

Unemployment Statistics in Italy

(with Special Reference to Southern Italy)

by

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I - The Official Statistical Returns.

1. — To facilitate the understanding of the data and the remarks set forth in this article we will briefly describe the history, characteristics and purpose of the statistical returns on unemployment compiled by the Government services (1).

The available series of statistics may be classified in two groups: (a) the old series, from 1919 to 1941; (b) the new series from 1946 onwards.

(a) The *old series* cover the data:

— of the first systematic returns, begun in 1919 and compiled until 1923 by the *Ufficio Nazionale per il Collocamento e la Disoccupazione* (Ministry of Industry, Agriculture and Commerce) through local « Labour Exchanges » (*Uffici di Collocamento*) — of which there were then only a small number — and the so-called *Commissioni di avviamento al lavoro*;

— of the returns compiled by the National Fund for Social Insurances (*Cassa Nazionale per le Assicurazioni sociali*) (2) from 1924 to 1933, based on data supplied by the Labour Exchanges;

— of the returns compiled from 1934 to

(1) For fuller particulars see EDMONDO COSSU, *La nuova statistica degli iscritti agli uffici di collocamento*, in « Rassegna di statistiche del Lavoro », No. 5, September-October, 1951, p. 505 et seq.

(2) The *Cassa Nazionale per le Assicurazioni Sociali* (now *Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale*) administered — and still administers — the funds for grants to unemployed workers.

1941 by the then Ministry of Corporations, through the decentralised Labour Exchanges.

(b) The *new series* cover the data obtained from the returns made since 1946, through the decentralised Labour Exchanges, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

2. — Both the old and the new series have as their object persons seeking employment registered with the Labour Exchanges. Their fundamental purpose, indeed, is to meet the needs of the Public Authorities in carrying out the operational tasks entrusted to them in the labour field.

The persons registered with the Labour Exchanges form what is known as « registered unemployment ». These data on registered unemployment undoubtedly afford valuable information in a country where the placing of workers is a public function and where the law requires that most workers be hired through the decentralised government Labour Exchanges (3). Nevertheless, whatever be the

(3) This has been the case in Italy for the past twenty years and more. The Act of April 29, 1949, No. 264 on « Measures for finding work and assisting unemployed workers », has confirmed and emphasised the public character of the task of placing workers and the obligation to hire them through the Labour Exchanges. The exceptions to this compulsory rule provided for under art. 11 of the Act are restricted, and relate mainly to the spouse, relations not beyond the third degree of the employer; persons engaged to fill managerial positions; skilled and specialised workers engaged by means of competitive examinations; workers remunerated exclusively by a share in the proceeds inclusive of métayers and crop-sharing farmers; domestic servants, house porters, persons working in the offices of the liberal professions, and all workers engaged in household services.

legislation in force, returns for persons registered with the Labour Exchanges are always subject to notable limitations.

First of all, they afford no information about groups who need not be hired through the Labour Exchanges.

Moreover — and this is of special importance for the purposes of this study — one cannot obtain from them the information needed for making a direct estimate of certain special and noteworthy features of unemployment and under-employment, such as the unemployment and under-employment of « white collar » workers, under-employment in industry and above all in agriculture.

Lastly, the informative value of the data on persons registered with the Labour Exchanges depends on the extent to which the rules requiring that workers be hired through the Labour Exchanges are enforced. Evasions and irregularities may seriously affect the data in plus or in minus, both as regards the number of those who succeed in registering without being really unemployed, and as a result of « clandestine » hiring, regardless of the obligation to apply to the Labour Exchanges.

3. — Some explanations may be useful on the principles and methods followed in the case of the *new series*.

(a) *From 1946 to 1949:*

In view of the deficiencies caused by war in the operation of the decentralised Labour Exchanges and in the enforcement of the rules regulating the labour market, the Ministry of Labour, from 1946 until June 1948, limited the returns required of the Labour Exchanges to the figures for persons registered with them at the end of each month, classified by *sex* and belonging to the following *groups*: (a) agriculture, (b) industry (4), (c) commerce and banking, (d) sundry (clerks, labourers, seamen).

On the basis of the periodical returns made by the provincial Labour Exchanges the Mi-

(4) The item « industry » covered mining and quarrying, engineering, food industries, water, gas and electricity, textile and clothing, wood and furniture, chemical and glass trades, paper and printing, public entertainments, fishing.

nistry attended to compiling and publishing the national returns.

In July, August, and September 1948 a general revision of persons registered with the Labour Exchanges was made, and those listed were classified under four headings:

Class I - Pensioners and persons in employment seeking a different job.

Class II - Women in the home seeking a first job.

Class III - Young people under 21 and youths discharged from military service seeking a first occupation.

Class IV - Unemployed previously employed.

As from October 1948, the provincial Labour Exchanges were required to forward to the Central Statistical Service of the Ministry the data for persons registered with them on the last day of each month, classified under the four headings as above, and by sex. The groups of activity were enlarged by the addition of other important branches of industry. The monthly data were to be summarised and were to refer to: (a) agriculture, (b) industry, (c) transports and communications, (d) commerce, (e) banking and insurance, (f) general labourers (5), (g) clerks. The Labour Exchanges were to supply the Ministry each quarter not only with the data for the seven groups as above, but also with those for the sub-groups of economic activity (in all 33 sub-groups).

