Chapter 9

Electioneering, Parties and Voters

Introduction

In Chapter 7, I examined in some detail the nature of the political parties in Pertosa. At that stage of my argument I was mainly concerned to show that there were striking differences between parties in Pertosa on the one hand, and the stereotype of the modern political party in western Europe on the other. These differences can be summarised as follows. First, the bureaucratic organisation of parties in Pertosa is weak. The offices of minor parties operate only in the period immediately preceding elections. Officials are more interested in building up personal followings than in the political education of members. Local notables are often able to over-rule the party hierarchy. Secondly, party programmes and ideologies are of limited importance. There is no clear-cut correlation between class interest and party affiliation, and rival party policies have little effect on voting behaviour. These peculiarities suggest two main questions. In the absence of a strong permanent bureaucracy, what is the basis of party organisation? If the electorate is not divided by conflicting ideologies and class interests, on what principles do Pertosini vote?

Before I go on to try to answer these questions, however, there are two preliminary points which it is necessary to make: the first concerns the sort of data I was able to collect, the second is about its reliability. The fact that party bureaucracies are weak in Pertosa is both an advantage and a handicap to the student of local politics. On the one hand, he cannot study the regular, day-to-day duties of party officials, nor the clash of personalities between influential members, local notables and the secretariat, nor even the details of an election campaign, for all these activities normally take place not in the party offices, but during the *passeggiata* or in the homes of the party secretaries. On the other hand, there are few political secrets in Pertosa. Politicians find it impossible to hold their discussions in complete privacy; there is almost always a third person present, and sooner or later details of what was said and agreed become common knowledge in the village, although often in a garbled version. Much of the evidence, therefore, that I present in this chapter is secondary. I was rarely able to observe at first hand the way in

which political decisions were made, and I had to rely on information, not always impartial, given to me by politicians after the event.

One final preliminary point. Only at election times are parties fully mobilised, and it is in such periods that one can best see the interplay between the various sets of politicians who combine to form a party. Before attempting a formal analysis of political organisations in Pertosa, I have chosen to describe at length the way in which the political parties, particularly the DC party, prepared and fought the 1965 communal elections. In this description I shall concentrate on the principles on which candidates are chosen, and their relations with each other and with the local and provincial party authorities.

The 1965 Election Campaign

When the DC party began its electoral campaign some two months before the communal elections, it appeared to have a very good chance of victory. In the provincial elections, four months previously, it had received 1,307 votes, whereas the combined vote of the Socialists and the Communists amounted only to 1,034. The *Aratro* administration was plagued with internal dissensions; its most important leader, who had been largely responsible for its success in 1961, was dead, and it was generally unpopular in the village. At this time it was widely forecast by politicians of all parties that the Christian Democrats would win the election, provided that they managed to draw up their electoral list without provoking quarrels amongst their members.

Generally speaking, candidates for admission to the lists are chosen for one of two main reasons: they must be able to promise the votes of either a substantial number of clients, or else those of their many kin and affines. On the whole, upper class candidates rely on the support of clients; peasants and artisans on the votes of *famigliari*. Although other factors, such as long service to the party or loyalty to one of its leaders, are taken into consideration, they are always secondary.[1] Thus, for example, it was rumoured that the DC *capo lista* (the head of the list, and usually the mayor designate) had only recently joined the party, and certainly he had taken no active part in politics previously. Similarly, I was told that the DC committee which chose the candidates rejected two artisans with a long record of service to the party, adopting in their stead two peasants who, although they had never been ardent DC supporters, had a large number of kin and affines. Decisions of this sort are primarily a question of electoral tactics. Political leaders hope, not always realistically, that peasant and artisan supporters will continue to cast their votes for the party, even if their claims are neglected. On the other

hand, by including in their list peasants and artisans whose party affiliations are in doubt, or who have previously belonged to one of the opposition parties, they hope to make a net gain in votes by inducing them and their families to transfer their allegiance. It is not uncommon, therefore, for a former Socialist or Communist to be included in a DC list (and *vice versa*). The inducement is usually the promise of a job or contract in the gift of the commune.

