ITALIAN QUAKE

Future Bleak, Spirit Weak, Town Fights

BY WILLIAM TUOHY
Times Staff Writer

GEMONA DEL FRIULI, Italy—At 10 o'clock at night, the houses around here are empty and dark. But in a garage alongside the road a naked bulb glows wanly.

Inside the garage, 41-year-old Giacomo Rossi sits at a table with his family and a neighborhood couple. They are the only people left in the immediate area.

"Welcome," he says to a visitor, opening a bottle of a delightful local white wine and pouring a round.

"The first big earthquake in May, II Terremoto, crushed many of our houses," Rossi said, explaining his surroundings. "The second one in September crushed most of the ones that were left standing.

"Worse, for many of us in Friuli, it crushed our spirit. The future looks black but, for the time being, we in this house are staying."

Less than a third of the inhabitants of this lovely town, almost leveled by the two earthquakes, remain. And no one sleeps under a roof any more.

Although the Rossis live in their garage, fearful that their two-story house may collapse, the family—Rossi, his wife, Marianna, 35, their 19-year-old son Simonpietro, and 4-year-old daughter, Olivia, along with Mrs. Rossi's aged mother—all sleep in a tiny house trailer parked outside.

The trailer is one of hundreds leaned by dealers throughout northeastern Italy to provide shelters for the plucky people who have chosen to remain in Friuli.

"This winter will determine the future of our region," said Rossi, bundling up in his sweater against the chill and taking a sip of wine. "If the earth remains quiet, people will come back. Otherwise, Friuli will become an abandoned place. And that would be a national tragedy."

On May 6, a massive earthquake shook the Carnic Alps of northeastern Italy and shuddered down the Tagliamento Valley, the heartland of Friuli, killing nearly 1,000 people.

But the hardworking, sturdy Friulians returned to their communities and began the arduous process of clearing the rubble and rebuilding—despite the aftershocks that occurred almost daily.

In most earthquake zones, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, major tremors are followed by a gradually diminishing series of aftershocks.

But in mid-September, over a period of three days, Friuli was rent by two major additional quakes. Many of the houses, churches and public buildings that had been standing collapsed.

An exodus of terrified villagers began.

Now, most of the residents have been evacuated to seaside resort towns whose rooms have been requisitioned by the government. Some residents commute by day to the Friuli area to look after their fields and flocks.

Those who remain overnight stay in tents or in the trailers which have been hauled here. No masonry houses are trusted to remain standing in the face of additional shocks.

One of the more staggering effects...
Italy Town Fights Back From Quake Ruin

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of the quakes is the loss of the churches, public buildings and histori-
de centers of the small towns that made the Friuli region its distinctive character.

In nearby Venzone, for instance, a team of restorers had erected scaffolding around the cathedral to repair the May damage. But the Sept. 15 quake collapsed the church walls, leaving only the twisted metal scaffolding standing.

The centuries-old stone walls of the town also tumbled down in Septem-
ber.

"Two hundred years of history," commented a boy named Cirillo. "All just lying there."

"This kind of loss is terribly depressing," said Giacomo Rossi. "So much of our cultural heritage has been destroyed. The main thing, though is to get through the winter."

"I myself am looking after everyone's dairy cattle. We must tend our fields and animals. We must not let the chain of life be broken."

In Friuli, about 100,000 people have become homeless since the first quake, 40,000 of them in the September shocks. Some of those who fled have gone for good—others are undecided about returning.

In Lignano, a resort area on the Adriatic, 60-year-old Pietro Mardero said that he had worked for most of his life to buy land and build a home in Friuli.

"Coming here was the most painful trip in my life," he said. "The aftershocks never left us in peace and, as we found out in September, a new killer could come any time."

"We Friulians were always useful to others but now we are a weight on the nation and we do not like this feeling. I would like to go back, but I think I am too old."

Oswaldo Bierti added: "I spent 27 years working to save money to buy my house. All that is left is the basement. I don't feel up to starting all over again."

Prefabricated houses are being built and many believe they are the key to solving the housing problem here.

"By next March, we hope to have 20,000 units constructed in 140 communities," said an aide to Special Commissioner Giuseppe Zamberletti in Udine. "We should have been building these faster but there were problems about where to locate the prefab camps."

"We are in what amounts to a wartime condition. Patience is necessary, and we hope that the prefabs will house the residents while the towns are being rebuilt."

The government's slowness in providing emergency housing has come under criticism here. The authorities in Rome have belatedly announced a special tax on all automobiles to raise money for Friuli relief.

