

Summary

Giuseppe Barone
The sunset of the Florio family

An examination of the story of the Florio family allows us not only to separate the myth and the reality surrounding the most famous entrepreneurial dynasty in Sicily of the 19th and 20th centuries, but also to verify, through concrete research, certain historical aspects of the relations between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, the family and enterprise, and the market and the economic situation, considered from a specifically South Italian point of view. The essay mainly reconstructs the events and causes which provoked the downfall of the Florio family, whose interests were spread over all the most dynamic sectors of the Sicilian economy, from tuna fishing to sulphur, wine to citrous fruit, the ship-building and building trade to banking activity. Thanks to access to unpublished documents in the Bank of Italy and the Italian Commercial Bank, Barone has been able to refute both the «Sicilian» thesis of a political «plot», and the stereotype of aristocratic decadence, as factors influencing the crisis. Instead he offers a convincing analysis of the commercial imbalances and external dyseconomies which accelerated the decline of the group.

Pinella Di Gregorio
Bankers and managers: a South Italian case

In this study we examine the attempt by Seso, the *Società Elettrica della Sicilia Orientale* (the East Sicily Electric Company) to move autonomously with respect to its financial ownership. The management of the company identifies with the interests of local society, in contrast to those of the national and international financial holdings. In this respect, the experience of Seso would appear to run counter to the currently fashionable ideas of external intervention as a way of establishing hierarchies and generating mere dependence — in the story, about which so little is still known, of the history of enterprise in the South of Italy. The centre-periphery model is not, however, the only action which illustrates the independent spirit of Emerico Vismara, administrator-delegate and father of Seso, one should perhaps revert to the more general dialectic between management and ownership which characterizes the whole history of contemporary capitalism, and view this episode of the history of enterprise in Sicily within the same logical framework as other episodes which could take place in Milan or New York.

Rolf Petri
Industry, Territory, Special acts

The article considers several political, legal and economic aspects of industrialization in some Italian «special areas», already subsidized by «extraordinary» legal means before 1950. The Author proposes a partial revision of some standard assertions concerning the historical roots of the «Cassa per il Mezzogiorno». Furthermore, his analysis suggests that as a consequence of the lack of participation or insufficient participation by local economic forces, the «special acts» functioned to stimulate growth but not development. On the other hand, in the more recent case of the South Tyrol/Alto Adige, the predominance of cultural and political values has by no means damaged the efficiency of the special legislation. On the contrary, the «extra-economic» orientation of individual and collective behaviour has favoured its more organic integration in a long term strategy of economic development.

Alfredo Del Monte
Failures of the market or failures of the government.

The thesis upheld in this study is that policy for the South of Italy, initially arising in order to correct the mechanisms of development determined by the market, has, over the course of time, turned into an obstacle to the growth of the southern regions. The progressive expansion of the public sector has had an increasing effect of disincentivization on private activity in the South, and it has at the same time contributed to the expansion of the area of corruption. The quota of resources effectively allocated «through» the market has therefor continued to shrink. The conclusion of the study is that it does not at the moment seem possible to propose policies of endogenous development without modifying those economic and social mechanisms which are at the root of the inefficiency of public spending in the South.

Sebastiano Brusco and Sergio Paba
The theory of linkages and the development of Southern Italy. Preliminary results from a study of the manufacturing industry in Sardinia

The first part of the paper represents an attempt to develop Hirschman's theory of linkages. In order to better understand the dynamics of development, the concept of linkage is coupled with a new, more supply-oriented, factor: the competence, defined as the ability to recognize an opportunity of profit.

Linkages and competences have been used to study the development process of the manufacturing industry of Sardinia. The main results of this research, discussed in the second part of the paper, clearly indicate the importance of large, not-Southern firms in inducing the industrial development of the island in the last twenty years.

Adriano Giannola and Ugo Marani
The financial structure of industrial enterprises in the South of Italy

In contrast to a widespread view amongst economists, small-scale enterprise in the South of Italy does not, as far as economic performance, technology employed

and efficiency, lag so very far behind its counterparts in the rest of the country. Of course, the universe of small enterprises also includes precarious and marginal initiatives which probably constitute the most extended area. But within this universe are operating growing active entrepreneurial nuclei, in various locations, which are managing to compete on the market with a fair amount of success.

