

Libertarian themes in the work of Giancarlo De Carlo

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Introduction

At the Royal Institute of British Architects Annual Discourse in 1994, Giancarlo De Carlo made it known that his inspiration lies in the libertarian tradition exemplified by Petr Kropotkin, William Godwin, Enrico Malatesta, Mikhail Bakunin, Henry Thoreau, Walt Whitman, William Morris, Patrick Geddes and a few others. By and large this is a list of leading anarchist philosophers.

Failure to grasp the anarchist content in De Carlo's lines of thought has led even the most erudite to form uninformed opinions. A revealing example of this was Charles Jencks' remark following De Carlo's Gold Medal award lecture in London. Perhaps casually and even jokingly, Jencks suggested that De Carlo was a "revisionist." This is indeed predictable, as anarchists have always provoked a contradictory response from the uninformed. Among other things, libertarians have been called paternalists, prone to violence, and eccentrics. But for those who really wish to understand, most of them tend to be social philosophers often with a quiet but firm voice of dissent; many of their ideas have a global significance and appear to be relevant not only for the present but for the 21st century. Colin Ward (1991) in his book entitled *Influences* identifies a wealth of their prophetic formulations but citing one or two here might convince the reader of, first, their importance and, second, why someone like De Carlo found them inspirational.

One of Ward's examples is William Godwin's well formulated objections to the dominance of education by the state and the church. In the light of the imposition of a national curriculum in the 1980s and in the light of the Education Act of 1988 imposing a religious education on State Schools in Britain, Ward argues that Godwin's considered views are still relevant.

The second most revealing example of Colin Ward is that of Kropotkin's view that political economy is concerned with the study of human needs and the ways in which we can meet them with the least possible waste of energy. A greater economy in the use of energy required to supply the needs of

human life is necessary, precisely because the demand for energy is increasing and our resources are not inexhaustible. Ward quite rightly argues that Kropotkin's simple proposition is only now beginning to enter the general consciousness.

The characteristics which unite the libertarians, especially those that have had a considerable impact on De Carlo's thought and works, are¹:

- They deny authority and show a distaste for its imposition even by an elected government.
- They believe in a probing criticism of society as it exists and in mapping out an alternative vision for it as well as a means of realizing it. In this critique polemic has a place but dogma will be questioned and exclusiveness ruled out.
- As a critic it is the intellectual and not the academic who has a role to play in introducing a crisis out of the contradictions of the present state of society and in suggesting a way forward. No topic including Marxism is exempt from criticism by the libertarians and since creative ideas can have idiosyncratic origins subjective views are taken as legitimate.
- Direct action.
- Intolerance of Utopian views as well as a degree of sympathy for the basis on which they are formulated.
- An attitude to history which argues not necessarily in favor of the past but certainly in favor of any critically evaluated and unfettered ideals irrespective of whether they originate in the past or present.

The distaste for authority

All anarchists deny authority; most of them fight against it in their own ways; but by no means are all those who deny authority normally considered anarchists. Mystics and stoics are not anarchists. One does sense a degree of impatience on the part of De Carlo with the metaphysical inclinations of architects like Louis Kahn.² In exceptional circumstances even the most ardent anarchists have to exercise a degree of authority in which case the onus is on the person wielding authority to explain his or her prerogative to do so. Naom Chomsky is fond of giving the example of helping a child to cross a busy road as a case in point. Here authority is solely exercised in the interest of the child's safety and it is unwise not to in these circumstances. Analogous instances can be found in De Carlo's work. One example is the second phase of the Collegio dei Cappuccini development in Urbino where he used his authority as an architect to insist on developing the whole project in one go as opposed to phasing it in different sections (figs. 1 and 2). The intention behind this was to fight the tendency of Italian banks who finance the project to renege and put a hold on developments after the first phase and transfer investments to other

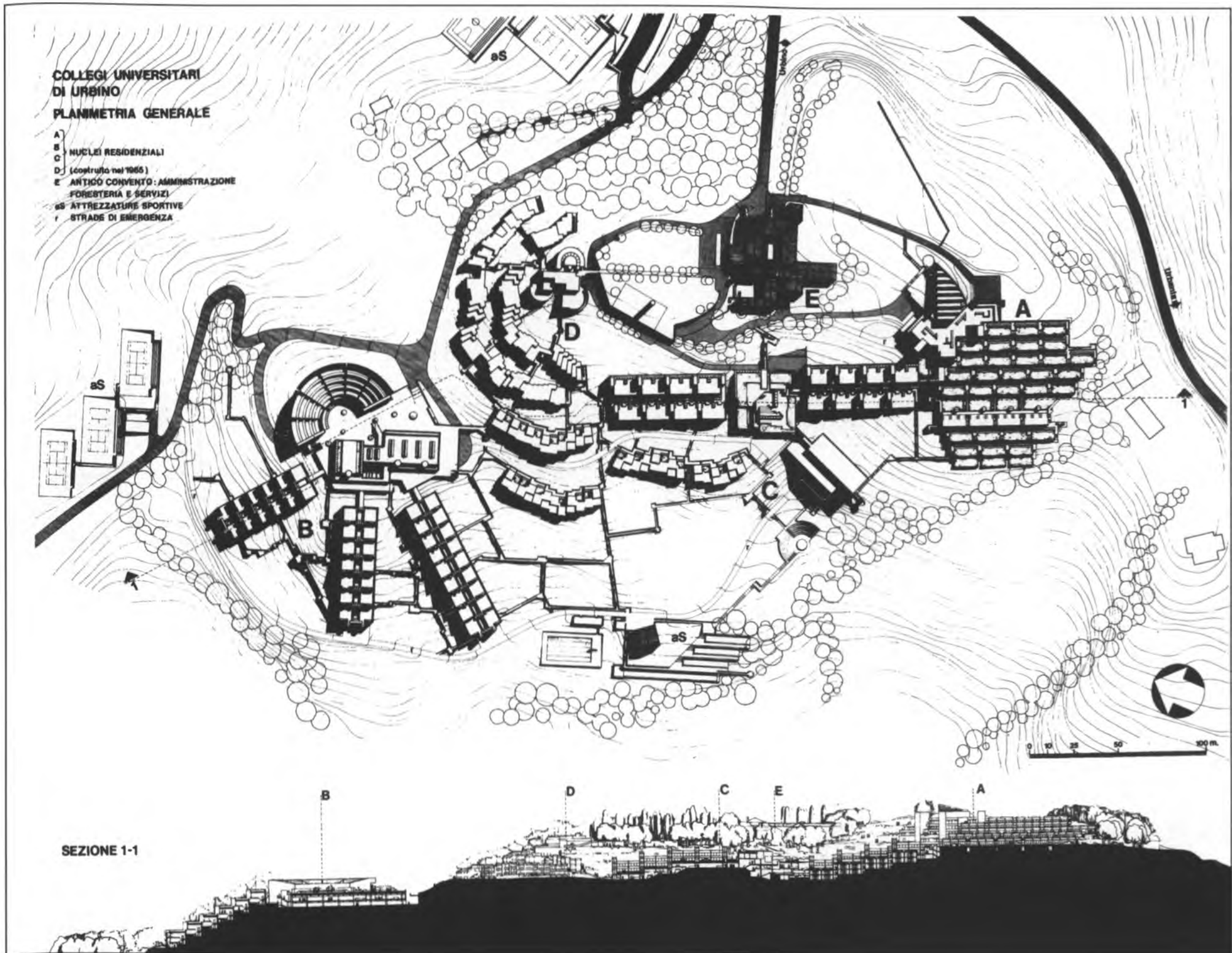


Fig. 1: Colle dei Cappuccini Development Site Plan. A: Collegio della Vela. B: Collegio del Trident. C: Collegio dell Colle. E: Cappuccini Monastery (now administrative building).



Fig. 2: Colle dei Cappuccini, aerial view. De Carlo has created a small city here, a miniature Urbino. Reasonably self-contained, it attempted to ease the pressure students put on housing available in the center for the indigenous population.

projects. Another example is the choice of color for the housing scheme in Mazzorbo. Traditionally, the local people painted the exterior of their houses with the paint they used for their boats and De Carlo sensibly wanted to follow this practice (fig. 3). Leaving the choice of colors to the tenants was considered but De Carlo took the view that tenants need to settle in the new place before they can make an informed choice on matters of this kind, particularly when the housing is meant for the overspill population from the adjacent island of Burano with a totally different tradition. He then convinced the users that the initial selection of colors should be left to the architect but he would explain the basis on which the choice was made. Without these seemingly compromised measures, one does wonder whether the end results could indeed be resignation and even inaction. But De Carlo is under no illusion about practising anarchism in an uncompromising way and modestly declared at a symposium following the award of the Gold Medal in London that in comparison to Colin Ward he is not a fully fledged anarchist. Nevertheless, he sees anarchism as a tendency and not a fixed state and he tries to contribute to it.