The distinction between the village upper classes who receive the votes of clients, and artisans and peasants who depend on those of kin and affines is not absolute. Whilst it remains true that the latter have few clients, in recent years some of the new *professionisti* have come to rely on the votes of *famigliari*. Until about 1960 most important political leaders in the village were landowners or professionals from gentry families. Most of their near kin lived and worked outside Pertosa and were not usually entitled to vote there. Consequently they could count on the votes of very few kin and affines. The new generation of political leaders, for the most part schoolteachers and *impiegati*, is in a very different position. Since they come from peasant and artisan backgrounds, most of their kin live in the village. Although they lack the conspicuous number of kin and affines of peasant and artisan members of the list who are chosen for this reason alone, they are normally in a position to recruit the support of such kin as they have far more effectively.[2]

The choice of candidates for the party list is of great importance. It is a commonplace amongst political leaders in Pertosa that in communal elections personalities count for more than party affiliations. In general and provincial campaigns few if any of the candidates are Pertosini; in local elections all of them are. Each member of the list is at the centre of a network of kin, affines, spiritual kin, friends, neighbours and (in the case of the upper class candidates) clients, and he can reasonably expect that they will vote for him even if in the past they have normally given their allegiance to another party. Conversely, a party can never be sure that all its members and past supporters will vote for it; and the fact that it was successful a few months before in a provincial or general election is no certain guide to the result of a communal election.

The task of the party committee which draws up the *lista elettorale* is to ensure that the combined personal networks of their candidates is such that the greatest number of Pertosini is included in them. As far as possible these networks should not overlap. Thus, for example, it is poor electoral tactics to include two members of the same family in the same list even when this is permitted by law.[3] Although there are several cases of siblings who have

stood as candidates for the same party at different elections, on no occasion have two brothers been included in the same list. The party leaders also try to make certain that each of the principal districts of the village has an equal number of candidates. The networks of kin, friends and neighbours of peasant and artisan candidates are most highly concentrated in the districts in which they live. By choosing a small number of candidates from each district the party leaders ensure that they have active propagandists in all parts of the village and that there is little overlap between their personal networks.

The DC *lista elettorale* was drawn up in accordance with all these general principles. Its six most important candidates came from the upper classes. Only two of them could count on the votes of a significantly large number of kin. All depended primarily on the votes of clients, and two of them, the *collocatore* and the secretary of the DC party, could command the votes of a great many clients. The nine peasants and artisans included in the list were fairly equally distributed amongst the various districts of the village. All had a large number of *famigliari* on whom they depended for the greater part of their votes.

Politicians are normally able to predict with a fair degree of accuracy the number of votes that each candidate will receive both in their own and in their opponents' lists. Since the ballot is secret and in the last resort there is no way of checking whether votes pledged have in fact been given, these calculations are obviously never exact.[4] Moreover, it is more difficult to make a successful prediction for candidates who depend primarily on the votes of clients than for those who do not. Often ties of clientage are vague and ill-defined. Although an upper class candidate has a number of clients whose loyalty cannot be questioned, for many of his votes he depends on a much looser sense of indebtedness. Thus, although in the week before elections a relatively small number of clients: family servants, *contadini* who work his land, and persons whom he has habitually aided in the past, come to his house to ask how they should vote, they provide only a small proportion of the votes he hopes to receive. On the other hand, there are many persons for whom he has performed occasional bureaucratic services or found a few days work, but with whom he has only infrequent relations. They are unlikely to come and ask for voting instructions, and even if they do, he can never be sure of their votes. Although most will promise him their support, he knows full well that some will vote for kinsmen or patrons in the other list or, refusing to recognise their indebtedness, will fail to redeem their promises on polling-day.

By contrast, it is far easier to calculate with precision the number of votes a peasant or artisan candidate will receive. Party officials, who perform

