



The Colonial Encounter and the Heritage of Colonialism in Africa and the Mediterranean Area

Gustavo Gozzi. University of Bologna

The article explores colonialism during the 19th century, with particular reference to French colonialism and the influence of the colonial heritage on current African and Euro-Mediterranean relations. The topic is analyzed from the perspective of colonial law. In the frame of colonial law it is important to examine economic legislation in order to understand the continuity of the economic organization of the colonies with the contemporary asymmetric relations between the European Union, on the one side, and the African countries and those of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, on the other. In particular, the article discusses the project of so-called “Eurafrica”, that is the idea of the complementarity of Europe and Africa from a colonial perspective.

Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Politics

The French colonies were first characterized by the doctrine of assimilation and later by the concept of association. Institutionally, the doctrine of assimilation is rooted in the French tradition of administrative centralism, while ideologically it stems from the principles of equality proclaimed in the Declaration of 1789. However, at the end of the 19th century the doctrine of assimilation was gradually overcome by the extension reached by the French colonial empire and the spread of the new sciences, namely sociology and social psychology. The opponents of assimilation called on the scientific ground provided by social Darwinism

to proclaim that all peoples develop according to their own laws, in their environment and according to their characteristics (Le Cour Grandmaison, 2010; p. 23).

The extension of the colonial empire imposed the need to consider the different institutional, ethnic, cultural and environmental characteristics of subjected populations and led to the abandonment of the universalistic idea of assimilation. This notion was substituted by the concept of association that derived from the idea of evolution, of which one could identify the different levels peoples under colonial rule had reached. As a result, the universalistic idea of equality was abandoned, to be replaced with that of cooperation and reliance, but between “superior” and “inferior” partners. The as-



sociation expressed itself in a certain degree of flexibility and autonomy of the colonial administrations that were largely exercised through the existing institutions of the indigenous populations.

In order to clarify the doctrine of association, René Maunier utilized the concept of hierarchical partnership (Maunier, 1949; p. 297 ff.), a contradictory expression because a hierarchical structure does not permit collaboration among equals. Raymond F. Betts claims the policy of association must be distinguished from that of assimilation because the former “sought the improvement of the native’s condition without severely altering his way of life, while the latter sought the reorganization of native society in the light of French civilization” (Betts, 2005; p. 125).

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Mohammad Shahabuddin, a lecturer in law at Keele University, has analysed the idea of assimilation and the subsequent adoption of the doctrine of association within the frame of a confrontation between the perspective of French liberal colonialism and that of German ethno-nationalistic colonialism. The French concept, guided by the ideals of the Revolution, had first undertaken a “civilizing mission” in the framework of a possible egalitarian assimilation and subsequently an association no longer grounded on the idea of equality, but on the basis of cooperation between a “superior” and an “inferior”. By contrast, the German concept of colonialism had excluded any possibility of assimilation,

looking only for the realization of colonial power and exploitation.

Shahabuddin analyses colonialism in relation to its nationalistic roots, that is the different concepts of nation proclaimed in the metropolis. By relating colonialism to the representation of the national self, there appear the different concepts of ethnicity that is the ethnic belonging of natives in colonies that could be considered from the monogenic-assimilationist perspective of liberalism or the polygenic-exclusionist perspective of German ethnic nationalism (Shahabuddin, 2016; p. 62 ff.).

Nationalism, commercial interests and the instrumentalization of colonial expansion as a function of domestic political dynamics were the elements that fed German colonialism. Lastly, this paradigm found its legitimation in an evolutionist doctrine that justified Germanic racial superiority and the elimination of the weak by the strong (Shahabuddin 2016; 70). However, the paradigm of liberalism must also be deconstructed in order to pinpoint its deep ambivalences. This becomes clear if we consider the economic aspects of colonization.

