

PART TWO

THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALISATION

Chapter 5

The ENI Project

Introduction

The decision to establish a petro-chemical complex on the Foggian coast was first made in December 1966, when Girotti, the president of ANIC, announced in a special press release his company's intention to build a plant which would convert natural gas into *ammoniaca* and *urea*. The investment involved in the first stage of the project was estimated at 30 milliard lire and it was envisaged that the plant would eventually employ some 500 workers. Early in the New Year it was confirmed that the complex would be built near Manfredonia.

The motives behind this decision were mainly political. Since the summer of 1966, ENI (which in this period was steadily increasing its stake in the methane wells of the Sub-Appennino Dauno) had become increasingly anxious to avoid being caught up in the mounting wave of criticism and protest which had followed *Snia Viscosa's* cancellation of its Manfredonia project in March 1966.¹ Similarly local parliamentarians of the government parties, alarmed at the prospect of a broad based protest movement over which they feared they would have little control, had sought to assure the electorate of their good intentions, and had lobbied both national planning bodies and ENI itself in an effort to secure a firm governmental commitment to the industrial development of their province.² Indeed, the announcement of the ENI project was heralded as a major triumph for the local political elite, and there can be little doubt that one of its main (and, as it turned out, vain) intentions was to quell the growing tide of popular discontent in the methane communes.

From the outset, there was a marked tendency for *ad hoc* political considerations to be allowed to override long term development plans and objectives. Thus, at the national level, details of the project were released without the prior knowledge or consent of the Ministry for State Participations, the ministry responsible for planning and co-ordinating state investments. And locally, it was clear that, if the ENI project was to go through, there would have to be a fundamental revision of existing development plans

within the province.

By agreeing to build within the province of Foggia, ENI had become eligible for a substantial fiscal concession in the form of exemption from paying royalties on methane production,³ but it nevertheless argued that in order to be commercially viable its plant required the full range of privileges granted to industries within designated industrial development poles. The basic difficulty was that for technical reasons (a need for abundant water and port facilities), it was essential to build the plant on the coast. But Manfredonia, the only port in the province which could be adapted to meet ENI's requirements, was outside Foggia's 'nucleus' of industrial development.⁴

Before going ahead with the Manfredonia project, ENI was obliged to seek planning permission from CIPE, the interministerial committee for economic planning. In addition, in order to qualify for a full range of subsidies and fiscal concessions, and to persuade the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* to invest in infrastructural improvements (a new port, a fresh water pipe line, improved roads and so on), it was necessary to present for the approval of the Council of Ministers a revised provincial industrial plan, under which the existing 'nucleus' of industrial development would be expanded to form an 'area' which would include Manfredonia and the neighbouring commune of Montesantangelo. Both these objectives were achieved. In October 1967, CIPE gave provisional approval to the project. A month later the Council of Ministers agreed to the establishment of an 'area' of industrial development within the province of Foggia, which included not only Manfredonia, but most of the communes of the Sub-Appennino Dauno.

Despite the project's eventual acceptance, several members of the CIPE expressed misgivings about its financial and technical viability. In the first place, it was suggested that a world glut of chemical fertilisers such as *urea* made a further expansion of production undesirable. Secondly, it was argued that even if it could be shown that a market existed for these products, they could be manufactured at lower cost in already established ENI plants. A third objection was that to locate the petro-chemical factories within a designated area of tourist development, made a nonsense of existing development strategies. A fourth criticism was the high infrastructural costs with which the state and the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* would be burdened.⁵ Although these arguments did not sway the committee's decision, the last two of them were later to be expanded and developed by opponents of the scheme.

By contrast, at the local level, the decisions to build the petro-chemical complex and to expand the area covered by the pole of industrial development were met with an enthusiasm and fervour which at times bordered on the hysterical. The local press (especially those newspapers and periodicals

controlled by government parties) set the tone with long and effusive articles offering praise and the thanks of the local population to those DC notables whose vigorous efforts, they claimed, had led to so favourable an outcome. There was also a marked tendency to exaggerate the advantages likely to accrue to the province as a result of these decisions. Thus, at least two local newspapers announced that the ENI project would provide employment for 5,000 workers (an overestimate of 1000%), and miraculistic claims that the arrival of new industries would bring about a dramatic and radical change in a hitherto stagnant and isolated agricultural society were the order of the day.⁶

The only discordant note in an otherwise euphoric set of press notices and public statements was that different parties and factions within parties attributed success to different causes. Thus, the Socialist and Communist parties argued that these decisions were the result of the vigorous demonstrations which had taken place in the methane communes earlier in the year. The Christian Democrats attributed it to the efforts of their own parliamentarians. Members of the *moroteo* faction pointed to the fact that Moro himself had presided over the CIPE meeting and one of his staunchest supporters, l'Onerevole De Meo, a local deputy, headed the Provincial Consortium for industrial development. By contrast, members of the Russo faction addressed their thanks to Rumor, the national party secretary, and hinted at their privileged relationship with ENI.

It is also interesting to note that at this stage of the proceedings ENI's developmental role within the province was widely recognised and acclaimed. Even members of the *moroteo* faction acknowledged publicly that it was the ENI project and the political pressure which the corporation had been able to bring on national planning bodies, which led to the success of the application to transform the 'nucleus' into an 'area' of industrial development. Indeed, the public tributes which they paid to ENI in this period provide a curious antecedent to the accusation of bullying, self interest and corruption which they were to level at it a few months later.

The *Italia Nostra* campaign⁷

Although both in Manfredonia itself and in the province as a whole initial reactions to the ENI project were favourable, nationally it attracted an increasing volume of protest and criticism. The first major attack was launched early in December 1967, by the architect and conservationist Bruno Zevi, who in an article published in the influential Roman weekly, *l'Espresso*,⁸ condemned the project as absurd, scandalous and unnecessary. The burden of his attack was similar to the argument raised earlier at CIPE,

that the building of a petro-chemical complex at Manfredonia was incompatible with the development of tourism on the Gargano. The location chosen by ENI was not only the gateway to the Gargano, but an important archaeological site in its own right. Anyway, Law 717 expressly forbade the setting up of industrial and tourist development centres in the same area. The plant could easily be built outside the area, at Vasto in the north or Barletta in the south, where it would cause little ecological damage. The choice of Manfredonia, in the face of a whole series of obvious ecological objections, could, he claimed, only be attributed to political motives, above all to the fact that the area was part of the constituency of both Aldo Moro and Vincenzo Russo.

This line of attack was followed up by *Italia Nostra* which, both in its own publications and in the letter columns of the national press, directed a concerted campaign against the project. Thus, in a letter to *l'Espresso* on 17th December, Bassani, the association's president, accused CIPE of ignorance and incompetence and castigated ENI for being concerned only with its own short-term financial interests, and for promoting the clientelistic aims of its political masters.⁹ At the same time the association approached various government ministers who were thought to be sympathetic to ecological appeals, and through the good offices of leading members of the PRI (a party with which *Italia Nostra* is closely associated) tried to get the CIPE decision reversed, or at least to have the whole matter discussed in parliament.

The *Italia Nostra* campaign culminated in a national press conference held in May 1968 specifically devoted to the Manfredonia issue. At this meeting the criticisms of Zevi and Bassani were repeated. In addition, ENI was accused of riding roughshod over public opinion and using its considerable economic and political resources to silence its critics and to influence the discussions of both local and national planning authorities. The conference was only a limited success. For although it achieved its immediate aim of attracting the sympathy and publicity of part of the national press for its campaign, ENI had already obtained most of the planning permissions it needed to go ahead with the project, and, by this time, to re-open the whole question was politically a non-starter.

