ECONOMIC PLANNING IN CORPORATIVI PORTUGAL



FREPPEL COTTA

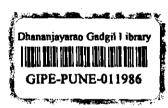
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CENTURY of deficit budgets, party strife and slack administration had brought Portugal to the peak of financial disorder, political confusion and economic ruin. Agriculture, the chief source of wealth of the country, was very backward and unorganized and was losing ground, even at home, to foreign competition; what little industry there was was ill-equipped and disorderly; labour was discontented, without unity and a very pliable tool in the hands of political agitators.

This book shows how, after the establishment of internal peace and order and the rehabilitation of the State finances, a scheme of planned economy has been introduced in Portugal for the purpose of reconstruction—a real and comprehensive plan, controlling and co-ordinating what is to be produced, what prices are to be paid for the products and what is to be the remuneration of masters and of men.

The results so far obtained are fully described in the book, as also the entire technique of the organization, which is not bureaucratic but auto-directed. Incidentally, this work is a good study of the corporative system, which in Portugal has taken an excellent form and reached an advanced stage.

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ECONOMIC PLANNING IN CORPORATIVE PORTUGAL

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BY

FREPPEL COTTA

Author of Agricultural Co-operation in Fascist Italy

WITH A PREFACE BY

DR. MARCELLO CAETANO

PROFESSOR IN THE FACULTY OF LAW IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON

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PREFACE

WE are living in an age rich in grandiose experiments, political, economic and social. At first sight it might be thought that the Portuguese Corporative State is one of those experiments. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Portuguese régime does not constitute a trial of any new formula; it is only a crystallization of old truths, long ago tested by common sense.

It is true that in Portugal we speak of a revolution, and that the country differs much from what it was ten years ago. But, thank God! revolutions are not always catastrophic—and a crisis, even in the worst illnesses, may resolve itself into health. Portugal had reached, as a result of demagogy, the peak of financial disorder, of economic ruin and of political confusion. The revolution of 1926 led us to reason: it was a crisis that saves.

Therefore, the Portuguese New State differs from the vicious democracy that preceded it, as health differs from illness. And what was this new health for Portugal?

First: Balanced Budgets, which for a century had been an impossibility, and which are since 1928 an inflexible rule of our financial life and a solid basis of the whole political structure and of all the social reforms.

Second: Discipline in Public Life.—Foreigners often take fright at the sound of certain words, without remembering that their meaning varies with the countries. Dictatorship, authoritarian régime are terms antipathetic to the British peoples. But the new régime in Portugal does not deprive its citizens

of any of the essential liberties: it only provides certain conditions necessary to ensure mutual respect in social relations, obedience to law and subordination to the collective interest. These things which are beyond dispute among the British peoples were not practised in the Portuguese demagogy. So, the dictatorship in Portugal meant peace, true civicism and the rule of law.

Third: Economic Organization.—In our age it is impossible to think that economic prosperity may result from the unco-ordinated play of competing individual activities. In an agricultural country, especially, where the economic unity of the nation is more evident, there is an imperative need of organization. Corporativism is an ideal form of good economic organization because it constitutes a kind of self-government in each branch of production. The State intervenes in the working of the autonomous corporations, first as a teacher or trainer, then as a representative of the mass of consumers, whose interests it harmonizes with those of producers. State intervention takes, therefore, chiefly the form of co-ordinating control.

In this manner, corporativism is a movement whereby the State seeks to lead the citizens to mutual understanding as regards their common interests by means of agreements, to which it gives legal sanction. Each guild, each syndicate, is an autonomous association, with both legislative and executive functions. It is evident that if the State did not maintain control over so many autonomous authorities, there would be a relapse into feudal dispersion of power. A Government with authority (and with continuity) is, therefore, indispensable to the success of the system.

Mr. Freppel Cotta deals very scrupulously with every part of the Portuguese corporative system, together with its foundations and its results, so that those who study in English are afforded an entirely trustworthy and complete source of information on the matter.

As the Portuguese Corporative State is still in the course of formation, we hope that this conscientious study will have many editions, in which an account will be given of the progress made and of the triumph which will, please God, finally crown the efforts of the present rulers of my country.

MARCELLO CAETANO, Professor in the Faculty of Law in the University of Lisbon.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN after studying co-operation in England and writing my book Agricultural Co-operation in Fascist Italy, I visited Portugal to investigate conditions there, I was much struck by the possibilities of a kind of co-operation that, in view of almost entire lack of effective voluntary association, was being introduced compulsorily in that country.

Voluntary co-operation, except in dairies, had not been much of a success in Ireland. In England, the model home of consumers' co-operation, because there was no agricultural co-operation capable of protecting and fostering that very important branch of production, marketing boards had been established by legislative measures for the principal commodities. In British India, if we relied on voluntary co-operation to give agriculture a much-needed lift both on the production and the marketing sides, it would probably take two or three generations before it became effective to any considerable extent. What has been said about the three countries could be applied to many others. What was being done in Portugal, where good economic and social results had been obtained within two or three years, would not, therefore, be devoid of wide interest.

Secondly, the association that had been introduced in Portugal was not limited to agriculture, but it extended to all the branches of production, whether of goods or of services. Moreover, that association was not only a means of promoting the economic and social welfare of those concerned, but it was also the instrument of giving effect to a well-laid and comprehensive scheme of planned economy, controlling and co-ordinating what was to be produced, what prices were to be put on the products and what was to be the remuneration of the masters and of the men. At the present moment, when laissez-faire is giving way throughout the world to more and more control, the Portuguese experiment, novel in many ways, would not, again, be devoid of wide interest, all the more so, since it is not on bureaucratic lines, but is based on auto-discipline of the activities concerned.

Thirdly, when I lived in England in 1933 and 1934 I found that very little was known there about present-day Portugal, and even the very little that appeared in the press was not sometimes well informed. Organizations of world-wide standing interested in economic and social matters were anxious to know in detail what the new régime was doing in Portugal; but very little information was available in English. Since then two publications that the writer has seen, Supplement Series No. 134 of *The Financial Times* of October, 1935, and the Report on Economic and Commercial Conditions in Portugal of the Commercial Secretary to the British Embassy in Lisbon, published by H.M. Stationery Office in October, 1936, have partly supplied the deficiency, but there is much more to be made known.

In endeavouring to serve the cause of knowledge in the directions and for the reasons indicated, I shall be as objective as possible, letting facts and figures tell their own unvarnished tale and teach their plain lesson. Nothing that might make for accuracy has been left undone. first visit to Portugal in the winter of 1034-35 was to be a short one; but I found that there was so much to study, so stimulating the intense formative period within which there took place also the first elections to the National Assembly and the Presidency under the new constitution, and so worthy of sympathy and of admiration the gentle, withal determined and herculean, efforts of Dr. Salazar to reform old ways, to eradicate inveterate habits and to re-construct Portugal, that I tarried three months. Throughout 1935 and 1936 I followed closely, from far-away India. through official and unofficial publications, the evolution of the organization, which now extends to all the more important branches of the national economy and is nearly complete. Finally, in order to focus better the picture before presenting it to the discriminating and exacting English-speaking peoples who are averse to generalizations. I spent over four months in the spring-summer of 1937 in Portugal.

F. C.

Lisbon, July, 1937.

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