Principles of Colonization and Colonial Legislation. Economic Notions

In his seminal work *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale* (1930), Arthur Girault analyses all the fields of exploitation of colonial resources. First of all, he considers the condition of colonial agriculture and particularly appreciates Joseph Chailley-Bert’s representation of the French colonies which he claimed were still in the age of agriculture (Chailley-Bert, 1896; p. 20 ff.). At the origin of this thesis there was certainly the theory of the development of societies through subsequent stages grounded on the different ways in which men made their

living (Meek, 1976).¹ Backward countries ought to follow the economic evolution like European countries; agriculture's development normally had to precede that of commerce.

Natives of the colonies did not lack the desire to buy the products of European industry, they lacked the means. Products are exchanged with products, declared Girault, according to the famous formula of Jean Baptiste Say. In order to buy something it was necessary to have some money. To obtain the money, it was important to have something to sell. To have something to sell, one ought to begin by producing it. To develop agriculture in the colonies was the surest way to increase the importance of the market that they could offer to metropolitan products. According to this perspective, the colonies were in the age of agriculture and they had only to develop this stage in order to be functional to the creation of a market for the products of the metropolis.

The considerations on colonial trade were also oriented to increasing the profit gained by the metropolis' trade. Girault suggests the creation of business ventures localized both in the colonies and in the metropolis in order to control the terms of sale of imported products. Moreover, he considered it necessary to create trade-marks² to guarantee the quality of products against possible fraud on the part of natives (!). One can clearly understand that this perspective is simply that of the commercial advantages for metropolitan enterprises without any considerations for a possible improvement of the native population's conditions.

Lastly, the considerations on the question of industry in the colonies were very complex. Camille Guy, Director of the Service Géographique et des Missions at the Ministry

of Colonies, asked whether it was not useless and dangerous to create flourishing industries in the colonies (Guy, 1900; p. 315). The adversaries of colonial industry declared indeed that the colonies had been conquered in order to assure a market for the products of the metropolitan industries. Consequently, it would have been contradictory to let the colonial industries develop against the interests of the metropolis.

Against this position Girault upheld the principle of the freedom of work and that of the equality of all French people before the law (Girault, 1930; p. 61). However, the French colonies were mainly agricultural countries and for this reason the possibility of industrial development could not regard Madagascar, Congo or French West Africa, but only colonies in Asia, such as, for instance, Indochina.

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In the case in which all the conditions were favorable to the growth of a colonial industry, nothing had to impede the genius of the French race (!) – so wrote Girault – to create on the shores of Pacific Ocean the wonders of metropolitan industry. Of course, these results could only regard the possible industrial successes of the French colonizers without any advantages for the native populations and without any considerations for their industrial development.

1. Meek establishes the origin of this theory in the works of scholars who wrote in the latter half of the 18th century, in particular John Millar (1731-1801), Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) and Adam Smith (1723-1790).

2. That happened for instance in French West Africa on the ground of the decree of 11 January 1924 that authorized the governor to adopt this measure (Girault, 1930; p. 60).

The Age of Agriculture. The Theory of the Stages of Development

According to colonial economic literature, all civilizations develop according to subsequent stages: the period of sheep-farming (or agriculture, if the conditions of a country do not permit this starting activity), then the period of trade and, lastly, that of industry. The colonies had yet to embark on the route towards civilization, consequently one could try to reduce the length of this period, but certainly it was neither possible to suppress a stage nor to think of inverting their succession. Therefore the best exploitation of the colonies ought to begin from agriculture, choosing those fit for this project of exploitation. Besides Algeria, which was considered the most advanced colony, Chailley-Bert had singled out Tunisia (a French protectorate since 1881), New Caledonia and Tonkin.