The 'Save the Gargano' campaign was, however, acutely embarrassing for ENI. As a founder member of *Italia Nostra* it was anxious to preserve an already tarnished reputation for caring about conservation. More important it feared that *Italia Nostra's* lobbying of ministers and influential parliamentarians might lead to difficulties in obtaining planning permission, and even call the whole project into question.¹⁰

The corporations's response to the criticisms levelled at it took a number of different forms. In the first place, it released further details of the project, and attempted to show that its decisions had been based on technical rather than political criteria. Thus, in two letters to the press in December 1967 and in April of the following year, Briatico, assistant to the president of ENI, sought to defend his company's record.¹¹ The initial decision to establish the fourth petro-chemical complex within the province of Foggia was, he claimed, understandably and quite properly political, a government response to the legitimate demand of the local population that at least part of the methane produced in the province should be processed locally. Subsequent decisions, however, to establish the complex at Manfredonia, and more precisely at Macchia, on the coast, two miles to the north-east of the town, were based entirely on financial and technical considerations. A petro-chemical plant of the type and size envisaged had three basic technical requirements: first, sufficient space for current and future development, second, an abundance of sea water to operate the cooling system, and third, a deep water sea port in the immediate vicinity. Only the Macchia site met these requirements. Company technicians had examined two other areas, an inland site to the south of the town, and a coastal site to the south west. Neither, however, were financially viable. The expense of pumping sea-water to the inland site would have been prohibitive. And the fact that the sea to the south of Manfredonia was much shallower than to the north would have greatly increased the costs of improving port facilities.¹² Briatico concluded by arguing that the disadvantages and ecological costs of the Macchia site had been greatly exaggerated. Macchia, he claimed, was not part of the Gargano proper, which only began some dozen miles further along the coast. The petro-chemical complex would not, therefore prejudice the tourist prospects of the area.

A second company response to the criticisms of *Italia Nostra* was to seek to mobilise support amongst its own political allies in parliament and on key planning committees, and to persuade those sections of the local and national press generally favourable to its policies to launch a counter campaign. On the whole this policy was successful. A number of articles appeared in the national and local press favourably assessing ENI's contribution to the industrial development of Puglia, and influential national dailies, such as *Corriere della Sera*, which in the past had attacked ENI for its indifference to conservation, adopted a much more favourable stance in the case of Manfredonia.¹³ Furthermore, ENI commissioned a report by Professor Baldacci, one of Italy's leading geographers, supporting its theory that Macchia was not part of the Gargano proper, and this report was also made available to the press.¹⁴

A third strategy was to seek to demonstrate publicly that the charge that ENI had failed to consult the wishes of the local population was unfounded. Thus, after sounding out the opinions of the main participants in advance, the company's public relations office 'arranged' a meeting of the Regional Committee for Economic Planning in Puglia, which was held in Bari in April 1968. This meeting, which was carefully stage managed, brought together a number of local political notables and parliamentarians (mainly from the DC and Socialist parties), representatives of the various regional and provincial planning boards, and the mayors of Bari, Foggia, Manfredonia and Montesantangelo (all of whom, as it happened, were known to be in favour of the project). The meeting was also attended by senior members of ENI's technical staff and public relations department who were available to answer detailed questions about the project, and in particular to assure members of the committee that the choice of the Macchia site was technically justified, and that the complex would not pollute either the sea or the surrounding countryside. From ENI's point of view, the meeting was reasonably successful.¹⁵ Although the Foggian representatives of the Socialist party and the provincial consortium for Industrial Development expressed doubt about the suitability of the Macchia site, they did so in terms which were much less forceful than might have been expected. Indeed, the following day, the local press was able (with only a moderate degree of distortion) to report that the committee had been unanimous in its decision that ENI should press ahead with the plant as quickly as possible.¹⁶

Taken overall, ENI's reply to the *Italia Nostra* campaign was not ineffective. Its arguments received wide coverage in both the local and national press, not all of which was unsympathetic to its policies. Similarly, threats to block the project by political means failed to materialise. How far, however, these results were due to the efforts of its very dynamic public relations department is difficult to judge. The most powerful factor working in its favour was that general elections were due to be held in May 1968. With good reason none of the main government parties wished to prejudice their electoral chances in Foggian constituencies by being held responsible for cancelling the project at this stage.

Local reactions to the Manfredonia project.

The *Italia Nostra* campaign had immediate political repercussions in those communes most closely involved in the scheme. Initial reactions were sharply hostile. Thus, on December 4th, (the day after Zevi's article appeared in *L'Espresso*) an extraordinary meeting of the council was held in Montesantangelo which passed a resolution reaffirming support for the project, and condemning what it described as the campanalistic attempts of

interested parties to have the plant transferred to another province. A few days later, the mayor of Manfredonia made a similar statement, and sent a telegram to Moro in which he spoke of the deep anxiety of the local population, and asked for speedy confirmation that the project would go ahead as planned. In both communes there were threats of strikes and direct popular action.

Early in the New Year, however, there was a gradual change in political attitudes in both Manfredonia and nearby communes.¹⁷ By this stage most local politicians were convinced that the risk of losing the plant altogether was minimal. And as further technical details about the project were released, they came to realise that ENI technicians were firmly committed to the Macchia site. All parties agreed that the plant must be built in Manfredonia, but there was increasing support for the view that the Macchia site was ill-chosen.¹⁸ Thus, early in March, the communal council of Mattinata (the next town along the coast to the north) passed a resolution condemning the Macchia site; in the same month, a citizens' committee was formed in Manfredonia with the specific aim of getting the site changed.

Within Manfredonia the strongest opposition to the Macchia site came initially from the Republican and Liberal parties. The head of the PRI became president of the Citizens' Committee. The Liberal leadership actively illustrated the disadvantages of the scheme in a series of articles in the national and local press, in pamphlets produced at its own expense, and in letters and telegrams of protest sent to the various government ministers and departments responsible for granting planning permission for the project. Both parties sent representatives to the *Italia Nostra* press conference, and their election campaigns were centred on this issue. As the date of the general election drew closer, they were also joined by the Socialists and important sections of the DC party.

Because of internal disagreements, both the Socialists and the Christian Democrats had experienced difficulty in taking a clear stand. Thus, whereas the Bari Socialists were broadly in favour of the project as a whole, their colleagues at Foggia and Manfredonia were divided on the Macchia question. There was even wider disagreement within the DC party hierarchy. Both at the provincial and local levels, the supporters of Russo unquestioningly favoured the project in all its details, but members of the *moroteo* and *col-diretti* factions increasingly expressed dissatisfaction at the decision to build at Macchia. Thus, the *moroteo* president of the Foggian Industrial Development Board castigated both ENI and the Council of Ministers for the South for failing to consult his organisation about the choice of the site.¹⁹ Similar criticisms also came from the President of the Provincial Council, a member

of the same political faction.

The Council of Ministers for the South ratified the choice of the Macchia site on May 15th, some three days before the general election. This decision catalysed opposition in Manfredonia. The following day, the leaders (*capi gruppi*) of all the four political groups represented on the council issued a joint statement condemning the decision which, they claimed, was exclusively in the interests of ENI, and which totally disregarded the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the citizens. Despite the appearance of unanimity, however, not all parties within the council were hostile to the Macchia site. The PCI, for example, adopted a stance of uneasy neutrality: on the one hand attacking ENI for failing to consult local opinion, and on the other arguing that, whatever the social costs, they would in the last resort be outweighed by the benefits of industrialisation. Furthermore, as we saw in chapter 4, throughout this period the council executive was dominated by members of the Russo faction, which fully accepted and supported the technical arguments put forward by ENI to justify its choice of site. Indeed, in the vital months between mid-March and early June, in which many crucial planning decisions were made, the Russo faction was able to block discussions of the project on the council.²⁰ And despite the joint party statement, on the last night of the electoral campaign, in presenting l'Onorevole Vincenzo Russo to the electorate both the DC party secretary and the mayor of Manfredonia argued that if the factory was to remain in Manfredonia, Macchia was the only possible location.²¹

In the general elections, those candidates supporting the ENI position fared relatively badly.²² Seemingly assured of popular support, opponents of the Macchia site stepped up their campaign. Early in June, the Socialists threatened to resign from the local administration, unless the issue was discussed on the council.²³ A full council meeting was finally convoked for 12th June. This meeting was a triumph for the opponents of the scheme. Although representatives of both the PCI and the Russo faction of the DC party expressed reservations at the outcome, all parties on the council were agreed in condemning ENI for its failure to consult or to take heed of the interests of the local population, and voted unanimously that the whole question of the choice of site should be re-examined by a panel of independent technical experts and then be re-considered by the relevant national planning authorities.