According to the authors it is therefore possible to intervene usefully in these areas, using the credit and finance system above all as a lever, in order to strengthen growth and development: a necessary condition for the strengthening of industrial structures in the whole of the South of Italy.

The Bank of Italy on the financial system of the «Mezzogiorno»

Four economists, Augusto Graziani, Marcello Messori, Alberto Niccoli and Giovanbattista Pittaluga, discuss a book published by the Bank of Italy on the financial system — banks, credit, the circulation of money — in the Mezzogiorno of today. Even if these four authorities have different points of view — and a prestigious institution like the Bank of Italy possesses an infallible power of analysis — they agree that the conclusion of the book under discussion is substantially a sort of justification of the South Italian banking system. It is a system which certainly appears weak and insufficient as regards the developmental needs of the Mezzogiorno, but that might have an important role in local economic life if it changed its operating philosophy. That is to say, it might propose more courageous and stimulating activities to local entrepreneurs not only by means of the credit offered but more generally by means of commercial services, of «know-how» and of the «good will» that a bank of today should be able to offer.

Domenico Cecchini

The urban Mezzogiorno between the recent past and the near future

According to a recent publication, in Europe «there has been a polarization of FURs (functional urban regions) since 1970. The cities with the worst problems have tended to deteriorate in relation to the strongest urban regions». Parting from this consideration, one may well ask if in the past fifteen years the disadvantage of the urban system of the Mezzogiorno, compared to that of Northern Italy, has become even worse. An answer to this question is offered by research conducted by Svimez on the decentralization of residences and industrial plants, on the tertiary and directional specialization of urban areas and of their central cities. From this data it follows that environmental conditions, efficiency and the quality of directional functioning have worsened relatively in the larger cities of the Mezzogiorno and that this limitation greatly impairs their contribution to its development. The results of a forecast of the demographic and territorial dimensions of urban areas in Italy for the next fifteen years are also given, along with a critical study of the present policies regarding the economic revitalization and urban upgrading of Southern cities.

Floro E. Caroleo

Can wage flexibility help unemployment in the South of Italy?

This article is intended as a review of positions on a subject which seems to have become of particular relevance to the debate on the South of Italy. As an alternative

to policies aimed at flexibilization in industrial relations, policies which have been pursued throughout most of the eighties, but which have had little or no effect in solving the problem of unemployment in the South of Italy, the need is therefore more than once stressed of restoring to wages their proper function, that of regulating the labour market. The various authors dealing with the problem of wage flexibility generally arrive at the same conclusions even though starting off from theoretical positions which are quite varied. The aim of this review is to show how there are many objections, both theoretically and in relation to the specific case of the economy of the South of Italy, to the hypothesis that greater wage flexibility might resolve the problem of unemployment in the South of Italy, for which the policies proposed must be regarded as short-sighted and of short-term efficacy.

Luciano Cafagna

Development studies, between politics and history.

In the section entitled «Paths of Research», the historian Luciano Cafagna reviews one personal path of intellectual and civil commitment: from the forming of his first research initiatives to his militance in the Communist Party, from the shock of 1956 to the hopes of the Centre-Left to his experience as expert in economic planning at the Ministry for the Budget and in the European Economic Community, and from thoughts on dualism in the economic history of this country to discussion of the relative importance of economic factors in the processes of transformation.

An interview with Michael Walzer

Individual, community, justice

Covering some of the more important themes of the thought of this American thinker, the interview takes into account many of the intellectual aspects of this original theoretician, and at the same time touches upon the list of some of the more dramatic problems today facing social analysis. From the classical authors who have influenced the development of his thought, to the new scenarios which have been opening up since the collapse of the regimes in the East, Walzer covers quite a rich repertory of the causal aspects which are today at the centre of contemporary political thought: those same causal aspects which uphold and inspire the worthy frameworks with which it is attempted to decipher and give names to social universes undergoing accelerated changes.

Silvio Lanaro

Where does the Nation begin?

Is it really true that nations always come after nationalisms? Are they really of a purely ideological nature? Discussing the conclusions of a seminar held in Paris last May, Silvio Lanaro polemicalizes with E.J. Hobsbawm and E. Gellner, expressing his misgivings about too linear a conception of development towards universalism.