Undoubtedly, his distaste for authority, whether it arises in his own personal circumstances or in other architects' work or in society at large, is clear. This dislike is derived from the libertarian philosophy and in turn, its rejection of authority is not simply based on the notion of rebellion for the sake of it. But much soul-searching debate, formulations, counter-formulations and criticism have led to this firm conclusion. The starting point of most anarchists is the wonderful distinction between "government" and "society" Thomas Paine (1776) made: "Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness: the former promotes happiness positively by uniting our affections; the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher. Society in every state is a blessing; but government even in its best state is a necessary evil."

Libertarians are not naive romantics who simply believe that man by nature is good. They are much more realistic than that and as Gerrard Winstanley (1944) put it: "Every one that gets an authority into his hands tyrannises over others; as many husbands, parents, masters, magistrates, that live after the flesh do carry themselves as oppressing lords over such as are under them, not knowing that their wives, children, servants, subjects are their fellow creatures and hath an equal privilege to share them in the blessing of liberty."

But the libertarians proceed on the basis that in a continuously evolving world evil and error are inevitable, but the cure is not further oppression but a diffusion of light. Unlike Marxists, anarchists argue that the state must not be taken over by the proletariat but abolished and it is not surprising that Alexander Herzen (1944) prophetically suggested that communism in Russia was autocracy turned upside down.

The arguments against the state advanced by the libertarians are very sophisticated indeed. Martin Buber (1951) gives an indication of this when he suggests that all governments seek more power than is necessary for the simple administration of public good which leads to friction within a state and between states, which in turn forces the government to seek further political power. The political principle emerging from this process is infinitely stronger than the social principles required by a healthy community. The result is a continuous elimination of social spontaneity and alienation.³

One of the important contributions of De Carlo is to demonstrate how this elimination of social spontaneity has affected architecture and urbanism and what can be done about it. In a relatively unknown article (1987) called "Sviluppo della città fra razionalità e spontaneismo" ("Development of cities between rationality and spontaneity"), De Carlo suggests that the so-called rationality in city formation revealed by places like

Palmanova, Sabbioneta, E 42 in Rome, and Central Square in Toronto always lead to places that are authoritarian and hence lifeless; whereas responses to human exigencies and concrete matters like topography and land form revealed by the islands such as Burano, the principal Piazza in Capri, Piazza del Campo in Siena, Piazza delle Erbe in Verona and Piazza Centrale in Lucca, lead to urban spontaneity and hence a sense of place. Each one of these examples supplies urban nutrients to a maximum of surrounding territory with a minimum of physical development. Nearly all of them accept the spontaneity of ordinary life and undergo continuous transformation.

One often wonders how De Carlo can work tirelessly on projects like Bergamo Basso where he worked with local people against the University's authoritarian imposition of a vast educational development or at Terni (figs. 4 and 5) and Mazzorbo (fig. 3) with unrestrained participation of users in every area of decision making. The answer lies in the fact that he has a highly developed libertarian instinct that supports social spontaneity. Furthermore as Colin Ward (1991) put it: "If we want to weaken the state we must strengthen society, since the power of one is the weakness of the other."

De Carlo for his part resists authority wherever it raises its head — for instance the authoritarian outlook of the factory managers in his Terni project (RAMAN, 1978) and indeed the authoritarian and mob instincts of students and teachers during the 1968 student revolution (DE CARLO, 1968) — and does not refrain from criticizing it in other architects' work. In his writing he expressed discontent with Le Corbusier's authoritarian disposition and saw La Ville Radieuse as its manifestation. Even the Unité which he regarded as being clever in its formal resolution was ultimately authoritarian in its intent and made more so by the politicians.⁴

Libertarians as critics

Criticism of the architecture of the immediate past is a familiar activity of the avant-garde architects. But this sort of criticism often tends to be partial, directed mainly on the formal aspects and often in favor of the kind of architecture one personally likes. But the anarchist mode is much more incisive and demands an incessant criticism of the present state of any entity followed by a vision for an alternative as well as a description of the means of traversing from one to the other. Perhaps it is this that has helped De Carlo to be one of those rare critics who have managed to look at architecture, urbanism and society in a nested and interlocking way and to overcome the difficulty architects often have in going beyond the all too familiar slogans and in-language. Interestingly my own contact with De Carlo's work began as a direct consequence of his unique quality as a critic. When I was a student of architecture in India in the 1960s I had an English professor and like all English architects at that time, she was obsessed with Le Corbusier's work, which some of us as naive students questioned. She divided the year into "pro" and "ante" Corbusier groups and organized a debate. I found myself in the latter and my frantic search for materials criticizing Le Corbusier only yielded one work, which was De Carlo's 1959 essay on the condition of modern architecture (DE CARLO, 1960).

De Carlo is one of those architects who, because he has a practice, tends to be overlooked as a critic and because of his prolific writing is generally regarded more as a thinker than an architect. Perhaps because he is a practitioner and perhaps because he has absorbed the libertarian traditions of incisive criticism as a launching pad for alternative ideas, his writing transcends the petty-minded criticism familiar to us all and concentrates on making judgements — which indeed ought to be the aim of all criticism. Criticism as pointed dialogue is very



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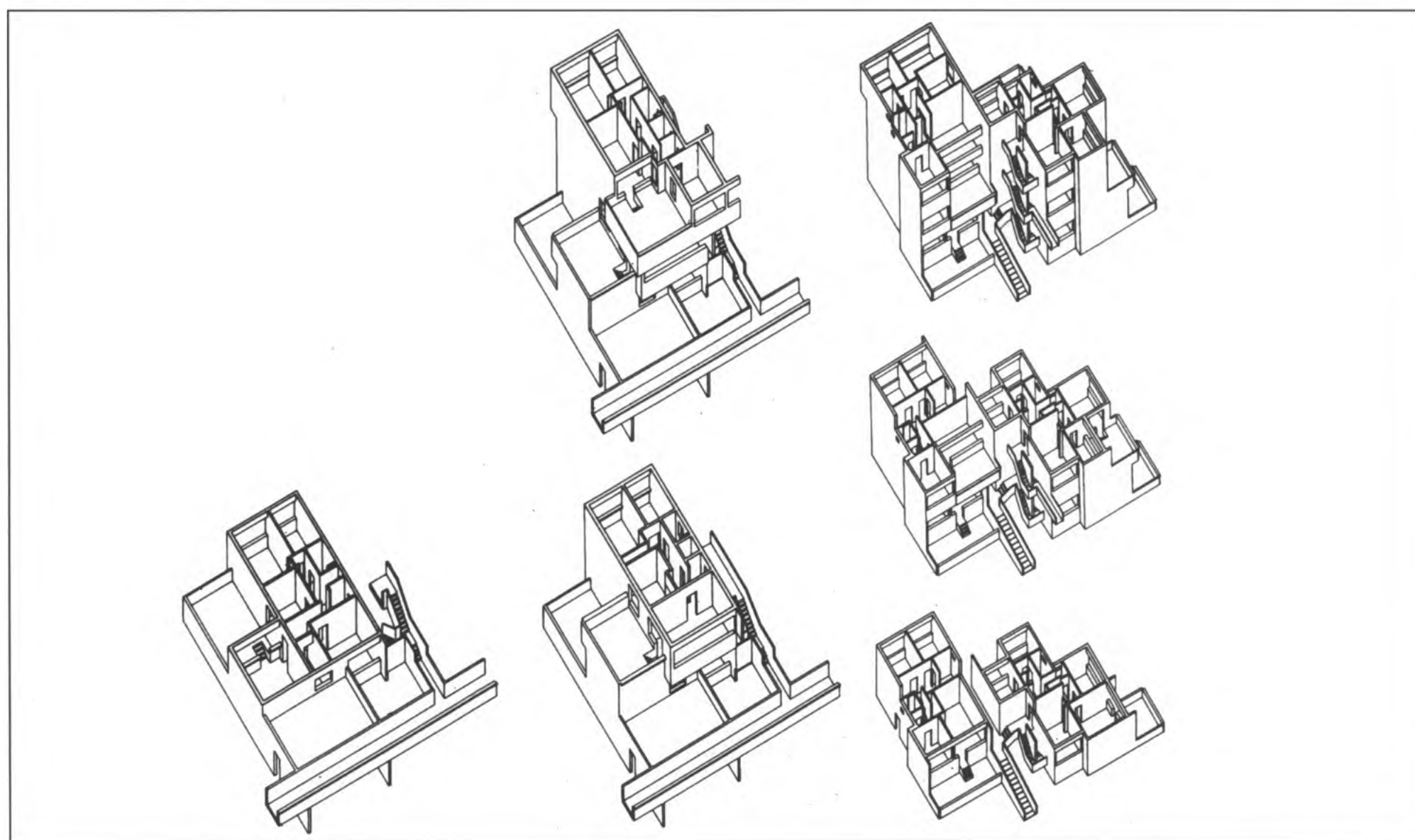
Fig. 3: Mazzorbo housing scheme.

Fig. 4: Axonometric of house types for Terni which involved the participation of workers at all levels of decision making.

Fig. 5: Housing at Terni.