(b) *From 1950 to February 1951:*

Consequent on the new provisions on Labour Exchanges contained in the Act of April 29, 1949, No. 264, since January 1950 persons registered with the Labour Exchanges have been classified in five groups instead of four, to wit:

Class I - Unemployed workers previously employed.

Class II - Young people under 21 and others

(5) By « general labourers » were meant, as before, those who cannot be assigned to any special group of activity.

in search of a first job, and youths discharged from military service.

Class III - Women in the home seeking a first job.

Class IV - Pensioners seeking a job.

Class V - Employed workers seeking another occupation.

(c) *From March 1951 onwards:*

A further, and this time a substantial improvement has been made since March 1951.

Thanks to the installation in the Ministry of Labour in Rome of a mechanographical apparatus, a national card-index has been compiled of all persons registered with the Labour Exchanges. A personal card has been made out for each registered person, giving all data essential for classification (6) and for following in due time subsequent movements (7).

In addition to the classification by sex, class (five classes) and group of economic activity, the registered persons are classified under one of 30 «occupational categories», subdivided in their turn into 250 «standard trades». The occupational categories and standard trades are listed in a special «national guide», which, when completed, will also show the skill and specialisation of the standard trades (some 3 thousand items in all).

The monthly returns received from the decentralised Labour Exchanges enable the Statistical Service of the Ministry to know in good time not only the national and provincial data for each branch of economic activity, but also those for the small Communes, and for branches and sub-branches of economic activity, occupational category, standard trade, skills and specialisations. These improved returns will allow of more reliable estimates of the character of *registered* unemployment. They will be all the more significant if evasions and irregularities are reduced, as may be ex-

(6) The one of the five classes to which the person is assigned; the branch of economic activity to which he belongs; his trade and qualifications; sex; civil status (unmarried, married, with or without children); school grade; specialisation; number of members of the family; subsidy, if any, received.

(7) Registration, re-registration, assignment to work, taken off the register, with date (day, month, year).

pected with the improvement in the services of the decentralised Labour Exchanges (8).

II - "Registered," Unemployment.

4. — In spite of the serious defects of past statistical data and the diversity of the methods adopted for the returns since 1919, we may suppose that at least the *ratio* between unemployment in North and South Italy may be considered reliable. The data are summed up in Table I.

TABLE I
PERSONS REGISTERED WITH THE LABOUR EXCHANGES

Year (a)	Italy	North (b)	South (c)	
			N.	% of Italy
<i>Old Series</i>				
1922	407,364	348,810	58,554	14.4
1923	246,396	204,436	41,960	17.0
1924	164,853	125,786	39,067	23.7
1925	110,298	77,302	32,996	29.9
1926	113,901	91,208	22,693	19.9
1927	278,484	229,457	49,027	17.6
1928	324,422	262,970	61,452	18.9
1929	300,787	247,649	53,138	17.7
1930	425,438	335,352	90,086	21.2
1931	734,454	567,738	166,716	22.7
1932	1,006,342	770,433	236,009	23.4
1933	1,018,953	804,564	214,389	21.0
1934	963,677	750,550	213,127	22.1
<i>New Series</i>				
1946	1,428,101	946,183	481,918	33.9
1947	2,227,866	1,553,530	674,336	30.3
1948	1,656,263	1,393,561	562,702	28.8
1949	2,085,850	1,409,649	676,201	32.4
1950	2,109,230	1,374,252	734,978	34.8
1951	2,119,520	1,368,062	751,458	35.5
1952	2,243,938	1,406,503	841,480	37.4

(a) From 1922 to 1934, annual averages; from 1946 to 1952, end of January figures for each year.

(b) Northern and Central Italy.

(c) Southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia.

These figures afford proof of the noteworthy increase in unemployment in South Italy in this post-war period and also show that it has become more marked in the last few years, notwithstanding the measures taken

(8) A few annexed Tables (A, B, C, D) sum up the more characteristic features — grouped in the main geographical divisions of Italy — of *registered* unemployment in January 1951 and 1952 (See pag. 86 ff.). For the more thorough study of the situation — made in the subsequent paragraphs — only some representative months are considered.

in favour of the South. There is, indeed, nothing surprising in this in view of the greater annual excess of population in the South as compared to North Italy, and the scanty emigration both to other parts of Italy and abroad.

A very different situation can be found in Northern Italy, where unemployment is, on the whole, diminishing (See Table I, above, and Table II).

TABLE II
PERSONS REGISTERED WITH THE LABOUR EXCHANGES: INDEX NUMBERS

Year	December 1946 = 100		December 1949 = 100		
	North	South	Year	North	South
1947	86.2	81.8	1950	93.3	103.6
1948	95.2	120.2	1951	91.2	104.6
1949	91.4	112.0			
1950	90.7	116.0			
1951	81.3	118.6			

5. — *Rate of unemployment (ratio of unemployed to employed).* The lack of up-to-date statistics on the labour force does not allow us to make a correct calculation of the rate of unemployment, *i.e.* to calculate the ratio between the unemployed and the employed of the same category (9) either for the

(9) This ratio can only be calculated — and of course only approximately — for the year 1931 when the census of population, taken on 21st April of that year, included an enquiry on unemployment. The returns referred to unemployed persons between the ages of 15 and 64, and did not include persons seeking a first job. At that date the number of unemployed, calculated on a very restrictive and prudential basis, stood at 920,000, as compared to 680,000 registered with the Labour Exchanges only a little earlier. The difference between the two figures amounted to over one quarter.