Despite this show of strength, the council was unable to persuade ENI to change its mind. Appeals to national politicians and planning bodies went unheard and for the most part unacknowledged. The council had no powers to forbid the project directly, since, by this stage, the Macchia site came

under the jurisdiction of Montesantangelo. By the autumn the final batch of planning permissions had been obtained, and ENI began buying up land and preparing the site for the building of the factory complex.²⁴

Opponents to the Macchia site put forward four main objections. In the first place, they argued that the economic costs with which the town would be burdened as a result of the ENI decision cancelled out any beneficial effects. For the most part Macchia had consisted of olive plantations whose loss had to be set off against the relatively small number of jobs which the factory would create. Furthermore, Manfredonia's hope of attracting high class tourism had been based on the prospect of developing the area to the north of the town. Whereas agriculture and tourism could be successfully combined, industry and tourism were incompatible. A second and closely related argument was that the factory would constitute an ecological hazard, in particular polluting coastal waters, thereby destroying the livelihood of many local fishermen. A third set of objections was not so much concerned with the actual choice of site as with the way in which it had been made. It was claimed that, before making a decision which had important consequences for the development of Manfredonia, ENI should have consulted the opinions of the local authorities in a much more substantial and systematic way. The decision to build at Macchia had been presented as an *ex cathedra* technical judgement, and, although technically it might have been correct, the council should have been given the opportunity to appoint an independent commission of experts who could have discussed the matter with the ENI management on an equal footing.²⁵ A fourth attack of the ENI management was aimed quite specifically at the political motives which were said to lie beneath its choice. It was claimed that the technical reasons which had been put forward were not only contentious and probably false, but were, in reality, nothing more than a facade, an *ex post facto* justification designed to conceal a complex series of political manoeuvres. According to this version of the facts, ENI was a pliable tool in the hands of l'Onorevole Vincenzo Russo. It was his influence which had led to the decision to build the factory in the first place, and it was he who was ultimately responsible for the day-to-day decisions of its technical staff. The decision to build the factory on the boundaries of two communes had been made in order to ensure him of a maximum political pay-off in the form of votes. Moreover, it was claimed that Russo had a personal financial stake in the matter, since one of his major supporters, a local priest, controlled a large plot of land in the Macchia area. An additional, if secondary, motive for the choice of Macchia was that it was a deliberate attempt to prejudice Manfredonia's chance of creating a high class tourist trade, thereby preserving the monopoly of the ENI hotel and villa complex at Pugnochiuso, further along the coast.²⁶

Although elements from all four sets of criticisms were often combined, there was a marked tendency for particular parties and factions to concentrate on one line of attack in a way that throws light both on their own motives and on their bases of support. Thus, the Liberal party, which as we have seen, derived most of its support from landowners and entrepreneurs, mainly used the economic costs and pollution arguments. On the other hand, the Communists, not wanting to alienate the poorer sections of the community, were anxious to make it quite clear that they were in favour of industrialisation in general, but argued that in this particular case the local population should not have been excluded from the industrial planning process. Furthermore, not wishing to lend strength to the widespread belief that the DC party had a special relationship with state industries, they tended to pour scorn, at least in public, on the Russo jerrymandering tales. Conversely, the two DC minority factions, threatened by the prospect that the Russo faction would gain exclusive control of industrial patronage, accused their rivals and the party leadership of personal and political corruption.²⁷

Although there was little direct contact between national and local opponents of the ENI project, Manfredonian opposition to it was expressed in terms closely reminiscent of the earlier strictures of *l'Espresso* and *Italia Nostra*. Indeed, most election speeches in the town and most of the local pamphlet literature on this topic was little more than a reiteration of arguments originally put forward by Zevi and Bassani. But, if the arguments were the same, their interpretations and the emphasis laid upon them was different. The brunt of the *Italia Nostra* campaign had been directed at a national planning process which permitted *ad hoc* political needs to override long term development goals, and it had attacked ENI because it felt that it had made use of this process to further its own financial ends. By contrast, in Manfredonia, criticism was almost exclusively aimed at ENI, and much greater emphasis was put on the supposed political advantages which the company and its supporters would gain from its actions. Indeed, in my experience, most Manfredonians denied that there was any substantial technical basis to ENI's choice of site, and their explanatory model of its behaviour was predominantly political and particularistic. Table 5, which is based on Manfredonian replies to a survey question about the reasons for the choice of the Macchia site, neatly illustrates this point.

Table 5: In your opinion, why was Macchia chosen (as the site for the petro-chemical complex)?

	Number of replies	Percentage
1. Political reasons	56	20
2. To further the personal interests of ENI's local supporters ²⁸	92	33
3. Technical reasons	86	31
4. Other reasons	19	7
5. Don't Know	25	9
Total	278	100

In general terms there can be little doubt that the opposition of most of the parties to the Macchia site reflected the feelings of townsmen as a whole. Once again, this is confirmed by the response to a survey question which I have included as table 6.

Table 6: Do you believe that Macchia was a suitable site for the establishment of a petro-chemical plant?

	Number of replies	Percentage
Yes	25	12
No	184	84
Don't know	9	4
Total ²⁹	218	100

These results must, however, be treated with caution. Whilst it is clear that most Manfredonians opposed the choice of the Macchia site, this cannot be taken to imply that they supported all the objections to it put forward on their behalf by politicians, or that the political campaign against ENI encompassed the full range of popular criticisms. Thus, the apprehension of many party leaders that effluent from the factory would pollute local fishing grounds was not fully shared by the fishermen themselves; and most agricultural day-labourers with whom I spoke felt that the job prospects offered by the project were adequate compensation for the loss of work in the olive plantations. Conversely, the widespread campanalistic belief that Macchia was ill-chosen because it meant that most of the benefits of industrialisation would go to Montesantangelo found little expression in the anti-ENI campaign. Indeed, the attitudes and tactics of the parties were as much determined by internal factional strife, electoral interests, a struggle for the control of new patronage resources, and even a desire to maintain the privileges

and high status of those professional groups from which the political elite was principally drawn, as by concern to mitigate the negative consequences of industrialisation. And although none of them were able to ignore completely the interests of their supporters, their policies were at best only a partial representation of the very varied Manfredonian response to the advent of industry.³⁰

Notes to Chapter 5

1. For further details, see chapter 2.
2. Thus during the electoral campaign held in November 1966, Vincenzo Russo formally promised the electors of the methane communes that his party would take immediate steps to ensure that the industrial development of the area was not neglected.
3. A special law (no. 825) had been enacted in 1960 exempting from royalties companies processing methane in its province of origin. Law 825 referred only to the Val Basento area in Lucania. In 1965, however, it was extended to cover the whole of Italy. This concession is especially valuable since mineral royalties in Italy are very high. For further details, see Bruni and Colitti, 1967, pp.84-86.
4. At this date Foggia's 'nucleus' of industrial development was confined to a narrow strip of territory surrounding the capital city of Foggia itself, development strategies elsewhere in the province being focused on agricultural improvements, and the promotion of tourism in the Gargano. By opting for a site to the north of Manfredonia, ENI not only located its factories outside the existing pole of industrial development, but 'invaded' the fringes of a zone supposedly reserved for the development of tourism.
5. For details see *Il Globo*, October 19th 1967.
6. It is worth noting that although most national newspapers gave a much more accurate assessment of the factory's future work force, ENI made no attempt to deny or correct the false impression created by part of the local press. As late as May 1968, a local communist senator, famous for his last minute election speech surprises, tried to shock local opinions by announcing that the factory would only employ 500 workers. Even in 1970, there was a marked tendency for Manfredonians to overestimate the number of workers who would eventually be employed at the plant.

In fairness, it should be pointed out, however, that in large measure the exaggerations of the local press merely reflected the views of their political masters, who in a pre-electoral situation were anxious to gain as much credit as possible from this favourable turn of events. Thus, several local politicians spoke glibly of the problems of emigration and unemployment being solved. In a speech reported in the *Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, 20th October 1967, Vincenzo Russo claimed that the ENI project would significantly reduce the flow of overseas migration.

