 2010, *La Repubblica*.

The suicide of Nourredine Adnane

Lunaria

Palermo, 11 February 2011. Nourredine Adnane, a Moroccan man of 27 from Ben Hamed, a small village near Casablanca, is sitting next to his stall in Via Basile, near the university. He is a street vendor who works to feed himself and his family; he holds a regular residence permit and a vendor's license. Unfortunately, it is a very restrictive licence: he can sell his goods in the same place for no more than an hour at a time. Although in this Sicilian city, illegality is very much part of everyday life, the limits imposed by the license allow the local police to carry out constant check-ups on the vendors' routine. This is what happens on the day in question, despite the fact that Nourredine had already received three notifications in the previous week. The latest request to move on, possibly exacerbated by the seizing of his merchandise, is the final straw for Nourredine. He leaves the scene for a few minutes and returns holding a bottle of petrol, which he proceeds to douse himself with before setting fire to himself. He is taken to hospital with third-degree burns over 80% of his body. He dies in a Palermo hospital, after eight days of agony, on 19 February. His death cannot simply be read as the result of anger and despair. Immediately after 11 February, his family, friends and the leaders of the local trade unions and associations came forward, outlining a situation that predated and transcended his desperate act. It came to light that the local police patrol that operated in the neighborhood, and one of the officers – known as Bruce Lee – in particular, was notably over-zealous in performing these routine check-ups on foreign street vendors.³⁷⁸ Nouredine's cousin, Rashid Adnane, spoke of a veritable persecution carried out against him and all the other street vendors, and accused the local policemen of looking on passively instead of stopping the young man from setting fire to himself. The immigration spokesman for the Palermo office of the Cgil union confirmed: "It is an intimidating atmosphere for the immigrants. Some of them have told us that the local policemen regularly handcuff the street vendors, bundle them into their cars and drive them round the block. Having done this, they requisition the merchandise without even drafting a report".³⁷⁹

The high number of witnesses for these abuses carried out by local police officers eventually (a few months later) led to an enquiry, running parallel to the one on the death of Nourredine, into the so-called "traffic warden gang": ten local police officers and inspectors received a notice of investigation on counts of libel, causing injury, forgery and falsification; some of them were members of the group that checked Nourredine's licence on 11 February. To back this up we find the statements given by a number of Moroccan, Tunisian, Bangladeshi and Chinese street vendors.³⁸⁰ People from the neighbourhood, the Moroccan community and Palermo-based associations, expressed their solidarity in a well attended protest march on 19 February; sadly, the

³⁷⁸ Cf. E. Bellavia, "Se la legge diventa persecuzione nella città delle regole a intermittenza" - (When law becomes persecution in the city of intermittent regulations), 19 February 2011, repubblica.palermo.it and "Non hanno mosso un dito" - (They didn't lift a finger) 19 February 2011, lasicilia.web.it

³⁷⁹ Cf. "Al capezzale dell'ambulante ustionato. Tra lacrime, rabbia e preghiere" - (At the bedside of the street vendor who set himself on fire. Tears, anger and prayers), 12 February 2011, repubblica.palermo.it

³⁸⁰ Cf. S. Palazzolo, "Angherie e botte agli ambulanti sotto inchiesta dieci vigili urbani" - (Abuse and beatings of street vendors. Ten local policemen accused) 19 June 2011, repubblica.palermo.it.

national press did not grant these events an equal degree of attention. Only the local edition of *La Repubblica* went into the case in detail, even promoting, along with Ciss, a local NGO, a fund-raising initiative that raised €20,000 to support Nourredine's family: his 21-year-old wife, a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, his father and brother in Palermo and seven more brothers and his mother in Morocco. The local Chamber of Commerce and the President of the Senate Renato Schifani also participated in the initiative, the latter publicly asking the mayor, putting him in an awkward position, to open an administrative investigation. The petition for a day of public mourning, put forward by some members of the opposition, was turned down by the mayor who chose to limit himself to offering to reimburse the family's funeral expenses, a move which was met with a firm refusal. Nourredine's body was repatriated with the help of the Moroccan embassy. The judicial inquiry opened by the Public Prosecutor of Palermo is still ongoing: the alleged offence is instigation to commit suicide. It has been observed that, unlike Mohamed Bouazizi, the 26-year-old Tunisian man from Sidi Bouzid who set fire to himself on 17 December 2010, becoming the symbol of the Tunisian uprising, Nourredine Adnane met with a different fate: "The life of an immigrant, particularly a poor one, counts for less than nothing. Adnane's name does not make the list of martyrs like Bouazizi, nor does he stir the conscience of Italian citizens making them aware of the daily episodes of discrimination and humiliation undergone by immigrants or the abuse that they are forced to undergo at the hands of domineering individuals, whether in uniform or not".³⁸¹ The hope is that, at the very least, the investigations will continue and eventually lead to a fair trial.

³⁸¹ A. Rivera, "La riscossa della sinistra e i nostri Bouazizi ignorati" – (Left to the rescue and our ignored Bouazizi's) 19 May 2011, <http://blog-micromega.blogautore.espresso.repubblica.it/2011/05/19/annamaria-rivera-la-riscossa-della-sinistra-e-i-nostri-bouazizi-ignorati/>

Rome drives its Roma community out. An opportunity for reception wasted

Serena Chiodo

In April 2011, a high number of evictions (almost daily) of unauthorized Roma settlements were carried out in Rome.

On 5 April the local police cleared out two smaller settlements located in the 15th district, under the Ponte dell'Industria bridge and in Via della Magliana.

The next day, bulldozers pulled down thirty shanties in Via Papiria, 7th district. According to the census carried out immediately after the eviction, 54 people, including 21 children, lived on the premises.

On 7 April it was the turn of the settlement in Via di Porta Furba, 6th district and on 12 April the local police, jointly with other police officers and the staff of the city council's welfare helpdesk dismantled three further settlements: two were situated in the 5th district, in Via G Seguenza and Via del Tufo, a third in Via Teano, 6th district.

These early evictions involved small-size settlements, with an average of 50 inhabitants. In the following days, the municipality focused its attention on the larger ones.

On 18 April, the settlement in Via Severini, which had risen next to the meat market between two main roads – Via Prenestina and Via Palmiro Togliatti – and housed 200 people, was cleared out in the presence of Mayor Gianni Alemanno, the city's health and safety rep Giorgio Ciardi and the president of the 7th district Roberto Mastrantonio. On the same day, on the other side of the city, 200 more people, 40 of them minors, were evicted from their makeshift shelters in a former factory, Mira Lanza, in the Marconi neighbourhood. Two days after that, the bulldozers entered the Via del Flauto settlement in the 5th district: at dawn on 20 April, its 270 inhabitants suddenly found themselves with nowhere to go. The settlement in Via dei Cluniacensi in the Casalbruciato neighbourhood (5th district) was cleared out on 22 April: 300 people lived there, 65% of them minors. In the space of five days a total of 970 Roma were made homeless.³⁸²

The Cara (centre for reception of asylum seekers) in Castelnuovo di Porto, already a reception centre for more than 400 asylum seekers, has been chosen as the ideal place for hosting, by turn, the evicted Roma while they wait for the completion of the building projects on further authorized settlements (www.romatoday.it, 11 March 2011).

The word “safety” is often rhetorically associated the word “Roma” in the statements of local institutional and political representatives, particularly when tragedies occur: safety for children, for all those residing in the settlements and for the citizens who live in the surrounding area. For instance, safety is the most popular word when four

³⁸² The evictions of the past few days follow the equally frequent ones carried out in previous months, fulfilling the promises of the 'Plan for Nomadic Peoples' designed to solve the capital's 'Roma Emergency', presented by Mayor Gianni Alemanno on 31 July 2009. See: stranieriinitalia.it/briguglio/immigrazione-e-asilo/2009/agosto/slides-piano-nomadi-rm.pdf). The plan prioritised the dismantling of around 80 unauthorised camps, and stated that they would be replaced by 13 authorised ones which would, by the end of 2010, provide accommodation for six thousand Roma. At November 2010, the 21luglio (21st of July) association had recorded 130 evictions, most of them forced, carried out by the city council with no decent alternative accommodation arrangements offered to many of the people involved. (Don't evict my rights: petition in favour of Roma children who have been illegally evicted in the capital, 25 November 2010, 21luglio.com.)

children die in the fire that consumed the shanty where they were sleeping, in a small settlement located on the Via Appia Nuova on 6 February 2011 (Il Corriere della Sera, 6 February 2011). Mayor Alemanno used this opportunity to deal with the issue of forced evictions: "This is the tragedy of the wretched illegal settlements: they need to be taken down, they are extremely dangerous". Najo Azdovic, commissioner in charge of Roma issues, echoed his words: "These tragedies must not occur anymore: institutions have to find alternative housing solutions". (La Repubblica, 6 February 2011). (However, it is hard to think of Roma safety as the main reason behind the forced evictions given the way in which they are carried out).

Alternative living solutions appear to be a basic necessity if we wish to avoid this sort of tragedy.

And this is precisely what was offered to the people evacuated in April. However, sadly, not to everyone. Indeed, a single offer from the municipality follows the evictions: the Cara of Castelnuovo di Porto is made available to women and children. And the men? "Men will have to sort themselves out. They could rent a flat and look for a job" City councillor Fabrizio Santori, President of the Safety Commission states (La Repubblica, 18 April 2011). He does not seem to be aware of the difficult situation of exclusion that affects most of the Roma community who encounter immense difficulties in accessing employment and social inclusion schemes. Breaking up families is considered a non-solution by many members of associations and of the political opposition, but above all by the Roma community itself, which, after the first bout of evictions, flatly refuses this option. After the dismantling of the Via Papiria settlement, a group of Roma paid a visit to the headquarters of Rome's 7th district, occupying the building for a few hours, to ask President Mastrantonio for his help in avoiding the breaking up of their families. Taking note of the lack of concrete answers, the Roma "who peacefully went to the district offices to ask the President for his mediation, have spontaneously and civilly decided to leave, as the administration was unable to propose an alternative solution to the harsh reality of family separation". (www.abitarearoma.net, 6 April 2011).

The municipality does not seem to want to acknowledge this state of affairs nor does it intend to go back on its word. Instead, Alemanno explains that "It is essential to start now so that, if illegal immigrants fleeing from the south arrive, they must not find an environment of illegal, inadequately run, settlements. (Il Tempo, 7 April 2011). This escalation of evictions begins at a time when Tunisian refugees begin to arrive in Rome after the fall of the Ben Ali regime: the mayor even goes to the effort of officially declaring that he does not intend to offer them any form of shelter, as "there are already 8000 refugees and asylum seekers in addition to about 2000 Romanians and travellers in the illegal settlements".

The political attitude of the municipal administration, faced with the clear need to bolster the reception system in and around Rome, remains the same: prevent the arrival of these people and clear out the Roma without offering any decent alternative housing. "Two evictions carried out on a single day without offering any alternative solution is the act of an irresponsible administration" Provincial councillor for Sinistra Ecologia e Libertà, Gianluca Peciola, declared after the two evictions in Via Severini and the decommissioned Mira Lanza (18/4/2011 www.corriereromano.it), while Mastrantonio,

president of the 7th district, stressed that he had already asked for the “relocation of more than 200 Romanian Roma in Via Severini, given the extreme inhumane conditions of the settlement”, hoping for “an improved living situation rather than eviction for its own sake” (www.agenparl.it, 18 April 2011).

The associations who work with the Roma community agree as to the inadequacy of the municipality’s proposal. “The 200 evicted people refused the social help that was offered only to women and children,” Gianluca Staderini from Popica association, who was present on the day of the eviction in Via Severini declares. “All of them chose to go their own way and walked off in single file. It is unclear where they will go.” (Il Corriere della Sera, 18 April 2011). Popica also releases a statement jointly with Arci to expose the lack of real policies for social and housing inclusion of the Roma community immediately after the shutting down of the settlement: “Most of the evicted individuals had already been sent away from other temporary housing solutions. This situation is seriously affecting the relationship between the Roma community and other citizens. None of these 200 persons agreed to split up their families as proposed by Rome municipality. In the capital of Catholicism, whose administration set up a department to protect family unity and rights, Roma families are evicted and separated” (www.popica.org).

At dawn on 20 April, the number of people evicted from the bigger sites verges on 670, after the shutting down of the settlement on Via del Flauto: all of them turn down the Cara reception option restricted to women and children. On 21 April, the Community of Sant’Egidio published a stern letter on “a grave act that encourages needless austerity and harshness”, pointing out that “contrary to what was announced, the evicted families were not offered an alternative housing solution but only the option of splitting up their families. Today, as a result, more than 600 people wander the city with no place to go. The family who lost its four children in the fire, for instance, has been living in our city for ten years and has already endured 30 evictions with predictable results in terms of social integration”.

The mayor returned these criticisms to sender: “The very fact that the assistance we offer is turned down means that many of them do not live in the desperate conditions outlined by the Sant’Egidio community” (La Repubblica, 22 April 2011). Sant’Egidio’s cry is taken up by other organisations who work towards guaranteeing Roma individuals’ rights: Popica, Arci and Arpjetto Onlus publish a statement immediately after the eviction on Via del Flauto that condemns “the deafening silence of the Church, taken up with the Easter celebrations and with organizing the beatification of John Paul II”. In light of the fact that “the administrators of Roma Capitale (special fund for Rome) claim that the evacuations are acts carried out for the benefit and safety of the Roma themselves”, the associations ask themselves “where do these Roma citizens, whose safety is supposedly being guaranteed, end up?” and “how are the over 30 million euros (public money) that are allocated each year to the prefect of Rome for the so-called “Travellers’ Emergency” spent?” (www.popica.org, 22 April 2011). Questions that remain unanswered.

The attention which this situation attracts does not, however, do anything to stop the shutting down of the Via dei Cluniacensi settlement on 22 April: after yet another eviction without an alternative being proposed for the ousted families, a protest is

inevitable. Immediately after the eviction, about 200 Roma break into St Paul's basilica, one of the most important churches in the capital, and occupy a portion of the pews as a sign of protest. "Our shanties were unattractive and dangerous, but after the evictions we are forced to live on the streets: we ask the Church to help us and make our voice heard, before tragedy brings us to tears. We ask the Church to hear our request: that for each eviction there will be a place where our families can be housed without separating us from our children, in order to start a true process of inclusion" they state in a letter addressed to Pope Benedict XVI, caught up in the celebration of the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum, broadcast worldwide, and claim: "We are enduring our very own Way of the Cross, after a week of evictions we have come here to St Paul's to ask the Church to help us to celebrate Easter and find an alternative solution to life on the street" (Il Corriere della Sera, 22 April 2011).

The person in charge of immigration at Arci, Claudio Graziano, adds "More Roma who were evicted in the last few days are coming. The occupation of the basilica, in the full respect of its functions, is an extreme act to ask for alternative solutions to the camps" (Il Messaggero, 22 April 2011).

The situation is extremely serious, partly because the occupation takes place two days before Easter. After long negotiations with Cardinal Vicar Agostino Vallini, the Roma decide to leave the basilica in order to allow the Good Friday celebrations to continue, and spend the night in two big rooms used as storerooms next to the cloister of the basilica. The next day, however, the Vatican gendarmerie receive different orders: access to the basilica is denied to all the Roma in question, even in order to recover an item of clothing they had left behind, or to grab a bite to eat. Those who leave, therefore, cannot then get back into the basilica: family separations begin from this moment. In order to be sure that no Rom can gain access to the building, the gates of the basilica remain shut until 10 PM, despite the heavy rainfall, which did not let up all afternoon. At 10 PM the Roma group was moved on and worshippers were let in, though many chose to leave in protest and solidarity with the Roma families. Associations and volunteers provided tents, food and blankets. On Easter Sunday lunch was served on the lawn in front of the basilica, while inside, the priest made no reference to what was happening just outside the doors. The Roma had no intention of giving up and negotiations continued. Councillor Gianluigi De Palo, in charge of family policy, at odds with the representatives of associations (if they had not been around to interfere, the situation would have unfolded more rapidly and easily) also took part in the negotiations, jointly with the mayor's cabinet chief, Antonio Lucarelli, the commissioner in charge of public safety Giorgio Ciardi, the Commanding Officer of the municipal police Di Maggio and the director of the Rome diocese's Caritas branch Monsignor Enrico Feroci. Lucarelli, on behalf of the mayor, put forward a proposal: women and children should be sent to the Cara of Castelnuovo di Porto and men to the administration centres open between 8 PM and 7 AM or, alternatively, €1000 would be given to families wishing to return to Romania. The municipality would provide €500 and the vicariate €500 more for the repatriation. Only 16 Roma accepted the proposal. The others stuck to their guns, as they wished to remain in Italy and not be separated. Thanks to the support of several local associations such as Arci, Casa dei diritti sociali, Stalker, Popica, and to the mediation of Caritas and Sant'Egidio, all the Roma families

managed to obtain housing, albeit temporary. Caritas made available one of its premises, at Arco di Travertino, run by the social cooperative Domus.

In a joint statement the associations declared themselves satisfied with the way in which things had panned out. But it is important to stress that the temporary solution was offered by a private organisation, Caritas, who stepped in for the municipal administration that simply did not deal with the problem. The Roman "Travellers' Plan" was also severely criticized by Amnesty International, who asked that "the controversial housing plan that lies at the root of the forced eviction of hundreds of Roma be re-examined", stressing that "this plan violates the human rights of thousands of Roma individuals" because it envisages forced evictions without any previous consultation or the offer of alternative living arrangements.³⁸³ Ignacio Jovtis, Amnesty International expert on Italy, explains how the terrible situation currently endured by the Roma community, part of which still lives in hovels without basic hygiene, is the result of years of discrimination and lack of adequate policies to counter it. In spite of the many enquiries carried out on a national and international level, the mayor interrupts the eviction programme for the duration of the week before the beatification of Pope John Paul II, insisting that "the administration will then continue with its programme of evictions of illegal Roma settlements".

The evictions carried out during April 2011 are the latest example of the long-term inability of the Rome administration to come up with a programme of social inclusion and housing for the Roma community: an effective alternative to the policy of the "contempt camps", destined to fuel discriminations, segregation and exclusion.³⁸⁴ A programme that must be included in a more structured plan geared towards tackling the housing emergency that affects thousands of people in the capital, not just immigrants and Roma families, and that must rely on the direct involvement of the Roma themselves in its development and implementation. As the Roman anti-racist organisation clearly revealed (www.popica.org, 24 April 2011) the "Travellers' Plan" is "the product of the confused and contradictory politics of Alemanno's council, based on evictions and crowd-pleaser security".

We cannot but acknowledge its utter failure.

³⁸³ "La risposta sbagliata. Italia: il Piano nomadi viola il diritto all'alloggio dei rom a Roma" - (The wrong answer. Italy: the Roma Scheme violates the right to housing of the Roma people in Rome), Amnesty International, www.amnesty.it

³⁸⁴ It would be hypocritical to blame the Alemanno administration alone for the Roma people's current standard of living in the capital. Without going into the forced evictions carried out under former councils, we should draw attention to the fact that the 'Plan for Nomadic Peoples' approved by the centre-right administration in 2009 is the logical extension of the 'Pact for a Safe Rome' agreed by Mayor Walter Veltroni and the Interior Ministry on 18 May 2007. One of the main aims of this Pact was "containment of peoples without territories" through the construction of four 'solidarity villages', each housing about 1,000 people.

“Gypsyville” and the other new terms in the land of fear

Paola Andrisani

“Nomads are people with their own culture and character. Are they different? We should take advantage of this. Let’s give them the chance to express themselves to the utmost, in a civil environment with rules that must be respected by both parties. Following this path, I am pretty sure we will reach a satisfying solution. *Gypsyville* can represent a rich resource for the city, maybe even a tourist attraction, where Milanese citizens can go and discover the charm and appeal of their traditions”: this is what Pdl (People of Liberty) member Ombretta Colli, then councillor in charge of social services in Milan, stated, back in 1997 (La Colli contro tutti. “Per i figli del vento costruirò Nomadopoli”, - Colli against everybody. For the sons of the wind, I will build Gypsyville, Corriere della Sera, 8 July 1997). Gypsyville was never built but it becomes relevant again after 14 years in May 2011, used by the centre-right as an image to describe what would be in store for Milan, should Giuliano Pisapia, the centre-left candidate, win the mayoral elections. The heated debate that already characterised the election campaign for the mayors of Milan and Naples gets even hotter on the eve of second-round balloting. A true smear- and racially-oriented campaign is carried out against both Pisapia and thousands of foreign citizens. The instigator is the Northern League leader Umberto Bossi who states: “The League makes this commitment: it will not leave Milan in the hands of a madman who wants to fill it with illegal immigrants and mosques and turn it into a “*gypsyville*” (Bossi: “Pisapia vuole una ‘zingaropoli’ – Bossi: “Pisapia wants a “*gypsyville*”) Il Secolo XIX, 19 May 2011). The centre-right’s goal is to warn Milanese citizens about the “danger” of a city ruled by, as out-going mayor Letizia Moratti herself describes him, a “friend of terrorists”. Defence Minister Ignazio La Russa, announcing the forthcoming publication of leaflets that claim to shed light on the “weaknesses” of the centre-left in dealing with issues of public safety, declares: Pisapia ought to state clearly in which neighbourhoods he wants to build these mosques, whether he is in favour of the “stanze del buco” (drug rooms -where drug addicts can shoot up in a controlled environment) or not and what his opinion on the occupation of unauthorised youth clubs is” (Insulti e manifesti contro Pisapia Lega e Pdl non abbassano i toni – Insults and banners against Pisapia, Lega and Pdl do not let up, La Repubblica, 20 May 2011). No less than ten trucks are hired by the Northern League to deliver “anti-Pisapia” propaganda material, announcing the threat of an “Islamic invasion” of Milan and the “danger represented by foreigners”. One of the posters from the Northern League that cause the greatest upheaval is titled “*With Pisapia Milan becomes a Gypsyville. More travellers’ settlements. The biggest mosque in Europe... Vote for Letizia Moratti and the Milanese way of life*” (Camioncini, manifesti e slogan l’offensiva anti-Pisapia della Lega – Trucks, banners and slogans: the anti-Pisapia campaign of the Northern League, La Repubblica, 21/05/2011). Next, it is the turn of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi who breaks his silence and takes the floor on radio and television. From news programmes Gr1 to Studio Aperto, from Tg1 to Tg2,

not to mention Tg4 and Tg5, the PM is everywhere.³⁸⁵ His lengthy media marathon stands out thanks to his insulting statements, directed, as ever, against Roma and Muslim individuals, already the target of choice of the racist speeches of the Northern League. Silvio Berlusconi, standing next to the symbols of Pdl (People of Liberty party) and the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy with the EU and Italian flags in the background, sounds the alarm, launching an appeal to the general public: "They want to turn Milan into the Stalingrad of Italy. Pisapia's programme is harmful for families and businesses because it involves higher taxes, a big Islamic centre, local election voting rights for foreigners, an end to Roma evictions and the legal recognition to Roma of the right to self-construction, namely the right to build their makeshift homes wherever they think fit. Milan will not be turned into an "Islamic city" a "gypsytown". The history of Milan cannot fall into the hands of the extreme left whose only desire is to open mosques and Roma settlements, allowing the construction of gypsy hovels everywhere, instead of dealing with the city's real problems". ("Berlusconi, parte l'invasione dei Tg", Berlusconi, and so begins the invasion of Tv news, Corriere della sera, 20 May 2011). After his appearance on various news programmes, the prime minister repeated his points in two online video messages, only three days later. Two video-clips are posted on the Pdl website, one for Milan, the other for Naples. The message is always the same. Pisapia "wants an Islamic city, a gypsyville besieged by foreigners to whom he also wants to grant the right to vote. We must protect our rights and our freedom" ("Berlusconi: 'Milano alla sinistra sarà una zingaropoli islamica' – Berlusconi: 'Milan will be turned into an Islamic gypsytown under left-wing government'", *Avvenire*, 23 May 2011)³⁸⁶. The PM is echoed by other members of the centre-right. The chairman of the Milanese town council Manfredo Palmieri (Fli) and third party candidate for mayor, comments on the answers given by the mayor in office about the building of mosques in Milan: "Mayor Moratti proposes smaller and decentralized places of worship. In other words, neighbourhood mosques. How can this position be reconciled with the electoral campaign of her supporters? To be consistent, they should declare that it will be Moratti herself who will turn, and, in fact, already has turned, Milan into *Islamville*" (Agi, 23 May 2011). Northern League member Mario Borghezio, appearing on KlausCondicio, a TV program broadcast on YouTube, states: "There is no doubt about it. Islamic fundamentalists, foremost among them Al Qaeda and the Al Zawahiri himself, would be very happy should the League lose and

³⁸⁵ The services and products committee of the communications watchdog Agcom decides, in a majority vote, to impose the toughest sanctions allowed by the law on the Tg1 and Tg4 television news programmes (these two have committed the offence before), and to fine Tg2, Tg5 and Studio Aperto €1000 each for the "situation which arose at prime time on Friday 20 May when Tg1, Tg2, Tg5, Tg4 and Studio Aperto all ran interviews with the prime minister." On that evening, according to accusations brought before Agcom, all the principal news programmes with the exception of Tg3 and La7 gave airspace to the prime minister, each with its own interview. ('Premier occupies all TV stations, Agcom fines news programmes', *corriere.it*, 23 May 2011.)

³⁸⁶ Naga, a voluntary charitable organisation in Milan, files an anti-discrimination suit for the use of the the expression 'Islamic Gypsyville' during an election campaign. "The magistrature was the main target for the right in Milan's mayoral campaign; and naturally foreigners were the second target. Roma people in particular seemed to hold a place of honour in the campaign of the out-going mayor: the city was plastered with posters warning of the danger that Milan would become a 'Gypsyville'. But followers of Islam – both Italians and foreigners – weren't forgotten either, and the prime minister stated that Milan might well become a 'Muslim Gypsyville' with Europe's largest mosque. Given the highly discriminatory nature of the posters and statements released over the past few days towards Roma – a minority protected by law – and towards Italians and foreigners professing the Muslim faith, we have presented a case at Milan's civil court, citing 215/2003 and law 286/1998, against the Northern League and the PdL (People of Freedom) party. For information, see the communiqué released by the association on 25 May 2011 on naga.it.

Pisapia become mayor of Milan. The victory of the left would open the doors to radical Islam. I can already picture the Islamic flag waving atop the Duomo. As the prosecutor's enquiry shows, Al Qaeda is well rooted in Milan, which may well be the only European metropolis which has yet to join the vast project of *Islamization of Europe* promoted in Brussels. Thus Pisapia, who is not Islamic nor an Islamist risks turning into a useful, if foolish, puppet" ("Elezioni Milano, Borghezio: 'Al Qaeda felice se vince Pisapia'" Elections in Milan, Borghezio 'Al Qaeda happy if Pisapia wins', blizquotidiano.it, 23 May 2011).