this task when preparing the list, first make a count of a potential candidate's near kin and affines. They then add the votes of distant kin, neighbours, friends and *compari* with whom he is known to be on good terms. From this total they must finally deduct the votes of close kin with whom he has quarrelled, and kin, *compari*, friends and neighbours who are known to be firmly attached to a member of the opposing list. Thus, for example, a party official told me that Giuseppe, a peasant member of the DC list, could count on between 40 and 45 votes. Giuseppe and his brothers had been DC supporters ever since the war, and his wife's brother and uncle were active propagandists. He himself, however, had previously taken no active interest in politics. He was chosen as a candidate primarily because of the large number of kin and affines who could be expected to vote for him. In fact, he had five brothers, two of whom had adult children, and a married sister. His siblings and their spouses and children had at their disposal some twenty-three votes, and Giuseppe expected to receive all but five of them. Furthermore, he was able to count on the support of his wife's kin who were, almost without exception staunch Christian Democrats. His wife's uncle, a barber, had been active in politics for many years, and with his help, Giuseppe was able to secure the votes not only of his wife's brother and spouse, but also those of the numerous family of his brother-in-law's wife.[5] In all, he expected to receive fifteen votes from affines. In addition, he hoped to collect the votes of a few distant kin, *compari*, neighbours and friends, and possibly those of one or two of the clients of his wife's uncle.

According to the estimate of one of the party secretaries, peasants and artisan members of the list can each command between twenty-five and fifty votes. Normally, upper class candidates have a much greater number at their disposal. Thus, during the elections the DC secretary told me that he feared that his party would suffer great damage on account of the opposition of a notable who disapproved of the list. The latter, he claimed, could count on the votes of forty or fifty clients and, if he chose to exercise his full authority, he might be able to influence as many as a hundred voters.

At first sight, it might seem good tactics to include only landowners and professionals in the party list. There are, however, two main reasons who this is impracticable. First, the number of upper class families who are interested in politics is limited. Only about eight of them support the Socialist and Communist parties, and some of their members are excluded because they are communal office holders. Secondly, these families are often divided by mutual jealousies and rival ambitions, and their members refuse to serve together in the same administration. The DC party is particularly prone to quarrels of this sort.

Although only two months previously it had been generally forecast that the Christian Democrats would win the elections easily, a week before polling-day even the most fervent party propagandists confessed that they would be content with a narrow margin of victory. The leaders of the party had quarrelled amongst themselves; they had found it difficult to agree on the choice of candidates, and almost impossible to decide who should hold executive posts in the communal administration in the event of victory. Indeed, only a few days before the elections, it was feared that several important party leaders would withdraw their support, or, even worse, actively help the opposition.

The most important of these quarrels was the continuation of a dispute which had first become serious during the 1964 provincial election campaign. In 1960, the DC communal administration had been dissolved before completing its term of office because of a quarrel between the mayor and the rest of the council. Egidio, the ex-mayor, resented not only what he regarded as the betrayal of his colleagues, but was also angry with the provincial party secretary, who had failed to help him overcome the crisis. Although he himself held no official position in the party, between 1961 and 1964 his nephew Pietro was party secretary. In the autumn of 1964, Egidio decided that as compensation for his humiliation of three years before it would be appropriate if the party chose him as their candidate for the forthcoming provincial elections. But despite the staunch representations of his nephew in the provincial party headquarters, Marco was chosen in his stead. From the point of view of Egidio and Pietro the choice of Marco was particularly unfortunate, the more so because their two families were hardly on speaking terms. Some months previously, Pietro had courted Marco's sister. The latter, convinced that he was about to ask her to marry him, broke off a previous engagement. When in fact Pietro became engaged to another girl, she and her family were furious, and relations between them rapidly deteriorated. The adoption of Marco as provincial candidate was doubly humiliating for Pietro. Not only had he failed to secure this honour for his uncle, but he was also obliged to to witness the success of a personal enemy. At this point he resigned his party secretaryship, and was replaced by Angelo, a close supporter of Marco. Indeed, it was strongly rumoured in Pertosa, although I have no way of knowing whether the tale was true or false, that Pietro and Egidio and their near kin, affines and personal dependents spoiled their ballot papers rather than vote for Marco.

When Egidio discovered that both Marco and Angelo intended to stand as DC candidates in the communal elections of 1965, he decided to exact his revenge by embarrassing his party and former colleagues in every possible way. First, he announced that he intended to make an alliance with another

family of dissident Christian Democrats and with a socialist who had quarrelled with his party leaders, and that together they would present a *lista civica*. Secondly, he spoke menacingly of corruption and scandals in the DC party, and threatened to reveal all on the hustings. The DC leaders, realising that he would cause considerable damage to the party if he continued in this tone, persuaded the provincial secretary to intervene. The discussion between the two was held in private, and I have no direct knowledge of what was agreed. In Pertosa, however, it was widely rumoured that first the provincial secretary and then the Minister Colombo had, by a mixture of threats and promises, persuaded him to withdraw his opposition to the DC list, and to abandon his attempt to form a *lista civica*.[6] Whatever means were used, there can be no doubt of their success. Egidio not only ceased to attack his former colleagues, but even addressed a public meeting on their behalf.