7. *Italia Nostra* is the Italian equivalent of the National Trust.
8. 'Une Ghirottina per il Gargano', *L'Espresso*, December 3rd 1967.
9. "ENI, which basically is the state in one of its forms of activity, should operate with a wide and comprehensive perception of its own responsibilities, and in the public interest; it behaves, instead, like a short-sighted and incompetent private company. Its powers are so great that, in a situation characterised by a lack of clear powers of control and by confused departmental spheres of competence, no-one has the force to resist it: not the local authorities who are poorly briefed and subject to political pressures from above; not the Ministry of Public Works, which has the responsibility for territorial planning; not the Ministry of Industry, which ought to have insisted on finding a suitable location for the plant; nor those of Education and Tourism responsible for the protection of the countryside and the development of centres of tourism ... It was the lowest form of electoral demagogy which alone determined the choice of site", *L'Espresso*, December 17th 1967.
10. Thus in March 1968, a member of ENI's public relations department submitted a confidential report to the personal assistant to the president of the company describing a conversation he had had with one of the advisors to l'Onorevole Giacomo Mancini, the socialist minister of Public Works. According to this source, the minister had been convinced by the arguments presented to him by *Italia Nostra*, and intended to block the project when it came before the *Consiglio Superiore dei Lavori Pubblici*.
11. *L'Espresso*, 11th December 1967, and *Nord e Sud*, no. 101, May, 1968.
12. ENI technicians later told me that it would have cost about 60% more to establish the plant to the south-west of Manfredonia. Briatico's detailed assessment of the advantages and disadvantage of the three possible sites was an attempt to counter an argument put forward by a number of moderate critics of the project. Part of the national press and several local notables claimed the risks of damaging the Gargano's tourist prospects would be greatly reduced if the petro-chemical complex was built

- to the south of Manfredonia, near the existing *Ajinmoto Insud* factory.
13. See *Il Globo*, 14th February 1968, and the article by Machiavello in *Corriere della Sera*, 14th June 1968. The *Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno* and most of the socialist press in Puglia also published articles in support of the Manfredonia project in this period. I was told that the ENI press campaign had also had a negative aspect in that the company used financial threats and inducements (for example, threats to withdraw advertising revenue, promises of jobs and consultancies) in order to stop the publication of articles attacking the Manfredonia project. I have no way of proving whether these accusations were true or false. Certainly they were strongly denied by ENI's public relations department.
 14. Published in *Universo*, June 1968.
 15. In addition to its public relations functions, ENI had hoped to achieve two distinct political objectives from the meeting. The choice of the Macchia site had already come under attack from members of the Foggian Socialist party, one of whose leaders, l'Onorevole Anna Matera, was a member of the Council of Administration (and a candidate for the Vice-Presidency) of the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*. Similar opposition had also been expressed by leading members of Foggia's Consortium for Industrial Development, which was largely dominated by the *moroteo* faction of the DC party. In Bari, where ENI had had a factory and a public relations department for some years, its range of political contacts and influence was far greater than in Foggia. In particular, it was assured of the support of the *moroteo* mayor of Bari and the Bari Socialists under whose auspices the meeting was held. By including both the regional and provincial leaders of the same parties and factions at the meeting, ENI hoped to temper the opposition of the Foggian delegates. A second, and more optimistic objective, was to attempt to isolate and marginalise one of the project's most implacable antagonists, l'Onorevole Cifarelli, a Republican senator from Bari, who was also a *Cassa* councillor. In the event, Cifarelli disobliged by failing to attend the meeting.
 16. *La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, 20th April, 1968.
 17. This change was much less marked in Montesantangelo than in other communes. From the outset Montesantangelo had been especially enthusiastic about the project; so much so that on December 2nd, 1967, its council gave its consent to the project without ever having seen it. The town was, in fact, to take very little part in the anti-Macchia campaign. The Macchia site straddled the borders of Manfredonia and Montesantangelo, whereas other suggested locations were in Manfredonia

the very good reason that they believed that had they done so they would have lost electoral support. In 1970, however, one of the leaders of the *Lista Cittadina* told me privately that he would be delighted if ENI were to leave the town, lock stock and barrel. And some members of the Republican and Liberal parties came close to sharing his views.

19. *Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, June 6th 1968.
20. It was for this reason that opposition to the Council of Minister's decision in favour of the Macchia site was expressed in the form of a joint statement of the *capi gruppi*. It is interesting to note that the DC *capo gruppo* was leader of the *coldiretti*, and one of the few important DC officials in this period who was not a member of the Russo faction.
21. These speeches, in fact, provoked a bitter reply from the Citizens Committee who accused them of betrayal. I have included the text of their reply in Appendix B.
22. Thus, Vincenzo Russo obtained relatively few votes of preference in Manfredonia, although he fared better in Montesantangelo. A Foggian Socialist candidate, who also supported ENI, was similarly unsuccessful in Manfredonia.
23. In this period, the centre-left majority on the council was made up of 18 DC and 3 Socialists out of 40 councillors. Socialist support was, therefore, vital.
24. Altogether ENI bought some 500 acres of land at Macchia, at an average cost of £1,300 per acre. These lands, which were highly fragmented, were mainly olive groves, and the price their owners received was at least double what they could have expected in the open market. Initially, a small number of landowners refused to sell, but were eventually compelled to do so under the threat of compulsory purchase orders.
25. The monopoly of technological competence enjoyed by ENI is well illustrated by the meeting of the Regional Committee for Economic Planning at which its engineers presented a detailed technical justification for its choice of site. Several local politicians and representatives of the Provincial Consortium for Industrial Development present at the meeting expressed doubts about the wisdom of this decision, but, on their own admission, were not sufficiently well-briefed to put forward a detailed technical rebuttal of ENI's case.
26. Although this view undoubtedly exaggerates both Russo's influence on ENI and the corporation's lack of scruples, there was just enough substance in such accusations to give it widespread credence. Thus, I was told by a senior member of ENI's technical planning staff that Russo

representatives of the Provincial Consortium for Industrial Development present at the meeting expressed doubts about the wisdom of this decision, but, on their own admission, were not sufficiently well-briefed to put forward a detailed technical rebuttal of ENI's case.

26. Although this view undoubtedly exaggerates both Russo's influence on ENI and the corporation's lack of scruples, there was just enough substance in such accusations to give it widespread credence. Thus, I was told by a senior member of ENI's technical planning staff that Russo had tried to insist that the complex should be built in such a way that it straddled both communes (as it turned out, unavailingly); and it was indeed the case that a large block of land at Macchia was owned by a religious foundation whose leader was a close Russo supporter. My own view is that 'political' considerations of this sort had very little influence on ENI's decision to build at Macchia, and that their choice of site was basically determined by technical and financial factors.
27. It is also interesting to note that opponents of the Macchia site were, in their turn, accused by rival parties and factions of having a personal interest in the question. Thus it was said that several prominent members of the *moroteo* faction opposed the Macchia site because they owned land to the south of the town which they would have liked to sell at the high prices offered by ENI. In a similar vein, the leading Liberal opponent of the scheme was accused of concealing a campanalistic interest in that he wished to see the factory transferred to Candela, his own home town.
28. That is, members of the majority DC faction.
29. Altogether, 218 people replied to this question and about one-third of them believed that there was more than one reason behind ENI's choice. By far the commonest combination was reasons 1 and 2.
30. For a detailed account of the way in which different social groups and classes assessed the Manfredonia project, see chapter 7.

Chapter 6

The establishment of the factory complex

Introduction

Undeterred by controversy over the Macchia site, ENI through its subsidiary ANIC went ahead with the factory building programme. By the winter of 1968 it had completed the purchase of lands at Macchia and had allocated the first building contracts to specialist construction companies. A small core of key workers including the director designate of the factory, a skeleton personnel staff, and a handful of outside contractors began to take up residence in the town.