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infrequent in architecture and Frank Lloyd Wright provided us with a rare example. As we know, he viewed the "Pavillon d'Esprit Nouveau" with a tree growing through the hole in the concrete slab as "nature quarantined" and in answer developed his Fallingwater as a sort of "naturalized terrace." In the second half of the century De Carlo seems to equal this. His Matera housing is a complete inversion of the Unité,⁵ Collegio dei Cappuccini is a rejection of the "object fixated" architecture of the 1960s that dominates everything including the landscape (fig. 6), Urbino Master Plan 1 which attempted an intelligent combination of conservation renewal and extension is the total opposite of comprehensive redevelopment (DE CARLO, 1966) and the Master Plan 2 is a rejection of the passive notion of green belt (DE CARLO, 1994b). Interestingly De Carlo's criticism of Le Corbusier is founded on a thorough familiarity as well as a degree of admiration for the Master's work. As early as 1945, De Carlo wrote an anthology of Le Corbusier's writing in which he systematically went through ideas on housing and the grand urban design projects. Perhaps in the following summary of De Carlo's views compiled by myself, the emphasis on making judgement as opposed to the commonplace activity of criticism as fault finding, that is to say negative judgement becomes clear: "No artist of our time has been discussed as much as Le Corbusier. On the one hand his doctrine has been elevated to that of a cult, proclaiming him to be above normal criticism and on the other, he has been bitterly accused of being superficial and incoherent and of presenting the problems of architecture in a muddled, philosophical, political and sociological way.

"In an effort to counter his highly expedient polemics, there is a tendency among writers today to concentrate on Le Corbusier as a man as opposed to him being a considerable artist and then to proceed to make an unfairly severe criticism of his philosophical and social outlook. This then enables his detractors to ignore completely the speculative and human value of his theoretical formulations. In the same breath, he is also accused of not relating his work to any theoretical position concerning architecture. All these contradictory views are probably inevitable in the confused state in which architecture finds itself and in the long run hopefully intentions of modern architecture will be clarified.

"However, many writers do seem to begin by presenting Le Corbusier's projects as roaring successes and him as the only protagonist of contemporary architecture. When the effect of the surprise caused by the novelty of his work has worn and the admiration for his spectacular presentations and the accompanying polemics recedes, the architectural world seems to feel that it has discovered the secrets of his originality and from then on starts accusing him of repeatedly dishing out a series of well tried and banal solutions.

"It is very important to recognize that the greatness of Le Corbusier rests in fact outside the polemics largely stirred up by himself. It indeed lies in his creations which are often animated by a fertile and poetic intention transcending any theoretical ideas; it lies in his tireless actions as a creative artist and a propagator of revolutionary ideas that are unrhetorical and unconventional."⁶

In spite of the slight overstatement, the judgement implied is largely correct, more so because it was made in 1945 and events since prove it to be so. The anthology points out the errors of the critics of Le Corbusier, the other architects who tried to follow him and indeed those of the great man himself. This habit of being constantly vigilant about the mistakes of the profession at large was to remain a theme of De Carlo throughout his career.

De Carlo's critique of Le Corbusier was analogous to that of William Godwin's of Rousseau. Both acknowledge their indebtedness to the two respective personalities they set out to

criticize, both praise the energy, the magnitude and originality of their speculations. But they also dare to point out the errors of these giants — De Carlo points out Le Corbusier's authoritarian instincts, his self-promotion and the adulterated language of aesthetics in which he expressed everything, and Godwin takes Rousseau to task for not valuing the child as a person. Both critiques are well formulated, intricate and represent a high level of intellectual endeavor.

In an era when architectural writing is so dominated by references to Theodor Adorno, Jurgen Habermas and Walter Benjamin, it is necessary to comment on the libertarian view of the so-called critical theory. As far as I know, De Carlo has not made any comments on this but as a subscriber to the anarchist tendency he would probably be sympathetic to the following sentiments.

The attempt of critical theory to rehabilitate "libertarian" aspects of Marxism is futile. In any case social philosophers of the anarchist persuasion such as Ivan Illich, Naom Chomsky and Murray Bookchin have shown that libertarian ideas can be explored without using Marxism as a crutch, that is to say they can be approached from the first principles as it were. Long before the term "critical theory" was coined, libertarians by instinct rejected positivism. It was therefore not surprising that De Carlo when he visited Edinburgh in 1974 was mocking some German architects' attempts at the CIAM Frankfurt conference in 1929 to design a perfect kitchen around the movements of a woman cooking an omelette.

Furthermore De Carlo would probably agree that Habermas, Adorno and Benjamin are perhaps more invoked than read critically in architectural circles, thus leading to more confusion than illumination. In any case much of the so-called critical theory in architecture comes across as being insufferably pedantic. The distinct feature of libertarian thought is a flux of never ending change rather than the dialectical forward movement of the Hegelians and Marxists which critical theory attempts to rescue. Libertarians argue for a world in which history loses all its rigidity in the interflow of balancing forces; they argue that contradictions are positive and see equilibrium as a dynamic condition in a world that changes constantly and never reaches the stillness of perfection because imperfection is the cause and consequence of everlasting movement. (Strangely, this is Hindu philosophy too. One will not be surprised to see that Giancarlo and Giuliana De Carlo agreed to publish in their journal *Spazio e Società* (no. 76, Oct./Dec. 1996) an article by myself on a very traditional Hindu temple built in London, probably because it used this philosophy to defend it). If one has to sum up the libertarian point of view in one sentence it will be: "revolution is accelerated evolution." And, how well this sentence sums up the work of De Carlo in Urbino!

On polemics

Given that an incessant critique of the present state of society at large is part of a libertarian outlook, a degree of polemics is inevitable. So, for example, we have Proudhon's (1840) catchword of the 19th century that "property is theft." His boldness of expression was intended to present a shocking message and as he explained later on: "If I were asked the question what is slavery? and I should answer in one word, 'Murder!', my meaning would be understood at once. No further arguments would be needed to show that the power to take from a man his thought, his will, his personality, is a power of life and death, and to enslave a man is to kill him. Why, then, to this other question: 'What is property?' may I not answer 'Theft?'" He then goes on to explain how property supports the acquisition of power and leads to unjust authority and concludes by rejecting the notion of non-working proprietors.

Of course we have analogous instances of polemical pro-



Fig. 6: A view of Cappuccini Collegio built in the 1960s showing how the building embraces the surrounding landscape as opposed to dominating it.

nouncements in architecture being deployed as a form of shorthand for reasonably considered ideas. Adolf Loos, an architect much respected by De Carlo, came up with the slogan that "ornament is crime." Again the short-term intention was to impart a shocking realization in his audience but Loos went on to explain how in the late 19th and the early 20th century architecture as applied decoration was getting out of hand and that it is incompatible with the innate elegance of industrial objects.

Quieter libertarians like Kropotkin became wary of facile slogans but nevertheless retained the polemic content of their formulations and De Carlo belongs to this stream of anarchists. Undoubtedly polemic is at the center of nearly everything De Carlo has done but let me hasten to add that the word "polemic" should be understood to mean "vigorous disputation of errors" and not withstanding Loos, it has very little to do with "slogans" that architects, particularly in the 20th century, often advance in favor of certain kinds of architecture. All of De Carlo's works in whatever form — be they housing, school buildings, student residences, re-using old buildings, or conceptual formulations like the relation between the city and the university, the relation between town and country, or volumes of essays dealing with issues that become fashionable among architects such as for example morality, typology, eclecticism and so on — have the same object: to impart a point of view on those at the receiving end. They are often about some limited topic such as say expressionism in architecture, Le Corbusier's ideas, or the university and the city, but in any case about an issue over which he feels that it is wrong not to take sides. Any intellectual who is polemical, having chosen what side to be on, uses his or her work for strengthening support for that side. Most critics of De Carlo either fail to unearth the polemical content of his work or, because they do not understand it, take the view that it is unimportant. My own feeling is that recognizing De Carlo's polemical stance will enable us to overcome the following paradox: his work, often incomplete and even abandoned after the initial stages (for example Housing at Terni, College of Art in Urbino and the Master Plan for Rimini), contrives to be so valuable and interesting. In Urbino disagreements with the local authority created a degree of friction which was eventually resolved and in 1994 De Carlo was invited to put forward the second master plan; in Terni argument with managers of the steel factory meant that the second phase of a far-reaching scheme for the workers' housing never went ahead and in Siena quarrels with politicians led to the resignation of De Carlo as an architect for the San Miniato project in Siena. Yet, De Carlo matters, for as an architect and urbanist who pushes the frontiers of his craft he is nothing less than magnificent. He possesses all the virtues a polemical intellectual needs — energy, incisiveness, clarity, urgency and humor.

An unprejudiced analysis of the polemical content of De Carlo's projects and writings will also enable us to avoid the error some close Italian friends and ex-colleagues of his commit, namely referring everything back to what they regard as his abrasive character. A man who has toiled all his life for the cause of professionalism and high quality in architecture and urban design is entitled to have his opinions criticized at the level of opinions, no matter how many uncomfortable anecdotes from his former assistants and friends we can remember.

