

Antonio Bonatesta, *Europa "potenza civile" e Mediterraneo. La politica comunitaria di Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza (1961-1977)*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Rome, 2019, pp. 202.

Antonio Bonatesta gives us a political biography of one of the few Italian politicians who played a prominent role in the process of European integration. His careful analysis draws on a good many archival sources. Scarascia Mugnozza was a peculiar figure in several respects. He was certainly not another Altiero Spinelli, an intellectual for whom Europe was a historic objective and who devoted his whole political career to achieving it. Bonatesta's study portrays a political leader who rose gradually to positions of European responsibility, by elaborating earlier positions and mediating interests deriving from his social background and local roots.

By family tradition and cultural inclination, Scarascia Mugnozza was closely tied to the agricultural milieu of Salento, the southern part of the Apulia region, and would remain so even after he was appointed to important positions in the Community institutions. In addition, he was close to Aldo Moro, whose political outlook had no equivalent in the European context of the time. "Morotheism" regarded the Community as a necessary outlet for the construction of "more advanced equilibria" in Italian politics, that is to say a broadening of the social bases of the state. Bonatesta's historical reconstruction of Scarascia Mugnozza's political career helps us comprehend the significant links between the local, national and international dimensions at a time when Italian and European history began to march together more closely. His approach is quite innovative, for in Italian historiography studies of international relations that take the territorial and local level into account are rare. Bonatesta also is to be commended for showing us that the local dimension – referring to southern Italy – was not passive or simply subjected to the evolution of Community policy, but attempted to play a pro-active role. In Scarascia Mugnozza's view, what had to be done was not simply to transfer local demands to the European level, but to develop

an approach that would eliminate conflicts and divergences between the southern, national and European dimensions.

Scarascia Mugnozza was born into a family that belonged to that part of the southern Italian Catholic world which, under the Fascist regime, had opposed totalitarianism. A powerful influence on his political formation was exerted by Giuseppe Codacci Pisanelli, a leader of the Christian Democratic party in Salento, which managed to attract a substantial share of local landowners who had been gravitating towards the right wing. Scarascia Mugnozza began his public career in Confagricoltura, a landowners' association, as an organizer of the smallholders' component. In this mid-level position, he cultivated "good neighborly relations" with Coldiretti, an influential smallholders' organization linked to the DC, refusing to hew to the line of conflict imposed by Confagricoltura. In this approach, we see an effort to open up the traditional "agrarian bloc" to the beneficiaries of the centrist governments' first land reform measure.

The Europeanist element was grafted onto this trunk. Bonatesta observes that adherence to European integration was, for Scarascia Mugnozza and other Christian Democratic leaders with a similar political curriculum, the outcome of two pre-existing elements: productivism and anti-communism. The European market was seen as an extension of the commercial outlets of northern Italy which, following post-war reconstruction, had absorbed a considerable part of the agricultural output of the South, helping to trigger development dynamics. These views were influenced by the economic liberalism of Antonio De Viti De Marco, an influential "Southernist" from Apulia, who had criticized Italian protectionism at the turn of the century from the standpoint of the most dynamic sectors of Southern agriculture. At the time, therefore, the European prospect seemed to realize those expectations on a larger scale, even though the subsequent Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) would cool the enthusiasm of many. The European framework gave impetus to the strategy, pursued by Scarascia-Mugnozza and others, of creating a rural middle class.

Adherence to Europe powerfully confirmed the Christian Democratic leadership's "pro-West" and "Atlantic" preference, against the "neutralist" sympathies of a wing of that party. In the periphery, this meant drawing a clear line of demarcation from the left, for the other side of the Christian Democrats' policy of social alliances was, in fact, to combat and marginalize the efforts of the Socialist and Communist parties in the same field.

Ultimately, the pro-European vision that Scarascia Mugnozza developed starting from the early 1950s was not just the catalyst of a broad swathe of the Christian Democratic party's political and social policy aims in the early years of the Republic; it also represented an attempt to find an independent positioning against the backdrop of the crisis of centrism (1954-1960) and of Amintore Fanfani's project to strengthen the party's presence in both the state and society. The party's travail in the late 1950s was intertwined with the relaunching of Southern development policy, decidedly oriented towards industrialization. These transformations were undertaken by the party's new majority headed by Aldo Moro, elected party secretary in 1959. Under Moro, Apulia becomes an authentic "laboratory" for a modern industrial economy, strongly integrated into the development process underway in Italy and internationally. In this context, Scarascia Mugnozza's "ruralist" positions risked being marginalized; thus, Europeanism became "the field in which the proponents of agro-industrial development organized, within Moro's system of power, a sort of 'revanchism' of the agricultural option, betting on a capitalist modernization of the primary sector guided by the Common Market" (p. 26).

