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THE « HUMAN FACTOR » IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
OF SOUTHERN AREAS IN ITALY

GIUSEPPE CHIARULLO

The interest that experts in economics, statistics and sociology have shown in the past for affairs concerning Southern regions, is now rising to greater significance.

The reason for it will be found in the new economic structure which is meant to be given to Southern areas and in the position they would occupy in the larger scheme of the national economy.

It is not our task to lay down, in these brief notes, the reasons that cause the conditions of depression of Southern regions (This part of the country includes Abruzzi, Puglia, Lucania, Calabria and Sicily) — in fact, in order to justify them, we would be forced to deal with problems of social geographical, economic, demographic and historical nature and that would lead us far from our competency and intentions.

The industrial development creates new working areas in order to supply new markets which are the logical consequence of this dynamics; but where there are the necessary bases, the industrial development does not present important problems and the private initiative provides for the establishment of new factories.

Yet, what has been mentioned above does not refer to Southern areas which lack the necessary bases and where does not exist an industrial mind which thing is an absolutely necessary element for a process of industrialisation.

Since some time ago, special organisations have been providing social and economic improvements for these underdeveloped areas and we do not want herein to criticise their work, that in some regards is satisfactory, but it is undeniable that this assistance is not any more up to the industrial development. Therefore, because of the absence of an adequate structural intervention we have to witness the ever increasing transferring of human resources and of capitals from South to North with great detriment to the already precarious Southern economy. Up to now the politics of intervention in the South has been limited to the realisation of « infrastrutture » (work such as drainages, aqueducts, etc.) while, with regard to the actual industrialisation, it has only been spoken of incentives or incitements to the private initiative or of the forming of life conditions favourable to the creation of the transforming activities.

This opinion is corroborated by the reality that shows how these interventions — alone — are neither sufficient to create the technical ground — which is necessary to the creation of the industry — nor to stir the local demand for the products of the industry itself.

We think it would be impossible — only by means of complementary elements — to start, in the regions in question, the process of economic development which is necessary for the attainment of the final aims, to create industrial areas, to promote and rationally improve the agriculture which, unfortunately, is already slacking owing to the total absence of adequate interventions.

One of the results which have been obtained from statistics, shows how the economic depression of southern areas is due to illiterateness (25% of active population) and to the lack of professional qualification and training schools; in fact if the private initiative and the assistance of the Government do not contribute to fill this blank, all what have been obtained by means of « infrastructure » will be irremediably lost.

It is logical that in these situations the element which restrains the economic development is not the capital but the human factor, the latter not being considered as a whole but as the efficient means for the transforming activity.

All what have been ascertained up to now, points out the necessity of preparing young people to carry out the tasks related to the industrial organisation, and further, to enable them to consider the training and the teaching as a preparation for the attainment of a profession — with manual or mental labour as required by the profession itself — and as the education for employee life and for the obtainment of a professional conscience.

The necessity of providing for all this, much in advance, compels us to solve this problem which is to be set so as to make the work of training and development of the staff to become a congruous investment of human capital.

What southern areas need is to get rid of the « common labour » and of the mental inactivity (which is more dangerous than the inactivity of the body) and to urge on the capacities of people in order to keep up with the rapid introduction of the automatic industry which requires expert and specialised staff or at least operators having their own competence and responsibility as already happen in management of concerns in well developed areas.

To confirm our thesis we notice positive aspects in this regard, in the migration of northern workmen this transferring of capacities takes a greater value than a real investment.

The easiness with which various organisations sketch brilliant analyses and even more brilliant assistance programs, does not help to compensate for the inability and impossibility to adequately solve the problems of industrialisation and of training. It is not this continuous postponing the solution of matter that frees us from the present responsibility. Only if there is the willingness to act with capability towards the existing problems, we can confidently think that we will be up to the tasks of the future.

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