For most Manfredonians this was a period of intense speculation and concern. What sort of jobs would be available at the factory and how many of them? Should emigrants be recalled and would industrial experience abroad count in their favour? Would temporary construction workers have precedence in the eventual allocation of permanent jobs in the factory? To whom should one apply for jobs, and what group of persons or politicians could best sponsor applications? The difficulties people encountered in finding satisfactory answers to these questions lent strength to rumour and speculation. And subsequent decisions to increase industrial investment at Macchia by adding a port, a power station, and a further petro-chemical plant, *Chimica Dauna*, financed jointly by ENI and *Snia Viscosa*, although generally welcomed,¹ added to the confusion as people sought to understand how best to take advantage of the new industrial opportunities presented to them. Indeed, the only point of certainty in a confused situation was that most Manfredonians especially unemployed students and manual workers were convinced that the conditions of employment offered by ANIC were likely to be much better than anything available in the local economy.²

The construction of the factory complex and its infrastructure was largely though not entirely entrusted to northern Italian specialist contractors, a policy which evoked some resentment both in Manfredonia and in the province as a whole for its implied criticism of local firms. Opponents of this policy pointed out that the ENI project entailed a massive injection of capital (about £20 million for the ANIC factory alone) and an absurdly high

investment/worker ratio. If the multiplier effects envisaged by Law 634 and the provincial industrial development plan were to have any chance of success, preference should have been given to local companies. From ANIC's point of view, the trouble with their argument was that there were few, if any, local firms with sufficient capital or the necessary technical skills to undertake major contracts and, understandably, they preferred to deal with companies whose past record provided guarantees of competence and financial stability. Some minor contracts, for example, the building of the factory boundary fence, were allocated to Manfredonian firms, but they accounted for only a tiny portion of the investment programme, and their impact on the local economy was slight.

The only direct benefit accruing to Manfredonians from the construction of the factory complex was that it provided welcome temporary employment at a time in which the local building industry was moving into a recession.³ Most of the manual workers employed on the site were recruited locally, being engaged in the correct official manner through the employment exchanges of Manfredonia and Montesantangelo. Indeed, during the early stages of the building programme, the prospect of large numbers of temporary jobs seemed likely to lead to a quarrel between the two towns. But, in the event, and largely because none of the major political parties saw any advantage in allowing campanalistic sentiments to cut across the loyalties of their supporters, a compromise was arranged through the good offices of the provincial labour exchange, whereby each town was allocated an equal percentage of the jobs available.

A second criticism sometimes levelled at ANIC was the aloofness and unapproachability of its managers. Forewarned by previous experiences in Sicily and the South, where claims to friendship had been used to put impossible demands on their services, most members of the ANIC staff were wary of taking an active role in the social life of the town, and their dealings with Manfredonians were largely confined to semi-formal and fairly regular meetings with local politicians and notables. But for members of Manfredonia's landowning and professional elite, there was a tendency to interpret such behaviour as a rejection of their traditional culture and style of life, and to see it as a threat to those values on which their own claims to status within the town were based.

The recruitment of the work force

For the overwhelming majority of Manfredonians the most important aspect of the ENI project was the number of permanent industrial jobs it would provide. Ever since the methane demonstrations of the mid-sixties,

the creation of large-scale industrial employment has been one of the primary political pledges of all the main parties, and repeated promises by representatives of the government parties that this aim was about to be achieved had greatly inflated local hopes and aspirations. In the aftermath of political euphoria which followed the official announcement of the Manfredonia project, the public had been grossly misled by persistent overestimates of the employment potential of the ANIC plant, and even the more modest claims of the ENI press hand-out and the revised figures presented to the electorate by the Communist party, turned out to be substantial overestimates. In the event, the ANIC plant provided work for less than 300 persons, with a further 200 jobs being promised for *Chimica Dauna* and the ENEL power station. The numbers of jobs available were so much below the original estimates that even at the end of 1970, when the factory was almost ready to go into production, many Manfredonians had difficulty in believing them.⁴ Certainly they came nowhere near meeting local demands. Thus, according to the ANIC personnel department, by March 1970 one thousand applications had already come in; six months later these had risen to more than five thousand, a situation bound to lead to frustration and disappointment.

A further difficulty was that the range of jobs offered by ANIC did not correspond to the areas of greatest local need. About one-third of all jobs at the plant were for highly qualified technicians, people with degrees or high school diplomas in chemistry or the natural sciences, almost the only educational category which the province could not provide in abundance. On the other hand there were no more than a score of administrative posts to be divided amongst vast numbers of unemployed land surveyors, accountants and schoolteachers.⁵ Although many of them would have been prepared to take manual jobs, ANIC was reluctant to accept them. In part because it believed that marked status differences amongst manual workers led to disruption and discontent on the factory floor, in part because the presence of large numbers of overqualified workers put undue strain on the company's internal promotion scheme.

Wherever possible the permanent work force was chosen directly by the ANIC personnel department.⁶ After an initial scrutiny to eliminate applicants who failed to meet the company's general age and educational requirements, the rest were called for interview at the factory where they were put through a series of aptitude tests and a medical examination. Lists of suitable candidates were then sent to head office in Milan, which made the final selection and was responsible for sending written notification to successful applicants. Most technicians and skilled workers were awarded company scholarships, sent on training courses and given practical experience by

working for short periods at the company's other plants.

Throughout 1969 and 1970 ANIC's selection procedures were at the centre of a great deal of criticism and controversy, and although this issue never got off the ground as a topic for public debate, it was the subject of much private discussion, speculation and concern. The nub of the controversy was the principles on which the company chose its workforce. Despite its complex selection procedures, in Manfredonia it was generally held that the factory recruited personnel not according to impartial criteria such as age, skill and qualifications for the job, but appointed people with the most powerful recommendation or those prepared to pay substantial bribes.⁷ And these beliefs, right or wrong, served as a basis for action. Thus, few people applied for jobs without first seeking the support of one or more intermediaries, usually though not always leading members of the Russo faction, who, particularly during the periods of the interviews, bombarded the factory staff with telephone calls in which they sought to promote the interests of their clients or, at least, to find out how their applications were faring. Both the supposed political favouritism practised by the factory, and the squabbles between DC factions for 'control' of these new patronage resources were widely criticised, especially by unsuccessful applicants and members of non-government parties.

A striking illustration of Manfredonian attitudes to recommendations is provided by their response to three survey questions which I have included as Tables 7-9. Tables 7 and 8 show that a belief in the need for recommendations was almost universal, and that for many Manfredonians they were a sufficient condition for obtaining a job at the factory. Table 9 provides a fascinating insight into townsmen's perceptions of the relationships between factory and the local political elite, illustrating, in particular, the supposed privileged position of members of the 'Russo' faction.

Table 7: Question 32a: Do you believe that it is necessary to have a recommendation in order to get a job at the ANIC plant?

Yes	207
No	8
Don't know	1
Total	218 ⁸

Table 8: If you replied yes to Question 32a, do you believe that a recommendation is sufficient on its own, or do candidates also require technical qualifications?

Recommendations sufficient	98
Need other qualifications as well	109
Total	207

Table 9: In your opinion, which parties or persons are best able to furnish a valid recommendation for jobs at the ANIC plant?

Parties/Persons	Number	Total
<i>Parties</i>		
DC	69	
Other government parties	24	
Other parties	8	
		101
<i>Politicians⁹</i>		
Named members of 'Russo' faction	129	
Named members of 'Moroteo' faction	8	
Local Communist senator	11	
Others (named)	8	
Others (not named)	20	
		176
<i>Others</i>		
Local notables	7	
Members	16	
Trade Union officials	4	
Employment Exchange officials	6	
Members of ANIC factory staff	9	
Others	4	
Don't know	17	
		63
Total		340

Manfredonian attitudes to recruitment were important if only because they seemed to provide ANIC's managers with a striking confirmation of the theory that the opposition which their project encountered was the product of an idiosyncratic set of local cultural norms and values which prevented those who held them from understanding the needs of industry and the logic of the industrial decision making process. Officially, the company denied that recommendations were taken into account, and pointed out that to do so would negate the principles of technical and economic efficiency on which modern industrial organisations depend.¹⁰ The fact that Manfredonians acted as if recommendations were all that mattered was an irrelevant but unavoidable nuisance and a problem which they had encountered in all their other plants in the South. Such behaviour was based on the understandable but mistaken assumption that the same particularistic criteria of recruitment which obtained in local bureaucracies were equally applicable to modern industrial concerns. And the recommendation syndrome was reinforced by the activities of unscrupulous local politicians anxious to convince their clients of their own power and influence.

Up to a point, this managerial diagnosis of Manfredonian attitudes to recruitment was accurate. Thus, as in the controversy over the Macchia site, there was a marked tendency for people to underrate technical factors. Applicants were often unaware that the jobs they sought had precise technical requirements for which their qualifications were quite unsuited. And they pinned their hopes of political sponsorship in much the same way as if they had been seeking employment in the local administration, a situation which the local political elite were quick to take advantage of.