There are a number of De Carlo's beliefs that are invariably dismissed in the Anglo-Saxon world as pseudo-political to which the Latins are prone and strangely enough in Italy too as products of a personal situation or mere reflexes hardly to be regarded as suggestive of ideas. This is simply wrong. Not only are his socio-political convictions genuine but they also contribute considerably to the freshness in form and content of his architecture. For those who care to find out there is a great

deal of inspiring thought in De Carlo's polemical stance; take, for instance, his wish to identify with the underprivileged, be they workers in relation to managers, students instead of administrators and faculty, citizens as opposed to politicians and indeed users as opposed to clients.

This feeling for the underprivileged is traceable to earlier events in his life. A year in Greece with the Italian Navy in 1942 had instilled in him the hatred of oppression. He speaks with great feeling of how the Greek people coped with the Fascist occupation and accompanying violence with considerable dignity. At the same time, he recalls how the ordinary Italian soldiers as opposed to the officers were kind to the Greeks and in fact to this day the older generation of Greeks speak of this special relation with great fondness. De Carlo says that the only way to keep away from the violence of occupation was to be involved in the maintenance of the ship's engine which in addition helped to preserve his own dignity and personal competence. Listening to De Carlo's description of this experience, one is reminded of George Orwell's heartfelt views. Returning to England after serving five years in the Indian Imperial Police, Orwell (1937) wrote: "I had reduced everything to the simple theory that the oppressed are always right and the oppressor always wrong, a mistaken theory but a natural result of being one of the oppressors yourself. I felt that I had got to escape not merely from imperialism but every form of man's domination over man." The emotional identification of De Carlo with the underprivileged has this Orwellian fervor and we know that he has carried this to lengths which no other architect has done, not even Ralph Erskine or Lucien Kroll. To many of us who live in the English-speaking world this might come across as professional naïveté. That immediate superficial impression is dispelled if one follows his arguments in favor of re-introducing people as clients of design, the often grim, realistic and bleak explanations of the difficulties involved in doing so, and the energy and imagination needed for overcoming these difficulties. This is what persuades us to consider his ideas as ideas and arguments as arguments rather than give them names of one movement or other and dismiss them.

William Morris and the libertarians

One of the earliest in the wide-ranging publications of De Carlo is a book on William Morris written in 1947. In it he identifies the key conceptions of the moral obligations of the artist to society of which he is a part and the need for the infusion of ethics with aesthetics. It is easy to think of architects who had a sympathy for this point of view but difficult to find those who have consistently manifested it in their work.⁷

No one will describe William Morris as an anarchist in the strict sense of the term. But as George Woodcock (1963) points out, his *News from Nowhere* is very close to the three-century old dream of libertarians. Morris and the anarchists shared the contempt for devious shifts and compromises of politics. De Carlo loathes those architects who join political parties and get absorbed by their suspicious and expedient compromises in the interest of short-term gains. He wrote in a letter (26 December, 1976) in response to my suggestion that he is one of the least acknowledged architects: "Am I acknowledged? Not very much, especially in Italy where architects who carry out a miserable professional practice by joining the political parties or being labelled as post-modernists or by getting steadily rooted in the academia. They do not like me at all. Since I have been maintaining that I despise them all, their need for ignoring me seems normal ..." Furthermore he is uncompromisingly critical of Le Corbusier's approach to Mussolini for commissions.

The central thesis of anarchists that freedom cultivates sociability, and public opinion can effectively counter the anti-social individual, also finds expression in Morris' thought.

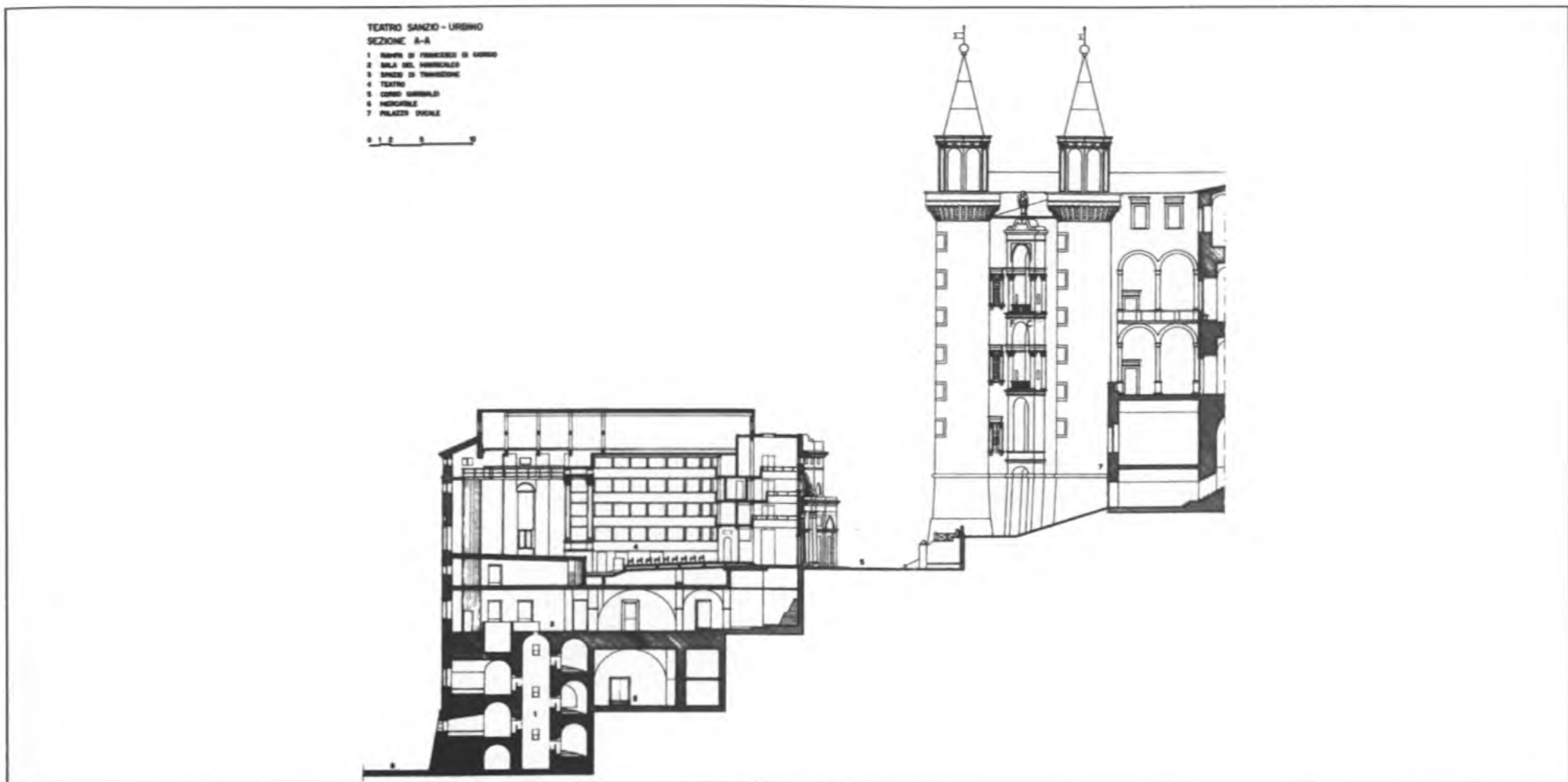


Fig. 7: Section through Teatro Sanzio showing visual connection between floors in the foyer.

Those who know De Carlo's views on contemporary architecture will not be surprised by his observation (1947) that in Morris' work lies the fundamental premise of the modern movement. He is particularly impressed with the idea that art suffers the same illnesses as society and that in order to create a living art, first of all we need to interest people in art and hence the moral obligation of artists to society. Just as we cannot conceive liberty or education as the privilege of the few, art too cannot be exclusive. Here is the starting point of De Carlo's ideas on participation. Also, Morris' view that art should be infused with ethics is at the center of his critique of modernism which he felt was devoid of any spirit as it became dominated by slogans and ideas that can only be described as "look-at" architectural theories. De Carlo eulogizes the idea of the Arts and Crafts school and Morris' habit of working there, creating and producing with his own hands furniture and other household artefacts and in the process studying new methods of improving craftsmanship.

The earliest of De Carlo's work in Urbino, the central administration building, a converted and restructured building (it was indeed the first home of the Duke of Montefeltro) is in many ways a homage to William Morris' thoughts. It not only followed the suggestions of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for restoring old buildings closely but also used a great deal of the local construction and craft skills. Perhaps in Morris' notion of learning by doing, practicing what you preach and teaching what you practice lies the principle of the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design directed by De Carlo. Morris' faith in the master craftsmen as opposed to intellectuals must also have had a lasting influence and I have personally observed De Carlo's good rapport with the builders who actually carry out the work on site which eventually paid rich dividends in terms of the quality of the completed projects. The restoration and restructuring of Teatro Sanzio in Urbino is a case in point. The 19th-century architect of the theater, Vincenzo Ghinelli, was competent but provincial in outlook. The foyer he provided for the theater meant for lyric opera was mean to say the least, and no doubt the constricting site limited the possibilities. De Carlo's solution was to allow for

a degree of overlap at first floor level between the theater foyer and the student refectory conceived in the adjacent Orto del Abbondanza (in fact the former ducal stables) and provide at least a feeling of generosity by the use of visual interconnections between floors. The refectory project was indefinitely postponed and opening the floors was the only recourse. On completion De Carlo felt that a roof light would not only enhance the feeling of spaciousness but also open up the views to the famous turrets of the ducal palace (figs. 7 and 8). I personally witnessed De Carlo charmingly persuading the foreman to undertake this work at a very late stage.