If we refer the figures for unemployed returned for the census to the number of workers of the same group at the same date we get for 1931 the following percentages:

Branch of activity	Italy Total	North Italy	Central Italy	South Italy	Islands
Agriculture . . .	9.1	14.4	6.6	4.7	5.6
Industry	15.3	16.4	14.6	11.9	13.7
Transports and Communications	8.2	8.9	5.6	7.2	10.4
Commerce	12.8	13.5	9.5	10.9	12.2
Sundry	3.2	4.0	2.1	2.1	1.9
	11.9	14.2	10.4	7.7	9.1

several branches of activity or of economic activities as a whole.

We are thus unable to express an opinion on the real bearing of unemployment.

One can however get a clue to the situation by accepting the hypothesis that in 1951 the territorial distribution of available workers between North and South was in the same ratios as in 1936 (10).

By referring the data on persons employed in 1936 to those on the unemployed in 1951, we get the ratios between North and South specified in Table III.

TABLE III
RATIOS OF UNEMPLOYED TO EMPLOYED PERSONS

Area	Percentages		Unemployed per 100 employed (a)	
	Em- ployed	Unem- ployed	%	Index N. North = 100
North	71.1	60.9	18.5	100.0
South	28.9	39.1	29.1	157.3
Italy	100.0	100.0	21.5	

(a) Unemployed in November 1951 referred to the number of workers returned by the 1936 census. For the comparisons with the percentages of 1931 cited in note (9) we should need, on the one hand, to deduct from the number of unemployed in 1951 those in search of a first job (classes II and III) and on the other hand to raise the figures for the employed population. The following percentages have been obtained for 1951 on the base of estimates: North 10.0%, South 17.5%, Italy 12.1%, a figure slightly higher than that of 11.9% in 1931. The percentage for the North is, according to this calculation, considerably reduced (from 14.2% to 10%) while that for the South has risen from 7.7% to 17.5%.

This would show that the rate of unemployment in the South is now near 60% higher than in the North.

6. — *Unemployment classified by main groups of activity.* It is not possible to draw territorial comparisons classified by branches of activity because of the large percentage accounted for by the groups «unspecified workers» and «employees». On the supposition that the unemployed described as «unspecified

(10) Cfr. «Informazioni SVIMEZ», No. 11-13, March 1950: *La popolazione attiva del Mezzogiorno nel 1949.*

workers » all belong exclusively to *agriculture* and *industry*, it would appear that these two branches taken together (inclusive of «unspecified workers») account for 60.1% of the unemployed in the North and 39% in the South (averages for May, July, and November, 1951).

If we compare these percentages with those of the labour force — 69.3% in the North, 30.7% in the South — we are led to the conclusion that, even when all due reservations are made about the data used, the hypothesis of heavier unemployment in the South (in agriculture and industry taken together) is confirmed.

7. — *Male and female unemployment.* For the sake of brevity, the calculations on unemployment classified by sex have been made for a few months only. This does not affect the validity of the observations as the aspects here considered are characteristic of present structure of unemployment in Italy.

This is the case, for instance, with the percentage of males to the total unemployed (Table IV); a percentage which, as was to be expected, is notably lower in the North (where it fluctuates around 63%) than in the South (over 74%).

TABLE IV

Months	% of males to total number of unemployed	
	North	South
	November 1950	63.2
May 1951	64.0	75.0
July 1951	62.7	73.9
November 1951	64.1	75.5
January 1952	66.7	78.3

(a) *Per branch of activity.* — The reservations repeatedly made deprive the data for the several branches of much of their significance. Nevertheless the ratios between North and South are fairly representative. In Table V, we give the percentages calculated for January 1952.

TABLE V

Branch of activity	% of males to total number of unemployed	
	North	South
Agriculture	61.3	86.3
Industry	69.1	72.4
Transports	97.3	98.7
Other occupations	49.5	55.6
Unspecified workers	65.6	79.1
Employees	64.8	78.4
Total	66.7	78.3

Whatever be the branch of occupation, the percentage of males unemployed is higher in the South; the difference is most marked in agriculture. In «other occupations», which cover — in addition to commerce, banks, etc. — domestic service, the percentage of males stands around 50% of the total (a little less in the North, a little more in the South).

(b) *Per classes of unemployed.* — The data for the three groups of unemployed, in which the five classes considered by the official statistics may be summed up, are given in Table VI.

TABLE VI

Unemployed	% of males to total number of unemployed					
	January 1952			January 1951		
	North	South	Italy	North	South	Italy
1) Previously employed (a)	75.2	82.8	78.0	73.7	83.4	77.2
2) Seeking a first job (b)	48.7	68.7	55.9	47.0	66.7	53.7
3) Others (c)	83.8	91.7	87.2	85.5	89.3	87.3
Total	66.7	78.3	71.1	65.8	78.9	70.5

(a) Class I; (b) Classes II and III; (c) Classes IV and V.

