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National Conference :

ITALY - EUROPE - THE MEDITERRANEAN

Naples, 8-9 November 1975

The Prospects for Southern Europe

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The conference has been organized with the collaboration of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

## THE PROSPECTS FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE

It is not easy to find one common element which defines and characterizes the region we call "Southern Europe". There are, however, many similar elements which help to define this complicated European region.

The common elements are of a geographic, ecological, anthropological, historic, ethnologic and political nature.

Many of these elements have had very different origins, but their subsequent integration in a common process enables us to realistically speak of Southern Europe as a fairly distinct European region.

We can even say that there is a Southern Europe based on greater common foundations than those of Northern or Central Europe, realizing, however, that this subdivision is only for the sake of comparison and is extremely inaccurate.

Southern Europe is therefore one of the most homogeneous regions of Europe.

The first point to consider is that this homogeneity, in modern history, has never been used as a constructive element.

Secondly, it must be established whether using the homogeneous and characteristic elements of Southern Europe to insert it with positive results in the framework of European unity, will contribute in a productive and useful way to the process of European integration and future unity.

Thirdly, it must be clear that the concept of Southern Europe is not a category which rigidly and inelastically defines its reality, which clearly and totally cuts it off from the rest of Europe. Rather, it is a concept which explains an undeniable but in many ways indeterminate fact, which could

be transformed into a positive fact in the traditional way, that is, with economic, cultural, political, and other accords.

Fourthly, in order to correctly interpret the nature of things, we must not forget Southern Europe's collocation in the Mediterranean, that is, her setting in regards to North Africa and the other elements which make up what we call Eur-Africa.

Finally, we cannot forget that Southern Europe, with only very specific exceptions, is a constituent part of the European Community and that therefore its programs and future possibilities cannot deviate from this condition.

According to the above reasoning, we arrive at the conclusion that the expression Southern Europe coincides with the idea of Mediterranean Europe, given that Portugal, which can be regarded as an exception, is, as all the Iberian Peninsula, within the co-ordinates which define Southern Europe, even if her shores are not washed by the Mediterranean.

The idea of the Mediterranean as a definition is certainly, in many cases and aspects, insufficient and even antiquated. Nevertheless, it continues to be a concept and a fundamental reality, above all, from the point of view of international economics and politics.

#### THE POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL PROSPECTS OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

Reversing the classical methodological order, I shall speak about the political superstructures before speaking about the economic structures. In my opinion, in the actual South European situation, the political problem has priority. As long as the present contradictions, which exist between the

fundamental political institutions and the will and needs of the majority of the people of the Mediterranean countries, are unresolved, it will be impossible to go ahead in a satisfactory way toward the specific solution of the economic and social problems of the South European region.

From this point of view, there are two fundamental problems to consider:

- a) What will be the future political evolution of Southern Europe?
- b) To what extent do global strategic needs condition this future?

As for the first question, the political future of the South European countries is more and more influenced by the fact that, for the average citizen, most of the institutions which traditionally served as a medium for his participation in politics and administration are no longer valid.

What is happening is that while growing individual awareness and collective needs make a constitutional and democratic state more of a necessity, at the same time, the means for achieving this end are being sought more and more in decentralized political and administrative institutions as close as possible to the immediate expression of the people's will. The desire for a democracy directly controlled by the people, in order to avoid corruption and excessive intervention by the state, is a political fact which characterizes the South European countries.

This fact, which is amply confirmed by the introduction of the concept of self-government in the majority of political programs, is reflected in the answers, both political and economic, of neocapitalist society. In all of Southern Europe one notices a development in local politics and administra-

tions which corresponds to what we are saying. The political response of neocapitalism is not simple, but it also tries to overcome the contradiction between the economics of concentrated and planned large scale production, and political and administrative decentralization with the more direct participation of the people both as citizens and as workers.

In Southern Europe plans are being drafted for a political society based on the principles of a popular democracy in a constitutional state, a model which appears as something new on the political horizon and for which it will be necessary to reform the Constitutions and the party and trade union structures.

We must keep in mind that, while this particular "populism", that does not deny individual liberty but rather intends to fully guarantee it, is catching on in the Mediterranean area -- in a way it is the result of ethnological and anthropological as well as economic factors -- as the road to a more or less homogeneous political future for Southern Europe, totalitarian reactions are emerging as well. It is not idle to ask: is Southern Europe threatened by the return of fascism or by any other form of totalitarianism that might interrupt progress towards a future renewal?

