

AN AMERICAN DREAM: ADRIANO BUZZATI-TRAVERSO AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY OF GENETICS AND BIOPHYSICS IN NAPLES

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This contribution analyses the fundamental role of Adriano Buzzati-Traverso (1913-1983) in the development of population genetics and molecular biology in Italy from 1940 onward.

It points out, in particular, on the foundation of Buzzati-Traverso's major project - the International Laboratory of Genetics and Biophysics (ILGB) in Naples (1962-1969) - by focusing on the interaction of two different perspectives:

First of all, a *national* perspective: Buzzati-Traverso's action as head of the Institute of Genetics and of the CNR Centre for Biophysics in Pavia, and as director of the Division of Biology of the CNRN (National Council for Nuclear Research), was instrumental in the development of radiobiology in Italy during the 1950s and in the constitution of the ILGB in the 1960s.

Secondly, an *international* perspective. This perspective is articulated into two parallel historiographic levels. The first one concerns the involvement of American (Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, US National Science Foundation, US Atomic Energy Commission) and European agencies (EURATOM) in the development of genetics and molecular biology in Italy, and in particular in Buzzati-Traverso's projects: the Institute of Genetics in Pavia and the ILGB in Naples. The second level is focused on international scientific cooperation, pointing out the fundamental role of Buzzati-Traverso as founding member of ICRO (International Cell Research Organization, UNESCO) and EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organization): in both cases, Buzzati-Traverso contested the model of a supranational European laboratory of molecular biology, although stressing the constitution of a federal organization. The ILGB in Naples was conceived as the core of this European federation, as a sort of "Cold Spring Harbor" in Europe.