Scarascia Mugnozza's European experience began in this setting, when he was appointed member of the European Parliament in 1961. The initial "near monopoly" of southern Italian agriculture in the European Common Market, as far as Mediterranean goods were concerned, was undermined by EEC trade policy. While the CAP adequately protected continental farm output, the Common Market was gradually opening up to imports from the Mediterranean countries then emerging from

decolonization. Scarascia Mugnozza called attention to these risks, but he also threw his support behind a number of initiatives aimed at modernizing southern Italian agriculture, for example the International Centre for Mediterranean Agricultural Studies (CIHEAM), based in Bari, which strove to make Apulia a reference point for research and development activities throughout the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean question was central to Scarascia Mugnozza's thinking and action. In the early 1970s he became Vice-President of the European Commission with responsibilities for Institutional Relations, Environment and Transport. Opportunities and constraints converged and became inextricably intertwined. In the background were the simmering tensions between the two shores of the Atlantic. Meanwhile, the *Ostpolitik* of Germany's Social Democratic government spurred France to seek a leading role in the Mediterranean, overlapping with the policy of openness and dialogue that Italy had long pursued. The European Mediterranean itself became a factor of upheaval, with the coup d'état of the Greek colonels and the subsequent clash between Greece and Turkey for control of Cyprus, and continued to experience instability, with the political transition in Greece, Spain and Portugal, where attachment to the EEC became a major element of legitimization for the parties leading the democratization processes.

Europe and the Mediterranean were essential components of Aldo Moro's "strategy of attention" towards the left wing and towards the new social movements then emerging. The strengthening of European construction was seen as crucial for the stabilization of the international framework. Against the positions prevailing most notably among the leaders of France, who envisioned Europe as a "third force" between the United States and the Soviet Union, Moro appears to have seen Europe's role as that of mediator within the Western camp to assist détente between the two blocs, an essential condition for inaugurating a new political phase in Italy. Further, Moro considered Europe the dimension in which the problems of Italy's backward areas could be tackled with far greater resources than those which the Italian state

could muster on its own. Finally, Moro's attention to progressive movements in Mediterranean countries was functional to dialogue with the left wing at home.

Moro's push in favor of integration processes inside and outside the Community, motivated essentially by political reasons, implied a willingness to accept sacrifices for certain national economic interests. In keeping with this, Scarascia Mugnozza, the EEC Commission's Vice-President, supported economic and political overtures to the Mediterranean countries, almost completely abandoning his protectionist concerns of the previous decade. He argued that the way to resolve economic conflicts between Italy's Mezzogiorno and the Mediterranean countries lay in a deep transformation of the economy of the Mezzogiorno, what Bonatesta calls "planned specialization." This would have entailed granting higher agricultural production quotas to the more backward countries, while transforming the Mezzogiorno into a "Mediterranean hub," a logistical platform for regional trade. The plan was to be financed by the Community budget.

This effort to integrate southern Italian economic interests into Moro's broad plan for a peaceful Mediterranean was undermined by the 1973 oil shock, which increased the intra-EEC imbalances. While Germany maintained a strong trade and financial position, partly through economic policies aimed at monetary equilibrium, almost all the other countries entered a phase of turbulence, characterized by payments deficits, repeated devaluations and high inflation. Germany provided aid to some of its EEC partners, making it conditional on the adoption of austere policy measures (as was the case of Italy in 1974).

In these circumstances, the debate within the European institutions took a significant twist. The "strong" countries began unilaterally to accelerate the integration process, following a "two-speed Europe" model. Meanwhile, new ideas began to take hold among national political forces – and their European "families." Bonatesta highlights not only the rightward shift of Germany's CDU, but also the "strict" positions of the Social Democratic Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, on re-

gional policies; Schmidt's Atlantic realignment of foreign policy should also be mentioned, for it would be to the detriment of a prospective convergence between Italy's Communists and Christian Democrats. In conclusion, towards the middle of the 1970s, just when Moro returned to office as prime minister, the margins for his policy had narrowed dramatically. In Europe, Italy's position grew increasingly subordinate, with other governments increasingly worried about the country's economic and political situation. In these circumstances, convergence between European integration and the overcoming of internal disparities was a matter of critical importance, but positions that relied on Europeanism to question public intervention in general, and measures in favor of the South in particular, were gaining ground. The end of Scarascia Mugnozza's political career coincided with the end of a phase of Italian and European history and the disappointment of many of the hopes and expectations that had animated it.

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