Fig. 8: Foyer of the Theater. Interior of the theater was restored, the building was structurally strengthened and the foyer modified considerably to provide a feeling of generosity and to take advantage of the possibility of views of the turrets of the Ducal Palace in front.

Utopia and the libertarians

We should remember that of all artists and architects who frequented Urbino, De Carlo developed a particular affection for Francesco di Giorgio, Luciano Laurana and Piero della Francesca, the three most practical of Renaissance personalities. Unlike so many of their contemporaries these three artists were not that concerned with theoretical exercises like Ideal Cities.

Such dreams are an anathema to most anarchists because they are seen as rigid mental constructs which, when imposed on the real world, prove to be stultifying. Moreover, they represent a kind of perfection and to the libertarians anything perfect has automatically ceased growing and developing. In his lecture on architecture of participation at the Australian Institute of Architects in Melbourne in 1972, De Carlo implies that the mono-centric vision propelled by the rediscovery of perspective produced paintings like the Ideal City. They in turn led to the elimination of the presence of human beings in architecture and towns such as Palmanova based on ideal geometry never became a living urban setting.

Nevertheless, Morris' idealist vision is shared by De Carlo as well as other anarchists. The general distrust of utopian thinking did not prevent them from embracing the idea of communal distribution of resources advocated by Thomas More's original Utopia and Charles Fourier's ideas on how to induce people to work for passion rather than profit. In fact De Carlo often makes references to Fourier in his lectures and writing. The extraordinary mixture of fantasy and persuasive social reasoning in works of this kind cannot possibly be dismissed out of hand. De Carlo (1971) argues that "Utopia, like many other misused terms, has a contradictory and ambivalent sense. Utopia is taken to mean a situation supplied like opium, corresponding to something outside reality and presented as the image of something we do not want and therefore cannot achieve. But Utopia can also mean a stimulant. It is then part of reality and supplies the image of what could and should be achieved, destroying the obstacles which handicap reality." Tolstoy (1900) put it slightly differently and perhaps more eloquently when he said: "The details of the new order of life cannot be known to us. We must shape them ourselves. Life consists solely in the search for the unknown and in our work of harmonising our actions with the new truth."

If one does not want to be dogmatic and at the same time preserve our ability to discriminate, worthwhile ideas have to be accepted after a critical appraisal regardless of their source. In this connection a touching obituary De Carlo (1994a) wrote on Charles Moore in *Spazio e Società* is rather revealing: "We ... published many projects and writings by Charles Moore — and some people found it strange, as they defined him as a post-modernist and so inherently not interesting to us. They were wrong, of course. Beside the fact that we are interested in talent wherever it happens to be, we felt that Charles Moore was very close to our position. We appreciated his cultivated and comprehensive refinement, his ability to create a sense of place out of the sequence of rigorous spaces which he designed, and especially his constant concern to promote the involvement of social groups with and for whom he was designing. Few observers have dwelt on this aspect of his work, which is evident not only in his public buildings in California, but also in his books which are richly imaginative and embody a passion for civic values in the libertarian vein of the great American tradition." The title of the series of obituaries in which this appeared was called "Growing Solitude."

Direct action

As far as libertarians are concerned Utopia should always be

dissected and its true content thoroughly examined. Furthermore as Colin Ward (1991) put it "the fact that there is no route map to Utopia does not mean that there are no routes to more accessible destinations." These sentiments are shared by all libertarians and it enables them to put their utmost faith in direct action. Right from the early stages of his career and in fact even before he became an architect, De Carlo was involved in direct action of one kind or another. I have already mentioned the pacifist way of countering the horrors of occupation in Greece. Like so many courageous people forced to take up arms against evil, De Carlo is reticent about his partisan activities during the Fascist period in Italy. But an issue of the Italian architectural journal *Parametro* in 1975, dedicated to his wartime anarchist colleague and architect Giuseppe Pagano, amply illustrates the extent to which he went in taking direct action against the Fascist army.⁸

The major participatory works like Terni, Mazzorbo and Bergamo Basso are projects which assert this notion of direct engagement. Colin Ward recently gave the following example: "Last August in the Piazza della Repubblica in Urbino, I saw an old man threading his way through café tables to greet him. He was a veteran of anti-fascism, the first post-war mayor of the city. Ten minutes later, Giancarlo was off to the municipal offices to complain to the current mayor, Massimo Galuzzi, of the democratic party of the Left, about the newest affront, 'musak,' or amplified music to the freedom of the square. He is an architect of civic engagement."⁹ When De Carlo takes up the cause of ordinary citizens against the authoritarian powers as he did in Bergamo Basso or Terni, his explanations remind one of Patrick Geddes' view (quoted by BOARDMAN, 1978) on direct involvement: "Socialism implied that until everything and everybody is ready for the millennium, nothing can be got really ready at all. Whereas co-operation does the daily duties which lie nearest, refuses no bird in the hand today for the sake of two in the bush tomorrow, and thus, not only lives and grows, but daily strengthens towards larger tasks, since, in fact, getting a bird into the hand today is the best practice for getting two out of the bush tomorrow." This seemingly idiosyncratic analogy hides a profound wisdom which is reflected in De Carlo's (1972) thoughts when he speaks about the importance of approaching larger projects, if they are inevitable, as though they are composed of smaller ones and the relevance of direct involvement.

Architects and urbanists as intellectuals

Concerns of libertarians are of course deeply intellectual as well as practical. Interestingly it was Antonio Gramsci,¹⁰ another Italian, who provided the most rigorous analyses of the nature and role of intellectuals in society. He went beyond the conventional definition of an intellectual being a person engaged in thought-based activity as opposed to action-based activity. Gramsci argued that such distinctions are artificial and in fact all men are intellectuals although not all may have exercised or wished to exercise their function as intellectuals in a community. In any occupational group those who aim to fulfil the need for social, cultural and political elaboration of its tasks are intellectuals. Thus personalities like Bertrand Russell, Naom Chomsky, Umberto Eco, Ivan Illich, Salmon Rushdie, Edward Said, Vaclav Havel and Günter Grass come from a wide range of occupational groups. Very few architects in this century can claim to be intellectuals of this caliber and De Carlo perhaps is a rare exception.¹¹ Even the political outlook of say Frank Lloyd Wright remained rather naïve and undeveloped and that of Le Corbusier oscillated in an opportunistic way between socialism and sympathy for Fascist dictatorship. The apolitical socialism of Aalto was certainly important, but he

was by nature a reticent man; while his humanism can be felt in his work, it was nevertheless difficult to fathom how his broader outlook on society fashioned his architecture.

In many ways one can understand architects' disengagement with matters concerning society at large. Plutarch once wrote "men who love to build are their own undoers and need no other enemies." To build to live is not the easiest thing in the world and it hardly leaves time or energy to be concerned with other cultural and social matters. Somehow or other De Carlo managed to preserve a Chomskian fervor not only for his discipline of architecture and urbanism but a critical outlook on the cultural developments of his time. Perhaps this is what makes him such a comprehensive professional. He is an inspiring teacher and sharp but polite critic. He is the author of exemplary development plans for Urbino (in fact two with a span of some 30 years between them), Rimini, Plovdiv in Bulgaria (competition project), Pistoia and Lastra Signa. His plan for Urbino when it was first published was hailed by the *Architectural Review* and *Architectural Forum* as model plans for all historic centres.¹² His architectural contributions at Urbino include a number of buildings of exceptional quality and one or two highly sensitive conversions and extensions. His views expressed in a book written in 1968 after the student revolution, in his essay on why and how to build school buildings for the *Harvard Educational Review* (no. 4, 1969) and in his plan for Pavia University (DE CARLO, 1976) are some of the most persuasive and far-reaching. His housing scheme for the steel workers at Terni (RAMAN, 1978) and the residents of Mazzorbo (ZUCCHI, 1992) in the Venetian lagoon involving user participation in design are unique.