The differences in the percentages for North and South are less marked for group 1 (unemployed previously employed) and highest for group 2 (persons seeking a first job). Here women account for 50% of the total for Italy as a whole, for more than 50% in the North and for about one third in the South.

8. — *Seasonal character of unemployment.* The study of the seasonal character of unemployment in the different areas, and of its causes, would be of considerable practical importance if we possessed, at least for some years, statistical data reflecting a «normal» situation, considered not only in relation to unemployment but also to the continuity in the methods of securing returns and to the efficiency of the Labour Exchanges.

For studies on the causes of monthly fluctuations it would also be necessary to analyse the regional or provincial data and those for the several branches and groups of activity.

The material now available satisfies none or very few of these requirements.

III - «Unregistered» unemployment.

9. — To get a complete picture of the phenomenon of unemployment, account should be taken not only of that registered by the Labour Exchanges but also of «unregistered» unemployment, which in Italy, and in the South, as generally speaking in all depressed and over-populated areas, consists of a great body of «quasi-unemployed» or «under-employed» persons. This body — which is not registered and in many cases could not be registered by the Labour Exchanges — weighs heavily on the labour market and on the national economy. The definition of unemployed strictly, we might almost say administratively speaking — *i.e.* of persons out of work but able to work and previously employed, in search of a job, and also of the new recruits who arrive each year on the labour market, consisting of those who have fulfilled their scholastic and military duties and must work to earn their livelihood — is thus enlarged and complicated. Hence the need of explanations and suitable definitions.

To this end, the non-registered unemployed must be distributed in two groups.

(A) The first group consists of those who escape registration with the Labour Exchanges but who should or might be registered. This group consists of those who do not pass, or do

not always pass through those Exchanges either because the Exchanges themselves are inefficient, or because of local difficulties (distance, inadequate means of communication) or because of the old and deeply-rooted traditions of the populations (generally related to the inefficient working of the Labour Exchanges) or because of local prejudices (in the case of female workers in some parts of the South), or because unemployed persons for whom the maximum length of time for which the unemployment dole is paid has expired do not take the trouble to register, etc.

If it be true, as many have assumed, that the Labour Exchanges in South Italy are less efficient than elsewhere (partly because of the prevalence of agricultural activities in socially backward communities), it would be evident that South Italy is worse off than the North, also in the matter of unregistered unemployment. Unfortunately we have no figures in support of these «impressions».

(B) In the case of the second group of unemployed who are not registered with the Labour Exchanges and who generally speaking are «unregistrable», the notions of the so-called «unoccupied», «under-employed», «over-employed», «hidden-unemployed» and «latent-unemployed» need to be defined.

With the introduction of these notions we tend to pass gradually from the field of «work» strictly understood, to that much wider one of income (or rather of low income) which in its turn raises the problem of the «minimum wage» or the «living wage». The leading idea is that all those who are below that minimum, for whatsoever reason, should be entitled, as are the unemployed, to relief. This leads us to consider in addition to the unemployed workers also those who at the time of joining the ranks of the unemployed were not working as subordinates and even those who belong to the so-called «non-professional» classes, such as housewives etc. This entails many complications and uncertainties in definitions, statistical returns, the social and economic significance of unemployment.

It is difficult to fix a boundary line between unemployment, poverty and indigence. If we

are to remain in the field of employment and unemployment we should therefore limit ourselves to dealing with the principal types of unemployment above mentioned, which are constantly recurring in economic and social literature.

(a) *The «inoccupati» (unoccupied)*. — This expression has been coined and put in use in Sicily. The notion behind it — which has come to the fore mainly because of the unreliable nature and incompleteness of unemployment statistics — is that of considering as «unoccupied» able-bodied persons of both sexes who for some reason or other are not engaged in any trade or profession.

For the purposes of a first rough calculation, the extent of «unoccupation» may be measured by comparing the «active» population (11) with the whole population at the same date (generally speaking the date of the Censuses).

This give indeed a summary estimate, as it does not take account of the diverse influence that the varying ratios of old people unfit for work, young people (students etc.) over 10 year of age, housewives or members of large families, etc. may exercise on the result of the calculation. To say nothing of the force — sometimes insuperable — of the tradition against waged work for women (especially in South Italy), and of the well-known unreliable character of the census returns for women employed in agriculture.

The notion is however a fundamentally sound one. If the use of suitable statistical methods were to eliminate the influences above mentioned, it would be possible to reach a less rough estimate than those so far obtained from the bare unrevised data, on which the percentages of Table VII have been calculated.

In calculating the number of «unoccupied» persons, the starting point is given by the census returns of population of working age.

(11) The expression «active» population refers to the number of persons over 10 years of age occupied in economic activities, increased by the number of the unemployed, but exclusive of persons who do not exercise a paid trade or profession (e. g. inactive persons, old people unfit for work, housewives, students, etc.).

It is admitted that a certain percentage of this population cannot, under normal conditions, find work for social reasons (married women looking after their homes, students, inmates of institutions, etc.). This normal percentage is fixed on the basis of ascertained facts. For South Italy the percentage accepted as «normal» is that returned for North Italy. When this «normal» percentage is applied to the census returns of population of working age, those persons who remain in excess of those returned are held to be «unoccupied».