But to regard such actions simply as an expression of local cultural values is mistaken. If Manfredonians used a home-made, particularistic, model to explain the actions of the industrial giant on their doorstep, responsibility for this lay, at least in part, with ENI and ANIC. ENI maintained a large public relations department with a group of officials specifically responsible for local community affairs, and the ANIC management was also supposed to perform some public relations functions. Yet at no time did either set out to explain to the public as a whole the aims and policies of their companies. Thus, although ANIC ran an office in Manfredonia for a few months at the beginning of 1969, it never directly advertised the number and types of jobs available at the factory, or how to apply for them. And, relationships between staff members of ENI and ANIC and members of the host community were largely confined to irregular meetings with local politicians and administrators. Deprived of direct access to information, ordinary Manfredonians were left to make whatever sense they could out of the snippets of gossip, hearsay and speculation which swept through the town.

Understandably, they did so by fitting them into their pre-existing patronage models of bureaucratic behaviour.

The ENI and ANIC management justified their reluctance to give information to the general public on two main grounds. First, they argued that to advertise jobs was unnecessary since they already had far too many applicants. Secondly, they claimed that even a full-blown publicity campaign would have failed to convince the local population that recruitment was impartial and that people would anyway have gone on using recommendations. Even when examined purely from a management point of view, both these points seem to me to be doubtful. The first was a question of economy of administration. Although advertisement may well have led to a greater number of applications, there was a strong possibility that a higher percentage of applicants would have sought only those posts for which they were qualified. The second point assumes that local notions about corruption, recommendations and so on are unchanging and form an impenetrable and self-perpetuating system of actions and belief. Whilst there is some truth in this view, it seems to me that it can easily be exaggerated. In my experience, Manfredonians' ideas about recommendations were mixed, and certainly they did not believe that all selection procedures were partial to the same degree. Thus, I was frequently told that a better result could have been obtained if ANIC had been prepared to recruit its workforce entirely through the official employment exchange, whose points system selection method was, it was claimed, fairer and less open to dishonesty and political abuse.

An even stronger reason why it would be misleading to explain Manfredonians' attitudes to recruitment simply in terms of a particularistic local ethic is that their perception of the situation, although distorted in emphasis, contained an important element of truth. In public the ENI/ANIC management maintained throughout that its selection procedures were impartial and fair, but, in private, some of its members were prepared to acknowledge that there were exceptions to the rule and even to discuss the circumstances in which they occurred. Generally speaking, they distinguished between two sorts of favouritism: the first, the appointment of people to jobs for which they are unqualified, was rare if only because of its negative consequences for industrial efficiency; the second, the use of political recommendations as a means of discriminating between eligibles, was more common, its frequency varying according to the relationship between the company and local and national power elites. Thus, in an attempt to improve relationships with the local community the factory personnel department seems to have been prepared to accept a handful of candidates nominated by local notables, and similar facilities were made available to influential national political leaders with an interest in the constituency. Overall, my impression is that only a

tiny proportion of the workforce was recruited in this way, but a few well publicised examples were all that was required for the local political elite to create an illusion of total influence and control.

There were two other important ways in which local politicians were able both to influence selection procedures and to create the impression of power. The first derived from their position as intermediaries between town and factory, the second from the privileged relationship which existed between one faction of the DC party and the ENI hierarchy. If one compares the flow of applications with dates of appointment, it is apparent that early applicants stood a far better chance of obtaining jobs.¹¹ It is equally likely that a significant portion of such applicants were the *protégés* of local political notables. In a situation in which the company itself remained tight-lipped about its recruitment policies, local politicians with contacts in both the factories and the national ENI hierarchy were in an ideal position to obtain (and, indeed, to monopolise) information about job requirements and selection procedures. Especially in the early stages of the selection process candidates were generally obliged to have recourse to political intermediaries, with the effect that most applications had already gone through a form of political pre-selection before arriving at the factory. Similarly, there was also a degree of political mediation in the announcements of the results. In some cases, at least, it appears that members of the entourage of l'Onorevole Vincenzo Russo were able to obtain information about the outcome of the interviews before the results were officially announced. And successful candidates often first heard of their appointments through a standardised ministerial telegram in which they were informed that thanks to the minister's personal intervention they had been found jobs at the factory.

From the company's viewpoint the influence of local politicians was peripheral and derisory, and several of its managers told me that they had been subject to much less political pressure in Manfredonia than in other areas in the South.¹² But even if the powers of local politicians were founded more on careful impression management than on substantial access to decision makers within the corporation, the intricate web of illusion they were able to create was real enough in its consequences. Manfredonians were rarely willing to risk foregoing the possible advantages of a political recommendation, and successful applicants found it hard to deny that their good fortune was at least partly due to the efforts of their patrons.

In view of its sensitivity and prompt response to criticism in other areas, it is, perhaps, surprising that ENI made little attempt to curtail the activities of those politicians whose misrepresentations contributed directly to the unpopularity of its recruitment policies in Manfredonia. To have done so

would have been relatively simple. By denying them access to privileged information, their scope for political mediation would have been greatly reduced, and the cost of setting up the company's own, rival, information service in the town would not have been high. There were, however, both organisational and political reasons why ENI found it difficult to adopt measures of this sort.

Because of a division of public relations functions between ENI's central office in Rome and the local factory, there was a tendency for the corporation to be slow to recognise and to respond to social problems in Manfredonia, whose dimensions were not always fully comprehended. As the men on the spot, the factory manager and his staff were best placed to follow the day-to-day vicissitudes of relations between town and factory, but their primary concern was with the financial and engineering aspects of the project and, although they could call on the public relations skills of their colleagues in Rome, my impression is that they did so only in emergencies. By contrast, the central public relations department, whilst highly competent to deal with the type of social and political problems which arose in Manfredonia, was far more concerned with national than local issues which were only taken seriously, when, as in the case of the Macchia episode, they threatened to disturb the intricate balance of power between the corporation and the government parties. Indeed a fear of disturbing this balance was probably the most important of ENI's reasons for being unwilling to rescind the privileges of local politicians, since in the final analysis the corporation itself was dependent on the support of its own national political patrons.

The ENEL affair

By far the most important clash between town and incoming industry which took place in the period in which I was living in Manfredonia followed the decision to build an oil-fired power station on the Macchia site. Between the autumn of 1969 and early summer 1970, the government released details of a new investment programme for Manfredonia which was designed both to create an adequate infrastructure for the petro-chemical complex and to bring other industries into the area. In September 1969, ENEL (the National Electricity Generating Board) stated that it had acquired 30 hectares of land from ENI at Macchia on which it proposed to build one of the largest generating plants in the South; shortly afterwards, ENI and *Snia Viscosa* announced their intention to invest jointly some £20 million in a chemical factory for the production of caprolethams. Some months later, plans for a new deep-water harbour, improved rail and road links and a new water supply system was also released.

Initial reactions to these proposals were remarkably similar to those which had followed the decision to build the ANIC plant. The local, mainly DC controlled press, was fulsome in its praise of l'Onorevole Vincenzo Russo, whom it described as the principal architect of the industrial upsurge of the region; and once again there was a marked tendency to overstate the employment potential of these new ventures.¹³ The immediate response of the left-wing parties was more restrained. For the most part they refrained from comment in public, though privately some of their leaders were prepared to admit that the proposals went some way towards meeting their declared objectives that the ANIC plant did not remain 'a cathedral in the desert', and that other industries with a bigger job potential should be brought into the area.