This racist electioneering goes beyond Milan itself: in Trieste the Northern League Provincial Secretary and MP Massimiliano Fedriga makes a similar appeal to his voters: "If you don't want Trieste to be turned into a sort of Sodom and Gomorra, a den of gypsies and illegal immigrants, just vote for Roberto Antonione in the second ballot. Otherwise Trieste will become a magnet for illegal immigrants, Roma and foreigners in general" ("Sinistra estrema. Lega all'attacco" – Extreme left. Northern League on the warpath. Il Piccolo, 21 May 2011).

The headlines of the daily press fully reflect the political climate: in perusing them, we notice that the journalistic reporting of the electoral campaign for the city council elections focuses on the different ways in which the candidates and the political parties supporting them approach the subjects of immigration, the presence of the Roma community and of Muslims. These headlines stress the contrast between the two parties on precisely these issues, as if, in fact, the future of our cities is exclusively dependant on a mayor's ability to deal with these matters. "Roma, Islam and taxes, the League versus Pisapia" (Il Giorno, 20 May 2011). "Gypsy Friends. The lawyer's creed: 'each Roma has a right to housing'" (Liberio, 22 May). "The latest from the left-wing candidate: farms and apartment blocks to the Roma" (La Padania, 22 May 2011). "Open letter sent by email and read out in the Pdl Gazebos. Here is the new anti-gypsytown pamphlet (Il Giornale Milano, 24 May 2011). "Swimming pools with us, mosques with them" (Il Giornale, 20 May 2011). "Mosques and Roma on the cards. Mosques and drug rooms everywhere. But no mention of them can be found in the programme." (La Repubblica, 20 May 2011).

Prominent among the biased accusations that the right wing hurls at the centre-left candidate for mayor of Milan is the article by Franco Bechis in Liberio where the journalist chooses an allusive title referring to the programme that Pisapia supposedly wishes to propose in support of the homosexual community and Muslim citizens: "The Pisapia model. Milan to become the *Gay Mecca*. Pisapia will turn Milan into a never-ending gay pride (*La folgorazione di Pisapia: "Milano Mecca dei gay"*, "Pisapia's bolt from the blue: Milan as the 'Gay Mecca'", Liberio, 21/05/2011).³⁸⁷

Thomas Hammarberg, delegate for human rights at the Council of Europe, the day after his visit to Italy, strongly condemns the racist and xenophobic content of certain campaign posters put up around the city in support of the centre-right against Pisapia: "I was shocked by the widespread use of xenophobic messages against Roma and Muslim communities in the course of the electoral campaign. When in Milan, I noticed

³⁸⁷ Moreover Bechis twists the facts to his own ends: the article analyzes the file drawn up by one of the workshops contributing to the "Pisapia workshop", implying that the proposals outlined in the document, on which we cannot dwell here, are part of the electoral program, which is not the case.

some posters that don't show Italy's best side. I believe that, after the elections, a reflection on how certain political parties carried out their electoral campaign is certainly in order". (*Milano, il Consiglio d'Europa. "Shock per i manifesti xenofobi"* "Milan, Council of Europe- 'Shocked by xenophobic posters'", La Repubblica, 31 May 2011).

Let us recall some of these offensive posters: "The Pisapias are coming. Watch out, Milan! Moratti makes us sick, but the others are even worse": in the background, a photoshopped image shows a group of Middle-Eastern people, sabres in hand, marching on Milan: some of them have been given Pisapia's face. "Milan is an Islamic city. Marching for Pisapia": in the background, a picture of Muslim protesters marching for their rights with the figure of Pisapia in their midst. "Pisapia girls": in the background, five women wearing veils in imitation of the niqab. "The left will bring back the Roma's illegal settlements. We're with you, Letizia!": the slogan is written in upper-case in large characters and is flanked by the Pdl (People of Liberty) party symbol.³⁸⁸ A mixture of racist and xenophobic propaganda that luckily was not endorsed by voters and, hopefully, will be soon be punished by the magistrature.

³⁸⁸ Some of the posters can be found in the photo gallery on the website set up by Lunaria www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org

“Forced overboard” in Montagnana

Lunaria

Borgo Frassine, Montagnana, 23 May 2011. The body of Abderrahaman Salhi, a 24-year-old Moroccan, was found by a farmer in the river, next to a bridge about two kilometres from the village centre. His face was swollen and tumefied, the head showed signs of injury: it may have been caused by a fall but also by a blunt instrument. Salhi was homeless, well known in the village; he did not have a job, lived by the day and had an alcohol problem.

His death was reported in a number of local newspapers on 25 May. The first theory was that the young man had fallen into the river in his drunken state.³⁸⁹ However, in the following days, some elements that emerged in the course of the investigations led to suppose that things might have gone differently.

Salhi was last seen in the village on 15 May during the local ham fair: he was drunk and harassed a number of women who called the Carabinieri police. Salhi was taken away in a car and the investigators are trying to piece together what occurred from that moment onwards. According to some witnesses, Salhi was taken by the Carabinieri to the banks of the Frassine River where they proceeded to plunge him in up to his waist only to leave him there. An autopsy was carried out but the outcome was not disclosed. Four officers on duty in the Carabinieri station of Montagnana on 15 May are added to the list of suspects. Some of the victim’s fellow countrymen begin to talk with the press and to investigators, telling of a common practice, which, if confirmed, could place the four officers in a very difficult position.³⁹⁰ At least three witnesses stated that they were repeatedly thrown off the bridge into the river by policemen. One of them identified the four officers as the perpetrators of this special “treatment” accorded him in the past; the practice of the forced baths was allegedly repeated several times (from two to four) in order to make him sober up, particularly “after the arrival of the white-haired officer”. The four officers were transferred to another station. Kidnapping and voluntary manslaughter are among the charges they face. The Razzismo Stop association together with the “Sinistra Unita” civic list organized a protest march in Montagnana and a press conference in front of the Prefect’s office in Padua on 4 June: they asked the latter to shed light on what happened and demanded that the media report the incident. So far, the piece of news had been largely ignored, with two possible exceptions.³⁹¹ And yet, if the investigations confirmed the claims of these Moroccan witnesses, the crime would be an extremely serious one. Razzismo Stop also offered legal support to Salhi’s family. It is undeniable that, when the police forces are involved in an investigation, the press tends to tread with extreme caution.

³⁸⁹ Cf “Montagnana, trovato il corpo di un marocchino nel Frassine – (Montagnana, body of a Moroccan man found in the River Frassine)”, 25 May 2011, mattinodipadova.gelocal.it and “Montagnana: il cadavere di un 24enne emerge dal fiume Frassine – (Montagnana, corpse of a 24 year-old emerges from the river Frassine)”, 25 May 2011, Padovaoggi.net

³⁹⁰ Cfr. C. Genesin, “Bagni forzati nel fiume per chi sgarra – (Those who misbehave forced to take a dip in the river)”, 2 June 2011, mattinodipadova.gelocal.it; R. Polese, “Quando siamo ubriachi ci buttano in acqua dal ponte – (When we are drunk they throw us off bridge)”, 3 June 2011, Corriere.it

³⁹¹ Il manifesto also reported the incident: G. Mercante, “Marocchino affogato indagati quattro carabinieri – (Moroccan man drowns, four Carabinieri officers under investigation)”, 13 June 2011, il.manifesto.it

The murder of El Kaalouli Imad

Lunaria

Desenzano, 28 June 2011. El Kaalouli Imad, a 19-year-old Moroccan who had been resident in Italy for six years, died during a quarrel which had broken out with his employer, the owner of a restaurant by the lake, in Desenzano del Garda on 28 June. News of the murder is released by the Ansa newsagency during the afternoon but no details are provided apart from the fact that “the victim went to the restaurant to discuss a money matter with the owner”. In order to find out that Imad went to the restaurant in the company of his employment advisor you need to browse the internet until you come across *Il Giornale di Brescia*, which specifies that the young man “went to the restaurant in order to terminate his contract”. Few articles are written and no newspaper gives the events much importance. But Imad was only 19, so it is worth to recalling what happened based on the small number of available sources.

Imad had been working in the “*Il Gattopardo*” restaurant for about five months as a cook or, other newspapers claim, as a waiter,³⁹² or as a plate-washer, according his uncle who was interviewed by *Bresciaoggi* on 1 July.³⁹³

His relationship with the owners of the restaurant was problematic, to the extent that the termination of his contract was agreed. On 28 June Imad went to assert his rights – arrears and severance payment – taking the employment advisor with him. The reconstruction of the conversation is relatively hazy. After an animated discussion, the owner’s father Gioacchino Ferruggio is alleged to have given him €500 in cash, stating that he would go and get the remaining money in his office (or, according to a different version, a cheque for €1,200 that Imad then ripped to shreds). Having returned from his office, Ferruggio did not hand over the money, but instead brought with him an illegally held semiautomatic pistol (.32 calibre) and proceeded to fire eight shots: four or five of them hit Imad in the chest and sternum while another shot wounded the employment advisor. All attempts to resuscitate Imad failed.

The first articles published on the incident tended to place the blame on Imad, viewed as responsible for the unsustainable working relationship, as claimed by the self-confessed murderer, who stated that Imad “had behaved arrogantly on several occasions”; the lack of respect shown by the victim towards his employers supposedly led to the interruption of their working relationship. These arguments were called into question by the victim’s family lawyer who asks the press to make room for the statements of family members, in an announcement published on the website www.bsnews.it on 30 June. He points out that “the theory proposed by the man who is currently under investigation, who claims that the situation degenerated as a result of the young man’s aggressive attitude, does not do honour nor justice to the memory of

³⁹² Cf “Desenzano, omicidio sul lungolago. Freddato un cuoco marocchino – (Desenzano, murder by the lake. Moroccan cook killed)”, 28 June 2011, bresciaoggi.it; “Sparatoria in un locale di Desenzano ucciso un 19enne, ferita una passante – (Shooting in a Desenzano restaurant. 19-year-old killed; a passing woman wounded)”, 28 June 2011, repubblicamilano.it; “Sparatoria a desenzano, cameriere 19enne ucciso davanti al ristorante (Shooting in Desenzano. Waiter aged 19 killed in front of a restaurant)”, 28 giugno 2011, corriere.it; “Far west a desenzano, un morto – (Wild West in Desenzano, one dead)”, 28 June 2011, quibrescia.it; “Va al ristorante per licenziarsi. Titolare spara otto colpi – (Goes to the restaurant in order to resign. Owner fires eight shots)”, 28 June 2011, *Il Giorno*; “Brescia, proprietario di un locale spara e uccide un cameriere marocchino – (Brescia, owner of a restaurant shoots and kills Moroccan waiter)”, 28 June 2011, *Adnkronos*

³⁹³ Cfr. “Distrutti i parenti: “Imad era buono” – (Relatives distraught: “Imad was a good boy)”, 1 July 2011, bresciaoggi.it

the deceased". The words of the victim's uncle are even clearer (Bresciaoggi, 1 July 2011), when he states that Imad "did not get along well with the owners of the restaurant. The main issue was the salary. He was only given half of the money officially established by the contract". According to his family, Imad "always behaved in an upright way. He may well have complained because the money was not enough to provide for his mother, father and three younger brothers, as he would have wanted". The Cgil union in Brescia seems, therefore, to have the right idea: in a statement published on the website on 30 June, it expresses solidarity with the family and comments on the fact that "our campaigns office and our delegates have witnessed, over the years, an inexorable worsening of work conditions. Nowadays it is often difficult to extract basic rights such as wages, holidays and severance pay from employers who, more and more frequently, exercise authority to the point of lapsing into abuse". The cause of death for the young Moroccan should be sought in the revoking of these rights in the workplace rather than in his alleged arrogance. Imad was born in Daroulazidouh, a few kilometers from Casablanca where he was supposed to get married after collecting the money owed him. The end.

An inventory of intolerance

Paola Andrisani (edited by)

2009

16 July 2009 Afragola (NA), Campania

A 21-year-old African from Burkina Faso is wounded in the legs while on his way back from the Caritas canteen. He is looked up to as a leader by the African boys who work in the fields around the city. Two men on a moped shoot him twice with a handgun. The attackers are two Italians of 59 and 39 with previous convictions: they are stopped by local police officers and charged with attempted murder, illegal possession of firearms and firing shots in a public place. The African is sent to hospital with a predicted recovery time of 30 days.

Source: unionesar.da.it

19 July 2009 Alghero (SS), Sardinia

A Senegalese man (54) is the victim of a violent attack by a group of teenagers who shower him with kicks and punches. The man ends up with a broken arm. The inquiry carried out by the Carabinieri police leads to the arrest of two teenagers held responsible for the attack.

Source: notizie.alguer.it

19 July 2009 Palermo (PA), Sicily

Musa Awudu, a 51-year-old Ghanaian man, loses the use of his right eye after a violent racially motivated attack consisting of a vicious punch and the words "go back to your country!" The man only reports the attack a month later: he no longer has a job, he cannot pay the rent on his house and has to undergo permanent medical treatment. The police have not yet found his attacker.

Source: La Repubblica

20 July 2009 Bolzano (BZ), Trentino Alto Adige

The provincial government passes decree n. 1885 that fixes the "quotas" of funding for the construction of public housing to allocate to non-EU immigrants in 2009. These are allocated 6.83% of the living space assigned in 2009 and 7.9% of rental grants in the same year. A few days after the approval of the decree, the president of Ipes, Albert Pürgstaller states: "From now on, we will not be able to provide any housing or subsidies to non-EU citizens, because the quota fixed by the provincial government was already reached in the first months of the year". In November 2010, Ipes and the autonomous province of Bolzano are ordered by the industrial tribunal to provide a rental grant for an Albanian citizen who had seen it revoked as a result of the decree. In pronouncing the sentence, the judge describes the decree as "discriminatory" towards immigrants given that, in awarding funding, it clearly penalizes foreign citizens. One week after this first ruling, 400 appeals were lodged for similar cases.

Source: Alto Adige

21 July 2009 Naples (NA), Campania

In the district of Forcella a young black foreigner asks a 30-year-old man, who comes very close to hitting him with his car, to slow down. The driver gets out of the car and, with the help of two other men, viciously beats up the young immigrant, hurling insults at him such as “go home nigger, it’s what you deserve”. The young man manages to escape. Not long after, a police car arrives on the scene in search of the aggressors.

Source: La Repubblica

22 July 2009 Avellino (AV), Campania

Two local policemen, who beat a foreign national up while he was displaying his merchandise in a market and proceeded to unlawfully arrest him, are sentenced to a year and ten months’ imprisonment, with suspended sentence and the requirement to provide compensation. In their report it stated that the immigrant had used violence in order to avoid the seizure of his goods. The Supreme Court confirms the verdict issued by the Court of Naples and stresses “the inconfutable evidence” based on “a precise reconstruction of events provided by eyewitnesses”, and points out “the evidence provided by forensic enquiries”, thanks to which “the presence of injuries surrounding the lumbar region of the immigrant’s body were found that match, with regard to timing and type, the data provided in the statements, while the injuries suffered by the policemen were attributable to the young man’s attempts to ward off the blows”.

Source: blizquotidiano.it

23 July 2009 Turin (TO), Piedmont

A Nigerian woman Beatrice I. (33), married to an Italian painter and mother of two children, takes her oldest boy (7), who is autistic, to the park. The child throws a stone at a group of people, hitting an 86-year-old man. The woman immediately apologizes, explaining his particular situation to them, but is sternly rebuked: “lock that bastard of yours away in a madhouse” and “go back to your own country”. A man, helped by two others, hits her with a stone. The woman suffers injuries with an estimated ten-day recovery period. The police arrive on the scene and make a note of all those present. A 68-year-old man is charged with attempted grievous bodily harm.

Source: Corriere della Sera

23 July 2009 Florence (FI), Tuscany

Bianca Maria Giocoli, town councillor for the PdL (People of Freedom) party, in reporting supposed instances of “barbarity” on the 29, 30 and 35 bus services, claims that “Chinese people are constantly spitting on the floor. Once, a Roma woman who was at the back of the bus urinated: the liquid trickled across the floor. Albanian, Slavic, Chinese and Roma, street vendors all stink. They simply should not be allowed to take the bus. In the morning, I wash myself, dress properly and smell nice. These immigrant street vendors are always getting in our way with their bulky bags full of stuff”. And she carries on: “gangs of gypsies take up all the seats, emit a nauseating smell, are filthy and scratch themselves all the time, spreading lice all over the place”.

Source: unaviaxoriana.it

25 July 2009 Palermo (PA), Sicily

Wardi Chikhaoui (40), a Tunisian philosophy teacher and professional musician, is the victim of a racially motivated attack. He is brutally beaten up with a stick and a bottle by six young men in Via Balsamo. Chikhaoui loses three teeth, as well as ending up with four cracked ribs, a dislocated shoulder and a deep head wound. "I thought I was going to die, I was powerless in the face of the gang which assaulted me. They were armed with sticks and full bottles of beer. They didn't want me to cross the street and, when I asked why, they shouted: "You are a piece of shit, you need to leave". The blows continue to fall for at least five minutes before the man is rescued by a bartender who calls the police. A month later, Wardi files a police report. After few days, he receives a deportation order on the grounds that, although he has a clean record, he is not in possession of a residence permit.

Source: La Repubblica

28 July 2009 Florence (FI), Tuscany

Two Roma settlements are completely destroyed by a fire one morning. "In the camp consumed by the fire – claims the "Medici per i Diritti Umani (doctors for human rights) association – there were a great many young people, boys and girls who, it has to be said, lived in one of the most respectable arrangements we have ever observed." They speak in the past tense because a number of these Roma youths has not been heard of since the day of the fire. While the remaining "survivors" (about 30 of them) purchased several "igloo" tents and camped out on the site of the burnt down huts with the intention of moving on as soon as possible. To the association itself had only been aware of these two settlements for a short period of time: "Last 20 July," they say, "we paid them a visit and we noticed that an area around second settlement had been burnt out so as to mark it off. We asked what had happened and the Roma told us that they were not the culprits. They had not seen those responsible. We can only hope it was not some sort of warning".

Source: Corriere Fiorentino

28 July 2009 Padua (PD), Veneto

The 31-year-old Romanian citizen Nona Evghenie, a technician for a Verona-based banking group, is elected as town councillor for the Democratic Party. One Sunday, she leaves for a day trip with her husband, an Italian lawyer (35) and another married couple (an Italian man and a Romanian woman). When they reach their destination, they have lunch with another friend of her husband's, a doctor living in the Veneto region. When the latter learns about her election, he begins to insult her rudely with comments like: "you cannot expect to give me orders in my own home". Later, the doctor, in offering to take the two men home on his motorboat, does not allow their two Romanian wives on board. In order to make the concept even clearer, the doctor hands the two women bus tickets for their return journey. He then says goodbye to the woman, adding: "You are worth nothing. You do no work. My son, who is a child, works a lot more than you do".

Source: La Repubblica

30 July 2009 Mantua (MN), Lombardy

The Northern League proposes “optional courses in dialect for carers” and town council meetings “in the local dialect”, at the instigation of the Provincial Secretary Claudio Bottari. “It is important to actively promote a working knowledge of the language used by many of our older constituents, who are the main beneficiaries of these foreign carers,” Bottari maintains. “The richness and variety of our local idioms proves that the courses are necessary for the carers in order to live up to their full potential”. This proposal is not entirely new, given that the province of Treviso, also governed by the Northern League, has already included the Veneto dialect in its “Training Programme for Carers”. And back in 2008 it was the municipality of Caravaggio which adopted similar measures, following the example of the town of Saronno in 2007.

Source: Gazzetta di Mantova

30 July 2009 Florence (FI), Tuscany

An Italian citizen and a Chinese woman without a regular residence permit decide to get married in Florence rather than in the province of Treviso, where the man is resident, because celebrating the wedding in that area would be extremely risky. In the Treviso area, the so-called “Safety Package” is already enforced despite the fact it has not yet been officially approved: as a consequence the bride would risk automatic repatriation. This is because as the couple’s lawyer, Giovanni Cecilian, states, “in that area, under pressure from Treviso police HQ, when a wedding involving an Italian and a foreigner occurs, it is already a common practice to give advance notice of the celebration, together with the date on which the wedding is to be held, to the police, so they have time to stop people without a permit, take them to headquarters and to the Identification Centre and eventually repatriate them”

Source: Corriere Fiorentino

31 July 2009 Cittadella (PD), Veneto

A decree from Mayor Massimo Bitonci bans street vendors from selling kebabs. The document forbids itinerant sales taking place in public areas of the town centre and its immediate surroundings. The form of retail undertaken by street vendors does not appear to meet the “standards of decorum” the historical site calls for, proving “incompatible” with the urban context. “I refer specifically,” Bitonci explains, “to all those items that have very little to do with our culture and our traditions, such as certain exotic products or food, like the kebab, which simply do not fit in with our historical, traditional and local environment.”

Source: Corriere Veneto

2 August 2009 Ospitaletto (BS), Lombardy

A Liberian citizen, During Kennedy, 32, is metalworker in a factory in Brescia. On 9 January he goes to the registry office to ask to be placed on a list of local residents. The request is put on hold until Kennedy submits not only his tax returns, but also documents certifying that his living quarters are fit for human habitation and lastly an original copy, translated and approved by the Italian embassy, of the equivalent of his

legal record from the country of origin. The man has been resident in Italy since 2002, having been granted a permit on humanitarian grounds because of the ongoing conflict in his country. He files a complaint against this request with the help of the ASGI legal support association and the refugee department of the CGIL union. The sentence of the Court of Brescia declares the town council's behaviour to be "discriminatory" and asks that the decree be revoked, that the cost of the trial be refunded (€600 in taxes and €1,500 in fees) and that Kennedy be added to the local register.

Source: Liberazione

6 August 2009 Rome (RM), Lazio

A 23-year-old Bangladeshi immigrant is attacked in the greengrocers where he works in the district of Tor Bella Monaca. Three Italian males aged 18, 19 and 38, beat him with sticks as well as stabbing him with a knife and kicking him: he is sent to hospital with an undisclosed recovery time for concussion, cuts and bruises to the head and two stab wounds on his right hip. The three are promptly arrested and charged with attempted murder, and all turn out to have criminal records for breaking and entering offences. A 12-year-old boy also reportedly joined in the action, but, due to his age, he cannot be charged. "We hit him because he was inportuning my daughter who is only 17..." the oldest of the group claims. But, rumours suggest that one of the three had already taken part in an assault on foreigners in the same neighbourhood.

Source: Corriere della Sera

9 August 2009 Turin (TO), Piedmont

Brahim Kandour, a 33-year-old Moroccan bartender, takes a walk with three Italian friends. At around 11 PM, he is surrounded by four or five men who punch, kick and stab him in the chest, to the point of puncturing his lung, for no apparent reason. "Fu**** Moroccan, you even dressed up", they shouted, insulting him. Twenty minutes later, a 33-year-old Bangladeshi man, Repon Mia, is attacked while he is selling necklaces and bracelets at his stall. They punch him and hit him over the head with a stick. They then turn on another salesman who tried to come to his aid and hit him on his back and hand. The statements provided by the victims of the two attacks agree on several points: the perpetrators are the same group of young men aged between 20 and 25. Source: La Repubblica

10 August 2009 Naples (NA), Campania

Evelyn, 19, was born in Santo Domingo but has Italian citizenship: she declares that she was attacked, viciously beaten, insulted and denigrated for the colour of her skin by her employers who only wanted to pay half of what she had earned for her work. Bites, kicks, slaps and insults: "You're just a nigger, take this money, or we'll make sure you're kicked out of the country". During the violent assault, some neighbours who had heard the shouts and the insults call the police, who arrive on the scene and rush the girl to hospital. Source: Il Messaggero

14 August 2009 Latina (LT), Lazio

Ali Shadadi (37) is a Congolese citizen, residing in Italy since 1997, who works as a cultural mediator and is stably employed in a hotel. He tells how a regular customer who had woken up late had approached him demanding breakfast although the kitchen had already closed. When informed that this was not possible, the customer began to heatedly object: "Why should I have to petition a nigger in order to eat? This is why Italy is going nowhere, because niggers are beginning to take over!" He then starts to manhandle Ali and threaten him in front of other clients and hotel staff, claiming that he had a handgun on his person. The Congolese man reports the incident to hotel management who tell him that it constitutes a "personal matter". He eventually reports the event to the police and, having received absolutely no support from his employees, he decides to tender his resignation.

Source: La Repubblica

18 August 2009 Rome (RM), Lazio

The staff of the Hydromania waterpark in the Valle Aurelia neighbourhood ask the Carabinieri police to get rid of two Italian Roma families from Pescara who are visiting the park for the first time: their presence is not appreciated. The previous year, the director had already been reported by another Roma family which was denied entrance (in that case, he explained, there were hygienic and sanitary reasons – they were just too dirty). But this time, he claims: "I didn't let them in because they were rude and arrogant". Outside Hydromania, one of the Carabinieri agrees: "This is a privately-owned facility. Just as you are free to keep whoever you want away from your homes, they are free to do so here"

Source: il Manifesto

21 August 2009 Brescia (BS), Lombardy

Abdallah (38) is an Algerian national: he is partner in a property renovation company and is in possession of a regular residence permit. On the way to the mosque of Via Corsica for the first day of Ramadan, he stops to ask the local traffic policemen who are blocking the entry to the street where he can park his car. One of the policemen answers, while his colleague approaches his window and starts to hurl insults at him, telling him to get out of the way. Abdallah speaks out in mild protestation but the policeman begins to punch and slap him through the window, telling him to leave immediately. The man tells the traffic warden that he intends to report the incident to the Carabinieri police and lets his business partner know what is going on. In the meantime, in the presence of several witnesses, more local policemen arrive on the scene and join in beating up Abdallah: one of them holds him by the neck while another firmly grips his testicles. Abdallah's partner arrives in time to watch the whole confrontation. The man is handcuffed and taken to a police station where they resume with their threats and racist insults. After hours without receiving any assistance; Abdallah feels ill and is sent to hospital. Doctors find signs of extensive bruising caused by the blows, not to mention traumatic brain injury. The next morning he is taken to court to stand trial. The case ends in a plea bargain. Abdallah is sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Witnesses are not allowed to give evidence because of the type

of trial chosen. However they tell the press that the man was the victim of a racially motivated assault

Source: abusesbirro.com

25 August 2009 Gerenzano (VA), Lombardy

Cristiano Borghi, town councillor and member of the Northern League, promotes a hotline "that can be dialled to report the presence of illegal immigrants in town". The answering service is run by the department of Public Order and Safety and is also listed in the official record of council business: it guarantees anonymity to those who provide information. "Seven calls out of ten," the Northern League councillor claims, "report the gathering of illegal immigrants or complain about the difficulties that arise in trying to live with them. However, this administration has never done anything to promote integration nor set aside any piece of land for the construction of mosques or any other kind of place of worship for Islamic immigrants."