In a book published at the beginning of the 1920s, Albert Sarraut, French Minister of Colonies, declared that after the ruins of the First World War a general plan was necessary to enhance the value of the colonies on the ground of a complementarity relation between the colonies' wealth and that of the metropolis. However, the main problem was the limited consumption capacity of the populations in the colonies. There are "hundreds of millions of human beings – wrote Sarraut – that are reduced to inadequate living conditions... that do not consume any products that civil life supplies every day to the needs of the developed countries" (Sarraut, 1923; p. 152). So it was necessary to increase the consumption capacity of the native populations of the colonies. "What a

formidable reserve of future consumers for food materials or manufactured products that the creator's work will throw on the market of the future!" declared Sarraut, who triumphantly concluded: "Happy and wise are those who will not wait until the last moment to prepare themselves to answer the call of the universal consumer" (Sarraut, 1923; p. 153). This was the perspective of the colonial empire: to transform the natives into universal consumers!

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Afterwards this perspective was enlarged on an international level, because Sarraut also considered the question of a fair distribution of raw materials among the countries belonging to the League of Nations, recalling the debates held within the Council of the League in 1920.³ Art. 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations promised all its members fair economic treatment.⁴ It was a condition that openly clashed with the protectionist attitudes and the monopoly regime practised by the holder nations of raw materials. This debate reflected the question of the organization of international relations and international law that some years later the internationalist lawyer George Scelle expressed through the "federative principle" that ought to underpin the administration of colonies' resources in the name of international solidarity (Scelle, 1932; p.143).

3. Report presented to the Council of the League of Nations in Brussels in 1920, published by the *Revue de Genève*, No. 5, November 1920, pp. 664-667.

4. In art. 23 one can read: "...the Members of the League...(e) will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communications and of transit *and equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League*. In this connection, the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be borne in mind."

The French Union and the Community

The foregoing considerations on the economy of the colonies and the subsequent question of a new international order were increasingly linked to the problem of decolonization and the attempt of the colonial powers to oppose independence movements through institutional transformations. Some aspects of the French constitutional transformations from the French Union to the Community can be usefully outlined to clarify the attempt of French power to control the process of decolonization.

The constitution of the French Republic of 27 October 1946, art. 60, in Title VIII, proclaimed the realization of the French Union (Union Française) that comprised, on the one side, “the French Republic, that comprises (ed) metropolitan France, the departments and the overseas territories (and), on the other side, the associated territories and States”. Art. 81 also created a citizenship of the French Union that had the political purpose of expressing the unity of the Empire through the creation of a common tie for all members of the Union, within the authoritarian framework of this institution (Gonidec, 1959; p. 376).

However, during the 1950s Africa was moving on and the condition of associated State to the French Union, after the independence of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in 1954, was no longer attractive for any State. So the constitutional law of 3 June 1958 attributed to the government the task of issuing the draft of a new constitution. Through a complex constitutional procedure (Bidegaray, 1992; p. 196) the text of the new constitution was finally submitted to a referendum and after its approval came into force on 5 October 1958. The constitution proclaimed in the first article the creation of the Community (Communauté), that was proposed to the overseas territories that wanted to become States without soon

becoming independent (Luchaire, 1959; p. 116). But if a State became independent, it could no longer belong to the Community (art. 86). Moreover, the Community was opened to the association of other States that wanted to “develop their civilization” (art. 88). It is an expression that discloses the ancient “civilizing mission” of France. The relations among the peoples of the Community were expressed in the first article of the constitution that proclaimed the “solidarity of the peoples” that joined the Community. This solidarity implied the availability of resources to assure economic and social development.

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After the Second World War, the French effort produced mainly planning projects that, on the basis of the law dated 30 April 1946, were above all decennial development plans. French aid, essentially concentrated in the territories previously administered by France as colonies, consisted for the most part of donations that were largely earmarked, because only French companies or businesses belonging to the beneficiary countries could perform activities financed by the Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération (FAC). Moreover, materials and supplies that were purchased thanks to that fund ought to be French. In short: the markets of the countries belonging to the Community were used for the sale of French products. Continuity with the foregoing rule of colonialism is plain, first in the frame of the French Union and subsequently recognizable in the

Community, although in different forms. The same perspective emerges from an analysis of the organizational structure of the EEC.