TABLE VII
PERCENTAGE OF «ACTIVE» POPULATION TO THE
WHOLE POPULATION

	Males	Females	Total
Northern Italy	81.9	35.1	57.7
Central Italy	81.2	30.8	55.1
Southern Italy	79.4	27.3	51.6
Islands	80.0	11.5	44.6
North	81.7	33.9	57.0
South	79.6	22.1	49.3
Italy - Total	81.0	29.9	54.4

Thus if we take as normal for the South the above percentages returned for the North, the number of «unoccupied» in Southern Italy in 1936 would be as follows:

	Males	Females	Total
	(Unoccupied)		
South	82,000	266,000	348,000
Islands	30,000	443,000	473,000
Total	112,000	709,000	821,000

In 1936 the number of «unoccupied» persons in the South would have stood at 800,000 (inclusive of the unemployed estimated in 1936 at some 250,000). Today the number is probably about one million.

Therefore, in the South, «unoccupied» persons would account for about 20% of the «active» population, and for about 10% of the whole population over 10 years of age.

Women account for much the largest part of the «unoccupied». This reduces the signi-

ficance of the data, especially when account is taken of the doubtful value of the census returns on the nature of the work performed by the women of the rural classes.

Evidently, the notion of «unoccupied» is extended in these calculations to cover those who do not hire their services.

(b) *Under-employment and hidden unemployment*. — The notion of under-employment would seem to be a simpler one; it would cover, substantially, a degree of employment below «normal». The difficulty lies in the definition of that «normal» (expressed in hours of work or year-days of «normal» work). For industries other than seasonal the notion is a relatively simple one (for instance, 8 hours of work a day for about 300 days). The statistical returns of the Ministry of Labour would allow of making rough calculations of this kind for «industry» only (exclusive of the building trades).

But, in the case of agriculture, uncertainty prevailed until recently, and room was open for many hypotheses. Recent calculations however make it possible to give a more accurate definition of the nature of the phenomenon and to reach a rough estimate of its size, provided we accept the idea of including also in the calculation the under-occupation of those who do not hire out their services or who do so only partially.

One of the methods suggested is that used in the enquiry into the conditions of labourers in the lower Valley of the Po (12).

Undoubtedly the fixing of a «*guaranteed minimum*» involves arbitrary assumptions. If the «*guaranteed minimum*» is to have a sound basis it should refer to a minimum standard of living to be assured each person

(12) See G. MEDICI and G. ORLANDO, *Agricoltura e disoccupazione - I braccianti della Bassa Pianura Padana*, Bologna, 1952. To ascertain global unemployment expressed in days of work that would be required to absorb the unemployed, it is necessary first of all to ascertain the number of workers and the number of days they actually work during the year. This number is then compared with that of the minimum days of work that should be «*guaranteed*». The difference between the two is then inclusive of all forms of unemployment (total or partial), expressed in days of work. When the number of totally unemployed is known (expressed in days of work) the number of the under-employed broadly stated can also be deduced.

for 365 days each year. We are thus inevitably led to the wide field of discussions on income and the minimum wage.

These investigations however serve to improve the traditional notion of «unemployed» persons (at a given moment) by introducing a rational basis for estimating unemployment, no longer considered at a given moment but over an annual cycle, thus making it possible to measure the real intensity of the phenomenon expressed in *per annum* days of work (per unit). The days of work «lost», as referred to «normal» employment, are therefore ascertained.

So far, however, the field is always limited to the unemployment of hired labour in the strict sense of the expression.

But considered from the social-economic standpoint (and above all from that of *per capita* «income») the notion of unemployment, especially in agriculture, has a tendency to widen out until it includes that large mass of people (agricultural groups who are not hired labourers) who possess a very small — sometimes a tiny — holding with working implements, and who are seeking (or would seek if their surroundings of psychological outlook allowed) for wage work whereby to enlarge or round out their income. To a large extent these people are not registered with the Labour Exchanges.

This under-employment, known as *hidden unemployment*, is for the most part agricultural and affects the small holding formed by the family *i.e.* the great majority of Italian farms — on which both manual work and management are supplied exclusively or almost exclusively by the operator (owner, tenant, crop-sharer) and by the members of his family.

According to a valuable Report by G. Orlando (13) such agricultural undertakings (covering about 2.7 million hectares) account for some 800-900 thousand persons who in varying degree are under-employed (farm labourers and small farmers).

The above Report has made a rough but fairly accurate estimate of the degree of em-

(13) GIUSEPPE ORLANDO, *La disoccupazione nell'agricoltura italiana*, submitted to a Meeting for Statistical Studies on Unemployment (15-16 March, 1952).

ployment (and therefore also of under-employment) in the various parts of Italy. It would show that hired labourers (casual or permanent) are employed on an average in South Italy for 78 working days in the year, as compared to 117 in North Italy. Operating farmers work 138 working days in the year in the South as against 163 in the North.