Source: [La Repubblica](http://LaRepubblica)

26 August 2009 Silvi Marina (TE), Abruzzo

The Romani federation reports a serious instance of discrimination experienced by a group of 14 Roma children during a school trip to Abruzzo organised by the educational project established by the XI^o Department of Rome city council and managed by the "Casa dei Diritti Sociali" (House of Social Rights). Two restaurants refused to serve them just by virtue of their being Roma.

Source: [Federazione Romani](http://FederazioneRomani)

28 August 2009 Rome (RM), Lazio

The Consiglio di Stato (Italian Council of State), going against a ruling issued on 1 July by the regional administrative appeal court (TAR) in Lazio, authorises the identification and recording of minors – as well as adults – who live in authorised Roma camps, by, among other things, taking their fingerprints and headshots. The Administrative Court had partially allowed the appeal of the European Roma Rights Centre against the decrees concerning the declaration of a state of emergency in relation to Roma settlements, and against the laws introduced by the Prefects of Rome and Milan for the running of provisioned settlements set up for the Roma community. Previously, the Consiglio di Stato itself had declared the identification of Roma who live in the settlements by means of a particular "badge" to be acceptable.

Source: ilprossimosonoio.blogspot.com

1 September 2009 Milan (MI), Lombardy

The PopLine programme on Radio Popolare Network records the eye-witness account of a young Romanian who was turned down by an important company when attempting to take out theft and fire insurance on his vehicle. After an attempt at filling in the online form which did not allow him to finalise the transaction, he called the helpline, only to be informed by the operator that the problem lay in the impossibility of registering his nationality.

Source: radiopopolare.it

10 September 2009 Milan (MI), Lombardy

A Moroccan, AM (23), works in a car mechanic's. The young man is not in possession of a regular residence permit and therefore is not entitled to a proper work contract. While he is repairing a car, he gets an electric shock and falls to the ground heavily, bumping his head. In order to avoid further problems, his employer leaves him in a field, even though he is seriously injured. He is rescued by some passers-by and taken to hospital with a fractured temple and forehead. The police arrest the owner of the mechanic's, charge him with negligent injury and shut down his business due to its complete lack of safety measures.

Source: Il Giorno

14 September 2009 Verona (VR), Veneto

This incident is reported on the forum of the "Three" mobile phone company. A Romanian couple who have resided regularly in Italy since 2002 decide to buy a mobile broadband device in order to keep in touch with their nine-year-old daughter who goes to school in Romania. After two days, the two Romanians are contacted by the store manager who lets them know that there are a few problems with the contract. On going back to the store, they learn that activation of the service has been blocked by Three because, although their bank approved the payment, Romania is considered a high risk country (what for? ed.)

Source: mondo3.com

15 September 2009 Padua (PD), Veneto

The 56-year-old head of a construction company from Portogruaro who is being treated in the burns unit, threatens and insults a Congolese nurse, refusing her help. "I don't want niggers to touch me. Bossi is right; you should all go home," Hospital security arrives on the scene, pinning down the man and sedating him. The head of the unit states: "the patient had no personal issue with her, he just lost control for a brief moment due to the pain, the heat and his temperature: we must not lay too much importance on the incident". Not long after, the patient decides to dictate a letter of apology and the nurse does not file a report.

Source: Corriere del Veneto

18 September 2009 Treviso (TV), Veneto

A Kosovan boy, 13, is the target of racist insults and bullying on the part of a classmate and asks his parents to let him change school. One afternoon, the two boys bump into each other in the city centre: the Italian boy runs into a bar and claims that the Kosovan boy threatened to beat him up. In actual fact, the young immigrant runs after him because he has once again been insulted. The police arrive on the scene and reconstruct the incident, eventually confirmed by the young Italian who is led shamefacedly to the Kosovan and told to apologise.

Source: La Repubblica

21 September 2009 Gradisca d'Isonzo (GO), Friuli-Venezia Giulia

An amateur video furtively shot in a Cie (Identification and Expulsion Centre) and posted on YouTube reveals the swollen face of a Tunisian inmate, his trousers soaked in blood and his legs covered with bruises inflicted by repeated bludgeoning. The video goes on to show the cages in which the immigrants are locked while they await deportation and a man lying on the ground with his hand on his groin and blood running down his face. Next, it captures a team of policemen and soldiers in riot gear, preparing to charge. When asked about these scenes, the Prefecture of Gorizia denies everything: "There is no routine violence at the the Gradisca Cie; rather, the only person who ended up in hospital is a policeman who was kicked in the leg". The official version provided by the Prefecture states that during the night of 20 September, around 30 inmates tried to escape but were stopped by security guards without any violent clashes. Conversely, the detainees claim that the police did make use of violence. "They broke phone chargers, slashed some people's clothing and, in one room, ripped up a Quran" a witness recounts. After the police assault, 12 inmates allegedly ended up in hospital.

Source: Fortresseurope

27 September 2009 Bari (BA), Puglia

At 4 o'clock in the morning, a desperate detainee of the local Cie centre, starts to slash his wrists with a razor blade. His fellow inmates call for help. A group of soldiers from the San Marco Battalion arrive on the scene: they rush the wounded man to the infirmary with another detainee who claims to feel sick. However, no doctor is present. Instead of helping him or looking for a doctor, the soldiers viciously beat him up: slaps, shoves, kicks and a sound bludgeoning. A number of pictures taken with a mobile phone and posted on YouTube bear witness to the incident: they clearly show the scars of the blows received on shoulders, legs and backs. The two young immigrants decide to file a report on their aggressors.

Source: Fortresseurope

1 October 2009 Capriolo (BS), Lombardy

In anticipation of the new school year, the board of the Aldo Moro school creates a special small "ghetto" class made up of 17 youths, of foreign origin or simply repeating a year, the so-called "donkey class". The headmaster accounts for it by stating the need "to do something about the high number of fails and the periodic arrival of immigrant pupils in the course of the school year with little grasp of the Italian language". The provincial councillor for education, Aristide Peli (Northern League), proposes a different solution: "reorganise the classes by equally distributing those repeating a year and immigrants".

Source: indymedia.org

5 October 2009 Alà dei Sardi (SS), Sardinia

Last 25 May 2011 Bouazza D., an Italian citizen born in Morocco who had lived in Italy for 25 years, told judges during the trial he was involved in of the assault he had been victim of on the night of 5 October 2009. The episode unfolded near the structures known as *cumbessias*, put up for the feast of St Francis, in the countryside around Alà

dei Sardi. "We were resting in our vehicle after a day of work," he recounted. "At around one o'clock in the morning, we heard something thumping against the van. We got out and I asked the boys outside what they wanted. While I was trying to get back into the van, they hit me in the face and the head with the butt of their gun. There were at least 20 of them and they gave us a good beating. While they were hitting us, they made comments that I do not wish to repeat in this court, not only because they are deeply offensive, but also because they still cause me pain". The incident cost him two complicated maxillofacial operations and caused permanent damage to his eyesight in one eye. The public prosecutor charged Antonio Scanu, 25, Antonio Mazzone, 21 and Stefano Nieddu, 24, with the aggravating circumstance of racial hatred. The three defendants, identified thanks to phone tapping, are called to account for "robbery, grievous bodily harm, material damages, discrimination and ethnic- and nationality-based hatred". The same charges were brought against four more young men who opted for a fast-track trial and for three minors who were tried in a different Court.

Source: La Nuova Sardegna

10 October 2009 Padua (PD), Veneto

The Democratic Party collect signatures for the shutting down of a Roma settlement. "We are actually promoting two petitions," a Democratic MP explains. "With the first, we ask the Interior Minister Roberto Maroni to refrain from cutting funds to the police forces who patrol the area. With the second, we request that the Prefect Ennio Sodano clear the area." When accused of racism, they replied: "We do not object to the presence of Roma settlements, only to illegal ones. We don't take issue with the Roma people as such, but we are against this settlement which contravenes our legal stipulations. Roma, who are often Italians, must be granted the same rights as us, but at the same time they must respect the law in the same way as any other citizen. We are different from the Northern League," they conclude, "in that they object to the presence of Roma in our cities. Conversely, we simply do not want anybody to live outside of the law. We believe there is a huge difference."

Source: Corriere del Veneto

11 October 2009 Varallo Sesia (VC), Piedmont

Mayor Gianluca Bonanno, MP for the Northern League, decides that his town will be the first in Italy to be "Islam-free" and orders that specific notices be put up on the road into the town "in order to send out a clear message" to everyone arriving. "We decided that ridding ourselves of Islam is an urgent priority. Within the public sphere, Islamists must understand that we make our own rules and we will ensure that they are respected. That is not to say we won't help them, but it has to be clear that," he explains, "there are not only rights, but also duties. Just imagine if we dared to enter a mosque without taking off our shoes or offended them in their own countries". Therefore "we are not against the presence of Islamic people in our town," the mayor continues, "but we need to set clear 'guidelines' on the behaviour suitable to our urban environment. We have had enough of their influence and the objections to the crucifix, the nativity scene, the Christmas carols and the inclusion of ham in school meals! Being too understanding can, in itself, lead to racism!"

Source: Corriere della Sera

14 October 2009 Trento (TN), Trentino Alto Adige

In June 2007, the former town councillor Emilio Giuliana (of far right party Fiamma Tricolore) during a town council meeting, on the subject of Roma, states that “gypsies are scum whose children should be taken away in order to stop the spread of questionable traditions handed down from generation to generation (...) they are lazy, criminals, often murderers who come close to torturing their children”. At first, he is accused of racism, but is later let off by the judge. The verdict states: “Undiplomatic and deplorable though the tone chosen by the defendant might have been, it cannot be reasonably considered that, beyond a definite intemperance of speech, the general content lapsed into open or implicit acclamation of ideas based on racial superiority or into incitement to perform acts of discrimination. His words did not convey an idea of superiority but only expressed a feeling of aversion”.

Source: Corriere delle Alpi

23 October 2009 Bolzano (BZ), Trentino Alto Adige

The campaign against the opening of a mosque is undertaken on Facebook where the group “Say no to the Mosque in Bolzano!” boasts 1,857 members, united by the motto “They cannot expect us to build a mosque in our city! What would happen if we built a church in their country? They’d blow it up!” The group’s homepage provides a link and some pictures. The link is to a YouTube video entitled “F**k Islam: Islam in the west” combined with references to works by Oriana Fallaci and Magdi Allam, and also with invitations to only purchase Italian products and to join a further international group which proposes to gather one million followers who are opposed to Turkish membership of the European Union. The comments posted on the wall are even more cutting and insulting.

Source: Alto Adige

31 October 2009 Vittoria (RG), Sicily

A Ghanaian 18-year-old boy is attacked with a wooden stick with protruding nails in the greenhouse where he works. The young man is hit over the head; he collapses, cries out, implores his aggressors and asks for an explanation. “You aren’t Italian,” the two 20-year-olds shout at him. A primary school class and their teacher witness the episode. It is the woman who intervenes on his behalf and calls for help, while the two attackers make a run for it on their motorbike. The police track them down and charge them with bodily harm aggravated by considerations of racial discrimination.

Source: fieri.it

3 November 2009 San Giorgio di Acilia (RM), Lazio

A Bangladeshi citizen (29) sits on a bench in the Arcobaleno Park chatting with three fellow countrymen. The four foreigners suddenly find themselves surrounded and attacked by a group of youths who hurl racist insults at them (“bastards, we don’t want you here”, “you’re all niggers”) and move on to physical violence, punching and kicking them. The man in question ends up with a fractured nasal septum and

concussion, while his three friends manage to run away and call the Carabinieri police in Ostia. According to the police reconstruction, it constituted a proper, pre-planned attack. The Carabinieri identify five individuals, all underage.

Source: Corriere della Sera

11 November 2009 Azzano Decimo (PN), Friuli Venezia Giulia

Enzo Bortolotti, Northern League mayor, has already become known for putting padlocks on public rubbish skips in order to deny their use to non-residents, installing "anti-vandalism" cameras in the oratory and fitting out traffic policemen with bulletproof vests. As his next measure, he decides to introduce an "Islamic census". It is not, in actual fact, a proper census, but rather a recording of all Muslims present in town. The mayor's request, regularly placed on the agenda, does not seem to have met with any objections from the town council.

Source: blizquotidiano.it

11 November 2009 Bolzano (BZ), Trentino Alto Adige

Police in Bolzano arrest Dominik Defatsch, a 19-year-old painter and decorator, and carry out 17 house searches, nine of which involve underage boys, in the course of the "Black Spot" operation, against a group of young skinhead Nazi-sympathizers known as "Naturser Hitler Jugend", Hitler Youth from Naturno. In the course of the searches files with neo-Nazi content are found, as well as clothing, jacket pins and other memorabilia. The members of the group are accused of distributing neo-nazi material and spreading concepts and ideas based on racist hatred. Among the confiscated items is a video that shows them in the act of putting together and throwing Molotov cocktails. The investigations, begun in October 2008, helped to identify the members of the youth group who on more than one occasion carried out violent attacks, the most serious being an assault on three Polish youths. The group advertised their activities on the netlog.com web portal under the initials "88N.H.J.88".

Source: La Repubblica

12 November 2009 Alba Adriatica (TE), Abruzzo

The torchlit procession of solidarity for the family of Emanuele Fadani, 37, shopkeeper and father of a six-year-old girl, killed by three drunk Roma outside of a pub, breaks out into a proper anti-Roma uprising with burnt and overturned cars, stones and smoke bombs thrown towards Roma houses and a fire being set in one of these. Over 200 people initiate a "gypsy hunt" yelling "murderers, murderers ... get lost". Policemen, Carabinieri and traffic wardens try to call them to order in an attempt to avoid tragic consequences, but to no avail. The Romani Federation writes to the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and to several local institutions. "So far," President Nazzareno Guarnieri writes, "the Federation has responsibly avoided needless confrontations in order to get past this tragedy without inflicting further pain. But the fierce "pogrom" against Roma that has been going on for several day in Alba is pure anti-gypsy racism: if a major tragedy has not yet occurred, it is only thanks to police efforts. The pogrom has been going on for several days amid the deafening silence of civil society, politics and institutions".

Source: Corriere della Sera

18 November 2009 Coccaglio (BS), Lombardy

The mayor of a small town in the Brescia area, with three Northern League councillors, sets up the "White Christmas" operation, in order to "cleanse" the place of immigrants. The name was chosen because the deadline for the operation is Christmas day. The Northern League Councillor, Claudio Abiendi, who came up with the initiative, explains: "for me Christmas is not the feast of welcoming, but a celebration of the Christian tradition and thus of our identity". Local policemen have until 25 December to pay a visit to the houses of about 400 foreign nationals, those with a residence permit that expired more than six months ago and who are supposed to have begun the procedures for its renewal. "If they cannot provide evidence that they have done so," Mayor Franco Claretti says, "their permit is automatically revoked". "Since last 25 October we have carried out 150 inspections. About the 50% of the individuals in question were found to be irregular," Abendi claims, adding that the initiative was taken up by other Northern League mayors in the neighbouring villages. "Last 24 October, in Milan, during the first convention of Northern League mayors, the 'White Christmas' operation received open support from the party leadership. Minister Maroni is a hands-on man," Claretti resumes, "and gave us important suggestions on how to enforce the measure in such a way as to avoid the usual court appeals".

Source: La Repubblica

27 November 2009 Aviano (PN), Friuli Venezia Giulia

Mario Balotelli, 19, black forward for FC Inter, after being heavily insulted by some hard-line Bologna FC fans yelling racist chants, is on this occasion the victim of offensive graffiti. It would appear that this is the second instance of xenophobic graffiti directed at Balotelli at the entrance to the stadium and promptly scrubbed off. "The graffiti was dealt with at once but appeared again not long after, Mayor Del Cont Bernard states. "I feel extremely indignant about it. And all the citizens of Aviano agree. It is unacceptable behaviour. This is not vandalism, it is racism."

Source: Messaggero Veneto

2 December 2009 Egna (BZ), Trentino Alto Adige

A young Pakistani couple on a regional train is caught by an inspector without a ticket. The inspector raises his voice several times and eventually orders that they get off the train. When the two young Pakistanis refuse, the inspector asks to see their documents. In a fit of pique, the inspector then throws the documents out of the window on to a bench by the side of the tracks. The young man rushes off the train to get his belongings back, but the doors close behind him and the train sets off again, leaving the man on the platform and his wife alone on the train. The inspector – witnesses state – says: "This kind of thing happens every day, foreigners often don't have tickets and we need to subject them to this sort of treatment in order to teach them a lesson. They must respect our rules." Informed of the incident, the Democratic Party decides to lodge a complaint to the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Source: altoadige.gelocal.it

3 December 2009 Teramo (TE), Abruzzo

Uzoma Emeka, a 32-year-old Nigerian, sentenced to two years' imprisonment for dealing drugs, dies "in mysterious circumstances" in a hospital in Teramo. The man had witnessed a violent reprisal in Teramo prison, as attested by an audio file of a conversation held in the prison guards' office in Castrogno jail. The commanding officer, Giuseppe Luzi, is talking to a subordinate about an attack carried out on 22 September on a detainee, as though it was standard procedure in the running of the jail. The officer says: "Didn't you know that he beat up the detainee in the public section?" The other answers: "I wasn't there, I know nothing..." But the officer insists: "Come on! Everybody knows about it!... You shouldn't attack a detainee in the public section; we can only do that downstairs... We risked an uprising just because the nigger saw everything". The public prosecutor opens an investigation. Under questioning, the commander rejects the accusations: "It is only a misunderstanding. I was not talking about an attack". The Minister of Justice Alfano relieves Luzi of his post.

Source: Corriere della Sera

5 December 2009 Biella (BI), Piedmont

Ibrahim M'Bodi, 35, a Senegalese man with a regular residence permit, is stabbed nine times and killed. His lifeless body is found on the drainage channel of a rice-paddy in Ghislarengo, in the Vercelli area: a water-carrier who is passing by, spots the corpse and gives the alarm. For several hours the body lies in the morgue in Vercelli without a name: the victim has no documents on him and the Carabinieri only manage to identify him by means of his fingerprints. Confronted by the Carabinieri, after a brief interrogation, Michele D'Onofrio, a local craftsman, promptly pleads guilty. He was the man's employer and did not want to pay his outstanding salary; he even tried to suggest that he officially register as a craftsman in order to get rid of him as an employee, but Ibrahim kept asking for the money that was rightfully owed him. The murderer recalls: "He produced a knife and I instinctively reacted in a moment of madness". The local trade unions organise a sit-in in front of the Prefecture of Biella, because "the murder of Ibrahim on the part of his employer cannot pass unobserved. Such serious episodes can be attributed to a widespread tendency of social relationships towards barbarisation, with the possible aggravating circumstance of racial hatred".

Source: La Stampa

8 December 2009 Ravenna (RA), Emilia Romagna

Mor Niang (57) from Senegal has been living and regularly working in Italy for 19 years. Last September, his application for the renewal of his residence permit was turned down. Police headquarters explain the decision by citing the low income declaration submitted by the Senegalese citizen in 2008. They give him a 15-day ultimatum to leave the country. Mor does not comply and in November 2009 he is taken to the CIE (identification and expulsion centre) in Gorizia where he is informed that he is under investigation on charges of "illegal residence". During the night of 1-2 December, Mor is woken up by a group of policemen, taken to Malpensa airport and

bundled on to the Milan-Dakar flight for repatriation. Mor Niang rebels against this situation. Although his hands and feet are tied and he has a police escort, he begins to shout so loudly that the plane's captain is obliged to make him get off for safety reasons. Once he is back on the ground, he receives a sound beating. "I was the victim," the Senegalese man states, "of unjustifiable violence. I ask for justice."

Source: Il Fatto Quotidiano

12 December 2009 Bolzano (BZ), Trentino Alto Adige

The Northern League demands that posters expressing solidarity placed on the spot where Moussa Oulachagar, 18, born in Bolzano of Moroccan parents, died in a serious car accident, be taken down. "I can't believe it, it's abominable," Ben Jannet, Moussa's father, says. "Why is there such strong hatred against us? Moussa never hurt anyone; we have been living here, working regularly, for 23 years... Is it possible that these people cannot understand our grief? What next? We are all equal in the face of death: there are neither Christians nor Muslims." The man then mentions another incident which the Carabinieri are looking into: a comment supposedly posted on a blog, referring to Moussa's death: "One down."

Fonte: altoadige.gelocal.it

14 December 2009 Cassano Magnago (VA) Lombardy

Near the sports stadium, two teenagers – a Serbian boy aged 13 and his female cousin aged 17 – are approached by a group of five or six youngsters of a similar age, who, for no apparent reason, start to chase them and taunt them with racist insults. ("F**king Serbs, go back to your own country.") The two cousins try to run off, but their persecutors catch up with them and start pushing them around. The boy, by then on the ground, is repeatedly kicked. The police enquiry leads to the identification of five minors, reported to the public prosecutor's office at the juvenile court of Milan on counts of grievous bodily harm and insults aggravated by racial discrimination.

Fonte: varesenews.it

14 December 2009 Rome (RM), Lazio

Ruth Piperno, a Jewish trader who runs a stall in Campo de' Fiori market, becomes the object of insults and threats. "F***ing Jews, we'll get rid of you," they say to her. According to the statement given by her husband, the insults were imparted by a number of street vendors whose licences had recently been revoked. "We have been receiving threats for a long time. It's impossible to carry on like this. Today is just the last in a long series of insults, even including a lighted cigarette butt thrown at our stall," Marco Salmoni, another market trader in Campo de' Fiori, explains.

Source: romatoday.it

19 December 2009 Montecchio Maggiore (VI), Veneto

Mayor Milena Cecchetto decides to extend the remit of housing regulations to temporary hospitality. Therefore, foreign citizens in possession of a regular residence permit cannot put up guests (not even for a night) in their homes, if this would involve exceeding the maximum number of people allowed by individual housing regulations.

Among the housing requirements, there is the presence, in every dwelling, of a living room or kitchen of at least 15 square meters. These rules apply to all guests who are not Italians.

Source: vivicercentro.org

20 December 2009 Alzano Lombardo (BG), Lombardy

As a remedy against the decay of the city centre, local administrators try to convince young couples to settle there with a series of tax breaks and national insurance perks, as well as a reserved parking lot, built at the town council's expense. The local Northern League government adds to this measure its very own "Padania green clause", ie the possession of Italian citizenship. The opposition objects, but Mayor Roberto Anelli does not give ground.

Source: La Repubblica

23 December 2009 Villorba (TV), Veneto

Two young sisters, aged 13 and 9, of Senegalese descent, are insulted and threatened by the driver of the Actt number 1 bus. It is around 6 PM. The reason provided by the man is that the two girls only have one ticket between them. "You *gypsies* are all the same. You have to get off right here, at the hippodrome," he says to them. The older girl asks to be fined rather than left behind in a dark road that separates Treviso and Villorba, in the snow. Luckily a teacher of one of the two girls is also on the bus, and he steps in and pays for the ticket. The children's father files a complaint against the driver.

Source: La Tribuna di Treviso

31 December 2009 Gradisca d'Isonzo (GO), Friuli Venezia Giulia

The EveryOne group reports an extremely serious case of violence and torture in a Cie (identification and expulsion centre) on the night of 28-29 December. A Moroccan man, Said Stati, held in the Cie in Gradisca, is taken from his cell and his head and body are ruthlessly beaten with truncheons and bare hands. A number of fellow detainees and social workers apparently witness the violence. "Only after leaving him lifeless, crumpled and bleeding, did guards allow the social workers to take him to hospital where received treatment." Said has lived in Italy for 19 years; he lost his job and so was unable to renew his residence permit; hence the notification of impending deportation and detention in this Cie.

Source: Gruppo EveryOne

2010

5 January 2010 Florence (FI), Tuscany

On New Year's Eve, in two separate incidents, two foreign nationals – an Ethiopian and an Egyptian, both 37 and long-time residents of Florence – are kicked and punched by a gang of youths. The incidents are reported by a number of local newspapers a few days later. The sequence of events is very similar, as are the descriptions of the aggressors. The girlfriend of the Ethiopian, who was beaten up after he complained about the firecrackers they were throwing, speaks of a neo-fascist type of assault: "They were all about 20," she explains, "with close-cropped hair and bomber jackets: they used the Roman salute and sang fascist songs". The second episode is reported by the victim himself: "they were waiting outside a club which is also popular with the gay community. They seem to be looking for an excuse to start a fight. I just happened to be passing by and they started punching and kicking me, shouting all kinds of things: "Nigger, f***ing Arab, fag".

Source: Corriere Fiorentino

8 January 2010 Salerno (SA), Campania

Mayor Vincenzo De Luca is already, regrettably, famous for signing forced eviction orders, introducing vigilante patrols as part of the "Clean seafront" operation and setting up another campaign known as "Zero Tolerance for all immigrants". This time, he goes even further and initiates a veritable manhunt, sending municipal police patrols to immigrants' houses in the middle of the night in order to check their documents. The Senegalese community representative in Salerno, Daouda Niang, a street vendor who had previously been involved in a heated argument with Mayor De Luca, explains "We all have residence permits; we want to live in this town, working and abiding by its laws. What happened a few evenings ago on the main street is truly disgraceful. We were chased away like criminals. Since then, we have been closely monitored and last night the municipal police paid us a visit and checked our documents at one o'clock in the morning. Yet the mayor knows every single one of us, and that evening on the main street there were no unfamiliar faces, except for a few friends who had come to visit us in Salerno".

Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

12 January 2010 Villa d'Ogna (BG), Lombardy

The Northern League-led town council provides a €6,000 fund for people who have lost their jobs as a result of the economic crisis. The fund is reserved for those who have lived in the town for at least five years and belong to a single-income family (below €7,000) with two dependent children. Foreigners excepted. Mayor Angelo Bosatelli counters accusations of racial discrimination: "The assets at our disposal are relatively limited seeing as we are a small municipality. I cannot rule out future amendments, but for the moment we have had to establish certain restrictions. Citing Italian citizenship as a requirement is simply a way of providing more immediate help to the families of

long standing in Villa d'Ogna". The decree was ruled discriminatory by the court in Bergamo.