And, yet, both in his country and to a lesser extent abroad, De Carlo is one of the least acknowledged architects. In fact, in Britain, with the exception of a few recent articles and a mention of one or two of his buildings one cannot recall any attempts to analyze the importance of works and writings. All credit to the younger generation, the one and only book on De Carlo in English is based on a student dissertation and everyone knows that the Royal Institute of British Architects Gold Medal came to him in a belated manner. There are many reasons why De Carlo's contribution has been underestimated. His thinking is at once persuasive and clear in a practical sense, and extremely sophisticated in a theoretical or philosophical sense. His buildings are widely visited and his lectures are well attended and appreciated by students and practitioners, so he must obviously strike a chord amongst them. On the other hand, those few academics and critics who have written about his works interpret them in widely varying ways which suggests that from a theoretical point of view his thinking must come across as being obscure. The reason for this contrary reaction is that De Carlo has attempted to look at architecture and urbanism in all their multifarious contexts, instead of confining his field of reflection on how to design interesting buildings. Insofar as his material is recognizable and familiar to practitioners, they find his thinking easy to follow; but critics and academics find the same material rather opaque when explained in all its historical, political and social contexts. De Carlo's thinking, however, is far from opaque since, intellectually speaking, it reflects the complexity of the subject with which he is dealing.

Another reason why architectural journals have not published his works extensively arises out of the cult image projected by CIAM and Team Ten members; this has often led to a number of misunderstandings culminating in an indiscriminate dismissal of the entire group as being *passé* and a spent force. But the most important reason why De Carlo has been neglected is that few architectural critics can judge with any certainty his at once complex and realistic ways of approaching a multitude of topics. Nearly all his works are attempts to

grasp architecture and urbanism as a whole, to consider their many facets in their dynamic relation and yet have a practical as well as an intellectual view of all key issues concerning the environment. De Carlo owes a great deal of this to his libertarian outlook. But the greatest difficulty with such an integrated view is to get going after and in spite of thinkers like Kropotkin, Geddes and the Goodman brothers. Their insights have been generally admitted to be, potentially, immensely important — and this feeling is growing ever stronger and more widespread, and, yet, those who try to follow their ideals never re-emerge as practitioners.¹³ Giancarlo De Carlo is an exception and an intensely significant one.

As I have already mentioned, the libertarians never exclude subjective reading of any phenomena as they believe that they provide a point of departure for the voices of creative dissent. Historians often show impatience with De Carlo's subjective reading of history. For example, they get irritated when he argues that perhaps the elimination of people as the subject of architecture began with the monocentric vision perpetuated by the rediscovery of perspective during the Renaissance. They become cynical when he cites a letter between Bramante and Francesco di Giorgio, the latter asking the former for permission to continue the work at San Bernardino in Urbino (begun by the former) as the ethical high point in the profession or Le Corbusier's letter to Mussolini as the ethical low point. They find it scandalous when he wonders whether Laurana derived the idea for the Ducal Palace turrets in Urbino from the Islamic minarets familiar to him in Dalmatia or when he argues that the Ducal Palace is an architecture of intelligent deception as it deliberately presents the back as the front to mislead attackers. While the concern of academics that this sort of reading can promote myths is understandable, distinguished scholars such as Wittkower have recognized the potency of such reading for the professional designer.¹⁴ After all, while being instinctive in his reading of the past, De Carlo is also critical of myth makers and is willing to subject his ideas for critical scrutiny by others. At the same time De Carlo is certainly impatient of the sluggishness of academia but perhaps more importantly he has been critical of practitioners who show academic tendencies including those who belong to CIAM and Team Ten. In many conversations I have heard De Carlo express concerns about his colleagues in Team Ten for being academic but it is without malice as people like De Carlo are good listeners. One can imagine De Carlo becoming frustrated with, for example, Smithson describing the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino or the Santa Maria della Scala hospital in Siena as being conglomerate architecture¹⁵ but after a searching debate being convinced of what in effect is a poetic way of describing buildings of this kind. Libertarians could never accept the non-intellectualism implied in Rousseau's cult of the simple peasant or the noble savage. When we encountered De Carlo, Aldo van Eyck and Ralph Erskine on the same platform in Perth in Scotland in 1993, what showed through was De Carlo's intellect and this, in spite of van Eyck's sensibilities and Erskine's prodigious design talent. Perhaps his libertarian lineage has provided him with a loftier vision than a purely professional outlook can supply.

I have certainly been observing De Carlo's progress since my student days in India and truly he has always been ahead of other architects including his colleagues in CIAM and Team Ten in many areas of professional engagement — for example, housing, urban design, safeguarding urban and architectural heritage through thoughtful re-use and reconciling mutually antagonistic concerns such as the city and the countryside, architecture and landscape, architecture and urbanism, and the city and the university. What is more, he has been urging them to catch up. This certainly baffles journalists, academics and the entrepreneurial architects who can become antagonistic towards him.

Undoubtedly, the origin of De Carlo's ideas on participation lies in anarchism but unlike the paternalism implicit in so many examples of community based architecture (even Erskine's Byker verges on it) the anarchist view of participation is deeply intellectual. No wonder therefore De Carlo traces the elimination of human beings as subjects of architecture to the Renaissance. His juxtaposition of the Renaissance painting of the Ideal City with a total absence of human presence and Lorenzetti's Good Government filled with people from every walk of life taking possession of what appears to be a lively architecture seems to make the point. Indeed Kropotkin wove an analogous verbal picture of the achievements of medieval free city-states.

There is a convergence opinion among scholars in many fields¹⁶ that progression of ideas in any intellectual endeavor is achieved as a result of directing our attention to anomalies and contradictions in the ordinary conduct of our professional activity which often leads to a crisis of sorts. De Carlo to some extent shares this view and when he was asked who are the most important architects of the last 50 years and why, De Carlo (1971) answered "Le Corbusier and Adolf Loos: both in different ways began a crisis of irreparable value to architecture ...". He also went on to say that personalities are less important than ideas. There is no doubt that libertarians believe that precipitation of a crisis out of the contradictions of status quo in any field, in order to offer alternative lines of attack, is the role of intellectuals.

De Carlo's career amply illustrates this process. In Britain there is a tendency for architects to leave planning to the planners. In fact James Stirling in his lecture on approach to architecture at the RIBA said that he gave up the study of planning because he realized that planning decisions tended to be political decisions. Planners throughout Europe have maintained that physical environment is less important than social and economic well-being. De Carlo sees a great deal of contradiction in all this and deriving inspiration from Berlage, Wright, Le Corbusier and Aalto argues that physicality of the city is very important. Disinterest of architects in socio-political issues of urbanism and the planners' undervaluing of physical characteristics of cities combined to produce "zoning" as a tool for ordering our environment. De Carlo suggests that the people who invented zoning as a method of planning saw the city in terms of controlling the cost of buildable land and eventually organizing the services in an efficient way (DE CARLO, 1987). Quite interestingly Lucien Kroll calls this mode of basing the city form on infrastructure layout as "sewerage urbanism."

The end result of all this is the familiar view that problems of planning and that of projects are only tenuously connected activities. De Carlo's development plan for Urbino was crucial in the evolution of 20th-century ideas on urban design because it used the contradictions implied in the emergent view in the profession and gave central importance to the morphology of the city. The salient planning issues were then strictly translated into architectural programs. Thus the plan and the projects were interrelated in terms of space and sequence as an expression of one process: that of giving form to the city and its territory.

De Carlo also sees contradiction in the so-called comprehensive redevelopment of cities in which universities throughout Europe played a major role. De Carlo argued that a great deal of education need not take place in purpose-built buildings at all and hence universities should use empty old buildings, leave the housing stock in the center for the indigenous population, and build residences for students in the outskirts because they are or can be more mobile than families with children.

On the housing front, De Carlo saw potential problems in the paternalistic view of giving users what they want in the name of

so-called community architecture, and devised a process to involve the citizens in every aspect of decision making which produced the seminal projects at Terni (figs. 4 and 5) and Mazzorbo (fig. 3).

Even in a project for the offices of an international corporation, De Carlo resists the architect's propensity towards fashionable ideas that eventually turn out to be straightjackets. In his project for British Petroleum, De Carlo eschewed the conventional cellular office layout and the fashionable landscaped offices, arguing that the former perpetuated poor communications, whereas the latter created, in the minds of office workers, a feeling of being watched permanently. He proposed instead an open-ended terraced building with split level floors linked by generous stairs which also act as light wells and an internal court on top of the two central floors. Although the building is 48 m deep, none of the offices rely on artificial light entirely (fig. 9). Examples of De Carlo's attempts to derive fresh solutions from the inherent contradictions in the professional intent of architects can indeed be multiplied and, more importantly than the merits of specific designs, they generate invaluable new lines of thought. But the lesson De Carlo offers us is that it is possible to be radical as well as sensible.

The libertarian outlook on history

As suggested earlier, Charles Jencks is not alone in mistaking the libertarian outlook of De Carlo with a revisionist tendency and indeed conservatism. Marxists have held for a long time that anarchists are reactionaries mainly because they never stop looking back to history to examine whether societies or groups have operated in an environment of cooperation as opposed to competition or oppression. In this respect Kropotkin (1902) provides an excellent account of the achievements of the free cities of Europe in the Middle Ages. One may indeed accuse Kropotkin of being biased as he underestimates the extent to which custom had a stranglehold on these sorts of societies. But this is no reason for accusing anarchists of revisionism as their intention is to derive some generalities among all non-authoritarian societies. It is something to do with looking back in order to move forward, as opposed to standing still or even regressing. Furthermore, as Ivan Illich (1981) put it: "As a historian, I am very suspicious of anything which pretends to be totally new. If I cannot find precedents for an idea, I immediately suspect that it is a foolish one. If I cannot find anyone in the past with whom I am acquainted, and in my fancy can discuss with him what surprises me, I feel very lonely, a prisoner of my own present-day and parochial horizon."