The chances of totalitarian dictatorships coming back in Southern Europe are scarce. Higher standards of living are part of a continuously developing process which, even if slowed down, will not stop, above all if we consider the index of expansion of products with high technical compositions in depressed areas. This development gives previously underdeveloped populations a specific potential for defending their constitutional rights and, in general, the possibility of participating in decision-making and power. We admit that there are

isolated acts of violence, restricted groups that defend a more or less totalitarian conception of the world, but they constitute more an aesthetic category than a political practice. Usually the development process, when accompanied by the widespread consumption of commodities produced by the new technology with a consequent reduction of the misery which has characterized certain Mediterranean areas for centuries, removes the danger of totalitarianism.

The question of possible totalitarisms, as a result of the rationalization of the world by continual technical progress is rather hypothetical and I do not think it needs to be dealt with now.

The only totalitarian state left in Southern Europe, including the Balkans, is Spain. The latest events in Spain seem to exclude for the moment the possibility of a political evolution towards democracy. In fact, an objective analysis of the situation reveals that the oligarchic minority which dominates the country is determined to make the dictatorship more severe, returning from the paternalistic autocracy of the past years to a system of total repression similar to that of the years immediately following the war. Totalitarian ideas do not appear in official Spanish propaganda but it is a fact that totalitarianism exists, characterized by the absence of institutions typical of western democracy such as universal suffrage, political parties and parliament, and by the negation of fundamental rights and guarantees. The latest "anti-terrorism" law is considered totalitarian by jurists because it reduces to nothing the guarantees of judicial power as far as political acts are concerned, and puts these questions in the hands of the executive and, specially, of the armed forces, denying the fundamental

liberties which most countries, not only of Europe, but of the entire Atlantic area, enjoy.

The particular situation in Spain and the one in Portugal are not similar and cannot be assessed using the same criteria. Portugal, with some oscillations, is seeking a political system based on rights and guarantees and so far liberty has been respected. In no case, therefore, can we speak of a totalitarian state.

The Spanish situation is one of the most serious problems for the future of Southern Europe because we do not know what political course will be taken. With the future of Portugal uncertain as well, the Iberian Peninsula presents itself as one of the elements which makes any hypothesis on the future of Mediterranean Europe difficult. The problem has not only internal dimensions. It goes beyond national sovereignty and fully enters among the problems of global strategy. Even though this issue is to be dealt with later, we can anticipate by pointing out that the U.S. sees Spain as a vital support in the Mediterranean both from a logistic and a strategic point of view and it is therefore not likely that it will be willing to give up its bases there. Because of this, and in any case, Spain's political future will influence (positively or negatively) the political future of Southern Europe in a very direct way.

The same reasoning applies to Portugal, even if with less emphasis, since it is probable that Portugal will adapt itself to the general European situation without provoking great upheavals, even if for a while there will be a lack of internal stability.

Until not long ago, the main problem seemed to be America's disapproval of its closest allies' acceptance of communist

parties as legal parties. The Spanish Communist Party's repeated declaration of its acceptance of the democratic road to socialism, and its public commitment to follow the Italian way and, in general, the European way, which admits the legality of the communist party, have created a new situation, a situation which leaves open the possibility that communism in Southern Europe will stick to democratic principles, accepting the fundamental institutions of contemporary western democracy and adapting itself to the comprehensive process, which we spoke of earlier, of having the people participate more directly in political decision-making.

If this were possible, we might optimistically believe that in the global scheme of democratic society, the right and the left could proceed together in the search for a political-institutional system suited to the particular characteristics of Southern Europe. On the contrary, if this were not possible, we would be left with a deeply, and almost permanently, unstable situation that could indefinitely postpone attempts to delimit in a conventional way (that is, with international accords) a semi-autonomous South European area within the framework of the European community. Even if, on the basis of appearances, we accept the optimistic hypothesis and even if we take for granted that the Spanish Communist Party's line is not tactical but strategic, that in Europe today only democratic communism is possible, we must not lose sight, as it is related to the future prospects of Southern Europe, of the necessity of linking Spain to the European community as soon as possible, both from a socio-political and an economic point of view, so that it becomes another member of the community. This can be achieved only if Spanish social and political protest is accompanied



by the European community's firm intention to contribute in such a way as to help the process of transformation come about quickly and substantially.

In Portugal just this is happening: in principle, it is difficult to understand European worry that Portugal depart from a democratic, constitutional state in the light of its indifference towards Spain.