In Udine, a handsome city with an elegant combination of Venetian, Renais-
sance and Austro-Hungarian architecture, many residents sleep in tents.

One such, Edda Cisiline-Novello, has pitched a tent for her family on a traffic island in the street in front of her damaged house.

"Even here in Udine, people are nervous," she said. "Everyone takes sleeping pills and tranquillizers. People have had mental breakdowns. When you look at the towns with the big damage, you realize what can happen to you if you sleep under a roof in a masonry building."

The people of Friuli are looking for assurance and guidance, but seismologists cannot say—or at least none in Italy is saying—whether the worst of the aftershocks are over, or whether there are more to come.

In the countryside, to which many have fled, other Friulians show stoicism, fortitude and courage.

"When my roof came down in May," said 51-year-old Santo Patat in Gemona, "I put it up again. It came down again in September, and I'm going to put it up again. I'll give up only when I'm swallowed up by the earth—me, my wife and my animals."
One Year After Disaster, Italy Still Strives to House Homeless Families

BY SARI GILBERT
The Washington Post

TARCENTO, Italy—The front yard of the half-destroyed two-story stone building was cluttered with debris from last May's earthquake, outdoor cookware on a smoldering fire, a bright blue tent and a small one-room trailer.

"It doesn't look like much, but gradually our home is getting back to normal," said a ruddy-faced woman whose casual attitude and mud-splattered boots showed an acquired tolerance of the winter cold and rain.

Pausing briefly in her household chores, the woman, who said her name was Rosamaris, pointed proudly to the empty lot next door. There a squad of brown-uniformed Italian firemen were erecting the small prefabricated home she and her husband had been expecting for months.

"Better late then never," she said philosophically, adding that the shelter offered by the new prefabricated building would have been even more welcome before the onset of the harsh winter in Friuli province.

Some residents of this Italian region north of Venice criticize the timing of the emergency housing programs set up shortly after last May's massive earthquake killed 1,000 persons and left near 1 million homeless.

Until recently the small town of Aprato boasted an angry homemade banner saying in the Friulian dialect, "Happy New Year to those who've helped us, may lightning strike the uncivilized who befouled us."

A local grocer, Ottario Betelme, flew an Austrian flag from his small store for months "because under Austrian rule (which lasted through World War I) the administrators were honest, while the Italian authorities did not live up to their promises to give us all homes by September."

Nevertheless, it is clear from a two-day drive through this area's rolling foothills and sloping valleys that despite obstacles posed by a second major quake in September and more than 110 days of rain since July, the Italian government will keep its promise that there will be a roof over every Friulian's head.

Rubble from the quakes, unpaved muddy roads, a lack of supplies and inadequate public transport show that much is yet to be done. But the countryside is colorfully dotted with more than 30 varieties of prefabricated buildings put up by regional and central government programs.

So far, more than 14,000 prefabs and mobile homes house some 45,000 persons. These largely temporary structures have replaced most of the 18,000 tents, 5,275 trailers and 2,000 obsolete railroad boxcars which the homeless spent the winter.

In the marketplace of Tarcento, a city of 9,300 that until the earthquake was known as "the Pearl of the Friuli," an unobtrusive mobile home contains the local "operational center," where firemen, army personnel, government and regional representatives, police and carabinieri coordinate the emergency housing program.

One day recently Mario Penta, a Sicilian-born Interior Ministry official who came to Friuli eight months ago on the staff of a government-appointed special commission, had his hands full.

A long-awaited shipment of prefabs was several lodgings short, a group of tent-dwellers camped out on the local soccer field and a warming into the prefabs assigned them, a middle-aged woman was distressed that her prefab was part of a cluster several miles from her damaged home, and the town drunk was discovered to be without an official residence certificate and therefore ineligible for housing.

"It's a complicated business," Penta said, "but gradually things are falling into place." Although only 139 of the town's 1,757 prefabs had arrived so far, major deliveries by both the central government and the region were expected shortly.

Penta and his counterparts in other Friulian villages said delays in the operation reflect the time needed to install facilities to service the prefabs, local production problems and political difficulties encountered by local authorities in expediting land for the new housing.

"But the major cause of the delay," carabinieri Sgt. Giuseppe Ruffini said, "was the second quake in September. It not only flattened many buildings that had remained standing but caused a widespread collapse of a psychological nature.

"People had spent the entire summer working to repair the spring damage and when the second quake undid much of what they'd accomplished, many of them just felt like giving up. People are still afraid," because of 500 tremors since September, he said, adding: "Many are reluctant to hand in their tents because they think they may soon have to use them again."