Source: libero-news.it

12 January 2010 Castel Volturno (CE), Campania

A group of immigrants gathered in front of a Caritas centre tells of how the locals have renamed the shops run by foreign citizens and mostly frequented by other migrants, branding them «*negrozi*» (a play on words obtained by combining "negro", nigger with "negozi", shops).

Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

16 January 2010 Sassuolo (MO), Emilia Romagna

The town councillor responsible for equal opportunities, Claudia Severi (People of Freedom, Pdl), decides to ask for an instant ban on burqas throughout Italy. The initiative draws "inspiration" from the case of a woman who arrived at the hospital with her body covered from head to toe by a burqa. After a number of similar episodes are reported, the councillor expresses the hope that the law that forbids the use of the burqa in Italy, which is being discussed at the Parliamentary Commission on Constitutional Affairs, "will be passed as soon as possible. It is not a question of racism or fear of the unknown, but rather the awareness that this piece of clothing represents a step backwards, particularly as far as the fundamental rights of women are concerned".

Source: Il Resto del Carlino

20 January 2010 Turin (TO), Piedmont

The owner of a glasses shop, Roberto Magnoni, tells of the disturbing discussion he had with two shopkeepers: "you know," one of them said, "until recently I worked here in Turin for XY company. But it had to shut down... The owner was Mr X, a Jew, if you get my drift; he chose to send everybody home rather than spend the two million euro that would have solved all our problems. You know how these Jews are about money: even the receiver was one of them... To tell the truth, I can kind of see Hitler's point; he didn't really get the job done though". Magnoni promptly shows them the door, but before they go, a young shop assistant butts in: "No, he didn't get the job done. I'm a Jew and I'm still here."

Source: La Repubblica

23 January 2010 Caserta (CE), Campania

The regional authority for education in Campania "orders" that records be kept on all foreign students, setting the deadline for the "monitoring-census" form on the 25 January. The authority is acting on a request from the Prefecture. The Cgil and Flc-Cgil unions raise the alarm: this request for information is very specific and involves the collecting of data which bears no relation to truancy issues. Trade union representatives declare that the Ministry of Education must account for this clear violation of citizenship rights.

Source: L'Unità

28 January 2010 Trento (TN), Trentino Alto Adige

The Trentino section of the Northern League, in a query submitted to the chairman of the provincial council Lorenzo Dellai, proposes that “all immigrants be systematically subjected to psychiatric and sanitary tests”. This idea stems from the arrest of a 17-year-old Algerian boy, charged with the attempted rape of a local girl: the boy went on to damage his cell and display self-destructive impulses. “What has occurred,” the query reads, “shows without a shadow of a doubt that on many, too many, occasions, immigrants, both regular and illegal, who arrive in our country suffer from serious ongoing health or psychiatric problems: this entails a serious risk of infection for all the unfortunate individuals who happen come into contact with them. For this reason,” the request continues, “the Northern League asks that all immigrants be submitted to *systematic medical checkups in order to ascertain their exact clinical background* so that they *cannot harm* by means of passive infection or violence, all those defenceless citizens who might happen to come into contact with them.

Source: Il Gazzettino

28 January 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

The statements on immigration issued by the PM Silvio Berlusconi after the cabinet meeting held in Reggio Calabria provoke a heated debate. Boasting “positive results” in the fight against so-called “illegal immigration” and recalling the “agreements with Libya”, the premier points out that a “reduction in the number of non-EU immigrants implies that fewer people tend to join the ranks of criminal organisations.” During the TV program *Porta a Porta*, Berlusconi returns to this subject, stating that “the fight against crime in part involves contrasting illegal immigration, because those who come here and cannot find a job will join criminal organisations.”

Source: Corriere della Sera

30 January 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

The EveryOne groups reveals a series of police operations in the area of Giambellino performed against Roma families from Romania who were evicted from their makeshift shacks, reported for squatting on private or public property and forced to move with no destination or any means of support. A week before these police raids against the Roma community, a number of unknown individuals had defaced the area near the settlements by writing racist slogans with spraycans. On the same occasion, they hung threatening banners reading “f***ing gypsies, get out of Padania!” Three days before the eviction, Angel, 21, was stopped by two men in uniform as he was begging, led to an isolated spot and beaten about. The evicted families, including a high number of women, children and sick people, tried to seek shelter in the public gardens and on benches, but police patrols moved them on once again. Institutions and authorities did not provide them with any social support or any means of shelter against the winter cold.

Source: Gruppo EveryOne

2 February 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

The EveryOne group reports an assault on a young Romanian Rom near the Stazione Centrale railway station. Adrian relates: "they attacked, insulted and beat us up. We were begging in the street, because nobody wants to employ us. It is not the first time we have been beaten up and it will not be the last. Sometimes they wear a uniform and sometimes they are in plain clothes. If one of us dares to complain, they claim that we attacked them and take us to the police station. When the case goes to court, we always come off worse and end up in a jail without having done anything wrong. In jail more violence, more insults, more humiliation are in store for us. Should we report the people who hurt us? Those who have tried have come to a sorry end, but I'd rather not talk about it." EveryOne reports two more evictions, veritable ethnic cleansing operations that led to the conviction of 20 Romanian Roma and two further families with children for squatting in a privately-owned building.

Source: Gruppo EveryOne

3 February 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

On the Carrefour chain website, one can report the presence of "gypsies" (customer services, main category -> information on your local store, secondary category -> presence of gypsies). After an online campaign promoted by a number of blogs and internet users who accused the retail chain of racism, Carrefour has removed this item from the list of possible remarks that can be made to customer services.

Source: Espresso.repubblica.it

5 February 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

In Via di Tor Cervara, in a café close to a Roma settlement known as the Martora, a Roma woman orders a coffee and is charged €2 instead of the usual 75 cents. "Yesterday it was €1.50 and today €2?" the woman exclaims. The cashier and the woman behind the bar remain unmoved. Furthermore, the coffee is served, unusually, in a plastic cup. Having left the bar the Roma woman explains: "One day they told me very clearly that they charge that much for coffee in the hope that we will go somewhere else..."

Source: Corriere della Sera

6 February 2010 Monaco al Seri (BG), Lombardy

An 18-year-old Moroccan, Aziz Amiri, is in the passenger's seat of a four-wheel-drive driven by a fellow countryman five years older than him, who, in order to avoid being flagged down by the police (he has 30 grams of cocaine in the car) goes into reverse and hits the officers' car. One of the policemen reaches into the car through the window, which is wound down. The Moroccan driver tries to disarm him. Then, suddenly, a shot is fired and kills Amiri. The prosecutor's office in Bergamo opens an enquiry. The officer is charged with voluntary manslaughter. According to his account, corroborated by his colleague, the gunshot was fired "by accident". The investigating magistrate must decide, on the basis of available evidence, whether or not to accept the request to shelve the enquiry. "It is necessary to cast light on the death of Amiri," the lawyers who represent and defend the victim's family say. "We demand to know the truth about what happened."

Source: La Repubblica

15 February 2010 Brescia (BS), Lombardy

The relocation of a number of Sinti families from Brescia to Birbesi di Guidizzolo and Gazzo di Bigarello gives rise to a Northern League-led initiative. After the decree issued by the mayor of Guidizzolo, Graziano Pellizzaro, more local administrations led by the Northern League in the same province (Ceresara, Bozzolo, San Giovanni del Dosso, Castelbelforte and Pomponesco) adopt the same ruling, which bans the overnight or prolonged stay of mobile homes, campervans and suchlike on municipal soil. The target of these Northern League mayors is not the tourist industry but Roma and Sinti people: "integration is not a good thing because it sullies our cultural heritage. For example, we recycle, while they dump their rubbish the streets," Vincenzo Chiazzini, secretary of the local Northern League section, explains.

Source: Gazzetta di Mantova

24 February 2010 Goito (MN), Lombardy

The regulations introduced by the city council, led by a centre-right coalition specifically state: "The *Angeli Custodi* school welcomes all children regularly enrolled by their families, pursues educational aims and also sees to their moral formation within a Christian way of life". The leader of the Civic Union for Goito, Franco Casali, Democratic Party, says: "Our understanding is that all those who do not share this Christian vision of life are automatically excluded. This is blatantly unconstitutional, in that we are talking of a state school funded by the town council, and not a private structure. During the council session we tried to point out that phrasing it in such a way makes it incompatible with the values of citizenship and integration included in the European Charter, but the majority simply refused to listen". According to the mayor, backed by a majority made up of the People of Freedom and the Northern League, it is a non-existent issue: "it is not true that all those who do not share in the Christian mindset are unwelcome: this is a state school open to everyone. And anyway in Goito there are also nine classes of public school. The one funded by the town council simply has a different legacy: when I was at school, I said my prayers and I never found it strange."

Source: La Stampa

1 March 2010 Caserta (CE), Campania

The young members of the Insurgencia youth group file a report on Ctp (Public Transportation Company) bus drivers. "We showed a video to the director general," one of them explains, "that we shot in the course of a week on the vehicles and at the bus stops. We observed that, on some services, especially M1N, M1B and M4, the drivers chooses not to stop if they only see immigrants waiting. This happens in Castel Volturno and Mondragone where the immigrants get the bus at dawn to go to work between 6 and 9 AM. Out of ten buses," they claim, "eight do not stop even if there are obviously empty places on board. The other two do not stop either but they, at least, are full. The director general of the transport company for the province of Naples, Giuseppe Fiorentino, insists that "it is not about racism."

Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

8 March 2010 Ventimiglia (IM), Liguria

Five immigrants, of Turkish and Kurdish origin, are viciously assaulted and beaten up with iron bars and baseball bats simply because they dared to play a football game on the Funtanin five-a-side pitch. The aggressors, four young Italians, are charged with grievous bodily harm. The five immigrants suffer from relatively extensive injuries to their heads and noses as well as damage to their joints and spine. The evening before this punitive expedition, several Kurdish citizens were thrown out of a bar for no reason whatsoever.

Source: blizquotidiano.it

15 March 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

An Italian youth gets into a violent argument with a Bangladeshi street vendor whose merchandise he wants to take without paying for it. The Bangladeshi man seeks shelter in a bar on Via Murlo in order to escape the boy's, and his friends', intimidations. Some time later, about 15 Italian youths, some of them very young, their faces wrapped in scarves, enter the bar, one of the main meeting-points of the Bangladeshi community, and set about viciously attacking tables, windows and the few clients in the bar. A few people, among them Italians, are mildly injured and receive treatment in a local hospital. On the evening of the assault in the bar, some threatening graffiti appears in the streets of the neighbourhood, claiming "our neighbourhood is changing, Magliana becomes fascist". Six young people, three of them minors, were stopped by the police: they are the supposed members of a gang that had already in the past been responsible for acts of violence against immigrants.

Source: Corriere della Sera

18 March 2010 Castiglione della Pescaia (GR), Tuscany

MP Monica Faenzi, People of Freedom (PdL) candidate for the presidency of the regional government and the incumbent mayor, sets up a competition for immigrant street vendors in order to regulate access to the public beach and to the 51 other bathing establishments, assigning them a certain number of permits to sell their merchandise – a sort of restriction on access. The competition is open to all foreign nationals who hold a "regular residence permit and are registered with the Chamber of Commerce", but only 25 places are awarded. All the others will not be able to access the area: the police are already out in force in order to insure that these measures are respected. The Northern League considers it "a way bring order to a situation that sees Italian beaches invaded by pedlars".

Source: Corriere Fiorentino

19 March 2010 Cazzago S.M. (BS), Lombardy

A young man of Haitian and Italian descent, goes with his two brothers to the Hotel Costez, a discobar in Cazzago. They are immediately stopped at the door by the bouncer: "sorry guys you can't come in!" When asked to provide an explanation, he says: "Come on, you know why! You're immigrants, I can't let you in!" After a brief but

violent discussion, the three brothers manage to get inside, but during the two hours they spend there they are kept under constant surveillance.

Source: osservatoriorepressione.org

3 March 2010 Sansepolcro (AR), Tuscany

In some of the smaller towns in the province, Northern League activists give away sachets of liquid soap “in order to wash ones hands after touching an immigrant”. Yet another display of intolerance on the part of activists from the party which is described as “extremely serious” by Alfio Nicotra, leader of the Federation of the Left in the province of Arezzo and member of the national directorate of the Prc (the Communist Refoundation Party): “The message it conveys is devastating: human beings seen as carriers of disease and misfortune purely by virtue of being foreigners”.

Source: La Repubblica

8 April 2010 Bologna (BO), Emilia Romagna

The Special Commissioner of the Municipality of Bologna Anna Maria Cancellieri establishes that the children of foreign parents who do not hold a regular residence permits will not be allowed to attend nursery schools. Deputy Commissioner Raffaele Ricciardi states: “laws are made to be enforced rather than debated: it is not even compulsory to send your children to nursery school in the first place”. Gianfranco Schiavone from ASGI explains that “this point is controversial because, while it is true that it is not compulsory to attend nurseries, a series of considerations endorsed by the interior ministry are in clear contrast with the decision made by the deputy commissioner of Bologna”.

Source: comitatoscuolapubblica.wordpress.com

10 April 2010 Frosinone (FR), Lazio

On the night between 12 and 13 May, Ivan Misu, a Romanian man aged 42, is accused by his employer of having stolen a few litres of diesel from one of the trucks parked in his garage in Piedimonte San Germano. The man orders his accomplices to kidnap him. He is then tortured (his ear is cut off) and eventually taken into countryside around Avellino where he is killed and his body melted in acid. The murder is unearthed after three years of enquiries carried out by the police and the Carabinieri of the provincial operations unit. The businessman is arrested and put in prison. In the past, he had already been under investigation for threatening and shooting at another Romanian employee whom he suspected for the same crime.

Source: La Repubblica

12 April 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

In the fifteenth district, several Romanian citizens who live in the Piana Del Sole neighbourhood, near Ponte Galeria, are insulted and attacked by three Italians aged between 17 and 18. The episode is sparked by the fact that, when asked for a cigarette, one of the Romanians answers that he doesn't smoke. The three boys take this an insult and proceed to make offensive statements, and then to kick and punch him repeatedly. The immigrant manages to escape and find shelter in the house of some fellow

countrymen. After two days, this house is the target of two Molotov cocktails. The young men are charged with dispensing insults, physical aggression and threats aggravated by racial discrimination; they are also suspected of being responsible for the throwing of the Molotov cocktails.

Source: romatoday.it

16 April 2010 Tivoli Terme (RM), Lazio

A group of around ten boys aged between 16 and 21, resident in the hot springs neighbourhood and in Albuccione, attack a Roma family: a father, mother and baby of only nine months. The incident takes place in Piazza Bartolomeo della Queva, in the centre of town, not new to similar incidents. V.P., a Romanian citizen aged 21, is strolling with his wife and his baby girl in a pram, when he receives the first threat: "give us €5 unless you want us to slap your daughter". When he refuses to give them the money, they slap the baby on the cheek. A fight breaks out: the group chases the Romanian as he runs inside the Acque Albule Spa, where they catch up with him and lay into him with a stick. Another Romanian tries to come to his aid but he also gets viciously punched and kicked about. "Call the police if you want, we don't give a f***" they shout. The young father is taken to hospital with a broken nose, injuries to his chest and abdomen, as well bruising to his legs, and arms head injuries. Four of his aggressors are identified and charged with attempted extortion and grievous bodily harm.

Source: dentromagazine.com

19 April 2010 Cascine del Riccio (FI), Tuscany

A 13-year-old Egyptian girl goes to the newsstand to buy a magazine with the coins that she saved up during the week – 15 ten cent coins. The newsagent, a woman aged 58, refuses to accept the coins. The girl recounts the incident to her father, an Egyptian citizen aged 43. The man goes to ask the woman for an explanation: her only answer is to produce a pepper spray (which does not even conform to current regulations) and aims it at him, hitting him in the face. A passer-by calls the police and an ambulance. The woman explains herself by saying that, when he saw the man coming towards her, she "feared the worst".

Source: Corriere della Sera

22 April 2010 Quartu Sant'Elena (CA), Sardinia

A four-minute video, posted on YouTube and Youreporter, bears witness to the details of the arrest of a young Senegalese man. According to an initial reconstruction, the police stopped the man on the request of some street vendors, annoyed by the presence of the man who was selling his items without a licence next to the local market. When asked for documents, the man tried to run away. Ten minutes later, the policemen found him again, seized his bag of merchandise and arrested him. The way the arrest was carried out is distinctly questionable in some of its aspects: while the young man was trying to break free, he was forced down by three or four policemen who held him while handcuffs were applied. In the video, the policemen bend over the young man while around him dozens of people look on, filming the incident on their mobile

phones. Someone shouts "Let him go, let him work". The chief of the local police denies any suggestion of racism as a motive for the episode. "The street vendor overreacted, trying to violently avoid the inspection, and four officers ended up in hospital," he claims. The video is promptly reported by the leaders of the Democratic Party and the Prc (Communist Refoundation Party) in Cagliari.

Source: quotidiano.net

20 April 2010 San Giuliano Milanese (MI), Lombardy

The inhabitants of a block of flats join forces against the presence of a pediatric surgery. The reason they give is "the danger of catching diseases from the immigrants who visit it". The pediatric surgery is located in a complex formed of three buildings looked after by a full-time porter. An accountant and a labour consultant also have their practices on site. In order to access the doctors' surgery, on the first floor of staircase "A", you have to go to the porter who calls the surgery on the intercom, directs you to staircase "A" and asks you to wait until someone comes and picks you up. The pediatrician is ostracized to such a degree that in order to let her patients (mostly foreign) in, she has to pay someone to go and pick them up.

Source: Milanotoday.it

22 April 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

In April the public housing institute Aler announces a competition for the employment of technicians, white-collar workers, inspectors, manual labourers and 19 porters. In accordance with the rules in place for all public sector workers, the call for bids includes the prerequisite of Italian citizenship or citizenship of an EU member state. The Cisl union appeals on behalf of Sonia Coracalcaicedo, an Ecuadorian national excluded from the competition because she is not in possession of Italian citizenship. The court in Milan upholds the appeal remarking that "an Italian or European citizen cannot be deemed to be more reliable than a foreign one when it comes to performing a technical or operational task, not involving public functions".

Source: La Repubblica

26 April 2010 Castel Volturno (CE), Campania

Mayor Antonio Scalzone is attacked by a group of foreign nationals when he attempts to drive them out of the centre of Castel Volturno, at the request of a number of local residents. The mayor explains: "we are prepared to turn Castel Volturno into another Rosarno, because we are literally overrun by immigrants. I appeal to Interior Minister Maroni, whom I hold in very high regard for the way he is attempting to fight the *camorra*; I hope he will help us to rid our city of these illegal immigrants who often turn into drug dealers and criminals. If swift action is not taken, I will be forced to lead a rebellion to restore dignity to our land. Whoever thinks they can bring more immigrants to Castel Volturno is sadly mistaken."

Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

30 April 2010 Ferrara (FE), Emilia Romagna

The *A Buon Diritto* association publishes the images of a supposed beating, which occurred in the local Carabinieri station, online. The incident dates back to 24 February, when four young foreign men in a drunk and disorderly state (two Ecuadorians, one Nigerian and one Albanian) were arrested by the Carabinieri for obstructing a public officer. "The images, captured by a surveillance camera installed on the premises, are striking: a young man, handcuffed, utterly harmless and with no possibility of defending himself, is attacked, bludgeoned and thrown to the ground," Luigi Manconi, president of *A Buon Diritto*, remarks. "He tried to get up again a couple of times but is knocked down each time. And no one came to his rescue". The prosecutor's office opens an enquiry, charging one of the agents with the grievous bodily harm.

Source: stranieriinitalia.it

4 May 2010 Ceresara (MN), Lombardy

The centre-right administration, with a set of regulations approved by the city council, guarantees the so-called "baby bonus" only to the first-born child of married Italian citizens, excluding, as ever, the children of foreign citizens, unmarried couples and single mothers. The opposition files an appeal with the regional administrative court (Tar).

Source: Ansa

4 May 2010 Cassibile (SR), Sicily

A group of young Italian boys attacks a Moroccan seasonal labourer aged 30, while he is walking along Via Nazionale. Insults, kicks, punches. The residents of the area sound the alarm and call an ambulance while the aggressors flee the scene. After a while, the local police identify the authors of the racist assault, in part thanks to the witness-statement of a Moroccan farm-hand.

7 May 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

The Trenitalia train inspectors and conductors on the Rome Tiburtina-Avezzano route reveal the appearance of a "peculiar" document, "totally unfamiliar to, and thus never authorized by" the company board. This document allegedly contains a box to tick in order to report the presence of Roma passengers. "Everything we do is purely for the safety and well-being of passengers," the company explains. The Salone train station is very close to a large gypsy settlement. The station was shut down in 2002 for public safety reasons and only reopened on 1 April. The matter is extremely serious, given that in the past passengers received threats, nobody wanted to board the train in that station. It was allowed to reopen only on condition that strict security checks would be set in place and cameras installed.

Source: *Il Piccolo*

5 May 2010 Novara (NO), Piedmont

Amel, a Tunisian woman aged 26, and her husband, are stopped by a Carabinieri patrol near the post office. The woman is wearing a *niqab* and the policemen ask if they can check if it is really a woman under the clothing. The man retorts: "My religion forbids a woman to show herself in public in front of a man". A policewoman arrives on the

scene and an agreement is reached. But the affair is far from over: the woman is in violation of the recent ruling from the Northern League mayor, Massimo Giordano, and is therefore fined €500 for “illegally wearing a burqa”. “I signed the decree,” Giordano explains, “for public safety reasons but also to ensure that those who come and live in our cities respect our traditions”.

Source: La Repubblica

10 May 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

In the course of a speech at the “Making integration possible” conference, Mayor Letizia Moratti states: “illegal immigrants who are not regularly employed tend to commit crimes. Illegal immigration is a crime. An illegal immigrants caught in the act cannot be deported if he/she is already on trial for a previous crime. In order to effectively implement the crime of illegal immigration, it must be included in other categories of crime”, so the deportation can be successfully completed. Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, who is also present at the conference, declares that at no point during the mayor’s speech are illegal immigrants equated with criminals.

Source: La Repubblica

14 May 2010 Tivoli Terme (RM), Lazio

Three men aged between 31 and 46 break into a Roma camp in the middle of the night, and, after having threatened those present with death and to set the camp on fire, they violently attack two Roma, bundling one of them into their car. He is taken to a piece of land in Villalba di Guidonia where he is repeatedly beaten and showered with racist insults for 40 minutes. The three men try to force him to confess to the theft of some of their rolls of copper wire. They finally let him go after further death threats and the commitment to return what was stolen. The victim reports the incident to the police. The three men are tracked down, arrested and charged with kidnapping, attempted extortion, injuries and racial discrimination.

Source: romatoday.it

14 May 2010 Lodi (LO), Lombardy

The Italian Football Federation (Figc) is found guilty of having discriminated against a young Togolese footballer, by banning him from taking part in an amateur tournament. Shaib Idrissuou Biyao Kolou, a former professional footballer who had made a couple of appearances with his national team, in Italy since 2008, is waiting to be granted political refugee status or protection for humanitarian reasons and holds a renewable five-month residence permit. The federation deems that this permit is not enough to sign him up, because regulations state that it must be “valid until at least the end of the season”. In their defense statement, the federation declares that the rules on signing up have the further aim of “protecting our own younger players”. For the judge, this assertion represents proof of discrimination.

Source: Redattore Sociale

26 May 2010 Cecina (LI), Tuscany

After an animated discussion at a city council meeting, the motion presented by Francesco Villani of the People of Freedom (Pdl) party to restrict the number of street vendors is rejected. According to the councillor “we need to consider that tourists only tolerate the phenomenon up to a point and that, on top of this, there are hygiene and sanitation issues to consider.” The Arci association remarks: “Villani’s ‘bathers versus street vendors’ equation belongs to a political culture inspired by the Northern League that borders on the barbaric. The municipality cannot and does not wish to act as a *beach ranger* which hunts down immigrants selling their merchandise along the seafront. The flipside is represented by the state of immigrants’ rights, something which does not seem to overly concern Villani; he forgets that our Constitution guarantees the right of asylum on Italian soil to foreign nationals, according to the conditions established by law.

Source: Il Tirreno

30 May 2010 Florence (FI), Tuscany

The “Paladar” restaurant, belonging to Francisca Frias, younger sister of Mercedes, a former Prc (Communist Refoundation party) MP, is under siege: first a car is set on fire in the courtyard of the restaurant, then there are episodes of vandalism, smashed windows, threatening and insulting emails and all kinds of damage. More than ten incidents are reported. The woman, 44, born in Santo Domingo, states: “I’m afraid these episodes may be rooted in racism. I’ve been living this nightmare for three years. I don’t think I have got in anybody’s way with my business. At first, I presumed they had it in for me because of my sister’s political activity. But I’ve since discarded that theory as well.”

Source: La Nazione

4 June 2010 Palosco (BG), Lombardy

The municipality refuses residence to a Pakistani man aged 28, Ashraf Tahir, on the basis of a decree issued by Northern League Mayor Massimo Pinetti, which establishes that an immigrant must declare an annual income of at least €5,000 in order to obtain a residence permit. In 2009, the man had lost his job and earned under the required amount. The issue is raised by the provincial secretary of the Fiom Cgil union: “This ruling is unlawful and we denounce the situation, in the knowledge that the number of immigrant workers who risk finding themselves in a difficult situation owing, in part, to this type of decree, is extremely high. We will pass on a letter to the mayor, the head of the police and the prefect, in which we stress the discriminatory intent of this decree. Law 286 of 1998 clearly states that when an immigrant is in possession of a regular living permit, income restrictions can no longer get in the way of his signing on at the local registry, in the whole of Italy”. One year later, the Court of Bergamo allows the appeal filed for by Ashraf Tahir and suspends the ruling.