#### THE STRATEGIC PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

Since this problem has been repeatedly dealt with and is the subject of other reports, I will simply outline and call attention to the fundamental problems. To focus the problems we must begin with one of these two hypotheses: a) either the strategic problems of the Mediterranean are so essential to the global strategy of the two superpowers that all other problems must be subordinated; b) or, given the actual state of military technology, above all in the field of non-conventional weapons, the Mediterranean is an area of sectorial importance, and global strategy can be tolerant towards political changes in Southern Europe and, above all, in the Mediterranean, even if these are accompanied by changes in the capitalist institutions, assuming that the process is democratic. To be more explicit: the U.S. might not oppose the participation of socialist parties, including democratic communist parties, in government if this did not vitally affect its strategic interests. In fact, it seems that in the case of Southern Europe, this possibility is compatible with global distention as long as American bases are respected and we can even hypothesize that these bases could be moved from Southern Europe if they created

tensions in global strategy.

If this revision of North American politics were certain; that is, if there were a distinction between strategic and political interests, leaving wide margins of liberty in the political field to the countries with which the Americans have bilateral agreements, Southern Europe might become neutral enough to be able to concentrate on its own political, social and economic interests without the interference of global strategic interest.

This possibility surely depends, in a certain way, on what happens in the Middle East and, in a very particular way, on the question of certain raw materials over which the big multinationals, closely linked to the U.S., cannot lose control. All the same, Southern Europe's future would be rich with possibilities and it could take a first step towards achieving important results, if it could go ahead with greater liberty towards the definition of a social and economic area based on homogeneous political institutions, freed from the conditionings of strategy.

Generally speaking, it seems to us that the lack of a suitable course for economic, social and political progress in Southern Europe would decisively disturb European integration, Euro-African relations and, in very general terms, world peace. Southern Europe can give a very important contribution to the European community and to Western Europe in general by finding a new way for changing man's relations with technology, with the tremendous technological development and with what is called consumer society. The predominance of northern Europe and of some parts of central Europe which have northern characteristics has disturbed the equilibrium, both

objectively and subjectively, of European individuality. It is necessary to go beyond this conception of man which seems to characterize the North European mentality, to find a new enthusiasm that gives sense to society and sets in motion a process of renewal which goes beyond the limits of satisfying daily material well-being. In very general terms, this would be the same as insinuating with force that Southern Europe can be the starting point for the regeneration of man's faith in ideals which give a new impulse to European culture.

This goal will be difficult to achieve if there is not a certain neutrality, and a certain independence from the global strategic interests which condition not only from a military but also from a cultural point of view, bringing about a uniformity in contrast with the anthropological and ethnological characteristics we spoke of earlier. Speaking realistically and with reference to a very significant case, if the U.S. did not interfere in the autonomous process of transformation towards democracy of the Spanish political institutions, there is no doubt that the Iberian Peninsula could be rapidly integrated into the European community and there would no longer be a political unknown or a disturbing factor.

#### THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRACTICALLY DEFINING SOUTHERN EUROPE

As we said at the beginning, the notion of Southern Europe is a concept referred to for practical reasons, many of which have been listed. We are not dealing only with a concept or a hypothesis since the notion coincide with reality. We have examined it, above all, from the point of view of Mediterranean interests, without forgetting however its relation-

ship with Africa. We cannot ignore its Atlantic relations either. In fact, from any point of view, we cannot be caught in either of these two exaggerations: seeing Southern Europe as a simple hypothesis, or seeing it as a reality so defined as to deprive it of its quality as an open and extensive region. It follows that Southern Europe does have characteristics which allow a minimum definition, but it cannot be circumscribed in any case as a new autonomous nucleus. More than autonomy we should speak of specificity, a concept which corresponds more with the practical needs.

First of all, we must consider that the South European countries could establish among themselves, in the wider framework of the European community, systematic and institutionalized economic, social and political relations without, however, thinking of taking on the form of an autonomous, partially independent region. In the Europe of the future there will be a number of regional agreements in various sectors; and it is in this context that we can imagine a Southern Europe brought together by regional accords which contributes to the equilibrium of both the Mediterranean and Europe. It is well known that at the moment Southern Europe is a reserve of labour for most of Europe, under unacceptable conditions for and with discrimination against the workers who emigrate. It is also obvious that many regions of Southern Europe serve as reserve markets, succumbing to the needs of the industrially developed nations with serious damage to the economies of these southern countries.

There is also the current thesis, not explicitly stated, and in many cases purely imaginary, that Southern Europe offers the sun and picturesque scenery while the rest of Europe offers

scientific creativity and industry. Reading between the lines in the cultural field as well, one often finds the insinuation that Southern Europe constitutes a reserve of aesthetic creativity which is, however, always at the service of the industrialized and superindustrialized countries to which one usually unconsciously attributes intellectual superiority mainly because of their superior level of industrial production and technology.

There is no reason for accepting these points of view, which are not mere hypotheses (of mine), but which actually exist.

