

GROWING TOURISM KILLS VENICE



Venice and Italy as a whole are suffering from uncontrolled flows of tourists. The municipalities benefit from growing tourism financially, but not in terms of cultural heritage. Italian urban, artistic and cultural heritage is on the verge of a collapse. Venice is the symbol of the critical situation. The collapse began here and now tourism is the biggest danger for the future of the city.

Tourism, in fact, brings rivers of money to Italy. But in return, it produces huge damage to the very reason for its existence, the Italian heritage. **Every year, Venice is flooded by an unprecedented amount of nearly 30 million tourists.** This is more or less half of the Italian population.

These tourists trample, collide, form crowds of huge numbers, lie down anywhere - on the steps of every church, every bridge. They leave little space to move, forcing passers-by to step over their bodies and backpacks.

For the night, the doors of thousand hotels are open, but more than a third of tourists accommodate themselves in city houses, which are now engaged in the "hotel industry" for years (mostly illegally).

Tourism in Venice turned the city into a ghost town, the original of a Disneyland that is already equal to its copy. Every day, cruise ships bring over 100 thousand people through the basin of San Marco.

A ghost town in which, however, presides a real mayor called Luigi Brugnaro. A man who says that he does not love philosophers nor professors and that "only the extremists" are protesting against these cruise ships.

For the future Brugnaro has prepared a program of skyscrapers up to one hundred meters tall, huge residential areas and an industrial area. Regarding tourism, the mayor's interpretation is such: "When one is hungry, he wants to fill his fridge to eat more. If you cancel tourism, you empty the fridge and can't eat anymore."

Tourism in Venice however has reached a point in which the fridge is filled but the owners think that it is not full enough. The savage exploitation of tourism resources has thus created in Venice as in many other places of the peninsula a vast web of interests that holds together many refrigerator owners who have permission to open it only once a month.

This situation is a result of the fact that Italy has no specific national authorities responsible for tourism. Only an agency for the promotion of tourism. Thus, there is no planning, no objectives, no attempt of governments to introduce appropriate incentives and disincentives. As a result, everything is shattered in the hands of regions, whose representatives seem somewhat incompetent and aiming for higher gains only.

The growing tourism has in fact become the new poison killing the regions, Italian cities, the heritage of art and culture and often even the Italian way of life. Venice, for example, still exists as a fabric of life, but what about the history of the city? For how long can it last at this rate? Is it right to exploit a city in such a manner? **Above all, is it right that the fate of Venice is decided by local authorities only?**

The mayor has absolute power over what is done in the city and is leading the city to an unpleasant outcome. It is possibly just a matter of time until Italians start raising their voice for the state and the government to start to act against this process of extinction of the majestic Venice.

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