The second important difficulty which the DC party encountered in forming its list was that its leaders quarrelled about who should become mayor in the event of victory. There were two main elements in this quarrel. First, two elderly DC notables, who between 1946 and 1960 had commanded the party, opposed the ambitions of its new leaders, particularly those of Marco and Angelo, whom they regarded as upstarts. Secondly, the upper class members of the list distrusted one another, and were divided by jealousies and conflicting personal ambitions. The quarrel broke out on the eve of the publication of the *lista elettorale*, when Angelo and Marco proposed that there should be no *capo lista*, and that the choice of mayor designate should be left until after the elections. At this point, Michele, another schoolteacher candidate, threatened to resign. For a few days there was deadlock. Finally, however, the dispute was resolved in favour of the latter at a special meeting at which the provincial secretary acted as mediator.

The motives behind the quarrel were somewhat complicated. The choice of *capo lista* is of some importance in communal elections. Many electors who have no special commitment to a party or a party representative vote for the *capo lista* whom they think will make the more suitable mayor. In particular, peasants and artisans want some assurance that the mayor will be willing to provide them with speedy service,[7] and will take up their grievances with outside authorities. The head of the *Aratro* list had twice been mayor, and enjoyed a high reputation even amongst his political opponents for his readiness to help peasants and artisans. Fearing that his reputation would induce many villagers to vote for his party, the Christian Democrats felt obliged to find a *capo lista* who could be presented to the electorate as a friendly and efficient mayor designate. The most obvious candidate for the job was Angelo. He had been largely responsible for victory in the provincial elections, and he took the leading part in organising the communal

campaign of 1965. Unfortunately, however, he was not very popular in the village. In the course of the provincial campaign, some six months previously, he had made a great many promises to the electorate which he had been unable to fulfil, and his political credit was nearly exhausted.

Angelo was well aware that his unpopularity would count against him when it came to choosing a *capo lista*, and that his enemies in the party would use it against him. On the other hand, his principal enemies were not members of the DC list. Once the party had won the election the fact that he was unpopular in Pertosa could no longer be held against him, and he hoped to be able to muster sufficient support amongst his colleagues to be elected mayor. But in order to achieve his ends, he had to persuade the party to postpone the choice of mayor until after the elections, and in this he was unsuccessful. The party committee decided to appoint Michele *capo lista*, and he insisted that all the other candidates should sign a document in which they agreed that in the event of victory he should become mayor.

In order to understand why Michele succeeded and Angelo failed, it is necessary to examine in greater detail their relationships with their fellow candidates and with other members of the party. Angelo's main handicap was that he had many enemies in the party. Some of these he had made on his own account; others he had acquired through his close association with Marco. Thus, as a friend of the latter he was liable to encounter the hostility of Pietro and Egidio. More important, however, he was cordially disliked by Martino and Grassi, two elderly DC notables and landowners. Martino was the richest landowner in Pertosa, and between 1946 (when he became its first DC mayor) and about 1960 he was undoubtedly one of its most influential politicians. At the height of his power, his lands had provided work for many Pertosini, and he had had little difficulty in acquiring clients. Although he was now an old and sick man and, with the growth of emigration, his stranglehold on the village economy had been broken, he still had considerable influence on the party hierarchy. For more than fifteen years he had been a 'grand elector', and consequently he had built up a wide range of political friendships both in the provincial capital and at Rome.

Martino's closest ally in Pertosa was Grassi, one of the village's three doctors. Although on a smaller scale, he was also an important patron, and like Martino he had many friends in political circles in the provincial capital. There were two main reasons why Grassi and Martino were hostile towards Angelo and Marco. In the first place, Angelo and Grassi had quarrelled. The former accused the latter of having ruined his father by refusing him credit to run his corn mill. Moreover, it was rumoured in Pertosa that Angelo had deeply offended Grassi by attempting to court his daughter. Secondly, both

Grassi and Martino resented the emergence of a new class of political leaders over whom they had little influence. Indeed, during his period of office as secretary of the DC party, Angelo had made it quite clear that he was unwilling to take instructions or orders from either of them.