Early in the New Year, however, there was a radical change in the attitudes of the main political parties, and the ENEL project in particular came increasingly under attack. The lead was taken by the newly elected left-wing administration. Thus, at the end of January, the council unanimously accepted a resolution of the Socialist/Communist *giunta* condemning the decision to build a power station and caprolethams factory on the outskirts of the town, on the grounds that the ensuing industrial pollution would constitute a serious health hazard for its inhabitants. At the same meeting it was also suggested that a more suitable site could be found further along the coast, and the council executive was authorised to take all necessary steps to achieve this end. As in the earlier controversy over the Macchia site, the council was gravely handicapped by its lack of official status. Local planning consent was in the hands of the municipal authorities of Montesantangelo which strongly favoured the new proposals. Nor could it hope to achieve its objectives through the Industrial Consortium for the Area of Foggia, the only local planning body on which it was legally entitled to be represented. The Consortium, which at the best of times had shown itself reluctant to oppose the interests of industrial giants such as ENI, ENEL or *Snia Viscosa*, was in a state of crisis because of factional quarrels between the Foggian political elite, and its planning functions were virtually in abeyance.¹⁴

The first move of the council executive was to negotiate directly with ENEL and ENI and with their colleagues in Montesantangelo. A series of meetings were held in February, but from the point of view of the Manfredonian council the results were disappointing. ENEL argued that sufficient safeguards had been built into the power station design to obviate any risk or pollution. It also pointed out that it would be folly not to take advantage of the costly infrastructure which the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno* was providing. ENI's reaction was even tougher. Council representatives were

told that if they were not prepared to accept the logic of industrial development, the most satisfactory solution for all concerned would be for the company to pull out of the area altogether.¹⁵ Despite Manfredonian appeals, the council of Montesantangelo re-affirmed its approval of the ENEL project, and relations between the two communities steadily deteriorated as a series of letters were exchanged, both privately and in the local press, in which accusations of self-interest, indifference to the needs of the population and personal abuse were directed at members of the other council.¹⁶

These rebuffs failed to deter the council executive. At the end of February an all-party fact-finding committee was appointed to study the effects of industrial pollution. In order to gain comparative experience, the committee consulted the municipal authorities of a number of other communes in which similar power stations had been established, and also sought expert advice on the case of Manfredonia from environmentalists at the University of Naples. The committee's report, which was presented to the full council on 11th March, was fiercely critical of the ENEL project. The corporation was accused of having sought deliberately to mislead the council at their previous meeting by minimising possible risks. The consensus of expert opinion was that, as a result of industrial effluent and oil discharges from visiting tankers, there was a strong probability of sea pollution, and the threat of sodium-dioxide fall-out over the town itself could not be discounted entirely. Furthermore, the experience of other communes had shown that it was both costly and difficult to monitor pollution levels independently, and hence virtually impossible to ensure that the safeguards promised by ENEL would be effective.

All parties on the council accepted the committee's report, and once again expressed their joint opposition to the project. Since, however, the corporation had already begun preparatory work on the site, there was less agreement on the options still open to the council. The hard line, adopted by the Liberals, Republicans, MSI and the *Lista Cittadina*, was that, even at this late stage, ENEL should be persuaded or compelled to choose another site. On the other extreme, the majority faction of the DC party seemed reluctantly prepared to accept the *fait accompli*, and argued that the best the council could do in the circumstances was to ensure that the safeguards promised by ENEL were fully implemented. The left-wing governing alliance took an intermediate stance. In view of ENEL's intransigence and the enthusiasm which the inhabitants of Montesantangelo had shown for the scheme, it would be politically extremely difficult to obtain a change of site at this juncture. The most promising strategy was to set up an independent committee of enquiry, employing outside experts. If, as seemed likely, their findings confirmed those of the council's committee, they might serve to temper

*montanari*¹⁷ enthusiasm, and could be used to extract concessions from ENEL, and in particular a promise to use methane gas instead of oil.¹⁸ In addition they would seek to bring pressure on ENEL in a number of other ways. As in the Macchia affair, the national press and conservation societies such as *Italia Nostra* might be willing to support the commune's case. And they could formally oppose the scheme at meetings of the regional and national health authorities (and even possibly at CIPE), and try to persuade these bodies to withhold planning consent.

In the event, these tactics met with little success. Apart from a solitary public meeting at which a leading environmentalist spoke generally about problems of pollution, the idea of an independent public enquiry was abandoned, largely because the administration came to realise that by the time its findings were published the construction of the power station would be well under way. Similarly, despite repeated letters and solicitations there was little response from the national press or from *Italia Nostra*.¹⁹ Visits to the Ministry of Public Health were equally fruitless. Both at the national and regional levels, officials were sympathetic, but claimed there was little they could do to help.²⁰

It was against this background of failure that a special meeting was convened under the auspices of the council on 31st March. This meeting was addressed by party officials, representatives of the trade unions and student organisations as well as elected councillors, and its main purpose was to discuss ways of broadening the basis of the anti-ENEL campaign. Two important decisions were made. First, the larger parties promised to consult their colleagues in neighbouring communes, and especially Montesantangelo, with a view to drawing up a common programme of opposition to ENEL. Secondly, it was agreed to establish a Citizens' Action Committee, independent of the commune, which would be responsible both for explaining to the local population why it was necessary to oppose the ENEL scheme and for co-ordinating the various forms of protest.²¹

Considering the earlier background of campanalistic strife between Manfredonia and Montesantangelo, this policy of joint consultation met with some success. Both the Socialist and Communist parties held discussions to which representatives of all interested communes were invited,²² and a compromise formula, whereby the power station would remain in the territory of Montesantangelo, but should be run on methane instead of naphtha was agreed. This formula provided the basis for a joint policy agreement made early in April between the mayors of Manfredonia, Montesantangelo and a number of nearby communes, and was the first step towards the establishment of an intercommunal committee for dealing with common problems

resulting from industrialisation.

But the first and only significant victory in the anti-ENEL campaign came not because of the threat of direct action or increasing inter-communal solidarity, but on account of the Demochristians' fear that discontent over industrial policy would lead to a repetition of their poor showing in the 1968 elections in the regional elections of June 1970. Alarmed by the fact that even his own faction within the DC party had become associated with the anti-ENEL campaign, l'Onorevole Vincenzo Russo organised a meeting at the Ministry of Public Works in Rome between the mayors of Manfredonia and Montesantangelo and Di Cagno, the president of ENEL. Under political pressure, Di Cagno, whilst denying that existing plans would lead to serious pollution problems in Manfredonia, nevertheless agreed to use methane as the main power source at the plant.

The effect of the concession was to take the sting out of the anti-ENEL campaign, at least for the duration of the elections. Both the Communists and the Christian Democrats proclaimed it as a victory for their own party policies, and although the smaller parties on the centre and the right were far from satisfied with the outcome, there was little they could do on their own. In comparison with the elections of two years earlier, the consequences of industrialisation was not a major campaign theme. Only in the late summer, when the left-wing administration came to realise that the promises they had received might not be maintained did the ENEL affair threaten once more to become a central issue in Manfredonian politics.²³

Overall, the ENEL controversy raises a number of interesting points. The first is the fact that opposition was expressed almost exclusively in terms of a conservationist ideology even though many of the economic and political objections which had been used to contest the choice of the Macchia site were equally applicable to the power station complex. The reasons for this were both technical and political. One of the lessons drawn from the ENI affair had been that conservationist arguments were most likely to attract the attention of the national press and pressure groups such as *Italia Nostra*. The Manfredonian authorities realised that the support of agencies of this kind was essential if they were to persuade ENEL to change its plans, and naturally, therefore, sought to present their case in its most persuasive form. Another reason was that a detailed economic and social costs analysis of the sort used two years earlier would have only served to strengthen *montanari* suspicions that Manfredonian objections to the ENEL scheme were purely campanalistic, whereas the risk of pollution could be presented as a problem facing both communities. Probably the strongest grounds for fighting the anti-ENEL campaign on conservationist arguments was that

these were the only terms on which all the parties in Manfredonia could agree. Party differences over industrialisation were much the same as they had been during the Macchia controversy, and the fact that on this occasion they were not allowed to destroy the united front adopted by the commune throughout the campaign, is striking testimony to the tact and skill with which the Socialist/Communist coalition handled a delicate and potentially divisive issue.²⁴

A second point arising from the ENEL controversy was the strong feelings of *campanalismo* which it aroused. These had been present during the earlier Macchia episode, but had been held in check by the heads of the major parties who had no desire to alienate support either in Montesantangelo or amongst the large *montanari* community in Manfredonia. But, in 1970, it was much more difficult to contain partisan sentiment. From the outset, it was apparent that the power station would be built in the territory of Montesantangelo, which would receive the lion's share, if, indeed, not all, of the benefits of industrialisation; specifically, a substantial tax revenue, and a high percentage of the contract labour force. For *montanari* the development of the Macchia site seemed to offer a unique opportunity to halt the decline in the fortune and population of their town. Consequently, Manfredonian protests and talk of pollution went largely unheeded, since, in their view, it was no more than a pretext, a covert attempt to persuade national authorities to move the power station further along the coast to the south, and within the territorial jurisdiction of Manfredonia.