The South European nations can negotiate precise accords:

- a) for the mutual protection of workers;
- b) for the mutual protection of national interests against the industrial imperialism of the more developed countries;
- c) for information exchanges and a cooperative effort to increase the scientific, technological and industrial capacity necessary for the development of natural resources;
- d) for taking advantage of ethnological, technological and even geopolitical possibilities in order to protect their own interests and better resolve common problems, with equal or better results than those that can be obtained in the actual situation of dependence;
- e) for making the most of the creative and imaginative capacity correspondent to their anthropological condition by developing their means of research. Without isolating themselves from the European institutions, the South European governments can, with a common effort, increase the means of theoretical research so that the experience of the more culturally and industrially developed countries is not indispensable. That is, they can try to create the conditions

which would put them in a position of reciprocity not only with the European but with all the Atlantic nations. It must be kept in mind that it is a question of making the most of the characteristic aspects of Southern Europe in order to contribute to the progress and equality of mankind, as well as to overcome the actual conditions of the capitalist market;

- f) Southern Europe, as we said, can propose new socio-political models that put an end to the systematic importation of institutions alien to its fundamental principles. In fact, we can see how systematic development and the South Europeans' capacity for cooperation with the emphasis on decentralization and local communities are giving life to a new political formula;
- g) Southern Europe has a particular function as a source and a go-between of culture, economy, etc. For the Eastern countries, which geographically belong to Southern Europe, and for the African countries. This last aspect is of particular importance because it could become an essential element of equilibrium. If Southern Europe organizes itself with efficient institutions in every sector, it could have a decisive cultural and technological influence on the Arab nations, conditioning the "warm war" sustained by the two superpowers in the Middle East.

Other than these considerations, the practical possibilities of success depend on the initiative of the states, on the initiative of public bodies, and also on private initiative, but above all, on the acceptance of the concept of Southern Europe,

with all its implications, in the political programs of the various parties. It is not likely that these principles will be developed by the states, that is, by the governments. As far as the public and private organs are concerned they will surely develop the theoretical aspects and will give an important contribution to public awareness of the facts; but if, as it seems, Southern Europe is not only a hypothesis but a real concept that can have decisive importance economically, socially and even strategically, there is no doubt that the most efficient way for practically developing this idea is through political groups, not only those involved in every-day political practice but also through European institutions with particular politico-ideological contents; the same thing goes for the European movements that promote federalist principles or claims of an ethnic character. In a way, this idea has a future to the extent that the large political groups, democratic, socialist, communist, give it room in their vision of the future.

The difficulties are certainly great. We are up against the fact that some countries of Southern Europe belong to different blocs, but if the facts are viewed from a wider historical perspective, there is no doubt that this program will be able to develop at least partially. We cannot deny that Southern Europe has been for centuries a potential reserve which no one has yet drawn from and which has unsuspected energies to be channeled and institutionalized.

#### THE ECONOMY AND NATURE

The South European countries can create closer relations

among themselves, keeping in mind the sectorial peculiarities of the economy, in order to create an area with specific and institutionalized economic ties; we must keep in mind, however, that given the characteristics of world technology and the distribution of raw materials, Southern Europe has particular requirements with regards to the management of natural resources, the ecological equilibrium, and the relations between industrial structures, urban population and rural population.

The ecological damage sustained by the Mediterranean world concerns Southern Europe in a particular way: the immediate problem and the future programs for the reconstitution of the flora and fauna of man's natural habitat must be confronted in different terms than those imposed by industrial development.

If industrial development is accepted as a process which cannot be stopped it must be admitted that the quantitative changes imposed on Southern Europe by technology have been transformed into qualitative changes and have affected the relationship between man and nature. It is urgent to re-establish this relationship, starting from the characteristics imposed by geophysics and primary industries. One of the most serious problems which Southern Europe faces is that of eliminating the destructive effects of the application of the industrial system without sufficient control over the relations between the exploitation of the natural resources, the technological means used and the consequent instability that these relations have produced in civilized society.

The economic structure of Southern Europe must be organized both statically and dynamically, in order to give the social relations the possibility of adapting themselves to the ambient. From this point of view, there are very few social institutions



which do not need to undergo radical restructuring in order to bring about closer contact between the people and the governmental and administrative institutions and the return of the people to a natural environment which has been abandoned, badly exploited or destroyed.

The future of Southern Europe with regards to new urban concepts and the utilization in this zone of particular energy sources, even though conditioned by nature, its industry and markets, will depend on the extent to which the inhabitants of this region and especially its leaders become aware of the seriousness of the problems.

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n° Inv. 10283  
09 MAG. 1991

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