Source: BergamoNews

13 June 2010 Turin (TO), Piedmont

Jorgovanka Nobilini, a young Roma woman, goes to the market in Via Di Nanni with her sister Ramajana and her cousin Ornella in order to beg – the activity which

constitutes their only source of income. The three women live in a Roma settlement in Strada dell'Aeroporto. Jorgovanka rings a building's doorbell. A young Italian man leans out of his window and shouts at her to go away threatening her with violence if she does not. The young woman walks away and rejoins her relatives. "But all of a sudden," Ramajana recounts, "we saw the same young man, tall, slim, wearing jeans and a red t-shirt, walking towards us. He produced a bludgeon from under his t-shirt and started beating us with it. He seemed almost possessed, he accused us of wanting to steal. Passers-by do nothing, and Jorgovanka receives a blow to the stomach. The three women go to the police to report the incident and are later sent to hospital. Jorgovanka, eight months pregnant, loses her baby. Source: Gruppo EveryOne

15 June 2010 Monza (MB), Lombardy

A driver on the Brianza Trasporti bus line z221 connecting Monza to the Sesto railway station becomes aware of the presence of some Roma people on the bus and exclaims: "I don't want sh*t on my coach, no gypsies please. Lets open the windows to get some fresh air." He then orders, in a threatening and aggressive tone, all those who do not have a valid ticket to come towards him and proceeds to make them get off. The bus company director remarks: "That sort of language should not be used. However, a very high number of Roma people take the z221 bus that passes near to the settlement at the end of Via Borgazz, and they have caused us various problems. You may harbour certain thoughts, but it's wrong to express them out loud. You should always keep a professional, civil attitude, but it is not easy."

Source: peacereporter.net

15 June 2010 Gallarate (VA), Lombardy

A young Moroccan man aged 20 who is walking through the town centre with a friend and his girlfriend, is approached by a Forza Nuova (extreme right-wing movement) militant who enjoins him, roughly and in loud tones, to get out of the way because he wants to put up a poster right in the spot where he is standing. The poster, as well as issuing a general invitation to sign up, states: "Italians first". The neo-Fascist activist starts provoking him with intimidation, racist insults and violent shoves. At this point, the young Moroccan reacts by punching him in the face, but is, in turn, hit in the back by another right-wing militant. The discussion descends into a brawl. After the last in a series of racist insults, the young man grabs a sugar bowl off a café table, hits the neo-fascist in the face and runs away. He then decides, of his own accord, to report the incident to the police and turn himself in for assault and bodily harm; at the same time he files a complaint against the Forza Nuova member on counts of violence, verbal abuse, threats and bodily harm aggravated by the motive of racial discrimination.

Source: varesenwes.it

16 June 2010 Salerno (SA), Campania

Two Indians, in town for the feast of the patron saint in order to sell some products, choose to sleep on a bench. In the dead of the night, unidentified individuals set fire to the clingfilm used by the two to keep out the cold, with flammable liquid and a lighter.

As the flames start to spread the two migrants shout for help. Some passers-by and a police patrol come running. The perpetrators are long gone.

Source: La città di Salerno

16 June 2010 Naples (NA), Campania

Eight teenagers – five boys and three girls – attack two Filipino immigrants, kicking and punching them for no apparent reason and then issue threats: “if you report us, we will kill you, we will cut your heads off.” The two victims are Joel Manuel, 46, president of the Filipino community and Josè Yoro, 54, both of whom have lived in the city for 20 years. They are taken to hospital with cuts and bruises. “What happened is extremely serious,” they say. “We have no idea why they attacked us; maybe they were bored and looking for some form of entertainment. Like us, many Filipinos are beaten up in the street. Once, they threw a can of coke at a man from a moving motorbike, on several occasions they have thrown punches at us from their mopeds. The situation has been getting progressively worse in the past year. Many of our fellow countrymen would not think to go to the police because they are scared, and this is why have chosen to tell the world our story.”

Source: La Repubblica

28 June 2010 Meolo (VE), Veneto

Three Senegalese workers who have been resident in Italy for nearly ten years, employed in Brescia by a firm which specialises in geothermic underfloor heating, are doing some work in a house in the town of Meolo. Having finished work, at about 9.30 PM, they make their way to the hotel, booked in advance by their company. While the son of the owner is taking down their orders for dinner, his father bursts in and verbally attacks the three men, insulting them and trying to kick them out of his hotel. Mother and son try their best to calm down the incensed man. The three Senegalese men, mortified by the unpleasant occurrence, look for another hotel, and finally find one later that evening near Treviso. The next day they report the incident to the police.

Source: quotidiano.net

29 June 2010 Santa Sofia (FC) Emilia Romagna

Ba Madame, a blue-collar worker born in Senegal, is insulted and attacked by the director of the “Pollo del Campo” firm, part of the Amadori group, where she has worked for six years. She is taken in an ambulance to hospital where they tell her that she has sprained her shoulder and left leg. The answer provided by one of the company managers to her family members, who rushed to Pollo del Campo to ask for some sort of explanation, is distressing: “your mother was lucky that we didn’t fire her.” After the complaint filed by the woman for violence and verbal abuse, the firm did not make any attempt at reconciliation. Instead, a few days later, Ba receives a letter of justified dismissal and a notification of libel action from the manager who assaulted her.

Source: lascintillaonline.org

30 June 2010 Naples (NA), Campania

The A3F association, based in Sant'Antimo, reports seven attacks carried out in just ten days against foreign nationals who own their own businesses. They all take place between Porta Nolana, Piazza Garibaldi and Piazza Mercato and all of them present similar features: a raid on the shops. One of the first victims, a Pakistani man, risked his life when the attackers hit him very close to his aorta. Niam, a man from Bangladesh, the victim of violence and material damages, did not report the incident because he was afraid. "Ethnic shops are the only ones who do not pay protection money around here," A3F states, "and this might well be one of the reasons behind the mysterious attacks. Even though we are more inclined to believe that these incidents stem from a climate of widespread racism."

Source: La Repubblica

8 July 2010 Brescia (BS), Lombardy

The local bus company installs disposable latex glove dispensers on the number 3 "Badia-Rezzato" buses, used by several foreign passengers, with the stated objective of avoiding the spread of diseases. The foreign nationals feel humiliated: "If there are hygiene issues," Mohammed, from Tunisia, remarks "why did they only install them on the line most used by us immigrants? Some people in Brescia are already calling them 'anti-nigger gloves'. This city seems to derive some sort of sadistic enjoyment from humiliating us: no day passes when we are not at the receiving end of some kind of insult." The Cgil union tends to agree: "if there is a serious health threat, why not extend the initiative to the other bus lines and to local trains?"

Source: La Repubblica

12 July 2010 Naples (NA), Campania

An Italian boy beats up an Indian one: four local policemen in civilian clothing arrive on the scene. Without even attempting to ascertain what has occurred from onlookers, they grab the Indian and try to drag him into their car. One of the policemen produces a leather belt, which he wraps around the boy's throat, pulling him towards the car. The young Indian manages to escape with the help of bystanders who object to the policemen's behaviour.

Source: napoli.indymedia.org

29 July 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

How to manipulate information. The Tg1 news programme broadcasts a story about a family carer who knocks around the elderly woman she looks after, but omits one small piece of information: the carer is Italian. The news story is followed by an interview with a foreign representative of the same profession: many members of carers' associations are, in fact, foreigners, due to the high rate of immigrant workers in this sector. The entire coverage leads us to presume that the perpetrator of the offence is foreign.

Source: Il Manifesto

3 August 2010 Padua (PD), Veneto

Niang Boubacar, 42, a Senegalese trade unionist who has worked in Fillea Cgil since 2001, decides to go with a colleague to inspect a building site run by R.C. Snc, based in Galatea in the province of Forlì, which is busy relaying the road surfaces around Padua. The two unionists approach the entrance and ask to be let in. In spite of the presence of three local policemen, who later draft a report on the incident and send it to the public prosecutor's office, the person in charge the site, Claudio Rossi, shouts at Boubacar: "Shut up, f***ing nigger. Dirty nigger, go back to your own country". Then, gripping a cobblestone in his hand, he resumes: "Dirty nigger, go back home... You've found your America here, but you are illegal... I don't want the Cgil coming here... It makes a living off exploiting workers". One month later, the public prosecutor summons Claudio Rossi and his son, Christian, to appear immediately before the court: they are both charged with "slander aggravated by racial discrimination and libel".

Source: Il Mattino di Padova

20 August 2010 Campi Bisenzio (FI), Tuscany

A Senegalese blue-collar worker aged 33, Niang Elhadji, dies in an accident in the Aston Martin car dealership. According to an initial reconstruction, the man was operating a forklift truck for a company that deals with precious marbles, that he works for, when the machine overturns on a ramp, causing his death. The victim was not in possession of a regular residence permit and was working in the black economy. Further irregularities also emerge: the man did not have his seatbelt fastened and the forklift was lacking a number of safety devices that might have saved his life. The company's cameras capture the whole incident: after the forklift overturned, all the people present run away swiftly, leaving the man alone.

Source: La Nazione

21 August 2010 San Leone (AG), Sicily

The woman in charge of the local branch of Legambiente and of the Circolo Rabat, Claudia Casa, asks the local councillor responsible for trade and industry, to amend his statement on the ethnic market in the former San Leone heliport. The councillor supposedly demanded "a ban on 'coloured' retailers participating in the ethnic market". "We call on councillor La Rosa," Mrs Casa states, "to do away with any misunderstanding: what we should be fighting in our city is illegal trade, irrespective of the skin colour of those who practice it".

Source: sicilia24ore.it

23 August 2010 Francavilla Fontana (BR) Puglia

Friday Osas, a Nigerian citizen aged 24, is sitting opposite the Voglia di pane bakery, begging passers-by for small change. When Benedetto Proto, town councillor for the People of Freedom (Pdl) party, already well known in the town for having promoted the first 'Puglia vigilante patrols to keep an eye on immigrants' (a proposal endorsed by the municipality in December 2009), sees the man, he brusquely orders him to make himself scarce because he is "in the way". After a few moments of tension, Proto walks off and gets out his mobile phone. Two local policemen immediately arrive on the scene and Friday runs off. The officers chase after him, stop him and arrest him for

obstructing a law enforcement officer, issuing threats when armed, illegal possession of weapons, refusal to disclose his generalities and grievous bodily harm. Proto claims that he was threatened with a knife. The police report of the arrest also includes the hospital visit made by one of the policemen who states that he was attacked during a confrontation with the young immigrant. But the owner of the bakery, Alessandra Latartara, who witnessed the whole incident, tells her version of the story: there were no threats and definitely no knife. The public prosecutor concludes that Friday Osas is innocent and asks for his instant acquittal with apologies on behalf of the entire citizen body, after nine days of imprisonment.

Source: La Repubblica

27 August 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

At 1.30 AM, a fire breaks out in the illegal settlement on Via Ettore Morselli, in the Magliana district: four shanties are burnt to the ground before firemen manage to contain the flames. In one of the hovels, the charred body of Mario, a three year-old boy, is found. His younger brother, Marco Giovanni, three months old, is rushed to the pediatric intensive care unit of the Gemelli hospital with second- and third-degree burns on over 40% of his body. His parents are kept for 25 days with second-degree burns in the emergency unit of Sant'Eugenio hospital. The prosecutor's office in Rome opens an inquiry into persons unknown for arson and voluntary manslaughter. The theory that the flames might have been triggered by candles placed "on the floor in order to prevent," Mario's parents explain, "mice from eating our clothes", has yet to be examined.

Source: Corriere della Sera

28 August 2010 Gonnese (CI), Sardinia

A young Senegalese man finds a free seat on the ARST company bus that connects the Gonnese seaside resort and Iglesias, but an Italian boy prevents him from sitting by stretching out his leg. Another boy says to him: "What do you expect, you nigger? You stink of elephant." The reaction of some of the other passengers attracts the attention of the bus driver who, having heard the raised tones, stops the vehicle and asks the boys to cut it out. The African boy finds another place at the back of the bus.

Source: Unione Sarda

2 September 2010 Prato (PO), Tuscany

A decree introduced by Mayor Roberto Cenni (centre-right) establishes obligatory early closing time for businesses licenced to serve food and drink social clubs, ice cream shops, delicatessens, kebab stalls and take away pizzerias in the so-called Chinatown neighbourhood. "This measure," the mayor explains, "attempts to find a solution to the discomfort expressed by citizens at smoke, noises and bad smells late into the night." The Democratic Party secretary retorts: "the decree is discriminatory", while for Italia dei Valori (Idv) Secretary Salvo Ardita, "obscurantism and the persecution of immigrants go hand in hand: the ghost of the worst kind of fascism comes back again to haunt these lands."

Source: Corriere Fiorentino

3 September 2010 Zelo Surrigone (MI), Lombardy

A 12-year-old Italo-Cuban boy plays with two younger friends in a park. Three 12-year-old boys start to direct racial insults at him with particular reference to the colour of his skin: "Dirty nigger, f***ing nigger". Pushes, slaps and punches follow. "Two of them held him down, while the third started to punch him," his mother recalls. "He ended up with a broken nose, a black eye and a swollen face. This is the first time they've touched him. The two Italian friends who were with him are very young. They got scared and asked them to stop, but they couldn't defend him." The Carabinieri police immediately identify the three young aggressors.

Source: La Repubblica

6 September 2010 Follonica (GR), Tuscany

At the train station in Follonica, the police escort 100 Senegalese immigrants off regional train number 2237 from Pisa, one at a time. They are all led into a railway company building to be checked. From above, a helicopter oversees the entire operation, while the police form a cordon around the station perimeter to stop anyone attempting to escape. It is the second time the space of a few days that the Grosseto police headquarters perform blanket checks on street vendors. "A democratically-minded general public cannot help but find these incidents disturbing. The station was surrounded, heavy police presence, chases, an immigrant sent to hospital, a high level of tension": this is the damning indictment on the part of the President of Arci Toscana, Vincenzo Striano. Conversely, the police commissioner explains that the operation was carried out after reports of altercations between railway staff and Senegalese individuals.

Source: L'Altra città

10 September 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

Augusto Santori, a People of Freedom (Pdl) councillor in the 15th district, remarks, in reference to place of prayer for Muslims, set up near Piazza Meucci in the Magliana neighborhood: "Luckily, the holy month of Ramadan ends today. The nightmare of dealing with the constant coming and going of an illegal mosque will now hopefully be over for many local residents. In the last few weeks, the residents have been subjected the drone of the loudspeakers and the litanies performed late into the night. To say nothing of the smell of the meals cooked for hundreds of noisy people and added nuisance of having to climb over hundreds of shoes piled up on the pavement in order to reach one's front door. A good relationship with the Islamic world needs to be a priority for our city," Santori resumes, "and this is precisely why it is necessary to restore the respect of the legality, propriety and serenity of all the people who reside in the outskirts of Rome, in order to promote the highest possible degree of integration."

Source: La Repubblica

11 September 2010 Adro (BS), Lombardy

A number of videos posted online show the opening of a new school complex (nursery, primary and secondary school with their respective canteens) named after the Northern

League “theorist” Gianfranco Miglio (who died in 2001) that reveal an entire school dominated by the party’s iconography (most prominent of all, the so-called “Sun of the Alps”): on the desks, windows, ashtrays, doormats, decorations and on the roof. For the Northern League mayor, Oscar Lancini, the complex “was built with funds from Adro town council, so I thought it only proper and fair to fly not the Italian flag but the symbol of the municipality instead”. Lancini has effectively inaugurated the first “federalist and Northern League school in Padania”, something unprecedented in an Italian school. This is all carried out with blessing of Education Minister Maria Stella Gelmini who sent a message expressing her sincere “personal appreciation” praising it as a “point of reference, an exemplary project that fosters well being and enthusiasm.”
Source: ilpost.it

17 September 2010 Sonnino (LT), Lazio

A Moroccan woman walks her child to the nursery school, where he is in his first year. The woman wears a burqa and, according to the complaint lodged by a group of mothers, she scares the children, who allegedly refuse to go to school because of the “black teacher”. “It’s nothing personal,” the worried women explain. “Outside school she is free to wear whatever she wants, but we ask that within the school building she be recognizable. All we require is that she at least reveal her eyes and mouth when she is in the school foyer. With a simple gesture she could reassure us as to her identity and our children would understand that under the dark clothing there is no black teacher’ but only a lady taking her sweet child to nursery school”

Source: La Repubblica

24 September 2010 Silvi (TE), Abruzzo

Some of the residents in a block of flats in Via Roma file an unusual report with the police, the Carabinieri, the mayor and the traffic police: various apartments (next to the one occupied by a large group of foreigners) are infested by insects, such as “german cockroaches”. “The situation is extremely worrying due to the risk of the insects spreading to the entire building and we therefore consider it necessary for the relevant authorities to proceed with the immediate eviction of the tenants in question”. On hearing of the complaint, the two landladies who own the flat immediately pay a visit to the building. “We have ascertained that the two Senegalese men, to whom we rented out the apartment have kept the place clean and tidy. It even smelt of bleach. They are respectable individuals: one works in a factory, the other in the market. As to the fact that there are a lot of them, we cannot keep constant tags on their guests. We believe that this is actually a matter of racism. They have been living in that house for four years now and nothing of the kind has ever happened before. We are indignant. Nobody alerted us to any problem. We have responded to the complaint and are thinking of reporting the incident to the European Court for the Protection of Human Rights”. Source: Il Centro

30 September 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

Mayor Letizia Moratti agrees with the prefect Gian Valerio Lombardi, special commissioner for the Roma crisis: the 11 Roma families in Triboniano, for whom

contracts have already been signed for temporary residence in council housing, must instead be placed in privately-owned apartments. "We have agreed that the Commissioner," Letizia Moratti states, "should find housing solutions which differ from those initially conceived (in flats run by the municipality) for the 11 families in question" insisting that the agreement reached with the Interior Minister Roberto Maroni should take precedence over what was initially established in the "Roma emergency scheme". The Roma forum association, the "Casa della Carità" (house of charity) and the Chamber of Labour in Milan are indignant.

Source: Corriere della Sera

1 October 2010 Acilia (RM), Lazio

Two Bangladeshi men, aged 19 and 29, are assaulted and hustled by a gang of about 15 Italian youths while selling leather goods outside the subway station. When one of the Bangladeshi men threatens to call the police if the Italians don't stop touching and moving the goods on the stall, the gang responds violently, hurling racist insults at the two, kicking and punching them, and threatening them with a pair of scissors and a wooden bar. A private security guard and the Carabinieri police arrive on the scene, forestalling any further trouble. Ten youths, of whom three are over 18, are taken to the police station. 'They started it, they grabbed metal bars and threatened us', one of the Italians told the police. 'And anyway, who do they think they are? They're foreigners, they should just shut up.' Source: La Repubblica

5 October 2010 Giugliano in Campania (NA), Campania

Mayor Giovanni Pianese gives his approval to a project, financed to the tune of 300,000 euros by the provincial council, for a wall to be built around the industrial zone. The project foresees the construction of a wall three metres high to separate the industrial zone with its 48 factories from a Roma camp. Of the 600 Roma currently living in the camp, only 120 will be allowed to remain. The Roma are accused of 're-routing mains water pipes to steal water, damaging electrical boxes, wreaking havoc on telephone lines by stealing copper from them, and throwing stones at workers and clients.' Opera Nomadi is furious: 'this is a shocking decision: they're segregating them to feel safer.' The industrialists, on the other hand, play down the decision: 'we don't have it in for anyone, but every now and then there are annoying incidents. We're tired of it.' Source: La Repubblica

6 October 2010 Prato (PO), Tuscany

During exceptionally bad weather, three Chinese woman die in a car trapped by floodwaters in an underground car park. The town council refuses to declare a day of mourning but, after protests from the Chinese community, the AssoCina association and Bishop Somoni, Mayor Roberto Cenni announces that the council will fly its flag at half-mast in a sign of mourning and that there will be a minute's silence during the council meeting. 'We didn't declare a day of mourning because we have never done so for anyone,' the mayor explains. 'I have talked to the victims' families on the phone to express my condolences and those of Prato, and I have written to the Chinese ambassador to Italy to communicate the sorrow of the city. Source: immigrazioneoggi.it

8 October 2010 Gavardo (BS), Lombardy

Mayor Emanuele Vezzola of the PdL (People of Liberty) party decides to carry out checks into 'fitness for habitation' and 'standards of hygiene' of buildings in some areas of town. It's a kind of drawing up of records expressly designed to discourage residence requests by foreigners, and to persuade them not to seek lodgings in certain areas, streets and buildings where there's already a large concentration of immigrants (there are 106 addresses to be checked on the council's list). The mayor's order is contained in a regulation covering 'registration at the local records office and public health, hygiene and safety standards.' Under the terms of the regulation anyone providing lodging to a foreigner not only has to communicate their presence (within 48 hours of arrival, as stipulated by law) to local police; they also have to specify length and terms of stay, the number and 'type' of lodger in proportion to the dimensions of the property, and provide land registry office data on the property. UNAR (the national anti racial discrimination bureau) roundly condemns the initiative: the regulations 'violate principles of equality of treatment, especially in those articles where they introduce new and stricter requisites for communicating terms of lodging.' Source: La Repubblica

10 October 2010 Fabrica di Roma (VT), Lazio

A tow truck is about to load up a Volkswagen which has double parked. The owner runs up, all out of breath: 'Sorry, I'll move it right away!' Iulian, a Romanian national, is here as a dinner guest of his fellow countryman Mihai M, together with his wife, his sister and his two-month-old son. It's Mihai who first noticed that the Carabinieri were checking his friend's car. He shouted out of the window that his friend was just coming down, to which one of the policemen replied 'Coming down my a***! As soon as Julian appears, the same policeman says 'You're a pain in the a***. You should go back to your country. We make the law!' The tow truck hooks up the car, encouraged by a policeman who is waving on the manoeuvre, even though Julian is now in the driver's seat. Fed up with Mihai's protests, the driver of the tow truck gets out and attacks him while he films the scene on his mobile phone, squaring up to the lens and shouting into his face, 'Listen you, you're not allowed to film me because...!' Then he unleashes a full-on punch and the mobile phone flies into the air. Mihai falls to the ground with multiple fractures to the jaw and the right cheekbone. His son picks up the phone and carries on filming, threatened all the while by the policemen. Mihai M, 62, files a report to the Viterbo public prosecutor's office against Luigi Crescenzi, owner of the tow-truck company, for actual bodily harm and failure to stop and give assistance. Source: Corriere della Sera.

11 October 2010 Pisa (PI), Tuscany

A 54-year-old air force marshall, Michele Greco, is stabbed to death by his 19-year-old drug addict son. It's the son himself who calls the Carabinieri and the ambulance, saying 'Come quickly, my father's been attacked, he's dying.' At first he attempts to explain the attack by pinning the blame on a scapegoat: he tells them that he and his father were attacked by 'some immigrants, two Moroccans.' But after a few hours of

questioning, the young man confesses and admits to murdering his father. Source: giornaledimontesilvano.com

14 October 2010 Bologna (BS), Emilia-Romagna

MP Fabio Garagnani of the PdL (People of Liberty) party presents a parliamentary query in which he protests against an initiative by the Sant'Orsola Malpighi Policlinico hospital: 'hospital signs in Arabic are utterly offensive, not only to our Italian cultural identity but also to people of other ethnic groups who may feel excluded. This is a dangerous precedent.' Source: Redattore Sociale

17 October 2010 Naples (NA), Campania

A reader reports an incident on bus R2. The woman sees a young black man carrying big blue bags full of the goods he sells getting on to the bus. Immediately after she sees two inspectors asking him if he has a ticket. The man is offended but says that he does have a ticket. Even before he has time to look for it, the inspectors start pushing him to the door and off the bus. The woman leans out of the bus window to hand the man two tickets but one of the inspectors grabs hold of her arm than tells her not to do it because 'the black man was rude.' Another passenger tells her that if she wasn't a woman, he would throw her out of the window. The woman accuses him of racism and a fight almost breaks out. Source: La Repubblica

20 October 2010 Pescara (PE), Abruzzo

Marco Forconi, provincial leader of the far-right Forza Nuova movement, is under investigation by the prosecutor's office in Pescara for having published 'leaflets and articles' against Sinti and Roma people. Three documents are being examined. The first is a flyer entitled 'Sinti, Roma, the disgrace of Pescara and Montesilvano' in which Forconi demands the confiscation of all Roma and Sinti assets to create 'nursery schools, barracks, youth clubs and shelters for the homeless.' The second is an article in which he accuses Roma and Sinti of 'stealing, dealing and assaulting', and proposes that all the property confiscated from them should be 'marked with an upturned triangle painted in brown or black.' The third text was published after an attack by a Roma man on a 22-year-old plumber: according to the prosecutor, this document explicitly foments racial hatred. Source: Il Centro

21 October 2010 Varese (VA), Lombardy

At the entrance of a middle school a group of girls is standing in the road, chatting after school. A 45-year-old man gets into his car which is parked near the school and tells the group to move. The girls go on chatting, so the man turns the car on and inches forward. The group gets upset and he gets out. A 13-year-old girl, of Ecuadorian origin, is insulted and pushed about by the driver. The man tells her 'get out of the way, filthy nigger, go home, what are you here for, idiot, piece of s**t...' The whole scene takes place in front of her classmates and their parents. The traffic warden on duty in the area intervenes and files a report. According to some witnesses the man also slapped the girl and bumped into her with his car. Source: varesenews.it

25 October 2010 Turin (TO), Piedmont

An Albanian labourer dies while on the job. His family, who live in Albania – a country listed as having ‘a depressed economy’ – are awarded compensation which is ten times less than what Italian relatives of a deceased worker would get, in order to prevent the Albanian parents enjoying ‘an unjustified increase in wealth’. This ruling comes in a sentence issued by a court in Turin, in which the judge, referring to a supreme Cassation court ruling of ten years ago, decides to ‘weigh the damages to take account of the real value of money in the economy of the country in which those to be compensated reside.’ And so, after assigning the worker 20% of the responsibility for his own death, the sentence grants each of the parents living in Albania damage of just €32,000. Had the labourer been an Italian citizen each of his next of kin would have been awarded something between €150,000 and €300,000. Source: La Repubblica

30 October 2010 Bari (BA), Puglia

A 29-year-old Liberian woman who is resident in the city is the object of racist insults from two 20-year-old locals on board an Amtab bus on route 53. They then punch her in the eye as she gets off the bus. None of the other passengers attempt to defend the woman and her attackers get away easily. At the hospital’s emergency room she is treated for an eye injury and cutting and bruising to her right eyebrow. Source: barisera.net

4 November 2010 Sassari (SS), Sardinia

A Senegalese national Mor Ndiaye, 26, is in the city centre selling his goods. He gets to the piazza, enters a bar and goes up to a group of young men. The three react angrily: they jeer at him and prevent him from leaving the bar, shoving him about. The bar owner makes them all leave. Outside, the three attack the Senegalese man again: they kick him, punch him and break a glass over his head. The police identify the attackers shortly afterwards: they are all over 18. Source: notizie.alguer.it