Angelo was more fortunate in his relations with his fellow members of the list. Of the other five upper class candidates, his staunchest ally was Marco, who gave him unqualified support in return for the help he had received during the provincial elections. In addition, Pasquale, an elementary schoolteacher, was a childhood friend, and was closely attached to him. Michele, a middle-aged schoolteacher with a permanent post and no obvious personal ambitions, was his only firm opponent. Previously, he had taken no active part in politics. He had been reluctant to stand as a candidate, and had agreed only on the understanding that he would become mayor. He opposed Angelo because he quite rightly felt that he was trying to take advantage of his political inexperience to deprive him of the office he had been promised. The other two *professionisti* candidates were more or less neutral. Avvocato Rossi, the son of a large landowner, scrupulously avoided taking sides; Enzo, the *collocatore*, wavered between cautious support for Angelo and neutrality. Previously, he had been friendly with Angelo, but he feared that he would become too powerful. Both were seeking similar rewards for their services to the party,[8] and Enzo was afraid that if Angelo became mayor his claims would take precedence.

The leading candidates also try to ensure that they have supporters amongst the less important members of the list. They know that there is a high incidence of quarrels in the council, and that in times of crisis it is useful to be able to count on the support of peasant and artisan councillors. Until a council has been in office for some months, it is not always easy to discover the allegiances of minor councillors. But, as far as I could tell, four lower class members of the list supported Angelo: two were peasants who had been included on his instigation, the third, an artisan, worked as a propagandist under his instruction throughout the campaign, the fourth, also an artisan, was his second cousin. On the other hand, only two peasants councillors were closely attached to Michele. The remaining four members of the list appeared to be neutral, although one of them was a dependent of Egidio, and, as such, was probably hostile to Angelo.

Having examined the relationships of both Michele and Angelo with other members of their party and with their fellow candidates, I can now return to consider the issues at stake in the quarrel between them, and the reasons for the victory of the former. Although Angelo would have stood a good chance of being chosen as mayor after the elections (he could count on

seven or eight votes to Michele's four or five), by insisting that the issue was decided beforehand, Michele was in a very strong position. In the first place, he was a much more suitable *capo lista*. Politically he was virtually unknown, he had no important enemies in the party, and was neither popular nor disliked in the village. Dissident DC leaders such as Egidio and Pietro could be more readily persuaded to vote for him than for Angelo and Marco who were their personal enemies. Furthermore, Michele had the support of the elderly DC notables who felt that he was the most tractable member of the new *professionisti*. From the point of view of the provincial party secretary who was called in the settle the dispute, Michele was by far the better choice. His appointment was unlikely to split the party. However much Angelo and Marco were annoyed by it, in the last resort they were unlikely to resign, even when the decision went against them, for both were heavily dependent on party patronage. Moreover, it was difficult for the provincial secretary to ignore the opposition and hostility of the two elderly notables. Both had influential friends in the wider Italian society, and both still retained a relatively large number of clients in Pertosa. Had they chosen to make an issue of the choice of mayor, not only could they have damaged the party in the village, but they could also have made life difficult for the provincial secretary himself by appealing to his political superiors.

Party Structure

Although in formal constitutional terms all parties in Pertosa are corporate and permanent institutions, consisting of members and their elected leaders, who share or who are supposed to share common interests, ideologies, rules and aims, in practice, they are composed of shifting and unstable coalitions of factions, bound together not so much by shared ideologies as by the common hope of gaining control of patronage resources. And it is these factions, and not the formal party bureaucratic framework in which they operate, that shape the structure of politics and political conflict.