The Report goes on to state: « the fact that unemployment of agricultural labourers is heaviest in southern areas both because the annual days of employment are fewer and because the number affected is greater, leads us to an important conclusion, *i.e.* that the unstable and precarious archaic agriculture of the large estates (*latifundia*), where we find real peasant towns of 40-50-60 thousand inhabitants surrounded by poor and scanty lands, are undoubtedly centres of rural unemployment. That form of agriculture is unable to absorb the natural rate of increase of the population... However, among the areas mentioned as the most severely affected, we find not only those under extensive farming of the « *latifundium* » type; the most grievous situations are found precisely where the work of man has built up a stable and progressive agriculture (the coast lands of Campania, Apulia, Calabria). *This suggests that the problem of agricultural unemployment cannot be permanently solved without the help of industry.* Only in those regions where industry has entered the towns in search of hands, and where agriculture has become a highly differentiated occupation engaged in producing for the market, is the vicious circle broken and has unemployment been *definitely* expelled from the countryside ».

Of the 2 and a half million agricultural labourers in Italy no less than 1.3-1.5 million are unemployed for a more or less long period each year. But at least in 40% of the cases (600 to 700 thousand persons) this unemployment is not a very serious matter as it coincides practically with the seasonal winter stagnation, and it should therefore not be described as unemployment in the real meaning of the word. But even so there still remain from 800 to 900 thousand persons (60% of the total

figure) who are out of work for long periods of the year, even when field work is at its busiest.

(c) *Over-occupation.* — Over-employment may be considered from two points of view: as the opposite of under-employment (*i.e.* an excess of hours or days of work), or the excessive number of workers employed as compared to those required if the methods of work and the organisation used were « normally » efficient, producing normal per unit yields, and with the right of the entrepreneurs to hire or dismiss labour freely. In this case the appropriate expression would be not « over-employment » but « employment of excessive numbers ». This group includes both the persons affected by the requirement that a given number of workers be employed (as is the case in agriculture) and by the prohibition to dismiss workers (the so-called « labour block »), and also the surplus-number of workers employed because of the backward technological systems in use and the poor organisation of the undertakings. They may, in short, be described as *potential* unemployed who will lose their jobs, as industrial methods improve.

Calculations on this subject have been made in the international field also (14) but it is evident that the criteria adopted are open to discussion, as are also the results obtained, because of the arbitrary choice of the term of reference.

For instance, W. E. Moore bases his study on four reference levels: a maximum one based on the average *per capita* output of agriculture in France; a second level based on the output per hectare of arable land in France; a third — the one to which he gives his preference — based on the average *per capita* level of production in Europe; and lastly a minimum level based on the productivity of France considered jointly with the level of average *per capita* production in Europe.

He obtains the results indicated in Table VIII.

We pass from a surplus of 10.7 millions, to one of 6.5, then of 5.1, and lastly to a deficit

(14) W.E. MOORE, *Economic demography of Eastern and Southern Europe*, League of Nations, Geneva, 1945.

of 2.6 million workers. This shows the importance that the selection of the « normal » level, the term of reference, may have in modifying the results of such calculations! In all the four cases considered there is, however,

TABLE VIII
SURPLUS OR DEFICIT (—) OF THE ITALIAN RURAL POPULATION IN CONFORMITY WITH THE FOUR HYPOTHESES (thousands)

Area	1st hypothesis	2nd hypothesis	3rd hypothesis	4th hypothesis
Northern Italy . .	4,039	2,752	1,231	- 1,133
Central Italy . .	1,845	426	853	- 1,643
Southern Italy . .	3,271	2,114	2,070	- 31
Islands	1,586	1,180	933	219
North	5,884	3,178	2,084	- 2,776
South	4,857	3,294	4,003	188
Italy	10,741	6,472	5,087	- 2,588

an excess of population in the South. In all four cases the excess of the rural population in the South is proportionately higher than that noted in the North, and is so even in absolute figures in the 2nd, and 4th hypotheses.

(d) « *Latent* » unemployment. — Another type of unemployment that should be considered is so-called « latent unemployment », which is in part a special sub-group of « hidden » unemployment. It consists mainly of women who, in periods when incomes are sufficient to satisfy minimum needs do not weigh on the labour market, but who look at once for a job, however modest, in periods of economic recession or stagnation. We have in Italy a large body of women in this condition, whose potential pressure on the labour market helps to keep down the level of wages. Let us suppose that for completely eliminating the « latent » female unemployment in Italy, the ratio of employed women to total active population should rise to 60% (15), thus leaving a margin of 21% as compared to the men. In this hypothesis, as the actual ratio is now about 30%, « latent »

(15) In Europe a percentage of 60% is obtained in Russia, Roumania and Bulgaria only.

female unemployment would amount to some 5 million persons, of whom 3 million in the North and 2 million in the South. Our hypothesis would still leave some 8 million women free to attend to their homes, being about equal to the number of married women, employed or not.

IV - Conclusions.

10. — Our study allows us to draw the following conclusions:

A. — Referring « *registered* » unemployment:

(a) The principles followed in making the returns and the elaboration of the data on the number of unemployed registered with the Labour Exchanges, and the organisation of the central and local Labour Exchanges have undergone notable variations since the service was started in 1919. Therefore comparisons drawn on the unemployment situation are either unreliable or must be limited to the post-war years. More confidence can be placed in the data on ratios as between areas, sexes, etc.