Thirdly, it is important to note that although ENI was not directly involved in the ENEL controversy it did not escape criticism. Not all Manfredonians were able to distinguish between the two state corporations, and many of those who did felt that without the active encouragement of ENI the power station would not have been built. The sale of part of the Macchia site to ENEL led to accusations of property speculation and profiteering, and the charges which had been levelled at the corporation two years earlier were constantly reiterated throughout the controversy.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that, despite political claims to the contrary, the ENEL campaign did not succeed in achieving any of its major objectives. Its failure both demonstrates the powerlessness of the local authorities and provided a wider perspective in which to assess the outcome of the earlier Macchia controversy. The failure of the 1968 campaign had been commonly attributed to persistent factionalism and inter-party strife which had destroyed the commune's unity of purpose and bargaining position. After the events of 1970, this explanation seemed far less convincing. Communal solidarity had been maintained throughout, and although there

were importance differences between the parties on the terms on which they were prepared to settle, they were not allowed to influence the conduct of the campaign. Although the power station complex had been established within the context of a planning policy which formally guaranteed grass-roots participation in decision making, there was no attempt to consult local opinion beforehand. Once the project had been sanctioned at a national level, Manfredonians had little chance of redress: local planning and consultative bodies were powerless to help, the national press was unsympathetic, there was no independent machinery for assessing the justice of their case. It is, then, hardly surprising that by the end of 1970 many local administrators and politicians were beginning to argue that direct action: strikes, a withdrawal of services, occupation of the factory sites and so on, was their only means of influencing the two industrial giants sitting on their doorstep.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. The exception was the power station, which was opposed almost from the outset. See section 3 below.
2. In comparison with people living in the 'methane communes', where there was a marked tendency to exaggerate the economic rewards of industrial workers, Manfredonians, largely because of their experience of the *Ajinomoto-Insud* plant, were able to evaluate with a fair degree of accuracy industrial wages and factory conditions. They were attracted by factory work, not so much on account of wage levels (which were not much higher than those offered by some local employers) but because of the security of tenure and extra welfare benefits which such employment offered.
3. At the height of the construction programme, at the end of 1970, about 600 workers from Manfredonia and Montesantangelo were employed on the site.
4. Thus, in response to a question about the size of the ANIC permanent workforce, put as part of a questionnaire administered to 218 household heads in August 1970, 9% believed it would employ less than 250 workers; 36% put the workforce at between 250 and 500; 31% at between 500 and 5,000. The remaining 24% were unable to make an estimate.
5. The composition of the ANIC workforce was roughly as follows: a managerial staff of about 30 composed of both technical experts and administrators; 10/15 accountants and secretaries; about 60 skilled technicians; 160 manual workers; a handful of ancillary workers, gatemen,

guards, cleaners and so on.

6. By giving scholarships and in-service training to successful applicants, ANIC was able to obtain exemption from the general rule that workers must be engaged through the official labour exchange. It was, however, obliged to take a part of its workforce through normal channels, and also to give preference to certain categories of persons (for example, war orphans) favoured by Italian labour legislation.
7. The explanation in terms of recommendations was far more common, but many people at the lower end of the social scale, for example, fishermen and building labourers, told me that bribes to certain local party officials or even to the factory management were the surest way of getting a job.
8. There were 218 replies to this question. Slightly more than one-half of respondents named two or more sources of recommendations, the commonest combination being DC and a named member of the Russo faction.
9. Most respondents specified individual politicians by name, a few (20), whilst making it clear that they believed that individual politicians were best able to furnish valid recommendations, were unwilling to name them.
10. This point was made very forcibly to me by the head of personnel at the ANIC company headquarters in Milan, who claimed that successful recommendations were so rare (perhaps one in a thousand applications) that they could be ignored altogether.
11. Thus, by Spring 1970 the company had received less than one thousand applications but had already filled about one-half of the total number of jobs.
12. Although the evidence is fragmentary and impressionistic, comparison with Gela and Ferrandina appears to bear out this generalisation. In both cases the ability of local and national politicians to impose their *protégés* on the company and the incidence of ministerial telegrams seems to have been significantly greater than in Manfredonia. See Davis; *op.cit.* pp 152-5 and Hytten and Marchioni; *op.cit.* pp 78. These differences can probably best be explained in terms of change in the political strength of ENI at the national level, a subject to which I return in my final chapter.
13. Thus, for example, the weekly newspaper *Il Gargano* (20.9.69) claimed that the power station alone would provide permanent employment for between 500 and 1,000 persons, a quite absurd overestimate.

14. During this period, there were no meetings of the Consortium, and a number of communes had still not appointed members to it. Even more important was the fact that its president had completed his term of office and there was intense political speculation about who, if anyone, should replace him.
15. I am doubtful whether at this late stage it would have been either politically or economically possible to carry out this threat. The reason why it was made was that the company's public relations department believed with some justification that talk about pollution was simply a pretext to gain other concessions. In its view, the main objective of the left-wing administration was to extract promises of further labour intensive industries. And it calculated that, in the last resort, the Communist party would be unwilling to take any action which might jeopardise those jobs already promised to the area.
16. See, for example, 'An open letter from the mayor of Manfredonia to the mayor of Montesantangelo'; *Corriere di Foggia*, 27.2.1970. 'La Guerra della Secchia del '70' in *La Gazzetta di Foggia*, 1.3.1970. And also, *Quaderni Garganici (Numero Unico)* May 1970; and *L'Avvenire Garganico (Numero Unico)* 19.5.70.
17. i.e. the inhabitants of Montesantangelo.
18. At their meeting with ENEL representatives in February, the council had suggested that the risk of environmental pollution would be much reduced if the corporation agreed to use methane. ENEL rejected this suggestion on the grounds that methane was too costly and too 'noble' a fuel for power station use. Subsequently, the council discovered that methane from the Sub-Appennino was being used to fire a power station in Naples. Hence its assertion that ENEL was acting in bad faith.
19. According to its secretary, *Italia Nostra* felt there was little point in making an issue of the ENEL decision, since the Macchia coastline had already been ruined by the building of the petro-chemical plant.
20. At a public meeting in Manfredonia (22.3.1970) the Provincial Medical Health Officer (*Medico Sanitario Provinciale*) made it clear that opponents of the ENEL scheme could expect little help from his ministry. His own office had not been officially notified of the project, and the regional public health committee to which the commune hoped to put its case still existed only on paper. The public health authorities were, he claimed, only consulted *ex post facto*, and since legally their powers were ambiguous, it was unlikely that they would feel able to impose a veto on the project of an important national agency such as ENEL.

21. The strongest backer of the Citizens' Committee was the left wing administration. At this stage, the Communist party believed that direct action was probable. It wanted to avoid a situation in which a Communist mayor and assessors were seen to lead a campaign of strikes and protest marches, which might serve as an excuse for the Prefect to suspend their administration. In the event, the Citizens' Committee was not called upon to organise a campaign of direct action. And the only activities of this sort which occurred whilst I was living in Manfredonia were a relatively insignificant students protest march and one-day strike held in April.
22. i.e. Representatives from Manfredonia, Montesantangelo, Mattinata, Vieste and Margherita di Savoia.
23. In these circumstances, it was obviously impossible to obtain accurate information about whether the power station would be fired with methane or naphtha. Locally based ENI and ENEL officials, with whom I discussed the matter, were privately convinced that despite promises to the contrary naphtha would in fact be used.
24. Understandably, these differences were hardly ever discussed publicly, although in the run-up to the Regional Elections, the Liberals strongly criticised what they regarded as the PCI's tardy and opportunist conversion to conservationism. (See, for example, *L'Avvenire Garganico*; 18.5.1970). The main difference between the parties were as follows: The PLI, PRI, MSI and *Lista Cittadina* wanted ENEL to leave the area altogether, and the *Lista Cittadina* would have been happy to see the industrialisation scheme (including the ENI and *Snia Viscosa*-ENI projects) abandoned in its entirety. On the other hand both Christian Democrats and the Communists were prepared to compromise provided that ENEL agreed to adequate safeguards. Indeed, it is probably fair to say that the Communist party's objections to the scheme were as much based on resentment on being excluded from the planning process as on fear of pollution. This does not, of course, mean that many of its members were not genuinely concerned about environmental damage and health hazards.