It is therefore important to examine the complex relations that intervened between the association of the overseas territories in the French constitution of 1946, and later in the constitution of 1958, and the associative forms that were created in the framework of the rising institutions of Europe.

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It was the project of an economic Europe that served to develop the debate on the question of the overseas territories in the frame of the doctrine of Eurafrica. France did not want to participate in the European single market shouldering alone the burden of public investments in the overseas territories. The representatives of France observed that the effort in favour of the overseas territories corresponded to the perspective of helping the underdeveloped countries. If this did not come about, Europe would not be able to keep these countries in the western sphere (Avit, 2005; p. 22). In the end, the European partners accepted this justification. The international context – the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser and the beginning of the Algerian conflict – also favored the French position. So the principle of association was admitted to the

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Eurafrica and Geopolitics

The project of Eurafrica was set in a specific geopolitical context. It had a clear economic, political and military significance with the aim of confirming the ties of France with the African continent and assuring its role as a great power (Papa et Samir 2004; p. 96). The complexity of the project depended on the relations of the African countries associated with France with the rising European Economic Community and the insuppressible independence tendencies of those countries.

During the 1930s, the Eurafrican idea was developed by the French political scientist Eugène Guernier on the grounds of the theory of the complementarity of Europe and Africa thanks to the African wealth of raw materials and hydroelectric resources (Guernier, 1933).⁵ After the Second World War, there emerged the awareness that Europe, overwhelmed between the two superpowers, could propose itself as a “valid factor” (Guernier, 1957; p. 22)⁶ capable of exercising the role of arbitrator and equilibrium between the two superpowers. However, the question of the complementarity between Europe and Africa, proclaimed as the basis of shared interests, was instead an ideology that aimed at assuring the interests of the colonial power. In order to justify this judgement we

5. According to other scholars, the idea of Eurafrica was first conceived by Count Richard de Coudenhove-Kalergy in his book *PanEuropa* that was published in German in Vienna at the beginning of October 1923 (Ageron, 1975; p. 450).

6. In this essay Guernier points out the extension of this new continent, Eurafrica, that measures 35 million square kilometres, in comparison with the 42 square kilometres of America and 40 square kilometres of Asia. After the Second World War, Europe discovered its poverty, but this condition could have been counterbalanced by the huge energy resources and mines of Africa.

must analyse not only the economic aspects, but also the military and political factors.

From a military point of view, Eurafrica was conceived as an answer to the communist “threat” and to the American manoeuvres that sustained the emancipation movements of the African countries. The Eurafrica project considered Africa the rear of the metropolis in case of a conflict with the Red Army. Africa ought to have been the Siberia of Europe and the Atlas mountains the Urals (Labonne 1948; p. 40).

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A number of journals issued after the Second World War – *Eurafrique*, *Défense Nationale* and so on – published essays by military officers who examined in depth the strategic aspects of the Eurafrican project. General Meynier, editor-in-chief of the journal *Eurafrique*, published a paper in 1958 analysing the strategy of the Soviet Union after the Conference of Bandung in 1955. According to his analysis, the Soviet Union aimed at exploiting the anti-Western tendencies of the Third World countries. Moreover, after the discovery of oil reserves in the Middle East and the Suez crisis of 1956, the Soviet Union had succeeded in realizing a fundamental objective of its foreign policy, namely access to the Mediterranean. The Russians had indeed offered arms supplies to Syria and other countries of the Arab League and had obtained authorization to use the port of Latakia. To this should be added the Russian interventions in favour of the independence tendencies of peoples of Northern Africa, namely the Algerian “rebels”, as General Meynier called them.

So there appeared the extreme urgency (Meynier, 1958; p. 21) of the realization of Eurafrica that could create strong relations with Northern Africa against the strategies of pan-Arabism and communism. In this strategic context, the question of the independence of the African countries must also be considered. The African nationalisms were conceived both as a consequence of the backwardness in the valorization of the colonies and as the result of the anti-colonialist ideologies sustained by the two superpowers. However, these considerations by France did not lead to an acceptance of the independence tendencies, but the hypothesis of a new colonization that could be advantageous to both Europe and Africa.