(b) As compared to the figures for Italy as a whole, « registered » unemployment in the South has been growing since 1919. In the last five years this growth has persisted, whereas in North Italy there has been a considerable reduction as compared to 1946. The main cause of this is to be found in the high rate of natural increase and in the small number of emigrants.

(c) The rate of unemployment, *i.e.* the percentage of « registered » unemployed as compared to the labour force, is much higher in the South than in the North.

In the last twenty years, from 1931 to November 1951, the ratio of unemployed to employed in the South would appear to have risen from 7.7% to 17.5%, whereas it has fallen in the North from 14% to 10%.

(d) The ratio of unemployed women as compared to the total number of « registered » unemployed is higher in the North than in the South, both as a whole and in all the several branches of economic activity considered, and for the several groups of unemployed.

(e) It is not possible to compile statistics on the seasonal character of unemployment, classified by region, age, marital status.

B. — Referring to «unregistered» unemployment:

(a) Calculations place the number of «unoccupied» in the South around 1 million, equal to about 20% of the active population.

(b) «Under employment» in agriculture stands in Italy around 800/900 thousands per-

sons (these figures do not take into account the unemployment of hired labourers).

(c) In Italy about 60% of the agricultural labourers, of whom there are about 2.5 million, suffer long periods of unemployment (in addition to the normal winter inactivity).

(d) It is reckoned that in Italy there are over 5 million women («latent» unemployment), of which 2 millions in the South, willing to accept a job at the first opportunity that offers, who weigh on the labour market.

ANNEXED TABLES

PERSONS REGISTERED WITH LABOUR EXCHANGES

TABLE A

Districts	January 1951			January 1952		
	No.	of which females		No.	of which females	
		No.	% (a)		No.	% (a)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A) Absolute Figures						
Northern Italy	1,081,822	397,333	36.7	1,090,040	390,334	35.8
Central Italy	286,240	70,164	24.5	316,463	77,784	24.6
Southern Italy	544,842	131,168	24.1	607,470	149,401	24.6
Islands	202,616	27,455	13.3	234,010	33,236	14.2
North	1,368,062	467,497	34.2	1,406,503	468,118	33.3
South	751,458	158,623	21.1	841,480	182,637	21.7
Total	2,119,520	626,120	29.5	2,247,983	650,755	28.9
B) Percentages						
Northern Italy	51.0	63.5	—	48.5	60.0	—
Central Italy	13.5	11.2	—	14.1	11.9	—
Southern Italy	25.7	20.9	—	27.0	23.0	—
Islands	9.8	4.4	—	10.4	5.1	—
North	64.5	74.7	—	62.6	71.9	—
South	35.5	25.3	—	37.4	28.1	—
Total	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—

(a) % on total.

TABLE B

PERSONS REGISTERED WITH LABOUR EXCHANGES, BY CLASSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Districts	January 1951						January 1952							
	I Class (a)		II Class (a)		III Class (a)		I Class (a)		II Class (a)		III Class (a)		Total	
	Total	of which females	Total	of which females	Total	of which females	Total	of which females	Total	of which females	Total	of which females	Total	of which females
A) Absolute Figures														
Northern Italy	705,508	203,585	341,134	187,578	6,170	1,081,822	397,333	688,420	186,873	364,424	196,317	371,196	7,144	1,090,040
Central Italy	185,058	30,270	85,766	38,711	1,183	286,240	70,164	197,461	32,766	103,388	43,607	15,614	1,411	316,463
Southern Italy	334,442	64,914	171,895	61,578	4,676	544,842	131,168	360,007	73,869	212,571	72,464	34,892	3,068	607,470
Islands	152,458	15,765	47,555	11,517	173	206,616	27,455	162,565	16,192	65,651	16,670	5,794	374	234,010
North	890,566	233,855	426,900	226,289	7,353	1,368,062	467,497	885,881	219,639	467,812	239,924	52,810	8,555	1,406,503
South	486,900	80,679	219,450	73,095	4,849	751,458	158,623	522,572	96,061	278,222	89,134	40,686	3,442	841,480
Total	1,377,466	314,534	646,350	299,384	95,704	2,119,520	626,120	1,408,453	309,700	746,034	329,058	93,496	11,997	2,247,983
B) Territorial Percentages														
Northern Italy	51.2	64.7	52.8	62.7	50.6	51.0	63.5	48.9	60.3	48.8	59.7	39.8	59.5	48.5
Central Italy	13.5	9.6	13.2	12.9	9.7	13.5	11.2	14.0	10.6	13.9	13.2	16.7	11.8	14.1
Southern Italy	24.3	20.6	26.6	20.6	38.3	25.7	20.9	25.6	23.9	28.5	22.0	37.3	25.6	27.0
Islands	11.0	5.1	7.4	3.8	1.4	9.8	4.4	11.5	5.2	8.8	5.1	6.2	3.1	10.4
North	64.7	74.3	66.0	75.6	60.3	64.5	74.7	62.9	70.9	62.7	72.9	56.5	71.3	62.6
South	35.3	25.7	34.0	24.4	39.7	35.5	25.3	37.1	29.1	37.3	27.1	43.5	28.7	37.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
C) Percentages by classes														
Northern Italy	65.2	51.2	31.5	47.2	1.6	100.0	100.0	63.2	47.8	33.4	50.3	3.4	1.9	100.0
Central Italy	64.7	43.1	30.0	55.2	1.7	100.0	100.0	62.4	42.1	32.7	56.1	4.9	1.8	100.0
Southern Italy	61.4	49.5	31.5	46.9	3.6	100.0	100.0	59.3	49.4	35.0	48.5	5.7	2.1	100.0
Islands	73.8	57.4	23.0	41.9	0.7	100.0	100.0	69.5	48.7	28.1	50.2	2.4	1.1	100.0
North	65.1	50.0	31.2	48.4	1.6	100.0	100.0	63.0	46.9	33.3	51.3	3.7	1.8	100.0
South	64.8	50.9	29.2	46.1	3.0	100.0	100.0	62.1	49.3	33.1	48.8	4.8	1.9	100.0
Total	65.0	50.2	30.5	47.8	2.0	100.0	100.0	62.7	47.6	33.2	50.6	4.1	1.8	100.0