5 November 2010 Bitonto (BA), Puglia

A 30-year-old Senegalese street vendor sets up his stall, as he does every Friday, in the weekly market in Palombaio. Mid-morning a 21-year-old woman approaches his stall and he begins the sales talk he always uses, urging her to buy his bags and belts, saying ‘hey darling, won’t you buy something?’ The woman, who is married with three children, goes home and tells her husband about the incident, saying she ‘didn’t like the way he went on at her, or that he paid her compliments.’ Half an hour later, her husband and three of his friends, armed with baseball bats, set off to punish him. They stop the Senegalese man right in the centre of the market and beat him up in front of everybody, leaving him bleeding on the ground. No one tries to stop them and no one calls the emergency services. During the attack, the four men steal the street vendor’s wares, and warn him not to go to the police. The victim is so scared of further retaliation that he fails to report his attackers. Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

8 November 2010 Valdaro (MN), Lombardy

A young north African woman arrives at the licensing centre to sit the theory test for her driving license. The woman turns up with her face visible but a scarf covering her head. The woman invigilating the exam demands that she remove the scarf. 'She was worried that she might have an earphone underneath,' some witnesses said. 'She was told quite clearly that if she didn't remove the scarf, she couldn't sit the test. But she said that was the second time she had done it, and the first time she did it with her scarf on.' Source: city.corriere.it

9 November 2010 Reggio Calabria (RC), Calabria

During the night a private security guard witnesses an attack on a foreign citizen and calls the police. After a chase, the police succeed in catching P.L., a local citizen aged 26. The man admits having attacked his victim with a stick because, he claims, the foreigner had made advances to his sister over the previous few days, using the sale of roses as an excuse to approach her. At the police station, the attacker is charged with bodily harm resulting from assault. In the emergency room of the local hospital, the foreigner is treated for bruising and a suspected fractured nose. Source: Ansa

12 November 2010 Pesaro (PU), Marche

Jacopo Patrignano, a student at the Nolfi high school in Fano, reports a racist incident which took place at 2pm on the Fano-Pesaro stretch of the number 99 Adriabus route. A Romanian youth notices an inspector boarding and runs to stamp a ticket. The driver informs the inspector of what has happened and the inspector charges towards him, shooting questions at him. 'What are you? Romanian? Ukrainian? Moldovan? Huh? What are you? Give me your documents! Hand over the money for the fine, immediately!' While he's asking questions, the inspector begins patting the Romanian youth's jacket, searching for his wallet and documents. Scared, the youth pays the fine immediately with a €50 note but the inspector, still not satisfied, picks him up bodily and carries him off the bus, leaving him at Fosso Sejore, half way to his destination, despite the fact that the fine has been paid. The person who was sitting next to the boy – a man of Asian origin – chases after the inspector and says 'you can't treat a person like this just because he's different to you!' The inspector replies 'shut up and just be thankful I haven't fined you too.' Once off the bus, Jacopo decides to lodge a complaint at the bus company. Source: pensieriinformazione.wordpress.com

19 November 2010 Treviso (TV), Veneto

The chairman of the provincial council, Leonardo Muraro of the Northern League, commenting on local television on the arrest of three Serbs caught with goods looted from a village near Padua after recent floods, states 'they should be handed over to the people of Padua. In cases such as this I'm all for shooting people and I would authorise the police to shoot guilty parties there and then. Elsewhere, in serious situations, they impose martial law. Why not here?' He is backed up by Giancarlo Gentilini, also of the League: 'no mercy. When disaster strikes, you're living in a war zone and therefore marshall law should be applied to looters: shoot them on the spot, without a trial.' After provoking a storm of protest, Muraro explains 'I just wanted to make a point.' His real

aim, he says, was to demand special laws and the despatch of a military anti-looting force, as happened in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Source: La Repubblica

22 November 2010 Montebelluna (TV), Veneto

Hamza Piccardo, spokesperson for the Union of Islamic Communities in Italy, reports a massive operation to compile unwarranted records on Muslim people as they emerge from some of the mosques in the province after prayers. The first report of this comes from the new mosque in Montebelluna: one worshipper emerged to find a number of police officers who asked him to produce his documents, then proceeded to photograph everyone who was praying with him in the mosque. The same thing happened at Castelfranco, Cornuda and Villorba. At police headquarters they deny doing anything wrong. 'These are routine controls,' the police chief says, 'to check for illegal immigrants and extremists. There are 14 Islamic centres in the province of Treviso and our controls have shown them all to be perfectly legal.' Source: La Tribuna di Treviso

29 November 2010 Monza (MB), Lombardy

Three officers from the local ROIS special intervention force are on trial on charges of kidnapping, maltreatment, stealing identity documents and damaging the cellphones of two Roma people. The court in Monza sentences two of them to one year and ten months in prison but suspends the sentence. The other is ordered to serve one year, 11 months and 20 days in prison because this is not his first crime: he was found guilty of manhandling a Senegalese motorist in 2004. Source: Il Giorno

2 December 2010 Padua (PD), Veneto

Vittorio Aliprandi, a town councillor associated with the PdL (People of Liberty) party and well known for his racist conduct, publishes extremely offensive statements about Roma people on his Facebook page. He posts several messages: 'I've never met a Roma who wants to be integrated: if they do, it's only so they can steal your children. If you want to change them, you'd have to take them away from their families at birth, and even then...' Others include 'these Roma really make me want to throw up. When I see one of them pretending to be a cripple, then find them walking through the station quite upright, I want to give them a good kicking.' After several protests on the social network, the councillor explains his stance: 'nothing but criticism, what a bore!' he writes. 'Isn't one allowed to be annoyed by Roma? Do we have to be integrated, build houses for them, keep them? They don't want to be part of society. Their main occupation is stealing and they mass-produce children. If they want to be nomads then they should go and live in a campsite like we would, and they should play by our rules.' In a discussion on the Facebook wall of another town councillor, Gregorio Cavalla, Aliprandi goes as far as to say that what's need is 'concentration camps'. He later explains that he was only joking. Source: Il Mattino di Padova

3 December 2010 Montesilvano (PE), Abruzzo

The far-right Forza Nuova movement distributes food to the poor, but not to Roma or immigrants. This initiative sparks protests from members of the IdV (Italy of Values) party and from the parish priest, Father Antonio del Casale, who states: 'giving food to

the needy is a good deed, discriminating is not.' When asked to visit the Forza Nuova rally, the mayor answers 'we're all free to choose whom we want to help.' Source: La Repubblica

4 December 2010 Padua (PD), Veneto

Pietro Giovannoni, a provincial councillor from the Northern League, calls for a halt to public funding for the 'Santo' marathon 'in which so many non-EU citizens in underpants take part.' This race in Padua, Giovannoni explains, costs about one million euros and the local authorities already contribute with municipal police, emergency services and security along the route. Giovannoni tells the provincial council that 'it's useless to fund athletes most of whom come here from the east or from Africa: Somalis, Kenyans and Ethiopians.' Centre and centre-left parties react with outrage and demand Giovannoni's resignation. Source: Corriere delle Alpi

7 December 2010 San Marcellino (CE), Campania

Ayoub, from north Africa, is beaten with iron bars by four local youths. The young man finds the courage to report the assault to the police, and receives support from associations in the area. 'In the past few months there have been at least five or six attacks on immigrants which have gone unreported because the victims were without papers, because there was little proof or because the victims had been threatened,' claims Nasser Hidouri, imam at San Marcellino's mosque. During a town council meeting Hidouri reads out a letter urging authorities to pay more attention to issues concerning the immigrant community, to set up some kind of democratic representation for them, and to institute a permanent dialogue on immigration and integration aimed at bringing about greater collaboration between schools, churches and associations. Mayor Carbone condemns the episode: 'the people of San Marcellino are not intolerant towards foreigners. We just have to make sure that latent negative feelings don't erupt into violence.' Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

8 December 2010 Montebelluna (TV), Veneto

Mohammed Fikri, a Moroccan who has been resident in Italy for four years, is incorrectly accused of murdering Yara Gambirasio, and is released after three days in prison. After he has been completely exonerated, Firkri's relations try to protect the young man, taking him back to the Veneto and keeping him in a safe place. 'Mohammed needs some peace and quiet,' his cousin Abderrazzaq says on the phone. 'We have to keep inquisitive people out of his life. It takes a moment to be accused of something, but years before people believe you're innocent.' For three days, Fikri repeated to investigators that he never used the word 'killed' in the bugged telephone call which is at the basis of the accusations (Allah forgive me, I've killed...). When the tape of the conversation is re-examined and retranslated, the transcript sent to the judge in Bergamo is different: 'God, God, please let him answer...' – a completely different meaning, with nothing to do with the Yara Gambirasio case. Source: Corriere del Veneto

9 December 2010 Rome (RM), Lazio

Three youths between the ages of 17 and 18 of south American origin – two from Peru and one from Ecuador – are assaulted in the Ponte Milvio area of Rome. ‘We were chatting quietly in the street when three Italians, slightly older than us, attacked us with a bottle and a stick,’ they told the police. ‘While they beat us up until we were bleeding, they were shouting racist phrases like “get lost, filthy niggers.” Then they ran away. Police from the station at Ponte Milvio are investigating. Source: Carta

21 December 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

A letter with strong racist insults published in the Northern League’s paper La Padania suggests to Democratic Party MP Jean Leonard Touardi that he should ‘go back to the uncivilised Congo where what he has learnt about Italian civilisation and culture might turn out to be useful.’ The letter comes after Touardi’s protests at a Christmas card sent by Minister Roberto Calderoli. The card expresses the minister’s backing of a plan to move some ministries and the Consob (the stock market commission) from Rome to northern Italy, and depict Italy turned upside down to make a Christmas tree ‘decorated’ with stylised baubles showing ministries and League symbols all over the boot.’ Source: newnotizie.it

23 December 2010 Milan (MI), Lombardy

A judge accepts a complaint from ten Roma people from the camp in Via Triboniano, recognising their right to take possession of council houses which had been assigned to them, then taken away for reasons which, according to the judge, were ‘ethnic in origin’. The prosecutor’s office also announces that it has opened a case – against persons unknown and for no particular offence – on the incident to establish whether there have been discriminatory actions as one section of the court suspects. The priest at the head of the local Casa della Carità (house of charity) Father Colegna is responsible for convincing the Roma to appeal: ‘the magistrature is telling us to stick to deals already made; let’s hope the fuss dies down and levels of collaboration rise,’ he says. But Igor Iezzi, provincial secretary of the Northern League, replies: ‘enough is enough: let’s give Father Colmegna the boot and close off funding to the Casa della Carità.’

2011

1 January 2011 Mestre (VE), Veneto

The driver of a public bus refuses to continue along his route because there's a Bangladeshi woman on board wearing a niqab. He demands that she reveal her face 'for security reasons'. The man insists for some time, and eventually she gives in. In the mean time, the police step in and decide to take on the role of public transport: they take the woman to the police station where she had been heading anyway to complete the procedure for obtaining her residence permit. Source: Corriere del Veneto

3 January 2011 Brembate di Sopra (BG), Lombardy

The EveryOne group reports that new developments in investigations into the disappearance of Yara Gamburasio have led once again to discrimination against the Roma people. 'Warning from Interpol: they're searching for Yara in Roma camps.' Much attention has been drawn to this news across the Italian press, despite the fact that there's no evidence to prove that searches for the girl from Brembate have been carried out in the very few Roma settlements remaining in northern Italy. This 'news' comes, moreover, after a young Moroccan man was accused – without basis in fact – of the kidnapping, only to be shown to be innocent. Source: Gruppo EveryOne.

4 January 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

UNAR (the national anti racial discrimination bureau) is asking for clarification of an article which appeared on 2 December 2010 in Corriere della Sera under the headline 'Robbers break into three villas'. In the sub-head and the text of the article, the alarm is raised over 'four armed and hooded Romanians' who, without any real proof, are identified as having been responsible for these crimes. 'We maintain that the indiscriminate attribution of criminal acts to a particular ethnic group, apparently with no real proof, raises strong doubts as it fails to adhere to a model of unbiased information and, moreover, contributes to a climate of tension which, unfortunately, is a characteristic of relations between Italians and foreign communities in some areas,' UNAR writes. Source: migrantitorino.it

8 January 2011 Agrigento (AG), Sicily

The entrance to a local soup kitchen has been daubed with swastikas and racist slogans – 'blacks stink', 'Italy for the Italians' – in black paint. Other discriminatory slogans have appeared on the shutters of a butcher's selling halal meat. The Digos (police special operations division) has begun an investigation, while a number of citizens have come forward offering to help remove the graffiti from the walls. The far-right Forza Nuova movement has issued a statement 'distancing itself from the offensive slogans'. Source: perlacittà.it

9 January 2011 Bolzano (BZ), Trentino-Alto Adige

On a train from Verona to Bolzano, during a routine check, a ticket inspector begins taking to task a Moroccan immigrant, 42-year-old Koudir H, who is resident in Spain

and whose living permit is in order. The Moroccan has a valid ticket but he has neglected to stamp it – as required – in the ticket machine before boarding the train. The inspector demands €5 as a fine, but the immigrant has no money with him. A woman passenger who has witnessed this scene offers to pay the fine but the inspector refuses to accept this. After a heated discussion, the woman accuses the inspector of being ‘racist’, and he raises the fine to €30, repeating that he can only accept the money from the Moroccan man. About ten other passengers voice their support for the woman and the Moroccan, and demand that the railway police be summoned. Charges are pressed against the inspector. Source: Alto Adige

10 January 2011 San Colombano al Lambro (NI), Lombardy

Four minors from Codogno, including a 17-year-old born in Italy of Moroccan parents, are assaulted. The father of the boy, HBT, 42, who has been in Italy for 21 years, says ‘the boys were waiting for a parent to pick them up. Three men from Graftignana – two aged 22 and one aged 30 – assaulted them, taking their money and cellphones, and kicking and punching them. They threatened them saying ‘call the police and you’re dead.’ ‘There’s surely a racist motive to this,’ the father says. ‘My son, who has had a kidney transplant and is therefore very delicate, was beaten worse than the others.’ Source: Il Giorno

12 January 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

Dozens of names of business figures, magistrates, artists and journalists – some of them very well known – are cited as being of Jewish origin – real or presumed. This anti-Semitic blacklist of ‘faces to erase’ appears on the Italian pages of the American neo-nazi forum Stormfront. The site is based on an American server, but the users signing many of the posts with Nazism-inspired nicknames are Italians and can therefore be identified by the Italian police. The neo-nazis also make accusation against research institutes which are ‘in the hands of Jews’. Source: La Repubblica

15 January 2011 Isola della Scala (VR), Veneto

‘The funds earmarked by the town council for education support grants generates discrimination between Italian and immigrant families,’ according to ARCI associations, Legambiente and the Democratic Party. In November 2010 the council approved a by-law allowing any families resident for three years to apply for education grants. But the budget available is divided into two parts: the first, for Italian families, totals €19,900 while the second, for foreign families, amounts to €10,000. Fifty Italian families can obtain grants but only 25 foreign ones can. Source: L’Arena

19 January 2011 Naples (NA), Campania

Municipal police officers forcibly stop a foreign citizen who is selling counterfeit goods in the street and who – according to the police – reacts violently to their attempts to confiscate his goods, insulting them. A crowd of about 200 people gather, protesting against the police action. They surround the police, insult them and push them about. Six officers are treated in hospital for cuts and bruises. Thanks to the intervention of these passersby, the immigrant manages to get away. Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

22 January 2011 Naples (NA), Campania

A gang of youths attack two foreign nationals in the middle of the day, kicking them in the face as passers-by look on. The first person to come to their aid is an elderly lady who, having seen the attack from the balcony of her house, calls the emergency services and rushes out into the street in her pyjamas. Investigators fail to discover the identity of the attackers. Source: La Repubblica

27 January 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

On 27 January, at a moment when the teacher is absent from the room during lessons in a high school class, a male student berates a female classmate of Jewish origin, saying 'juden raus'. The girl tells the teacher, the boy confesses and apologises to the girl. The teacher asks the boy to go with her to the principal's office to report the incident. As he leaves the classroom, he does a fascist salute and the class applauds. The principal suspends the boy from school for one day. Source: osservatorioantisemitismo.it

1 February 2011 Sesto San Giovanni (MI), Lombardy

The town council, with its centre-left majority, gives almost unanimous approval to a motion presented by the Northern League, calling for an end to the wearing of burqas in public places. The definitive document reads 'the burqa and other similar garments, which completely cover people's faces [...] constitute, in our culture, a form of extremism which is oppressive for women and which limits individual liberties.' Milan's centre-right deputy mayor, Riccardo De Corato, who is responsible for security in the city, says: 'this is the third slap in the face that Sesto San Giovanni has delivered to the Democratic Party in Milan: first came the anti-Roma wall, then the anti-prostitution regulations based on ours in Milan, and now this. A lesson in pragmatism.' Source: Corriere della Sera

4 February 2011 Fossalta di Piave (VE), Veneto

Four teachers and two auxiliary staff at a nursery school give up their meal tickets in order that a four-year-old Senegalese child can eat in the school canteen. The Northern League mayor Massimo Sensini objects. The little girl is the daughter of an immigrant couple – the father from Senegal and this mother from Chad – who have lived in Italy for a few years and are in serious difficulties: the mother doesn't speak Italian and has to maintain four more children between the ages of one and eight years old. 'They receive help from the town council,' the mayor explains, going on to describe the father as 'an Islamic extremist'. 'The price of meal tickets have been cut from €4.25 to €2,' the mayor says. 'Of these cut-price meal tickets 98 percent go to non-EU immigrants because they are the ones who claim to have the lowest incomes and the highest number of children.' Source: Il Gazzettino

9 February 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

During a city-wide day of mourning for four Roma children who died in a fire in a camp on the Via Appia, xenophobic and racist insults continue to appear on the pages of many Facebook users. This social network is no stranger to episodes of intolerance

like this. 'The problem is that not all the gypsy camps caught fire. Four isn't enough. Let's burn all the camps with them inside. Bloody gypsies,' two friends write on their walls. One far-right Lazio supporter, just a few hours after that xenophobic post, adds a photo of a molotov cocktail, with the caption 'share a molotov for all Rome's gypsy camps. Gypsies out of our city, now.' Another right-wing sympathiser comments: 'Four gypsy kids are burnt to death. Now Rome's polluted with their smoke. And we're expected to mourn. Well done Alemanno [Rome's right-wing mayor, Ed.]. Bloody bastards. Bloody gypsies. Alemanno raus.' One youth's hopes appears over a link to a report on the fire: 'I wish all the bloody gypsies would die.' The chairman of the provincial council Nicola Zingaretti calls for police to intervene to have those pages taken down.. Source: marcopasqua.eu

10 February 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

The southern Rome cell of the right-wing Forza Nuova movement comes up with a game called 'squash the gypsy' which appears on Facebook. It's a kind of challenge to drivers who earn points by running down Roma people. The post advertising it explains 'anyone can take part: all you need is a vehicle of any kind which moves.' The bigger and more powerful this vehicle is, the easier it will be for the player to gain points. 'But you can even play with a bicycle: you'll just have to run them over several times.' The game is immediately taken down. Source: Corriere della Sera

10 February 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

In an interview with Radio24, Tiziana Maiolo sums up her five years as social policy chief at the city council saying: 'all ethnic groups can be integrated except the Roma.' When the interviewer asks her to explain, she says: 'they have absolutely no desire to work; they hate us; all they want to do is exploit us; they call us gaggi, gagé, something like that; they have no sense of hygiene; they have babies in order to send them out to steal and often they use their children as child prostitutes. It's easier to teach a dog than a Roma child,' she concludes. The outrage caused by this interview forces Maiolo to resign as Milanese spokesperson for the Future and Liberty party. Source: Corriere della Sera.

13 February 2011, Arzano (NA), Campania

Asia and Muhammed, a Pakistani couple, report a private clinic for refusing to admit the woman in the dead of night, in an advanced state of labour. 'No, we're not equipped for emergencies. Go to the hospital,' they were told. Asia ends up giving birth in their car, before they can find a hospital which will take her in. But Asia's gynecologist works in that clinic, and Asia has an appointment there in a few days' time for a planned C-section. The police step in to investigate exactly what happened. Source: La Repubblica

14 February 2011 Pordenone (PN), Friuli-Venezia Giulia

'If we really get to the point where workers have to be laid off at Electrolux, then let's make sure that it's not local workers who face the axe. If anyone is sent home without a job, it should be foreigners.' According to the Northern League whip on the regional

council Danilo Narduzzi, Italian workers must be looked after during the economic crisis. Source: blog.libero.it/antilega

17 February 2011 Pisa (PI), Tuscany

A list of around 80 surnames of Pisan Jewish families and detailed information on the local Jewish community appears on Italian pages dedicated to 'unmasking Judaism' on Holywar, the anti-semitic site of the popular resistance movement for a Christian alternative. Included in the list, which features a home page showing a cross shattering a star of David, are many families which have left their mark on Pisa's Jewish history. Also under fire on the site are Roma groups in the city. 'God damn the mayor of Pisa to hell,' says a post from 'Protesilao', commenting on the news that Roma families in Coltano have been given houses. 'I really don't envy you Pisans,' 'WhiteEagle' replies. 'Sixty eight more gypsies. That means more crime, more filth and more chaos. It's a disgrace.' Source: Il Tirreno

20 February 2011 Imperia (IM), Liguria

Three cases of racism in schools are reported, involving teachers scolding foreign pupils or giving them low marks because they have problems with Italian. The victims are a Moroccan elementary school student and two Tunisians – a boy and a girl – at middle school. The incidents are reported by the Casa Africa (Africa House) association, whose spokesperson says 'these are three cases of racism in which teachers seemed unable to understand that the three pupils had language difficulties and therefore could not do their homework. We had to step in, helping their parents to mediate, and in the end we found a solution for the problem.' Source: riviera24.it

23 February 2011 Treviso (TV), Veneto

The regional councillor responsible for immigrant quotas, Daniele Stival of the Northern League, is asked during a live show on the Rete Veneta television station how to restrict the numbers of refugees from Libya. He replies 'The Greeks, Spanish and Croatians manage it, and so should we, using machine guns.' This is immediately condemned by regional governor Luca Zaia who says 'no machine guns. But no criminals either.' Source: Corriere del Veneto

23 February 2011 Montesilvano (PE), Abruzzo

Racist slogans and swastikas are found scrawled on walls along two roads where many foreign people live. The mayor and the councillor responsible for urban upkeep have them removed immediately. Source: iltempo.it

27 February 2011 Lampedusa (AG), Sicily

The public prosecutor's office in Agrigento begins an enquiry into the mayor of Lampedusa, Bernardino De Rubeis, who is accused of inciting racial hatred with a regulation issued on 27 February. The regulation reads 'in order to guarantee urban safety and protect the public from unforeseen dangers it is essential that we stop immigrants begging and behaving in a manner which fails to respect the laws of the Italian state by acting without public decency and decorum [...] we hereby ban begging

and unbecoming behaviour anywhere on municipal territory, and, in the interest of public safety and hygiene, the use of public places as campsites or latrines.’ Prior to this the mayor had intended to ban all immigrants from using the roads on the island. Source: La Repubblica

2 March 2011 Livorno (LI), Tuscany

A bus from the public ATL company stops at Livorno station on its way to Nugola. The driver sees two Roma women approaching the door of the bus. He immediately begins to shout at them, demanding to know whether they have tickets for their luggage (a stroller, two shopping bags and a bag full of toys) and telling them that if they don’t, they can’t take the bus. A lady passenger offers to pay for their ticket, but the driver starts muttering that ‘they’ve already driven me up the wall: those people never buy a ticket.’ The two young women say they do have tickets and begin boarding the bus, at which point the driver calls his colleagues who board the bus and surround the Roma women, insulting and threatening them, saying ‘Take all that stuff back to your camp! Dump it here or get off this bus! Get off the bus or we’ll call the police!’ The two leave the bus, and the driver immediately begins making racist remarks: ‘we need a flamethrower for when they come on board. They should have burnt the lot of them.’ Source: senzastoste.it

5 March 2011 Trieste (TS), Friuli Venezia Giulia

Danilo Narduzzi, Northern League chief whip on the Friuli Venezia Giulia regional council, opens an ‘anti-immigrant service’. It’s a telephone helpline (belonging to the Northern League group in the regional council offices) which is already up and running, where anyone who feels they have been ill-used by an immigrant can complain: about, for example, houses assigned to foreigners, or a baby bonus which never arrived. According to the Northern League all benefits of regional welfare services should be assigned first and foremost to Italians, and only afterwards to immigrants. Source: fattoquotidiano.it

9 March 2011 Rimini (RN), Emilia-Romagna

Seventeen-year-old Lear (not her real name) has grown up in Rimini, and is currently studying at the Malatesta hotel school. She has been refused a three-week internship at the reception of a hotel because she wears a veil. The place in question, the Sporting Hotel, is a well-appointed four-star. Saying that he’s ‘sorry for what has happened’, and insisting that they had no intention of hurting the student’s feelings, the manager explains ‘racism has nothing to do with this. We accept all kinds of students as interns. We’ve had so many of them. The only thing that we ask these schools is that they adhere to our standards of conduct, which include presentation and image. This company follows international hospitality rules, and these have nothing to do with politics or religion.’ Source: Corriere della Sera

10 March 2011 Naples (NA), Campania

In the Pianura quarter of Naples, a violent racist attack takes place against a 45-year-old Italian citizen of Somali origin who has been in Italy for 25 years. As she waits for a bus,

two youths approach her, grab hold of her and begin punching her and kicking her in the back. One of the youths opens his trousers and urinates on her. 'You don't deserve to be in Italy. Get lost, nigger,' they say. The woman returns home in a state of shock. A neighbour – an Ivory Coast national – goes to see her and says 'those two boys who attacked you stopped me, and told me to say that if you don't report them, they'll give you €50.' Furious, the woman goes to the police and reports them. The attackers are identified: they are both 16-year-olds, and sons of local criminals. They're let off with nothing more than a note on their police records for a racially motivated incident. Source: Corriere della Sera

11 March 2011 Cernusco sul Naviglio (MB), Lombardy

24-year-old Kelly Missey is a Congolese final-year student with a regular work permit who has been living in Italy since 2006 with refugee status. Entering the changing rooms after a shift working with a machine that was leaking oil, he leaves marks on the newly cleaned floor. A cleaner from the Terdeca SpA company – a 50-year-old Italian – reacts violently. 'He said to me 'nigger, go back to your own country, you stink like all of your race,' Missey recalls. During the lunch break the following Monday, the 50-year-old lies in wait for him at the factory gate with four other people, including his son. They punch and kick Missey and threaten to kill him if he reports them. The owner of the company comes to his aid and Missey reports his attackers to police in Monza. Doctors say his wounds will heal in a week but they say he is also suffering from severe shock. The cleaner is laid off. Source: La Repubblica