The nationalist movements were considered a threat for the European presence. Many interventions of the ideologists of the Eurafrican project strongly criticised nationalist movements and their leaders, such as the Tunisian Neo-Destour led by Bourguiba (Fabre-Luce, 1952; p. 24 ff.), the Moroccan Istiqlal and Nasser’s movement in Egypt. In short, the project of Eurafrica was the denial and refusal of the nationalist movements. It was an attempt to guarantee the status quo and, against every hypothesis of decolonization, it signified “a nostalgic return to the colonial era” (Papa and Samir, 2004; p. 111).

All projects for the industrialization of the African countries, together with the creation of strategic military posts, were in the name of a neocolonial project. In this geopolitical scenario – loss of the role of great power by France, independence movements in the colonized countries and neocolonial policies – there arose the question of the relations of the Eurafrican project with the new European Economic Community.

The problem was to adapt the constitutional solutions introduced in the French constitution of 1946 and afterwards in that of 1958 to the institutional reality of the European Economic

Community. The French idea was to promote European cooperation with the aim of combatting independence uprisings, but to ensure French influence in Africa at the same time (Schreuers, 1998; p. 85). During the Venice summit of 29-30 May 1956 the French minister of Foreign Affairs, Christian Pineau, declared that France wanted that its African countries to be associated members of the EEC (Schreuers, 1998; p. 84). The economic transformation of the Union Française through the association of the African countries with the EEC was the indispensable condition for the continuity of French power.⁷ In short: thanks to its European partners France aimed to finance the maintenance of its sovereignty in Africa. This was possible because the relations of the EEC member states with the overseas countries were mediated by the French political institutions (Papa et Samir, 2004; p. 110).

However, the Communauté, introduced by the French constitution of 1958, could not oppose the principle of association with the growing independence movements of the African peoples, notwithstanding the constitutional law passed on 4 June 1960 that reviewed the constitution permitting the compatibility of one State's independence with belonging to the Community (Duverger, 1989; p. 319-320).

This made necessary a different political strategy to introduce the policies of cooperation with the new independent African States. The contents of these policies of cooperation promoted by General De Gaulle were expressed in a fundamental document, known as the Rapport Jeanneney, and entitled *La Politique*

de coopération avec les pays en voie de développement, that issued the French doctrine on the aims of the policies of cooperation (Basso, 1992; p. 261). The document states that “to strengthen the economic independence of a country, it is necessary to be clearly aware of the causes of its dependence” (Jeanneney, 1964; p. 84). This declaration openly expressed the doctrine of “independence in dependence” (Papa et Samir, 2004; p. 112) underlying the French policies of cooperation.

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Indeed the cooperation agreements⁸ concluded in the period immediately after independence “were formally respectful of the existing sovereignties; ...in reality – as Jean Tuscoz wrote – they were grounded on the maintenance of the inegalitarian political, economic and cultural relations that had been inherited from colonialism. They were the expression of the Gaullist policy towards the Third World in general and towards francophone Africa in particular” (Tuscoz, 1974; p. 209)⁹. In short: the independence of the African States was conceived as the occasion for the realization of new neocolonial relations, masked by the ideology of cooperation policies, technical assistance and financial aid.

7. Trade with Africa consisted in the exchange of African primary and semi-manufactured goods for European manufactured products. These commercial relations had a very weak evolution in the following years.

8. From 7 July 1959 to 17 July 1963 138 cooperation agreements were signed by the French Republic and the African francophone countries. From 1957 to 1970, 320 diplomatic acts were signed by France and the African francophone countries. In the same period, 164 conventions or agreements were signed with the countries of the Maghreb: Algeria (72), Morocco (49) and Tunisia (44). The fields that were the objects of the agreements were culture, economy and defense (Basso, 1992; p. 270).