Factions are recruited by a leader or more commonly by a clique of upper class patrons, each bringing into the alliance his own personal network of supporters. The bonds linking followers to faction leaders are based on a wide range of structurally diverse principles.[9] As I have shown, the most important of these are kinship and clientship, but ties of neighbourhood and more occasionally those of religion and ideology are also of some significance. Factions are also conflict groups (or to be more precise quasi-groups). They never exist singly, but are always set up in opposition to other factions, with which they are in competition for scarce political resources.[10]

All these general characteristics were displayed by the factions which emerged within the DC party during the 1965 elections. Thus, at the head of the faction recruited by Angelo, the DC party secretary, was a core of four village professionals. Each was at the centre of a personal network, which was used as an action-set to recruit votes during the elections. For the most part, core-follower ties were direct, although each of the faction leaders recruited votes indirectly from the networks of his kin and clients. Thus, for example, Marco was able to muster support amongst the members of the women's section of Catholic Action by exploiting the network of his sister, who was its head. Similarly, his client, Giuseppe, put his network of affines at his disposal. The quarrel between Angelo and Michele illustrates very clearly the type of resources for which factions compete. The immediate aim of both was to be elected mayor, and to gain mastery of the commune. Indirectly, however, both sought office as a means of extending their influence and personal networks outside the village. Core members competed for rewards in the gift of provincial and national authorities: followers for the patronage resources of the commune.

In Pertosa factions and coalitions between them are always highly unstable, and they display none of the corporate trappings: clubs, property, festivals and so forth, which are said to characterise factions in other parts of the Mediterranean.[11] The main reason for their instability is that the resources for which they compete are always in short supply, and the aims for which they come together can rarely be achieved to the satisfaction of all their members. Even when factions are successful in their immediate goals of winning power and installing their core members in executive positions within the commune, they rarely remain intact for more than a few months, and there is a high incidence of secession amongst core members and their personal followings. Thus, as I described in the previous section, throughout the election campaign there were signs of strain in the Angelo faction, particularly between Angelo and Enzo, who were seeking similar rewards for their services to the party. Indeed, immediately after the new DC administration had taken office in 1965, they quarrelled openly, and Enzo switched his allegiance to the Michele faction. The reason for their quarrel was that Angelo's sister obtained a teaching post which Enzo wanted for his wife. Their dispute was only resolved (and then only partially) after the provincial party secretary had intervened, and warned them that they both risked losing their jobs if there was a public scandal.

In post-war years conflict between and within factions has been largely responsible for determining the structure of politics in Pertosa. A good illustration is the way in which the two major political blocs, the Christian Democrats and the *Aratro* alliance, have alternated in office. With one

exception, no party has won communal elections twice running,[12] and only three out of the six post-war administrations have run their full term of office. Although the coalitions of factions which constitute the parties are usually sufficiently stable to survive the elections campaign and the initial distribution of executive posts on the council, quarrels over the spoils of office and the allocation of patronage resources almost invariably lead to disarray and their premature demise. Even when they manage to last out their full period of office (for example, the 1961-1965 *Aratro* administration), internal wrangling and hostility between members of the council are such that the same set of faction leaders are unwilling to stand together in the same list at the next elections.

On the whole, DC councils have been slightly more unstable than those of the *Aratro* alliance, very largely because they have attracted the support of a greater number of upper class patrons, seeking similar rewards for their services. But this tendency has been balanced by the active intervention and mediatorship of outside authorities. Generally speaking, the prefect has been willing to turn a blind eye to the irregularities and maladministration of DC councils, and, as I have shown, by threatening to withhold patronage resources, the DC provincial party secretary is in a strong position to persuade local leaders to compose their quarrels.

The history of post-war administration in Pertosa is largely an account of malgovernment, squandered resources and opportunities lost. Although the electoral system guarantees a large premium to the winning list, none of the parties has been able to achieve stable and continuous government, and factional strife and constant changes of executive responsibility have made long-term administration and planning virtually impossible. Indeed, there is nothing to suggest that politicians will be able to solve any of its major problems, or to challenge the villagers' assumption that its leaders are only interested in deriving the greatest possible advantages from their offices for themselves, their protectors and their clients.

Voters

So far in this chapter I have been mainly concerned with the means whereby politicians recruit electoral support. It now remains to reverse my emphasis and to examine briefly the way in which ordinary Pertosini vote. One of the main difficulties in gathering information about voting behaviour in Pertosa is that most villagers claim to be politically neutral. Except for well-known party activists, their usual reply to questions about which party they support is that all politicians are rogues, and that they have no firm political commitments. In part, these expressions of neutrality are a defence

mechanism against possible political discrimination, but they also reflect a social reality, for most peasants and artisans have no long-term allegiances to a party as such, and their electoral preferences tend to be determined by their particular ties to members of one of the lists.