11 March 2011 Mantua (MN), Lombardy

A Moroccan couple are owed damages of five million euros, on the basis of a sentence issued by a court in Mantua in 2001. Due to a very difficult labour caused by medical malpractice, their son was born quadriplegic but the appeals court in Bologna has blocked the payment to the Moroccan couple, ruling that the parents of the child, born in 1998 at the hospital in Asola, 'given their modest economic situation and the possibility (as immigrants from Morocco) that they might return to their own country and never come back to Italy, cannot offer adequate guarantees for any excess sums that might happen to be paid, therefore making any further legal action extremely arduous.' Source: immigrazioneoggi.it

14 March 2011 Arino (VE), Veneto

An Albanian waiter working in the restaurant of a motorway service station is the object of very nasty insults from a group of 36 fans of the Treviso Calcio football team: 'go home you Slav bastard,' they tell him. Then about 15 of them surround the man, shove him in the chest so that he falls to the ground and pretend to kick him in the face, stopping the kick in mid-air before it does any damage. But a bottle of beer, which they have stolen from the service station and which is still full, hits him in the face and cuts his forehead. The man ends up in hospital with several stitches and injuries which will take 20 days to heal, according to the doctors' report. His colleagues call the police. The football fans, are charged with grievous bodily harm, and unprovoked, racially motivated assault. Source: Corriere della Sera

16 March 2011 Tivoli (RM), Lazio

In the space of two days almost 300 people – Romanians, Bulgarians and Roma – camped around the decommissioned Stacchini factory, are evicted with no prior warning. Those evicted include women and about 30 children, many of whom attend school in the area. The people evicted say there were ‘advised’ to go far away and not show their faces in the area again. The blitz comes out of the blue. The police turn up with bulldozers. Empty sheds are marked with spray paint for immediate demolition. The occupants of the other sheds are shaken out of their sleep and given an ultimatum: anyone with children has two days to leave; the others just four hours. ‘They shooed them away like flies,’ says former mayoral candidate Gianni Innocenzi, ‘and failed to listen to our proposal, ie that each town in the area should adopt at least two families.’ Source: L’Unità

24 March 2011 Grosseto (GR), Tuscany

Three friends – aged 35, 26 and about 70 years – are waiting for a bus. When the bus arrives, the older man is allowed to board but the other two are not: unaware that the older man is a friend of the other two, the driver of the Riemme-Rama bus says ‘get in quickly so I can close the doors and keep those two gypsies out.’ Something similar occurs the next day as well. Christian and Giuseppe are waiting at the same stop, without their older friend. As the bus approaches they signal to the driver but, recognising them, she fails to stop. One of the men, Christian Turri, lodges a complaint with the bus company. He receives a reply which informs him ‘we have summoned the driver in question and she denies having prevented anyone boarding the bus,’ after which the man decides to report this to the police. ‘Though ethnicity is, clearly, not a valid reason for behaviour of this sort,’ Christian states, ‘neither I nor my friend are Roma.’ After their initial denial, the bus company changes its tune: ‘The driver has confirmed that this episode took place,’ the chairman of Rama explains, ‘and she has received a written warning. Should she repeat this kind of conduct, further action will be taken.’ Source: Il Tirreno

29 March 2011 Manduria (TA), Puglia

In the towns of Manduria and Oria, which are both located very few kilometres from the CAI (Centro di accoglienza e identificazione: reception and identification centre) where some of the Tunisians who have arrived on the island of Lampedusa have been taken, citizens’ vigilante groups have been set up, and have requested ‘permission to shoot’ any immigrants who manage to flee the centre. There is already a vigilante group right outside the CAI: a band of ten or so youths aged between 16 and 18 years old, led by a 40-year-old who gives orders and points out which Tunisians should be stopped. Source: L’Unità

29 March 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

Questioned by journalists, Northern League leader Umberto Bossi whistles, makes a clear ‘they’ve got to go’ hand gesture and says, in Lombard dialect, ‘immigrati fora da i ball’ (immigrants, get the hell out). Asked about the possibility of finding places to

house immigrants in northern regions, Bossi says 'it's best to keep them closer to home [ie in Sicily and the south, Ed.]. You'd have to cover a thousands of kilometres to take them to the Alps. No region is happy accepting immigrants. The first thing to be done is to take them home; leave from the island and take them home. But (Interior Minister Roberto) Maroni knows these things off by heart.' Source: La Repubblica

29 March 2011 San Benedetto (AP), Marche

Democratic Party local councillor Gianluca Pasqualini complains of a Northern League advertising campaign involving huge posters around town. The posters carry the same message which has often formed part of the Northern League's electoral propaganda in northern regions: a photo shows a long line of foreigners, at the end of which is an Italian. 'Guess who's always last,' the caption says. The people in the queue are seeking council houses, social services, and places in nurseries and schools. 'These posters,' says Pasqualini, 'are discriminatory, and incite racial, ethnic, nationalist and religious hatred and violence. As such this advertising campaign should be banned and punished by the law. As soon as I have approval from the town council, I shall present a case to the public prosecutor's office.' Source: ilsegnale.it

29 March 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

On Radio24's programme La Zanzara (the mosquito), Northern League senator Piergiorgio Stiffoni states: 'these Tunisians coming to Italy, who turn up wearing Adidas trainers and designer-label t-shirts, aren't asylum-seekers... and anyway, the political situation in Tunisia is such that they couldn't seek political asylum anyway. These are healthy people, fit people, not emaciated people like true refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kurdistan, Iraq.' Asked for his opinion on statements by (Northern League leader) Umberto Bossi and the Sicilian regional president, Stiffoni says 'all Bossi has done is to amplify what our people are telling us.' Source: Asca

30 March 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

MP Giancarlo Lehner, a member of the parliamentary group known as the 'Responsabili', states: 'to restrict the influx of Africans – who are mostly young, bold and male – we need a psychological deterrent. All we need to do is spread the following communique: to prevent demographic imbalances and sex crimes, the Italian authorities have set up clinics at all points of entry to administer chemical castration to immigrants. Of course, we won't do it, but it wouldn't be a bad idea to scare them off by giving the impression that this country is the region of Emasculated Arabs.' Source: Asca

2 April 2011 Senigallia (AN), Marche

A group of youths goes to the main square and finds all the benches occupied. One of them starts a fight, lashing out at the bicycle of one of the youths seated in the park. At this point a young Italian girl of African original intervenes to stop the boys pushing each other about. But she comes out worse: first she is the butt of racist insults, then she's punched in the face by one of the boys. She is taken to hospital with an eye injury. The police step in to stop the fight, and summon the parents of the youths to the police station. Source: Corriere Adriatico

5 April 2011 Partinico (PA), Sicily

Sinkh, a 38-year-old Indian national, finds a job at a farm and agrees on a monthly wage of €500 for looking after some of the animals. It's not long before this job turns into a kind of prison sentence, during which Sinkh is beaten badly by his employers. In November 2010 he manages to escape, and goes to the Carabinieri police. He tells them how Mr Tringali, his employer and a well respected civil-case lawyer, locked him inside his property, confiscated his cellphone and documents, threatened to kill him and kicked, punched and beat him. After months of investigations, the lawyer is arrested on charges of enslavement. During the investigation it becomes apparent that many of the neighbours knew what was going on and had seen the lawyer beating and insulting the Indian, but no one had ever reported these incidents. Source: La Repubblica

5 April 2011 Pisa (PI), Tuscany

Under the cover of darkness, thousands of euros' worth of damage is done to the former orthopedic hospital at Calambrone, earmarked as a humanitarian aid centre for the reception of immigrants from Tunisia.

6 April 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

The editors of Il Giornale remove a number of racist comments which appear on their website after a boat carrying immigrants capsizes. 'Let's hope they don't find any more alive,' says one post. 'Shame, too many survived.' 'A boat capsizes: who gives a damn? All these boats coming to our shores should capsize, that way we can have done with the deals with north African countries who never respect them. And it won't cost a thing.' 'They saw the Piave swelling from his banks and his waves were fighting like infantrymen. Red with the blood of the proud enemy, the Piave ordered: "Go back, foreigner!"' [Quote from EA Mario's *Battle of the River Piave*. Ed.] 'I made a bad joke: I said, who gives a damn? But why do we always go out to pick them up. What if we did what Malta does and turn our cannon on the boats. I bet (campaigning magistrate Ilda) wouldn't go out to save them!' Source: futurista.it

7 April 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

Abdul Bouja, a 45-year-old Moroccan, goes to a bar in Rome's Montesacro quarter to buy cigarettes and have a coffee. Near the entrance to the bar is a hand-written sign saying 'no entry for dogs or immigrants. The Management.' Inside the bar, he asks the barman to explain. The barman says that the owner of the bar decided on this policy because of problems in the past when some foreigners got drunk in the bar and caused a fight. Abdul buys nothing, leaves the bar and takes a few photos of the sign with his cellphone. With the help of his lawyer, he immediately reports the incident. Source: L'Unità

7 April 2011 Sesto San Giovanni (MI), Lombardy

During a first division women's basketball match between Comense and Geas Sesto San Giovanni, a group of supporters of the local team focus their attention on Abiola Wabara, an Italo-Nigerian player. Every time the girl touches the ball, the stands erupt

with whistles, shouts and racist insults. The chairman of Geas asks several times for the match to be suspended but it continues to the end. After the game, the supporters approach Abiola and spit at her. The police begin an enquiry to identify the 15 people who insulted the player and attempted to assault her. Source: La Repubblica

11 April 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

A number of xenophobic comments appear on the website of La Padania. 'I can't get too worked up about this continuous loss of life,' writes one Northern League supporter. 'It's time we called these people by their real name: common criminals.' 'When I hear this never-ending waffle about integration of the north African invaders I get ball-twisting hormonal dysfunction.' The comments continue: 'What do they come to Italy to look for, these cocky youths with their bold, arrogant manners? Not work, that's for sure, or at least not honest work.' 'We need to be mean,' another reader writes. 'A heavy hand, armed surveillance, orders to shoot.'

12 April 2011 Treviso (TV), Veneto

The Democratic Party whip on the regional council Laura Puppato reports Razza Piave, a citizen's group ticket running for local council elections, to the public prosecutor's office in Treviso. Puppato cites the New York convention of 1966 and an anti-discrimination law of 1975, alleging that 'creating and advertising a ticket called Razza Piave (Piave Race) can be considered propaganda based on the idea of racial superiority, or on racial or ethnic hatred. Among the material proof presented with the report is a photo of a fascist inscription in Godega di Sant'Urbano which describes the 'Piave race' as 'the purest of Italian races, fascist also and above all.' Source: oggitreviso.it

13 April 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

Following in the footsteps of deputy minister for infrastructure Roberto Castelli, Northern League EuroMP Francesco Speroni, talking about immigration on Radio24, states: 'if someone invades the territorial waters of a sovereign state, then you can react, legitimately, with arms. International law allows this. Even Zapatero did it. They certainly don't have "refugee" written across their foreheads, and the situation in Tunisia really isn't one that can justify an influx of refugees. If they came from Malta or Canada would you call them refugees? We're being invaded. Italy is full of people without papers, breaking every rule. We have to resort to tougher means to keep them away. Often when our fishing boats approach the Tunisian coast they get shot at with machine guns. Let's use the same methods.' He then gives a horrifying example: 'Hitler got everything wrong: if he lived nowadays he would have sent the Germans off in leaking old boats to invade the world and no one could have stopped them for... well, humanitarian reasons.' Source: La Repubblica

13 April 2011 Genoa (GE), Liguria

A firebomb attack takes place during the night in a former school in Genoa's Sampierdarena quarter. The structure has been earmarked as a possible structure for the reception of north African migrants. The fire, which is brought under control by the

fire brigade, appears to have been caused by a rudimentary firebomb thrown at the front of the building. Source: TMNews

14 April 2011 Santa Maria Capua Vetere (CE), Campania

The 870 Tunisian migrants who have been held for ten days in the Andolfato barracks rebel, and are punished by the police. The refugees are demanding temporary residence permits, and protesting against the lack of hot water and soap, and against the stale leftovers that they have been given to eat. Scared at the idea of being sent back home, five of them try to escape and two get away. According to advisors and lawyers at the centre, the police then enter in riot gear. At first they refrain from charging but when the inmates revolt, they begin to use batons. Francesca Viviani, from the legal helpdesk at Naples' Ska organisation, is denied entrance to the barracks and is later forced to leave the environs of the reception centre, along with many journalists and photographers. Some people claim they have been threatened: 'keep quiet about this, or we'll do it every night.' Source: Il Manifesto

21 April 2011 Reggio Emilia (RE), Emilia-Romagna

Sixteen-year-old E, from Ghana, plays football at a sports club in Reggio Emilia; his parents are abroad and he has been fostered by a local council official. Seventeen-year-old J. runs in the 60, 100, 200 and 400 metre events; he is of Nigerian origin but has lived here with his mother for twelve years. He is one of the best in his category. Neither of the boys can take part in official competitions because they are not Italian citizens. The regional committee of UISP (the Italian sport-for-all union) expresses its solidarity and says it is committed to having the right to citizenship for migrants of all ages recognised. Source: Gazzetta di Modena

21 April 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

Talking on Radio Padania, MP Carolina Lussano of the Northern League comments on the case of two Roma children in Catanzaro who kicked a classmate in the stomach: 'We have to take a close look at the culture of their families. I don't want to come across as just another racist or xenophobe, but we're talking about Roma children, and there's a culture of violence among the Roma people that you don't find in other ethnic groups. This is an undeniable fact.' Source: danielesensi.blogspot.com

22 April 2011 Mores (SS), Sardinia

Mayor Pasquino Porcu sends a message of solidarity to Seder Hicham, a Moroccan street vendor whose car has been set on fire. The mayor stresses that no racist episodes have ever been reported in his town before, and that foreigners are accepted by all. After the incident, the Moroccan claims 'they told me I'd better make the burnt-out car disappear fast, otherwise they'd take my residence permit away.' The mayor insists on making it clear that 'if anyone said anything of the sort to Mr Hicham, then they're crazy and had no idea that what they were saying was criminal. No one can take away someone's residence permit, especially not for something like this.' Source: La Nuova Sardegna

23 April 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

The walls of the city centre are plastered with posters displaying fascist images and slogans. Written on them is '25 April, happy Easter Monday'. The posters show three fasces on the sides; in the middle is a drawing of a group of young armed fascist militants on a truck. Source: Ansa

24 April 2011 Mestre (VE), Veneto

Two 18-year-olds are arrested for assaulting a 46-year-old Bangladeshi man after asking him for a cigarette near the Le Barche shopping mall. The violence was gratuitous and unprovoked: before the man could even respond to their request, one of the youths head-butted him twice in the back of the neck, and he fell to the ground. They took his packet of cigarettes, then kicked and punched him. They threatened him, shouting 'you're a dead man.' Source: La Nuova Venezia

26 April 2011 Oria (BR), Puglia

Strolling in the city centre on the afternoon of Easter Monday, a passerby finds a leaflet produced by Confartigianato (an artisans' association) and a Committee for the safeguarding of safety and public calm. The leaflet contains a seven-point 'Code for self-regulation in civil cohabitation with immigrants in tent cities'. It bans immigrants from spending any longer than 15 minutes in any bar, the selling of alcohol to immigrants, and begging. The leaflet goes on to demand high levels of hygiene even in overcrowded accommodation, and insists that any 'acts of incivility, violence or harrassment' and cases which place 'citizens' safety at risk' be reported to the police immediately. Source: siderlandia.it

29 April 2011 Rovigo (RO), Veneto

Fascist statements appear on the Facebook wall of a local paper, written by Riccardo Onofri who is standing for election to the local council with the far-right Fiamma tricolore (tricolour flame) group. 'Islamic people had better start praying to their Allah... because if the right wins in Rovigo... I'm going to start taking the trash out...' Another Facebook user asks sarcastically, 'and what wonderful things are you going to do? Stick them in an oven like they did in Mussolini's time?' to which Onofri answers 'no, we have evolved and we're very up to date. I'm planning to produce bio-fuel.' The whole political world is unanimous in its condemnation. Source: rovigoggi.it

29 April 2011 Messina (ME), Sicily

The Fillea Cgil legal helpdesk in Messina reports a number of episodes of discrimination and exploitation in the workplace, of widespread illegality and of months of unpaid labour by foreign workers on building sites and in small firms with intimidation and harrassment of anyone who protests. The cases reported include: Romanian builders paid €300 for a month's work; a Tunisian apprentice fired for asking for three months' back pay; a Polish labourer working ten hours a day, seven days a week on a building site, paid for only 50 % of the hours he worked; a Romanian builder fired without valid excuse after he had spread the word he was joining a union. Source: Redattore Sociale

2 May 2011 Ventimiglia (IM), Liguria

The Confcommercio retailers' association organises a petition asking for the closure of the reception centre, and for immigrants to be moved away from the town. 'Ventimiglia can't cope with this situation. To date we have 250 signatures but it's early days yet. For us retailers it's an untenable situation,' says the chairman of Ascom [part of Confcommercio, Ed.] Source: Ansa

5 May 2011 Vibo Valentia (VV), Calabria

A number of Bulgarian employees of the Wanet Togni circus go to the Carabinieri police to report their exploitative working conditions: they are made to work 18 hours a day, their passports have been taken away, they have no right to breaks and they are forced, because of their meagre wages, to beg for food. The Carabinieri arrest the owner Egle Lozopone and his son Giuseppe Mavilla on charges of duress and enslavement. Source: Ansa

5 May 2011 Bologna (BO), Emilia-Romagna

In Emilia-Romagna, the Northern League once again presents draft regional legislation limiting the number of shops to be opened and run by foreigners – the so-called 'Harlem law'. The text states: 'a high concentration in the same area (street, quarter) of shops run by foreigners, and selling particular kinds of merchandise, leads to whole urban areas becoming ghettos, causing concern among the Italian population as well as making it difficult to encourage the integration of foreigners and their businesses into the social and urban fabric.' The draft legislation also foresees an intensification of inspections by municipal police. Source: immigrazione.biz

6 May 2011 Bari (BA), Puglia

A group of immigrant youths board a train operated by the Ferrovie Appulo-Lucane (Fal) company without a ticket. The inspector comes along. Another traveller films the ensuing scene with a cellphone. First of all the inspector says to them 'come on lads, behave yourselves because we're really on our last legs in Italy. Go and get yourselves jobs instead of standing in front of supermarkets annoying people.' One of the youths accuses him of racism. The inspector gets angry and says 'oh yes, it's all very well for those people who let you do what you want here in Italy, isn't it? It's all very well for the people who give you things to eat and hand you their change too, isn't it? Let's hope Hitler comes back, cuts your heads off and sticks you in an oven.' The Grillaio association posts the film of the incident on the web, after which the Puglia region and the chairman of Fal open an internal enquiry. Once identified, the inspector is suspended from duties for ten days. Source: La Repubblica

7 May 2011 Pordenone (PN), Friuli Venezia Giulia

Northern League anti-immigrant posters appear around town. The image shows locals 'oppressed by foreigners, and by Muslims in particular' forced to flee in an inflatable along the river Noncello. In the background, 'partying Middle-Easterners' are jeering around the town hall which has been transformed into a mosque with a large dome and

a minaret. 'We've gone for a strong image,' explains Danilo Narduzzi, Northern League whip at the regional council, 'and used a strong slogan: "before it's too late". The residents of Pordenone really have to be made aware that what's at stake here is not just the mayor's office: it's their future and the identity of the city.' Source: Il Gazzettino

10 May 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

The Arpjetto charitable organisation has been working for years with Roma in a settlement called Il Canneto, on projects to get their children into and through the school system. They report that Rome's first ever 'partial' eviction has taken place. Using a different approach to those of previous evictions, the authorities asked the association to provide data on families with children in school, who would then not be expelled and not have their shacks destroyed. 'When we got to the camp,' says one Arpjetto volunteer, 'we were asked to point out the families with children who go to school. About 14 sheds – home to 50-60 families – were saved out of the 70-80 which made up the camp. All the families that didn't have children in school were sent away. And that means even families with two or three children beneath school age (six).' The 14 'don't destroy' sheds were identified with a 'no' in big capital letters, in red paint. Source: Redattore Sociale

12 May 2011 Gallarate (MI), Lombardy

A web surfer reports the election manifesto of Mauro Lettieri, a candidate for the PdL (People of Freedom) party, who is seeking votes by promising a 'Gallarate with fewer foreigners'. The youngest candidate on the PdL ticket at 28, Lettieri justifies his slogan in the following terms: 'as well as rhyming with my surname ['foreigners' in Italian is 'stranieri', Ed.], this slogan is something I believe in. When I'm elected I shall dedicate myself every single day to issues of public safety and to introducing a sounder and less haphazard immigration policy. The leaflet I published on Facebook was absolutely not intended to be racist; just as it did not mean to present multiculturalism as anything less than a positive resource in some ways. It's obvious, in fact, that I was referring to foreigners who are in this country illegally, who commit crimes, or who don't give a damn about our rules and do just about anything they want.' Source: varesenews.it

13 May 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

City council candidate Maria Carmela Rozza of the Democratic Party is criticised, by her own party among others, for a racist poster bearing the words: 'Roma camp in via Idro, mosque, north African bus stop, eastern European market, neglect and decay in Lambro park, Latino gangs at the Trotter, ghetto dwellings at Cavezzali. Our area is not Milan's social rubbish dump.' The candidate refutes accusations of racism. 'The feelings of a large swathe of citizens living in the Milanese outer suburbs – and in outer suburbs elsewhere – can be summed up in one sentence: our neighbourhoods are not social rubbish tips. Citizens are complaining about it. Do we want to accuse them of racism, of only looking out for themselves?' Source: affaritaliani.libero.it

13 May 2011 Prato Nevoso (CN), Piedmont

A bus carrying 60 immigrants who arrived on the island of Lampedusa pulls into the village of Frabosa Sottana and the locals block their way, parking cars on the street to the hotel where the immigrants are to be lodged and on the road leading into the village. 'Get out of here,' they shout. 'No second thoughts, these people have to get back on their bus and go back where they came from. There are more densely populated places in the outskirts which are better equipped to take them in. But not here.' It's local shopkeepers who are most vociferous: 'we're not racist. But the economy of our whole valley is at stake here.' Source: targatocn.it

15 May 2011 Naples (NA), Campania

On the evening of May 9, on line 2 of the underground service from Montesanto to piazza Garibaldi, an Angolan nun is assaulted by a gang of men in a crowded commuter carriage. Thirty three-year-old Sister Delta Matureira Laurinda, from the San Carlo Lwanga order, is insulted, jeered at for the colour of her skin, pushed about violently, spat at, and has her veil ripped off. No one tries to help her. 'There were eight of them,' the nun said afterwards, 'all male, between 26 and 30 years old, and with stubble on their chins.' Source: levanteonline.net

17 May 2011 Fiumicino (RM), Lazio

Two Italian youths are arrested by the Carabinieri police, charged with grievous bodily harm. The victim is a young Bangladeshi street vendor, who was beaten up on the Lungomare della Salute beach. It began with a squabble between a woman on the beach and the Bangladeshi man. The argument was heard by the woman's son who, with an accomplice, assaulted the Bangladeshi man, kicking and punching him. Another bather called the emergency services. The victim was taken to hospital and treated for widespread bruising, a dislocated rib and whiplash. Source: romadailynews.it

17 May 2011 Montecatini Terme (PT), Tuscany

The Northern League demands more severe measures 'on civic decorum and the invasion of nomads in the town.' In a letter to the mayor they write 'the picture, taken on Sunday May 15 at 3pm, shows that this group of Roma, now familiar to everyone in town, can do whatever they want by day and by night. It all starts in the morning: you go into the station and you'll see five or six of them sprawled across the benches or begging from commuters. At lunch time they settle down on the steps of the former Bar Veronica to eat their meal, surrounded by paper bags, rubbish and bottles; sometimes they sit right on the pavement, so no one can get past. Then they lie down to rest under the palm tree outside the station so that any tourist arriving by train gets a good idea of what our town has become!' The letter requests that Roma be expelled from the city immediately, that regulations be introduced forbidding the consumption of alcohol and begging in public places, and that 'all forms of nomadic lifestyle' be banned. Source: valdinievoleoggi.com

19 May 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

Milan's out-going deputy mayor Riccardo De Corato, of the PdL (People of Freedom) party, commenting on the presence of Abdel Shaari, the director of the Viale Jenner

Islamic centre, at a rally held by centre-left mayoral candidate Giuliano Pisapia (a presence which 'dispels any doubts about Pisapia's real intentions,' according to De Corato), states that the 'Islamic citadel' that Pisapia plans to create would be 'a new crossroads for terrorism'. De Corato goes on to say 'there's just one detail which is being kept hidden from Milanese citizens: where, in which quarter, will this huge gathering space – a space which by its very size will certainly attract Muslims from every part of Italy and the world, illegal immigrants included, summoned by muezzins from minarets – be located? Pisapia, who plans to dismantle all policies on public safety, leaving the city to decay, has failed to explain how he will run checks on this great magnet for Muslims. Who will translate their sermons into Italian: the traffic wardens? Who will nominate the Imam? We only need to look around Milan to see how in Viale Jenner – one of the seven Islamic centres of the world most feared by the CIA – they were brainwashing would-be suicide bombers, as the judges have told us.' He winds up saying 'as long as there's a national law on Islamic places of worship, there will be no mosque in this city. Source: TMNews

22 May 2011 Galeata (FC), Emilia-Romagna

The local Muslim community has instructed its lawyer to press charges against the Northern League in order to defend its good reputation. This is their way of responding to a flyer signed by the Romagna branch of the Northern League which has appeared on the streets of the town, and to the League's accusations. The title of the flyer, in dialect, is 'there's someone here who isn't playing by the rules'. In it, the League asks 'if they've got money to pay for their mosque, then why can't they buy school books for their children? Why, whenever they have to shell out a single cent, do they refuse to let their children take part in school trips, outings, or classmates' birthday parties? Why do they often not pay their water, electricity and gas bills, their rent, road tax and insurance?' As well as pressing charges, the community issues a statement: 'some 40 people give up their savings to pay the rent on our mosque. All our members are honest workers with families who have been contributing to the growth of the local economy for the past 16 years.' Source: Il Resto del Carlino

23 May 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

On the eve of second-round voting in the Milan mayoral elections, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi rounds on the centre-left candidate Giuliano Pisapia in a video-message: 'with Expo 2015 approaching, Milan cannot become an Islamic city, a gypsy town full of Roma camps, under attack from foreigners whom the left wants to give voting rights to. A city like ours doesn't want to hand itself over to the extreme left and risk becoming a city of disorder, chaos and danger. I don't believe that we Milanese see building a nice mosque in our city as an important priority, just as we don't think creating new unauthorised youth clubs which sell themselves as artistic, creative centres is a priority.' Source: La Repubblica