It is interesting to read today De Carlo's talk on the situation of contemporary architecture at the CIAM 1959 Conference at Otterloo (DE CARLO, 1960). De Carlo takes stock of developments in 20th-century architecture and identifies two opposed but co-existing tendencies among architects: "The first might be described as the radical-historical-objectivity approach. An approach which accepted the new economic and social reality of the day and assumed that the very essence of architecture had to be revised so that it could participate as a progressive force of change in the new reality. The second approach assumed a subjective and unhistorical position, refused to participate directly in reality, proposed absolute alternatives and was determined not to contaminate itself by contact with the new circumstances. In the first approach the changes in contemporary society were regarded objectively, and an attempt was made to radically revise architecture and its association with society. The second approach accepted these changes only insofar as they provided an opportunity for lyrical renewal to an architecture whose substance did not change at all. Of the other tasks the second movement remained unconcerned, an attitude not basically different from

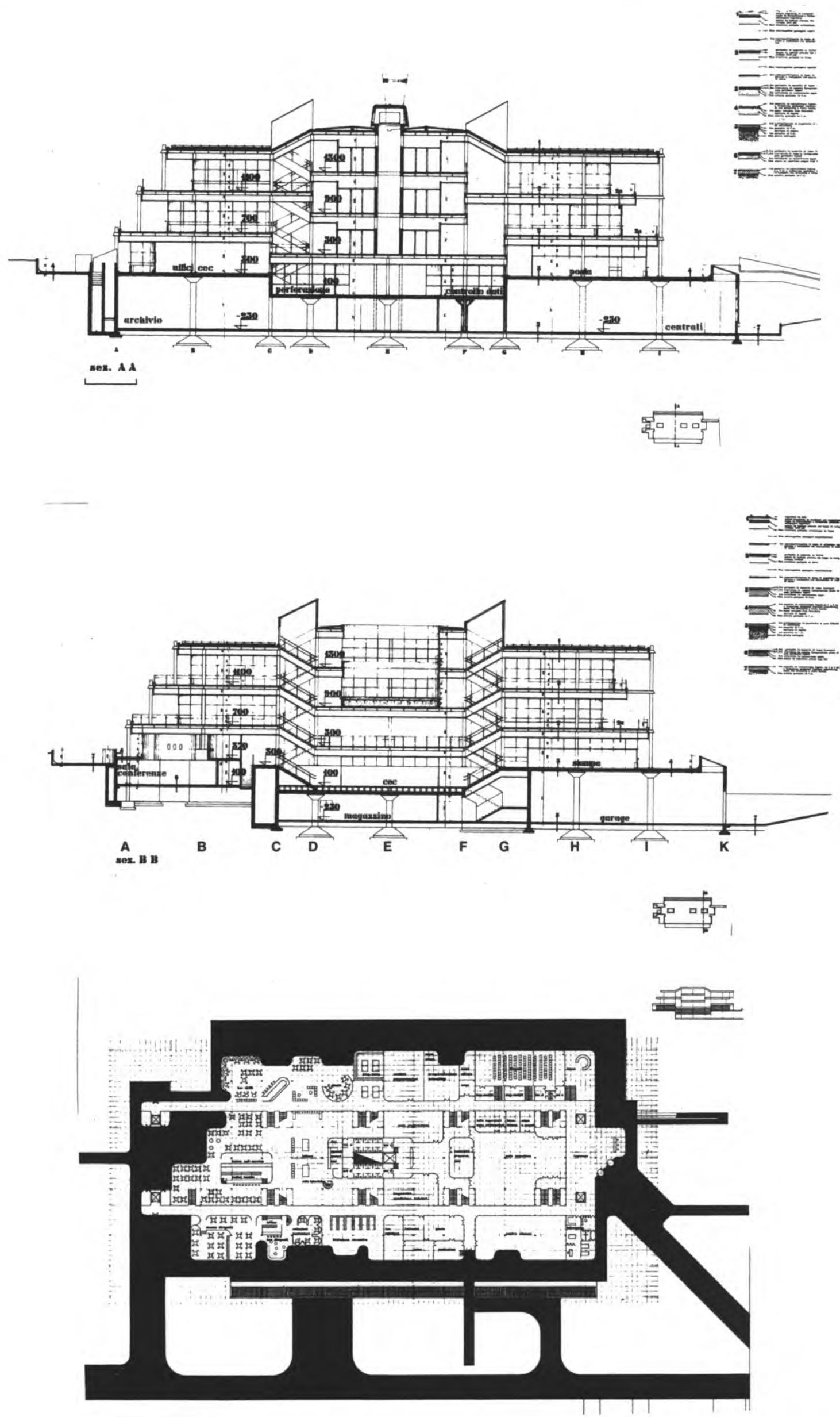


Fig. 9: Offices for British Petroleum in Milan (1968-1970) advances the view that we need not take the polarized position of either open plan landscaped offices or cellular offices but combine the two more creatively.

the romantic idea of 'l'art pour l'art.'

"Some of the present retrogression is due to the radicalism of the first approach, but far more is a result of the attitudes of the second which, being less revolutionary and more inclined to conciliation, found an easier way to melt and spread." Broadly, De Carlo links the first approach with the Arts and Crafts, the Chicago School (F.L. Wright and Sullivan), the Middle-Europe proto-rationalism (Berlage, Behrens), Adolf Loos and German rationalism of the first post-war period, and the second with the Art Nouveau, the Viennese Secession, all the European avant-garde trends of the 1920s, futurism, expressionism, neo-plasticism, etc., and the purism of Le Corbusier. De Carlo then goes on to say: "... for the first approach the renewal arose from the need to work out ways of action applicable to the new problems of modern society: the language resulted from the use of such ways and was more or less significant depending on the degree of objectivity of the research means and ways of action. The ensuing danger was that of diverting architecture to other levels than that of art — to cause it to be no longer an art — but this danger was considered from the outset since the aim was that of raising to a consistent quality level the whole range of architectural production, from articles of everyday use to town-planning. Results were valued according to their power to fulfil their civil task. Thus only when the intensity of the civil contribution reached something more than objective accuracy and became a synthetic representation of an experience of reality, would it be possible to judge it in terms of artistic value — an artistic value, however, based on an idea of architecture which was quite different from the outworn one of the past.

"For the second approach on the contrary, the expressive quality of language proceeded from an assumed subjective insight into each situation, and was in itself an all-solving power. Results here were valued according to their expressive power, and since expression referred to an aesthetic standard set in advance without any objective links with reality, the only criterion was that of taste. Taste, in fact, implied renouncing and checking all impulses that did not agree with the stylisation principle. Therefore instead of promoting a deeper understanding of the matter to which it was applied, it was prevented from going beyond its more obvious appearances." Here one sees the libertarian tradition of looking back in order to move forward, as well as incessant criticism of the present state. At a later stage in the Conference, De Carlo presented his housing scheme at Matera which indeed is a modest representation of what alternative stance architecture could take.

By all accounts, De Carlo's position might be described in Jacob Bronowski's (1972) terms, as "rational non-conformity" — that is to say, a clearly expressed and open disagreement with the current trends of hero worship, conceptual dogmatism and a tendency to express everything in an adulterated language of aesthetics. Now, in every field except architecture, non-conformity of this kind, which is rational, is accepted as a means of effecting conceptual shifts. For example, Bronowski in his life of William Blake notes that mining engineers, the textile inventors, the potters, the instrument makers, the iron-masters, were nearly all dissenters. Most of Blake's fellow artists were dissenters. One can indeed identify similar groups in the 19th and 20th centuries too. Either because architecture collaborates a great deal with the establishment or because of its pretensions, it only recognizes the so-called avant-garde or the eccentric but not the rational dissenters, the difference between the two being the former have no obligation to explain their reasons for dissent. Ask why architects like William Lethaby, Hans Scharoun, Laurie Baker, Walter Segal, John Turner and David Lea and planners like Patrick Geddes, the brothers Paul and Percival Goodman and Robert Goodman, got less recognition than so many other lesser professionals,

and the point becomes amply clear.

Fortunately for us De Carlo had sufficient wit to flourish under the kind of neglect meted out to most rational dissenters, and made his living by being an intelligent and tenacious observer of architectural events in *Casabella* under Ernesto Roger's generous direction.