Generally speaking, voting in Pertosa takes place within the context of established exchange relations: it is either a part of the mutual obligations of kinship and affinity, or an expression of the reciprocal ties which join patrons and clients. When obligations of kinship and clientship come into conflict, it is generally the latter which give way, for most villagers argue that their claims for special treatment and favours are more likely to be acknowledged by kinsmen than by patrons, and that it is easier to avoid repayment to the former than to the latter.

But whilst kinship and clientship are the main determinants of voting behaviour, there are two notable exceptions to this generalisation. In the first place, there is a small number of families (about fifty according to the DC party secretary) who are closely associated with the church and clerical organisations, and who invariably vote for the Christian Democrats. Even the presence of a close kinsman in the opposition list fails to shake their allegiance. Secondly, there are much larger numbers of persons whose voting behaviour is difficult to predict. For the most part, they consist of people living permanently in the countryside, and emigrants who spend most of their time abroad.[13] They are not included in the networks of leading politicians, and they rarely have near kin as members of the lists. Although it is difficult to make a precise estimate of their numbers, they probably account for as much as two-fifths of the electorate. Thus, one of the party secretaries told me that the combined personal networks of all candidates in the lists were, at best, only about 60% efficient. However carefully they were drawn up, there was always a residue of voters to whom no ties could be traced.

This residual two-fifths of the electorate is a source of considerable anxiety to politicians in Pertosa, particularly to the leaders of the DC party. Although some attempt can be made to recruit its votes by bribery and electoral corruption,[14] nowadays, such tactics are dangerous, and there is little guarantee that they will be successful, since both *foresi* and emigrants are notorious for not redeeming their promises in the polling-booths. This category of uncommitted voters is easily large enough to determine election results, and it is the only section of the electorate that tends regularly to vote according to its own class interests. In normal times, it is characterised by a relatively low turnout, and its votes are generally split between the main parties in such a way as not to influence significantly the outcome of elections; but in periods of special hardship it tends to vote solidly for the left,[15] and it

is largely immune from the influence of upper class political patrons.

Notes to Chapter 9

1 Important members of the list (i.e. those likely to became mayor and assessors) try to ensure that they will have personal supporters amongst the councillors. Thus, they may propose candidates whom they believe will be faithful to them. In such cases, however, the latter usually have a large number of *famigliari*. Personal loyalty tends to be a determining factor only in choosing between the claims of two potential candidates with similar numbers of *famigliari*.

2 In Pertosa, as in most peasant and primitive societies, genealogies tend to be 'skewed' in order to include important persons. Thus, if the son of a peasant household becomes a professional, he automatically becomes a sort of honorary *capo famiglia*, and distant kin and *compari* try to re-activate their relations with him.

3 See Chapter 6 above for further details.

4 Although the ballot is in fact secret, most villagers believe that it is not. But although upper class politicians have been able to convince the electorate that they can check up on the way in which they vote, I am doubtful whether they can do so except in a few sporadic cases.

5 His wife's brother's wife had twelve adult brothers, seven of whom lived in the village.

6 Thus, at a public meeting one of the Socialist candidates ironically told the crowd that the only possible explanation for Egidio's conduct was that he had received a telephone call from Colombo. If this story is true, it is not difficult to guess what form these threats and promises took. Like most other schoolteachers in Pertosa both Egidio and Pietro needed the protection of the provincial party secretary. Pietro was a temporary teacher (*supplente annuale*) with very precarious tenure, and so was Egidio's wife. In addition, Egidio's younger brother aspired to a job in a state petrol refinery in a nearby town.

7 The signature of the mayor is necessary for most documents issued by the commune. In the past, mayors have greatly iritated peasants and artisans by being unavailable to sign their certificates, or by making them wait for days on end.

8 Angelo hoped to persuade the provincial party secretary to find a job for his sister (an unemployed elementary schoolteacher). Enzo needed his protection in order that his wife, also an elementary schoolteacher, should retain her job.