9. For an in-depth and critical analysis of the debate on colonialism in France see Girardet, 1972.

Since African countries gained independence, this has indeed been the transformation of the Eurafrikan project with the aim of maintaining colonial interests, in particular those of France, and guaranteeing the exploitation of the resources of sub-Saharan and North-African countries also in the postcolonial age.

The EEC and the Neo-Colonial Project of Eurafrikan

But it should be clearly emphasized that colonial concerns still played central roles in the establishment of the EEC in 1957 (Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. xiv). When it was created, the European Economic Community comprised not only Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany, but also all the colonial possessions of the Member States. They were called Overseas Countries and Territories and included the Belgian Congo and French West and Equatorial Africa, Somalia under Italian trusteeship, Dutch New Guinea and many others (Madagascar, French Somalia, Cameroon under French trusteeship). In that period Algeria was part of metropolitan France and was formally integrated in the EEC.

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As Hansen and Jonsson declare, the EU (or better the EEC) “would not have come into existence... had it not been conceived as a Eurafrikan enterprise in which colonialism was Europeanized” (Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. 13).

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For the African States that gained independence,¹⁰ the project of Eurafrikan allowed the political elites of those States to make a compromise with their former colonial rulers, but at the cost of the majorities of African peoples for whom decolonization did not seem to have taken place. The postcolonial State conducted economic activities and trade according to the old patterns. This has been the function of the association agreements of the EEC (Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. 15). Through these agreements Europe continued to maintain control over the resources of the African continent.

In around the mid-1960s, Eurafrikan disappeared from the political agenda and was substituted by the projects of cooperation, development, and diplomatic counselling. In 1963, when 18 independent African States decided to maintain their association with the EEC in the frame of the Yaoundé Convention,¹¹

10. In 1960 the following countries gained their independence: Senegal, Mali, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Central African Republic, Ciad, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Niger, Mauritania and Madagascar. The same year saw the independence of Togo and Cameroon that had been under a trusteeship (Rossi, 2010; p. 39).

11. The Convention of Yaoundé was approved on 20th December 1962 in Brussels and signed in Yaoundé on 20th July 1963. The Convention of Yaoundé created a dependence relation on the EEC. It stated that the delivered funds in the field of diversification and production ought to be used for “measures essentially intended to make marketing possible at competitive prices on the Community’s markets as a whole, by encouraging, in particular, rationalization of cropping and sales methods, and by aiding producers to make the necessary adaptations” (art. 17). Moreover, aid to the programmes of diversification and production were established by the States and discussed by the Community (Lucaire, 1966; p. 522). Furthermore the 11th article of the Convention established that the “Community shall take the interests of the Associated States into consideration as regards products similar to and competitive with European products”. For this purpose the Community and the Associated States had to consult together. In short: the Convention tied the associated States strongly to Europe, conditioning the process of their industrialization and hindering the realization of African unity.

the fears that the African States could leave the EEC vanished definitively. The African Association with the EEC continued with the approval of the Yaoundé Convention, although with nominally independent African States. These African States subsequently opted for association with the EEC through the Lomé Convention (1975-2000) and then through the Cotonou Agreement (2000). But the spirit of association with the EEC was still in the frame of the old colonial paradigms.

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In the 1950s and thereafter, the economy of Europe needed the markets and resources of Africa through a relationship of geopolitical complementarity. The Eurafrica project represented an alternative to the perspective of pan-Africanism. According to Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, the Treaty of Rome could be considered the treaty of the Berlin Congress in 1885 (Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. 270). Its meaning was the advent of neocolonialism in Africa. Frantz Fanon declared that the project of Eurafrica was that one of substituting Africa as the “hunting ground of France” into the “hunting ground of Europe” (Fanon 2006, 126; Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. 271). According to Obadiah Mailafia, the coercive association of African independent States with the EEC “was oriented toward financing of infrastructures and was markedly biased against industrialization... association did not mark a major departure from the historical

pattern of colonial development” (Mailafia, 1997; 60). The African territories had remained “agricultural appendages to Europe” (Coryell, 1962; p. 13; Hansen and Jonsson, 2014; p. 274).