24 May 2011 Florence (FI), Tuscany

At dawn the final eviction, ordered once again by Mayor Matteo Renzi, gets under way for a group of Ethiopian, Somali and Eritrean refugees camped in Piazza Bambini di

Beslan. Municipal police pull up in jeeps with full beam on, and officers wearing rubber gloves order the refugees to get out, despite the fact that many of them have political refugee status. The police begin demolishing their makeshift huts, and the little that the immigrants possess is taken away in less than an hour in the jeeps. The Asylum Seekers' Assembly, along with the Movement for the Struggle for Housing and the Next Emerson youth club says they will press charges against the municipal police at the prosecutor's office 'for theft, intentional damage and abuse of office' Source: L'Altra Città

25 May 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

Officers from the first division of the municipal police stage an 'anti-illegality operation' in Rome's historic centre, attaching paper bracelets with five-figure identification numbers to the wrists of immigrants working as illegal street vendors. 'These bracelets allow us to match the vendors to the goods we have confiscated from them. It's a guarantee,' the division's commander explains. Cesare Pambianchi, head of the Confcommercio retailers' association, supports this: 'we welcome any measures aimed at fighting the phenomenon of illegal sales of counterfeit goods in all its forms, and therefore we accept numerical bracelets if necessary.' 'We would really like to know,' replies Daniela Pompei from the Community of Sant'Egidio 'which legislation this novelty is based on. As far as we can see, there's no regulation that allows this.' The Senzaconfine organisation accuses the city council: 'it's horrifying that the council could allow keeping records for no reason on people in this way, trying to justify it by saying it serves the public interest.' Source: Corriere della Sera

26 May 2011 Segrate (MI), Lombardy

The owner of a small company is found guilty of mistreatment aggravated by racism. The sentence refers to a case from May 2009 when a Sri Lankan citizen, who was working as a tinsmith in a small firm, was kicked and punched by his employer after a banal argument over a day off. Investigations showed that from that moment on the employee was regularly humiliated by his employer. Besides insults such as 'filthy nigger', 'you come from the third world and don't understand a thing' and 'go back to your own country', he found a note on his work trolley which said 'nigger who can't work but can take money'. In his sentence, the judge talked of 'vulgar racism' and 'racist outbursts for the simple reason that his skin is a different colour'. Source: La Repubblica

27 May 2011 Gioia del Colle (BA), Puglia

Two Senegalese youths come to town to work during the annual saint's day feast, and to attend the Festa dei Popoli (feast of nations) in nearby Bari. After a long train trip, they start looking for somewhere to stay. Their lengthy search takes them to hotels and B&Bs but everywhere they receive the same negative answer, from 'we're full' and 'no, sorry, we don't have room for you,' to racist insults. Late in the evening the two exhausted Senegalese youths are turned down yet again: 'yes, we have a room but I don't think it's for you, you can't come in here, you stink,' they are told at reception. All

that's left for the two Senegalese youths is to sleep in the street, by the stalls set up for the feast. Source: La Repubblica

27 May 2011 Asola (MN), Lombardy

Residents all over town find a flyer with a green background and the electoral symbol of the Northern League, entitled 'Ethnic Cleansing', beneath their windscreen wipers. Apparently the same flyer, with an Alpine sun symbol and the words 'Padania, ancient Celtic land' around it, has appeared in towns all around. The provincial secretary of the Northern League Marco Prandini distances himself from the flyer: 'these leaflets are not ours and we do not share the sentiments expressed in them. Whoever has spread these is trying to use our symbol to discredit us. Clearly someone is afraid that the League may win the provincial government elections in two days' time. We will begin legal proceedings against persons unknown. Let's just hope that whoever did this did it in an area where there were CCTV cameras installed.' Source: Gazzetta di Mantova

31 May 2011 Sanremo (IM), Liguria

A 51-year-old Senegalese immigrant L.M. is walking peacefully along a beach in Bussano when a dog with no lead or muzzle comes up to him and bites him on his thigh. The two owners of the dog – a young man and woman – see what has happened and move off the beach quickly. The man stops them and demands an explanation. The two begin to insult him: 'what do you want, dirty nigger, go back home!' The immigrant reports them to the Carabinieri police, accusing them of leaving the scene of an accident, bodily harm and failure to keep an animal under control. In front of the police, the two continue to repeat the same racist insults. Source: Agi

2 June 2011 Gallio (VI), Veneto

Following a decision from the prefect's office, Mayor Pino Rossi lays down rules for the reception of a refugee who is to be sent to the tiny village of Foza. 'I'm not racist,' he says, 'but Muslims could never be integrated here. I'm going to choose my own refugee and I'd rather have a Christian because we could maybe find him work in the parish. I'm doing this for him,' he goes on. 'How would he feel if everyone was looking at him? If, on the other hand, a Christian joined our community it would all be much simpler and he could help out at the parish church too.' Source: Il Giornale di Vicenza

8 June 2011 Vallerano (VT), Lazio

The local cell of the Democratic Party presents a statement to local magistrates, asking them to investigate 'why two thirds of the Romanian community in this town in Viterbo province voted together in local elections to ensure victory for the centre-right ticket called The Tower.' 'It's all the Romanians' fault: as is their wont, they have no qualms about prostituting themselves for an economic return. They are immoral by nature and so, thanks to the the unconditional support offered to our adversary from the PdL (People of Freedom) party by the 101 Romanian voters, our project to govern Vallerano for the next five years failed. Other non-EU immigrant communities are much better. The Romanians all voted together for the centre-right candidate Mauro Giovannini who won by 21 votes. They went to the polling stations because the Church, through its

Caritas charity, gave them gift packages to send home to family in Romania or to use themselves,' some Democratic Party activists stated. The Romanians are shocked by this: 'we thought that Italy was a free country. But because we went to vote we find ourselves with the police in our homes investigating. We will never vote again. This has made us realise just how difficult integration is going to be.' Source: legnostorto.com

9 June 2011 Ravenna (RA), Emilia-Romagna

The local branch of the PdL (People of Freedom) party issues a press release about 25-year-old Ouidad Bakkali, an Italian of Moroccan origin who is the councillor responsible for culture and education on the centre-left-led local council. The document signed by five council members states 'as we are unaware of any particular experience or specific expertise on the part of councillor Bakkali, we find the concept she represents to be worrying: there's a risk that we will find ourselves with a cultural policy which looks exclusively to multi-culturalism and fails to take into account the traditional culture of our city. At the root of our opinion lies our own very different idea of the individual, society and life itself. By forcing us into multi-culturalism we risk eradicating our values, our identity and our roots in order to become part of a new civilisation which is the sum total of those people who arrive on our shores and dictate their conditions.' Source: Il Fatto Quotidiano

14 June 2011 Montebelluna (TV), Veneto

The Northern League mayor Michela Cecchetto issues two by-laws, countersigned by the prefect. The first obliges anyone wishing to use languages other than Italian in public announcements of any kind to inform the mayor of the contents, which must be translated into Italian. "This doesn't mean seeking authorisation," the mayor explains, "it's just a straightforward communication, to allow the town council to monitor its territory; and it's useful for foreigners too, in that they will be able to count on the presence of the police in cases of over-crowded or particularly contentious meetings." The second order is to keep 'door to door' advertising, practised largely by Bangladeshi nationals, under control; it obliges companies to report the names, residence permit details and proof of a regular work contract of those distributing advertising leaflets to the town council. Leaflet distribution is limited to certain hours of the day. Source: immigrazioneoggi.biz

19 June 2011 Palermo (PA), Sicily

The public prosecutor's office in Palermo brings charges against a group of municipal police officers. Ten officers and inspectors are accused of slander, bodily harm, abuse of office, forgery and falsification of evidence. Witness statements from ten or so street vendors operating in the city centre have provided investigating magistrates with a distressing picture: for some time the 'traffic warden gang', as they are known, have been carrying out punitive checks, and issuing counterfeit statements for confiscated wares. This behaviour was not only reported by Moroccan fellow-citizens of Moureddine Adnane, the young man who set himself alight in February when he could no longer take the police checks, but also by Tunisian, Chinese and Bangladeshi nationals. Source: La Repubblica

20 June 2011 Casarano (LE), Puglia

In the town centre, close to the mayor's office, 31-year-old Moroccan citizen G.K, who has lived in Casarano for several years, suffers a near-lynching. Sitting on a park bench, and clearly drunk, G.K. directs some unpleasant remarks at a group of girls passing by. The father of one of these girls responds to his comments, drawing the attention of a group of adolescents who are eating pizza in a nearby restaurant. Six or seven teenagers start taunting G.K, who falls to the ground. The youths begin assaulting the man violently, in front of a small crowd which rather than intervening shouts encouragement to the boys. Unfortunately, by the time the police arrive, the boys have fled. Source: iltaccoditalia.info

20 June 2011 Fermo (FM), Marche

On Viale Trento – a street which has recently been daubed with neo-fascist slogans, celtic crosses and swastikas – eight Italian citizens assault two young Somali workers. As they leave a bar, racist insults are hurled repeatedly at the two men; they are then pursued and hit over the head with bottles, suffering serious bruises and cuts, leading to considerable blood loss. The act is unanimously condemned by all local politicians and associations. Source: [Il Resto del Carlino](http://IlRestoDelCarlino)

23 June 2011 Quartu Sant'Elena (CA), Sardinia

Four Senegalese nationals are dancing at the Alta Marea disco on the sea front when one of them accidentally bumps into a girl. They are immediately surrounded by about ten people, threatened and insulted with racist comments, then beaten up. The owner of the club attempts to save them by locking them in a store cupboard, planning to send them home later. Police officers arrive on the scene and two men are arrested for affray, aggravated damage, bodily harm and racially motivated offences. Source: [La Nuova Sardegna](http://LaNuovaSardegna)

1 July 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

In a query submitted to Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, Northern League MP Angelo Alessandri writes 'some police stations, particularly in northern Italy, have illegally granted permits to carry arms to non-EU citizens legally resident in Italy, and to those of Middle Eastern origin in particular. In my opinion it would be sensible and understandable not to release these gun permits to any non-EU immigrant with values, customs and feelings which differ from those of the local people. This is especially so for immigrants hailing from cultures with a different attitude towards the family and women, in which behaviour considered extremely serious in the western world – such as maltreatment of wives – is not even considered a crime.' Source: stranieriinitalia.it

2 July 2011 Florence (FI), Tuscany

A 36-year-old Somali farm worker is the victim of a violent assault in the Rifredi quarter of Florence. Taken to the CTO hospital with head injuries and a broken jaw, the man says he was approached by three strangers at three o'clock in the morning. The men

surrounded him and, unprovoked, began punching him violently, before making their getaway on a moped, leaving him lying on the ground. Source: La Repubblica

6 July 2011 Caprino Veronese (VR), Veneto

An assault of exceptional ferocity took place during the annual Havana Volley sports rally, which brings together volleyball fans from around Europe. Only the timely intervention of the police averted a tragedy. About 20 youths, some of them members of the 'Butei della Bassa' – supporters of the Hellas Verona football team – hurled insults at, then began beating up, a young black man; they also attacked a friend who came to his aid and a Red Cross worker. Five people between the ages of 19 and 23 were arrested and charged with damage to a Red Cross ambulance, bodily harm and for offences against the Mancini law on racial, ethnic and religious discrimination. Source: L'Arena

8 July 2011 Bologna (BO), Emilia-Romagna

In response to the juvenile public prosecutor's office which had requested that a 12-year-old Roma girl be assigned to the social services for a better life in a community, the Bologna appeals court headed by Vincenzo De Robertis states 'thought she does not attend school, we will not remove her from her family. This is a normal state for someone of her condition and origin. Due to her nomadic way of life and her culture, we cannot see how this state of affairs can be detrimental.' For the court, therefore, failure to send a Roma child to school, and condemning her to life in poor hygienic conditions is not sufficiently 'detrimental'. Source: La Repubblica

10 July 2011 Como (CO), Lombardy

Outside a club on Viale Geno, shortly after midnight, a 22-year-old Italian woman resident in Como begins shouting racist insults for no apparent reason at another woman, a 30-year-old black Italian citizen. The woman decides to call the police who intervene and take a statement from the offended party. According to the statement, there was an older couple with the girl who, rather than trying to calm her down, 'sniggered and encouraged her'. 'I came out of the club with my mother and a group of friends after celebrating my birthday,' the victim says, 'and suddenly this girl who I didn't know came towards me and began insulting me: "sh..ty nigger, get out of my way because you stink. Get away from me and go back to Africa.' Source: La Provincia

10 July 2011 Capri (NA), Campania

Mayor Ciro Lembo orders a 'screening' of immigrants, after eight burglaries in apartments and villas on the island [crimes which still have not been solved, Ed.]. 'This isn't racism,' says Lembo. 'We simply want to identify those non-resident foreigners who arrive on the island every morning from Naples or Castellammare and leave again each evening. I want to know what they do on our island and how they spend their days. And so I have ordered our 24 municipal police officers – including four part-time officers – to begin checks, in particular on a group of Romanians and Poles. These burglaries are strange,' Lembo concludes, 'in that they have taken place in out-lying

houses, belonging to simple people, where there's nothing much to steal.' Source: La Repubblica

12 July 2011 Campobasso (CB), Molise

Some bathers are convinced that they have seen Alessia and Livia – two children who disappeared with their father on January 28 – with two Roma women on the Lido Oasi beach in Termoli. They were identifiable as Roma, according to the statement made to the police, because 'they had dark skin'. A search gets underway immediately in all the so-called 'gypsy encampments' in Campobasso province. Newspapers in Switzerland begin a debate on child-trafficking [which has never been proved by law, Ed.] and demand to know why the Italian authorities didn't intervene immediately to stop the two women on the beach fleeing with the children. Source: sucardrom.blogspot.com

13 July 2011 Taranto (TA), Puglia

Twenty-year-old Alessandra Torno begins shouting racist insults at an Eritrean sitting on a bench, telling him to get up and let her sit down. When the young man refuses, she continues threatening him and shaking him violently, then strikes him with a broken beer bottle. A shard of glass cuts the Eritrean man's arm. When the police intervene, the woman attacks them too, and is arrested for resisting arrest, assaulting a police officer and causing bodily harm. Source: Corriere del Mezzogiorno

15 July 2011 Naples (NA), Campania

Mid-morning in the Poggioreale quarter, about ten people – their faces covered and armed with clubs – break into a Roma encampment. They let fly at huts and parked vehicles, breaking the windscreens of five cars as terrified women and children look on. They threaten to return if the Roma families don't leave the camp by that same evening. Police launch an enquiry into the incident, and follow a number of leads. Some days previously, a group of abandoned hovels had been set alight in nearby Ponticelli, probably as a warning to the group of 30 Roma – including about 15 children – who had reoccupied an abandoned camp in Via Argine a few days before. Source: sucardrom.blogspot.com

18 July 2011 Treviso (TV), Veneto

Staff at ACTT and La Marca, two local public transport companies, are asked to report 'suspicious activity of possible thieves, especially gypsy children' to the police. This initiative by the Treviso police HQ is aimed at 'fighting the wave of burglaries in houses and apartments, carried out in particular by young gypsies' – in this case by creating 'bus vigilante patrols' with 'driver-lookouts'. Source: La Tribuna di Treviso

22 July 2011 Padua (PD), Veneto

The provincial council approves a motion presented by the Northern League: mayors are asked to hold a referendum before giving building permits for Islamic centres, and the national government is asked to present a law making referenda on the construction of mosques obligatory. Provincial councillor Pietro Giovannoni, who is also chairman of the the Vigonza town council, defines Islam as 'a religion of death' and says Italy risks

becoming an 'Islamic caliphate'. He goes on to explain: 'I don't believe that the Islamic community around Italy is sufficiently mature as a religion to be the object of any kind of agreement with the state, such as the Concordat between Italy and the Vatican. Take the mosque in Rome, for example. It's just a big gift we gave to the Arabs because they give us oil. But we could never open a church in Riyadh. There has to be some give and take.' Fonte: Il Mattino di Padova

22 July 2011 Altamura (BA), Puglia

During the night a racist banner is hung by Forza Nuova – a far-right group – from the recently inaugurated Intercultural centre. Purpusefully misspelled, the banner reads 'better health care and welfare for Italians'; it is signed with a celtic cross. Parties and associationa express their outrage. Source. altamuralife.it

31 July 2011 Predappio (FC), Emilia-Romagna

Around 200 hankerers after Fascism gather in Predappio to celebrate the 128th anniversary of the birth here of Benito Mussolini. Leading the celebration is the defrocked priest don Giulio Maria Tam. When he was ordained in 1980 in the schismatic Lefebvre order, Tam responded to his 'call from God' like a crusader setting out to reconquer the Holy Land from the infidel. And today Tam harked back to the Crusades, reassessing their importance and key symbolic value in the light of the current 'Muslim invasion'. For this man – who greets the Madonna of the Fascio with a Roman salute and describes his priest's habit as 'an outsize black shirt reaching down to my heels' – 'Islam is the invading enemy'. Source: Il Fatto Quotidiano

1 August 2011 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

23- year-old Italian cyclist Marco Coledan, of the Bottoli Trevigiani Dynamon team, is expelled from the Brazil cycling tour for having addressed racist comments at a colleague who refused to change places with him at a certain moment during the race. An account of the incident is published in the online daily Folha de Sao Paulo, and passed on to the race's press office. At a certain point during the race, Coledan asked a racer behind him, Renato Santos of Brazil, to pull ahead to lead the group. When Santos refused, the Folha reported, Coledan insulted the Brazilian, calling him a 'filthy nigger'. Source: Ansa

3 August 2011 Imperia (IM), Liguria

About twenty members of the far-right Forza Nuova movement stage a night-time raid on a camp housing Roma and other foreign nationals in waste ground near an Italcementi plant. They hang up posters saying 'area occupied by gypsies and illegal immigrants who steal and deal drugs, coddled and supported by town institutions and the national government.' Forza Nuova says there will be more, and more incisive, initiatives of this type. 'We won't tolerate being treated as guests in our own home,' they say. Source: Ansa

3 August 2011 Bondeno (FE), Emilia-Romagna

A few days after the Constitutional Court sentence which declared unconstitutional a section of a law banning marriages between Italian citizens and immigrants without papers, the Northern League mayor of Bondeno, Alan Fabbri, refuses to marry an Italian man and foreign woman with no living permit, calling this 'morally intollerable'. 'I refuse to marry someone when I'm fully aware that that person is an illegal alien,' the mayor says. 'I shall tell my city council not to take part in marriages involving illegal immigrants. I think it's absurd that the Court took this decision.' Source: Il Fatto Quotidiano

7 August 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

Among the market stalls in Piazzale Lagosta in Milan, a woman appears upset by two other women whose faces are entirely covered – except a small slit for the eyes – by black niqabs. She begins shouting 'you're scaring me, that's banned by law.' She then goes up to the women and tears the veils off both of them, exposing their faces. She then calls the police who arrive when the incident is already over. 'A simple argument,' is how the women describe it. In fact, there is no such law, although on August 2 the Constitutional Affairs committee of the Lower House approved a draft bill banning 'concealing or disguising ones face' in public, and stipulating fines of up to €500 for anyone wearing garments 'of ethnic and cultural origin, such as burqas and niqabs.' This is an amendment to the law which states that everyone must be identifiable for reasons of public safety. Source: Corriere della Sera

10 August 2011 Ravenna (RA), Emilia-Romagna

After 12 years in Italy, 33-year-old Palestinian Fadi Karajeh learnt that his request for citizenship had been turned down because in 2004 he was found guilty of drink-driving. He paid the fine imposed by the judge in 2005, since when he has committed no further offences. But on July 1 he received advance warning from the Interior Ministry: that his request was being turned down because that violation of the highway code showed that he had failed to reach 'a sufficient degree of integration, which is demonstrated, among other things, through respect for the rules of civil cohabitation and the criminal code.' This ruling comes despite the fact that during 12 years in Italy he has learnt four different professions (solderer, blacksmith, painter and pizza cook) to ensure that he is never without work, that he has obtained two professional qualifications and that he has been called on by the courts on numerous occasions to serve as an Italian-Arab translator. Fadi Karajeh has called for a reappraisal of his request and talks explicitly of his rights being violated. 'If they make me out to be a criminal because of that incident, they really make me feel bad. It seems like an invitation to behave like a criminal. Is this the right way to guarantee public safety?' Source: ravennaedintorni.it

13 August 2011 Montecchio Maggiore (VI), Veneto

The Education Ministry and Montecchio's Northern League mayor Milena Cecchetto announce that the students of first year class B of the Jean Piget nursery school will be 'shared out', as the class at present is made up of foreign children only. 'Structurally, this area is like that, with a high concentration of foreigners,' says headmaster Sergio Cracco who has sought permission from regional councillor for education Elena

Donazzan to create a new class. The Education Ministry concurs that 'a class which is made up wholly of foreign students does not favour integration: it creates a ghetto.'
Source: ilsussidiario.net

19 August 2011 Milan (MI), Lombardy

A 62-year-old Indian citizen is admitted to hospital with sprains to his shoulder and left wrist after being manhandled by municipal police during an inspection of his restaurant, the Maharaja in Via Vetere. Shortly before one o'clock in the morning, four officers entered the restaurant in full view of its clients. They measured the pavement seating area, alleged that it was bigger than was authorised, wrote out a fine and left. A few minutes later they returned to the restaurant, saying that they wanted the copy of the fine back because 'there was a mistake'. Paul asked to make a photocopy of the fine, but the officers, who before had been brusque, became angry. 'In order to get the fine, the two men pinned my arms behind my back, holding my wrists very tightly,' the statement said, 'while the two women put their hands in my pockets and took the pieces of paper.' The man, who has been in Italy for 30 years and is married to an Italian, said 'I have always paid my fines. This seems like racist behaviour to me.' Then the police left. Maurizio Benussi, a client who was in the restaurant at the time, reported the incident. He asked the police officers their names, then went home and sent an email to the mayor, saying 'Paul is a serious person. He made this restaurant with his own hands and, for the people of the area, he's a point of reference.' Source: La Repubblica

21 August 2011 Rome (RM), Lazio

The neo-fascist movement formed by Gaetano Saya, a leader of the far-right MSI-DN party and already under police scrutiny after setting up a private police force, resumes its online recruitment campaign. The movement's manifesto includes: expulsion of immigrants and homosexuals; the reintroduction of the death penalty; Italy's exit from the European Union; pre-emptive press censorship. Its stated aims include: protecting Italy from invasion by 'new barbarians' ie immigrants; and forcing all foreigners who have arrived in Italy since 1977 to leave. The movement's manifesto concludes with a commitment by its leadership [to which women are not admitted, Ed.] 'to fight to the bitter end, even laying our lives on the line if necessary, to put this programme into operation.' The movement's so-called 'uniforms for the defence and safety of the Fatherland' – which can be purchased on its website – consist of a white shirt, black tie and belt, the Italian tricolor and the Black Sun, the symbol of Nazi mysticism. UNAR (the national anti racial discrimination bureau) has started an enquiry into the movement's homophobic and racist stance, to ascertain whether proceedings can be taken under the terms of the Mancini law on racial, ethnic and religious discrimination, in which case they will take their case to the public prosecutor's office. Source: La Repubblica

24 August 2011 Cles (TN), Trentino-Alto Adige

At around 1.30AM, as the Tropical Beach party in the village of Bersaglio is drawing to a close, there's almost a fight as a youth goes on stage, grabs the microphone and begins

shouting 'nigger, bl--dy nigger, son of a bitch, get out of Italy!' The youth is accompanied by a group of friends, all wearing black t-shirts and with their arms outstretched, doing the roman salute. A Moroccan youth and his friend are standing close to the stage. The youth approaches the racist group and, clearly offended, asks why they're doing this. Threats are made, and the Moroccan moves away to avoid a fight. The young racists follow him however, and start shoving and insulting the Moroccan and his friend. The owners of the club step in to restore calm. Source: Corriere delle Alpi

20 August 2011 Civitavecchia (RM), Lazio

The town councillor for environmental policy Gianfranco Frascarelli, from the People of Liberty party, states: 'it is a fact that there are foreigners who turn the area around rubbish skips into real pigstyes, a situation which the police must step in to resolve. This is not xenophobia. All I'm asking is that legality and hygiene be restored in this city which has shown itself to be a very welcoming one. If Civitavecchia is dirty, it's the fault of foreigners who rifle through the rubbish in our skips.' Source: Il Messaggero

29 August 2011 Venice (VE), Veneto

A swastika with the name 'Adolf' written beside it is found outside the Jewish cemetery on the Lido. The spot has been chosen to be fully visible from the house of a Jewish woman who lives nearby. Source: Adnkronos

Lunaria

Lunaria is an independent and non-profit association, born in 1992. Lunaria promotes the “principles of justice, social and economical solidarity, democratic participation to the life of the community, promotion of the civil, social and human rights both at national and international level” (art. 3 of the Constitution Chart).

In order to contribute to the achievements of such principles, the organisation develops research, training, communication and consultancy actions in the following fields:

- international economy, third sector and ethical finance;
- immigration, fight to racism and social exclusion;
- international voluntary service and youth exchanges.

Since 1996 Lunaria has been promoting research activities, awareness campaigns and information initiatives on migrations and racism. All our activities are supported by an intensive work of networking at local, national and European level.

In order to ensure full citizenship, civil, social, and political rights to non-EU nationals, the following initiatives have been undertaken:

- campaigns for the recognition of the rights of immigrants to vote in local elections, the reform of the laws on citizenship and placing the competency for residence permits under the civil authorities
- public initiatives to sensitize the public opinion on the cultural diversity
- law information point for legal indications for asylum seekers and refugees
- intercultural education programmes for high schools
- research about immigration trends and best practices in fight against discrimination.

Research and social analysis are considered as fundamental instruments to support initiatives and campaigns aimed to defend immigrants’ rights, against discriminations and xenophobia, and to promote alternative but sustainable policies. This kind of approach raised a deep knowledge of migration phenomenon in Rome, in Italy and in Europe, especially about discriminations and racism, immigrants’ labour market inclusion-exclusion condition, important and critical barriers that obstruct immigrants access to social services (house, school, health services, active participation).

Through www.cronacheordinariorazzismo.org Lunaria created a website devoted to the analysis, information and communication activities on racism. It is managed by Lunaria in cooperation with individuals, associations and movements that fight for equal opportunities and for the guarantee of citizenship rights for all.

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