The September quake led to the central government's emergency program to aid the regional effort and has brought about much of the progress.

During the summer, an initial regional housing program for 9,281 dwellings got bogged down in red tape and political uncertainty. Premier Giulio Andreotti then sent special commissioner Giuseppe Zamperletti, who had been in the area earlier, back north with a $120 million budget and almost unlimited emergency powers. His main job was to build and install 9,590 more lodgings using 4,000 soldiers and 500 firemen.

Italy has also received disaster relief from more than 15 countries and various international organizations.

The biggest contribution by far came from the United States, which immediately after last May's quake allocated $25 million in emergency assistance. It will be used for the construction of five old-age homes and 12 schools.

The U.S. buildings, designed by a staff of Italian and American architects and engineers to be fully earthquake-resistant, have attracted extra attention because they will be the first permanent structures in the area.
HELP FOR FRIULI AREA KEYED TO PLANNING

Italy Seeking to Learn From Past Quake Mistakes

BY LOUIS B. FLEMMING
Times Staff Writer

PRADIELIS, Italy—Two years after the Friuli earthquake, Giulia Parchiol and her neighbors are back in Pradielis, but not in their homes, and they are bitter. They live in temporary barracks, in sight of the shattered remains of their homes. The other day Signora Parchiol was carrying a load of laundry 100 yards from the barracks to a shed that is the temporary washing place. "We have come back to nothing," an old man said, watching her. His eyes moved to the lush alpine meadows on the steep slopes behind the town and he added, "There are no cows now." According to a government agriculture official, there will be no cows until the stables and barns are rebuilt. There were 200 people in the town when the first quake hit the Friuli region of northern Italy in May, 1976. They moved into tents and started rebuilding. Then, the following September, everything they had rebuilt was shattered by a second quake, and they moved out again, homeless refugees. All 200 are back now. For how long they have no idea.

But the bitterness of the homeless holds a reality in fact, much has been accomplished.

"By Italian standards, they have done a superb job," a foreign engineer commented. If that sounds like grudging praise, it must be judged against the back

ground of Belice, the Sicilian town destroyed by an earthquake in January of 1968, which is still the center of scandal and bureaucratic intrigue.

"The second quake taught us that we could not rebuild with our hearts," a senior government official said. "We needed technology.

The old towns were being rebuilt as they had been when the second quake struck them again. In the first quake 939 died. In the second, 12. But if the towns were rebuilt in the old way, countless more would have risked death. Now, science and standards are being imposed and in old

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sand the bars have been closed off. The old experiment has been exposed by crumbling walls, and all is pretty much as it was two years ago. Yet in the valley below, new factories provide work for those who were able to stay on or who have come back to the temporary homes that line the highways and fill the fields.

Of the 60,000 damaged houses, half were critically damaged, including about 12,000 which cannot be rebuilt.

"The buildings that can be rebuilt are in most locations," Chavola said. "The problem is not seismic but geological. In a few locations, such as

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Gemona and Vertenzo, there are serious landslide risks.

One of the tourists on the quake was the site of surrounding mountains as millions of tons of earth moved into the valleys, leaving scars that are just beginning to be covered by overgrowth. Both faces of the steep valley walls in Pradilus show the raw cut of white stone where the earth slid away.

Belice, the scandal-plagued Sicilian town, is a wasteland.

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earthquake town, had an influence on Friuli.

It encouraged people to think things through, not just in terms of immediate needs.

It also led to international cooperation in Italian administration, the official said.

So most outside donors of help, the government of the United States included, have bypassed the government of Italy and carried their gifts straight to the provinces and the towns.

There has been only one serious scandal, which led to the conviction and imprisonment of a mayor and the secretary of the national government's chief representative for diverting funds to their personal use.

U.S. assistance totals $50 million, Vogel recalled. He drew them out and told the contractors to sharpen their pencils. The next bids ran 50% lower and have stayed that way.

The United States is building a 100-person home for the aged in Massano, and another will be ready for occupancy early next year in San Daniele.

All the schools and homes for the aged financed by the first $26 million U.S. program are under construction, and a second $23 million program is under design. Of the $50 million, about $1 million was spent in emergency relief, $15 million will be spent on the centers for the aged and balance for 12 schools with a total of 294 classrooms.

"The first bids we opened were what I would call 'American prices,'" Vogel recalled. He drew them out and told the contractors to sharpen their pencils. The next bids ran 50% lower and have stayed that way.

Controversy has arisen over the houses for the aged.

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