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AUTHORS: Mario BANDINI

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AGRICULTURE AND COMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN ITALY IN COMPARISON WITH THE OTHER MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

Prof. Dr. Mario Bandini
Università di Roma

1) Let us consider Italy's situation, since this country :

- has rapidly gone through an intensive process of development in the post-war period;

- she has a typical dual economic structure : industrial north and agricultural south;

- she has both continental European (Po valley) and Mediterranean characteristics. She is a part of two developing areas aut step with one another : the north and the Mediterranean.

- considerable improvements have been made as far as communications are concerned (motor-ways, tunnels, ports, railways);

- she is becoming more and more closely linked with international economy, after abandoning her autarchical policy;

- she has achieved a number of important structural changes (land reclamation, land reform, the work of the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno);

- her political trends aim at modernizing her economic and social life;

For these and other reasons, Italy may be a useful confirmation of the theories of economic development as well as a good example for other countries and territories, that are following closely in her wake in these transformations (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, etc.).

2) The characteristics of Italian economic structure in 1965 are summarized in the following table.

National Product				
(Million Dollars)				
<i>Regions</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
I	2.000	13.500	7.900	23.400
II	3.300	9.400	8.800	20.500
III	3.200	4.000	4.600	11.800
	8.500	25.900	21.300	55.700
Millions inhabitants				
I	= (13,1)	1.800	\$	Yearly
II	= (20,6)	1.000	\$	»
III	= (19,4)	550	\$	»
National average		1,050	\$	»

Zone I comprises the industrial triangle (Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy). Zone II, Emilia, Veneto, Tuscany, Umbri, Marche, Latium. Zone III, Campania, Abruzzi, Molise, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia.

3) Italian economic development has been characterized by the following main factors :

— Rapid decrease of the percentage of the active agricultural population as opposed to the whole : 1936 = 49 %; 1941 = 42 %; 1966 = 23 %.

— rapid decrease of this population also from the absolute point of view :

1951 = 8,800 thousand labour units engaged in agriculture

1966 = 4,600 thousand labour units engaged in agriculture

— mass displacements of labour forces from south to north and from the Veneto to Lombardy. Approximately 2 million units;

— agricultural revenue in constant absolute increase, but at a slower rate than the industrial revenue. Agriculture develops at about 7-8 %;

— agricultural revenue pro capita heavily increased, but almost exclusively in relation to the decrease of the agricultural labour forces;

— however, an always permanent heavy discrepancy between these two revenues. Agricultural revenue is 52% of the industrial (conditions in Australia 95 % - United States 40 % - Cuba 20 %).

— marked variation in the demand for agricultural products. The demand for quality foodstuffs (meat, milk, fruit, green vegetables, sugar) increases. The demand for mass consumption (cereals, potatoes, dried vegetables) decreases.

— Important modifications taking place in the agricultural structures. The absentee landlord is becoming a rarity and, at the same time, the system of share - cropping. There are more farmer owners and the intensive medium sized farms are increasing;

— more importance is being given to the productive structures outside the farm (cooperatives, agrarian industries, mechanization concerns separate from the farm);

— Intensive development of mechanization : 40,000 tractors in the pre - war period; 470 thousand by the end of 1966.

4) The development maintains and sometimes emphasizes certain cases of profound unbalance : territorial (north - south); sectorial (agriculture - industry); social (agricultural - industrial labour).

Even though the Mezzogiorno has shown marked progress, this is always inferior to that of the north.

5) The general economic policy, the agrarian policy and the recent economic planning all aim at facilitating the development that is going on and, at the same time, at eliminating these cases of unbalance as far as is reasonably possible.

In the recent past, provisions have been made for this :

— by reclaiming land that is backward or under water. Land reclaim also arranges to provide rural infrastructures (road irrigation, electricity, settlements, etc.). The 1933 law;

— by land reform (1950 law), which has expropriated 770 thousand hectares of land from big extensive properties and arranged for the settlement of family farms. About 95 new farms have been set up;

— by the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno (1950 law), which provides for the execution of public works and infrastructures which affect the whole southern economy;

— by the creation of industrial development poles in the Mezzogiorno : Taranto, Brindisi, Ferrandina, Cagliari, Pescara, Latina, Catania, etc.

— by the tendency to link the economic development of the south with that of the north.

6) The future will be marked by a growing importance of the Mediterranean; as the connecting link of the economy in rapid growth. Problems that arise :

— the economic and agricultural integration of the Mediterranean with that of central and northern Europe;

— the countries of the Mediterranean basin have a shortage of cereals, meat and fats. On the other hand, as far as world production goes, they produce : 89 % of the olives; 65 % of the grapes; 44 % of the pears and apples; 36 % of the citrus fruit; 67 % of the figs.

These products are all in increasing demand, with the exception of olives. Economic integration will be able to intensify trade;

— problems of market analysis aiming at learning the trends. Group Studies of Demand.

— Agreements on production policies, so as to bring about harmonious and integrated development; harmonious agrarian transformation, particularly irrigation;

— close collaboration in the field of technical and professional training;

— agreements for the integrated development of transformation industries.

- Production standardization;
- integrated development of transport (sea, land).

7) The necessary recovery of the economy of the Mediterranean, which will make this sea a fundamental economic centre, after the development phase determined by the availability on the spot of raw materials (iron, coal), is the great task of this generation and of those of the future.

Ups and downs of the availability of power and labour forces.