Mesmerized as the profession was with Le Corbusier's virtuoso performances in the 1950s and early 1960s, the sort of dissent De Carlo expressed at the CIAM 59 Conference did not go unnoticed. His colleagues took him to task for his temerity and retaliated by arguing that his housing scheme at Matera, which he presented at the Conference, was rigid, Euclidean in spirit and betrayed the new plastic relationships of our time. But the scheme turned out to be one which had been conceived with a great deal of common sense. It consists of blocks of flats with shops and arcades at ground level and flats above on two floors. Staircases give access to just two flats on each floor and each of the top flats is provided with an internal patio. It is a well built low-cost housing scheme which respects local traditions of construction using bricks and clay tiles. Even from this early work of his, we begin to see what is at issue; the modern movement orthodoxy had been challenged — long before the phrase post-modern movement was coined and the project was a constructive attempt to see how modern architecture can be reconciled with varying local traditions and contexts. It was not a testy muttering about non-Euclidean space, nor was it an irate rejection of the past in the manner of the modernists.

History, De Carlo declared in 1959, does not concern itself with the past but with the present and it gives direction to the future. This view pervades all his work at Urbino and in fact it is difficult to find another town which demonstrates more effectively that architecture, past and present, is indivisible.

On setting an example

De Carlo's position in the architectural world today is analogous to that of Proudhon in Social Philosophy. It is customary for the leading critics to describe De Carlo as an isolated figure, but in reality he is a self-exiled hermit. Unlike Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Gropius, Rossi or Eisenman he seeks no followers and rejects with indignation that he has created any profound theories or architectural system. He is sceptical of a few academic attempts to pigeon-hole him into the so-called organic school. Respected though as an individual, he does not wield a hypnotic influence on young people as so many modern architects do. Although De Carlo has produced many valuable books, none of them have been accorded or seemed to demand a place in the canonical texts of modernism, such as Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture* or Frank Lloyd Wright's *Organic Architecture*. At the level of individual pieces of architecture, when the first phase of the Collegio dei Cappuccini was built, critics described it as an open system capable of replication and extension. It is exactly this aspect that De Carlo resisted in the second phase and thereby created a totally different proposition which was based on a self-criticism of the first phase. It is instructive here to compare the intentions of De Carlo in the Collegio with that of Le Corbusier's suggestions for the "Immeuble Villas" for the "Ville Contemporaine" which ended up cloning "pavillon d'esprit nouveau" "n" times. As far as libertarians are concerned the sole purpose of practicing one's craft is not to lead but to enlighten and set an example. It is of course naïve to suggest that anarchists are never involved in propaganda but it has to be by deed and not through rhetoric or public relations exercises.

Conclusion

When everything has been said, paradoxically, it turns out that

anarchism is a difficult term to define. George Woodcock (1963) wrote that: "... the very nature of libertarian attitude — its rejection of dogma, its deliberate avoidance of rigidly systematic theory, and, above all its stress on extreme freedom of choice and the primacy of the individual judgement — creates immediately the possibility of a variety of viewpoints inconceivable in a closely dogmatic system. Anarchism, indeed, is both various and mutable, and in the historical perspective it presents the appearance, not of a swelling stream flowing on to its sea of destiny (an image that may well be appropriate to Marxism), but rather of water percolating through porous ground — here forming for a time a strong underground current, there gathering into a swirling pool, trickling through crevices, disappearing from sight, and then re-emerging where the cracks in the social structure may offer it a course to run. As a doctrine it changes constantly; as a movement it grows and disintegrates, in constant fluctuation, but it never vanishes."

This is not only a potent image of anarchism but, by analogy it is also an apt summation of the libertarian content of De Carlo's work. One finds all these forms in his work and the libertarian outlook is never really absent. In Terni, it probably comes nearer to a swelling stream, in Urbino it is indeed a clean stream of highly palatable cool water percolated through porous and unpolluted ground of tradition, history and memory; in San Miniato, Siena, it probably gathered into an uncontrollable swirling pool; even in the project for the oil company in Milan it seemed to disappear but re-emerges when the contradictions in the program present it with an opportunity. One can endlessly extend the metaphor of a stream to describe the libertarian element in nearly all the projects of De Carlo. But the important point is the remarkable influence of the manifold quality of the libertarian philosophy on De Carlo's lines of thought. It is this that gives his architecture and urbanism significance, variety and an inner consistency so absent in the works of many architects of this century, with the possible exception of Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvar Aalto, Hans Scharoun, Geoffrey Bawa, Miguel Angel Roca and Laurie Baker.

Much more importantly, perhaps, the diversity in De Carlo's work can be explained in terms of the difference between Marxism and Anarchism. To Marxists, peasants, craftsmen, workers of different kinds, in spite of the necessary rapprochement they develop with them from time to time, essentially belong to the bourgeois class and must be converted to proletarians before revolution can begin. But anarchists believe that each stratum of society, because of its peculiar history, develops different traditions of cooperation.

Accordingly, for those who really wish to understand, there is considerable difference in the way De Carlo involved Urbinate in their town's affairs, in the way staff and students had a say in the projects for the Free University of Urbino, in the way steel workers participated in their housing scheme at Terni and the way tenants in Mazzorbo contributed their views on the form and content of their housing scheme there. Thus the diversity, richness and individuality of each of these projects derives from the unique characteristics of each place, its people, its collective memory and its particular traditions of cooperation. It is this natural, spontaneous and "from the grass roots" way of nurturing diversity in "form" and "content" of architecture and urbanism that we will in the long term admire in De Carlo's work.

Notes

1. This list has been compiled by the author by extrapolating De Carlo's major concerns with some of the emergent ideas of anarchism.
2. In response to a suggestion by the author that there is an acute difference in the attitude to history between Kahn and De Carlo,

the former having an almost religious outlook on history exemplified by his wish to go back to the beginnings of things and the latter with a more pragmatic view that follows the tradition of architects like Palladio, De Carlo wrote: "Thank you for disconnecting my connection with Louis Kahn, a good designer but after all a post-modernist."

3. Martin Buber built his arguments on the views of the sociologist Robert MacIver who suggested that "to identify the social with the political is to be guilty of the grossest of all confusion, which bars any understanding of either society or the state."
4. See "Conversation with Giancarlo De Carlo," in Zucchi (1992), pp. 158-173.
5. For a spirited defence of De Carlo's attempt to subvert Corbusian ideals of mass housing, see Aldo van Eyck's essay in *Urban Structure*, Architects Year Book 12 (London, Elek, 1958). The essay is about the University College but van Eyck refers to the work in Matera in a very direct way.
6. In presenting this passage in English the author has fully used the translator's privilege of restructuring the materials.
7. Interestingly the author wrote an article on "Community Architecture in Britain" in *Spazio e Società* (December 1978) and ever since De Carlo has been asking whatever happened to those architects and sadly the reply had to be that with the exception of the late Walter Segal most architects soon saw this as being unfashionable and some have concluded that normal architecture is much more lucrative. See "Architettura Partecipata in Gran Bretagna," in *Spazio Società*, no. 7 (September 1979).
8. See *Parametro*, no. 35 (1975).
9. Talk given by Colin Ward at a symposium organized by the author in Edinburgh to coincide with an exhibition of De Carlo's work in 1994. Paper not published but manuscript given to author by Colin Ward.
10. Apart from praising Gramsci's insistence on establishing a close connection between theory and practice and his refusal to make distinction between elite and popular culture mentioned in the Zucchi interview (see note 4), one never finds any references to Gramsci in De Carlo's writing. This may be because of the general scepticism of anarchists towards Marxism in all its forms. But the ideas on the role of intellectuals expressed by Gramsci are applicable to De Carlo. Furthermore, just like Orwell, Kropotkin, Illich or Chomsky, De Carlo is on the left in political outlook but never of it.
11. It is worth noting that Richard Rogers was invited to give the Reith lectures in 1995 precisely in order to provide a social, political and cultural elaboration of his sincere concerns for the sustainable city. Although his arguments were widely accepted and some of his projects acclaimed, his lectures seemed to lack intellectual depth. It is this De Carlo is able to provide, although not in the same sphere as that of Rogers.
12. See *Architectural Review* (November 1968) and *Architectural Forum* (March 1968).
13. The fact that one never heard anything at all about Robert Goodman after his devastating criticism of planning in his book *After the Planners* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972) worried De Carlo and so did the failure of many of the so-called community architects to continue to build on their successes in the 1970s. See note 7.
14. In attempting to relate Bernini's church at Ariccia and the Pantheon in Rome, Wittkower suggests that "Modern critics fail to understand the subjective and particular quality with which seemingly objective timeless classical forms have been endowed." See his *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1958), pp. 117-119.
15. My own understanding of conglomerate buildings is that they do not make distinction between front and back, and sides (none of them elevations in a conventional sense); all facets engage with their immediate context. Roof too is another one of these facets which also conducts a dialogue with the context. Because of its intrinsic robustness, conglomerate building can accept internal and external modifications at any point in time, and with each change it acquires a new sense of order. It is dominated by one material, it meets the ground in a most natural way as opposed to being built up to meet it. Its floor plans in different levels vary, volumes in each floor change and so does the density of columns and walls.
16. For instance Michael Polanyi and Thomas Kuhn in philosophy of science and David Harvey in geography, H.G. Johnson in economics, and indeed Gramsci in political theory.

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