The last ten years have witnessed a new interest in Africa on the part of the EU. As we can read in the Lisbon Declaration of December 2007, the new Africa-EU partnership was presented as a “partnership of equals [...] in order to achieve [...] the strengthening of investment, growth and prosperity”.¹² The summit held in Paris in August 2017 can represent the advent of a new partnership for a real development of Africa. However, only a Marshall Plan for Africa will be able to tackle the great challenges facing the African continent.

Colonialism and Euro-Mediterranean Policies

The colonial heritage is clearly recognizable also in the relations of Europe with the countries of the southern shore of Mediterranean. After the Second World War, in the era of decolonization, Europe has held itself out as a civil power intent on keeping the peoples of the Mediterranean’s southern shore in a state of dependence by making its aid to development conditional on their adoption of Western-style forms of democratic government and human rights protections.

At the time the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established, in 1951, France was firmly in control of its colonies and protectorates, so much so as to lead Schuman, Foreign Minister of France, to predict that these countries, too, could themselves be part of the new European Community. That actually happened with the overseas countries and territories, which in 1957

12. www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/eas2007_lisbon_declaration_en.pdf

were integrated into the European Economic Community (EEC) under Article 227 of the Treaty of Rome, which was signed in the same year and went into effect the following, in 1958 (Isoni, 2013; p. 9).¹³ In light of the complementary relation between former colonies and the metropolises, Article 3 of the treaty introduced, as we have pointed out, the principle of association for the purpose of increasing trade and pursuing economic and social development.¹⁴ The aim and content of such association are set out in greater detail in Articles 131-136. This provision was expressly requested by France as a condition for signing the founding treaty and was aimed at those non-European countries and territories that were bound to certain member states by so called special relations – the coded language by which Article 131¹⁵ referred to certain relations of manifest colonial dependence (Martines, 1991; p. 404).

Afterwards starting from 1961, a series of agreements was initiated with almost all the Mediterranean countries, under which the EEC countries would buy raw materials from these non-European countries while selling European industrial products (Isoni, 2013; p. 10). The first association agreements were reached with Greece in 1961 and Turkey in 1963. They were followed in 1965 by a mixed agreement – both commercial and of technical cooperation – with Lebanon. In 1969 two commercial agreements were signed with Tunisia and Morocco.

This was a strategy designed to exploit commercially developing economies, while protecting the European economy by making sure that agricultural products and other commodities and manufactured goods coming from those economies would not enter the EEC if they were in competition with European goods and commodities (Pocar, 1981; p. 5-17).

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Through a historical reconstruction, it is possible to bring out the way in which the development discourse is continuous with colonial policies, and the way in which this continuity has made it possible to promote ideas of Western superiority, difference, and inequality (Kothari, 2005; p. 63). Indeed this perspective is also recognizable in the so-called Global Mediterranean Policy of 1972 and in the Renewed Mediterranean Policy of the Nineties, till the persistent policies of conditionality of the EU towards the countries of the southern shore of Mediterranean. But Europe needs a different policy of interdependence and not of conditionality if it wants to realize a real partnership, and not asymmetric relations with our neighboring countries.

13. Article 227 declares: "...3. The special arrangements for association set out in Part Four of this Treaty shall apply to the overseas countries and territories listed in Annex IV to this Treaty".

14. Article 3 reads as follows: "For the purposes set out in the preceding Article [namely, "establishing a Common Market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States"], the activities of the Community shall include [...] (k) the association of overseas countries and territories with the Community with a view to increasing trade and to pursuing jointly their effort towards economic and social development."

15. Article 131: "The Member States agree to associate with the Community the non-European countries and territories which have special relations with Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom." The association had the objectives of applying to the trade with the countries and territories the same treatment as the Member States accorded each other and of realizing the investments required for the progressive development of those countries and territories (Art. 132).

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