

The Rom community of CASILINO 900

On the 17th of October 2000 CASILINO 700, the biggest camp in Europe, with its more than 1400 inhabitants, has been evicted. It was here that the sub proletariat, pictured in the vivid tales and novels of one of the most appreciated '900 Italian writers Pier Paolo Pasolini, used to live.

People evacuated from that camp moved in the abusive areas of Salone and Casilino 900 where, through the years, other Rom people kept settling. This has caused the deterioration of the yet indecent themselves settlements, with no services at all.

In this place, though, they are actually invisible, far from inhabited areas. Nowadays, the Casilino 900 settlement, is populated by about 650 Rom coming from ex-Yugoslavia devastated areas, so there are Bosnians, Montenegrins, people from Kosovo, Macedonians and Serbians, all joined together by the same ethnical belonging: Rom people.

The camp, situated in one of the four corners created by the joint between via Casilina and via Palmiro Togliatti, is bordered, towards the interior, by the public park just established in the area, that before has, for long time, been the seat of the Centocelle military airport and, until the year 2000, storage place for the nomad camp of Casilino 700.

The camp is positioned in a secluded area, hidden on via Palmiro Togliatti side by the cumbersome and degrading presence of "sfasci" (old and broken cars collectors), and on via Casilina side by a thick layer of vegetation that hides the camp profile. It is a camp non-authorized and non-equipped by Rome municipality (in the whole city there are just 11 allowed by law), but it's tolerated by the municipal administration; every so often they maintain the dirt roads that, being so, often become paths and get inundated and scattered by potholes as it rains. Moreover, the camp is equipped with chemical toilets, insufficient and badly working, and with one drinking fountain (for 650 people!).

More than a hundred kids attend school being brought by buses arranged with the municipal XI department and followed by Rom and operators from the Association Casa dei Diritti Sociali.

The scarce visibility of the camp makes of it a discrete presence that didn't provoke, so far, any firm refusal or urgent demand for eviction, as it's happened in many other neighbourhood and municipalities in Rome.

Anyways this characteristic of being a secluded reality shows, at the same time, the lack of integration of its population in the municipal social context. The ethnical settlements are proper ghettos, it's to say places where to collect minorities of divergent, foreigner, margined people. Casilino 900 doesn't subtract to this objective dynamic, even though maybe the awareness of the majority society is short. Rom in the camp first of all live in a margined condition, as they are secluded in a highly precarious state, with a high level of unemployment, in spite of their proved resourcefulness and capability in many different jobs.