(a) Class I: Unemployed workers previously employed. — Class II: People seeking a first job. — Class III: Pensioners seeking a job and unemployed workers seeking another occupation. (See Table VI, p. 86).

PERSONS REGISTERED WITH LABOUR EXCHANGES, BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY

January 1951

TABLE C

Districts	Agriculture	Industry	Transports and Communications	Commerce	Credit and Insurance	Unspecified Workers	Employees	Total
A) Absolute Figures								
Northern Italy	178,999	555,593	9,820	30,246	373	266,454	40,337	1,081,822
Central Italy	28,769	155,652	3,897	6,914	59	78,924	12,025	286,240
Southern Italy	164,087	245,915	4,072	6,377	61	110,356	13,974	544,842
Islands	75,682	90,493	2,450	5,875	24	26,205	5,887	206,616
North	207,768	711,245	13,717	37,160	432	345,378	52,362	1,368,062
South	239,769	336,408	6,522	12,252	85	136,561	19,861	751,458
Total	447,537	1,047,653	20,239	49,412	517	481,939	72,223	2,119,520
B) Territorial Percentages								
Northern Italy	40.0	53.0	48.5	61.2	72.2	55.3	55.9	51.0
Central Italy	6.4	14.9	19.3	14.0	11.4	16.4	16.6	13.5
Southern Italy	36.7	23.5	20.1	12.9	11.8	22.9	19.3	25.7
Islands	16.9	8.6	12.1	11.9	4.6	5.4	8.2	9.8
North	46.4	67.9	67.8	75.2	83.6	71.7	72.5	64.5
South	53.6	32.1	32.2	24.8	16.4	28.3	27.5	35.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
C) Percentages by Occupational Groups								
Northern Italy	16.55	51.36	0.91	2.80	0.03	24.63	3.72	100.00
Central Italy	10.05	54.38	1.36	2.42	0.02	27.57	4.20	100.00
Southern Italy	30.12	45.14	0.75	1.17	0.01	20.25	2.56	100.00
Islands	36.63	43.80	1.19	2.84	0.01	12.68	2.85	100.00
North	15.19	51.98	1.00	2.72	0.03	25.25	3.83	100.00
South	31.91	44.77	0.87	1.63	0.01	18.17	2.64	100.00
Total	21.12	49.43	0.95	2.33	0.02	22.74	3.41	100.00

PERSONS REGISTERED WITH LABOUR EXCHANGES, BY BRANCH OF ACTIVITY

January 1952

TABLE D

Districts	Agriculture	Industry	Transports and Communications	Commerce	Unspecified Workers	Employees	Total
A) Absolute Figures							
Northern Italy	145,628	587,390	13,658	35,480	262,832	45,052	1,090,040
Central Italy	37,324	149,743	5,752	11,559	94,983	17,102	316,463
Southern Italy	179,786	242,488	5,792	10,467	151,451	17,486	607,470
Islands	81,286	99,510	3,124	8,566	32,957	8,567	234,010
North	182,952	737,133	19,410	47,039	357,815	62,154	1,406,503
South	261,072	341,998	8,916	19,033	184,408	26,053	841,480
Total	444,024	1,079,131	28,326	66,072	542,223	88,207	2,247,983
B) Territorial Percentages							
Northern Italy	32.8	54.4	48.2	53.7	48.5	51.1	48.5
Central Italy	8.4	13.9	20.3	17.5	17.5	19.4	14.1
Southern Italy	40.5	22.5	20.5	15.8	27.9	19.8	27.0
Islands	18.3	9.2	11.0	13.0	6.1	9.7	10.4
North	41.2	68.3	68.5	71.2	66.0	70.5	62.6
South	58.8	31.7	31.5	28.8	34.0	29.5	37.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
C) Percentages by Occupational Groups							
Northern Italy	13.36	53.89	1.25	3.25	24.11	4.14	100.00
Central Italy	11.79	47.32	1.82	3.66	30.01	5.40	100.00
Southern Italy	29.60	39.92	0.95	1.72	24.93	2.88	100.00
Islands	34.74	42.53	1.33	3.66	14.08	3.66	100.00
North	13.01	52.41	1.38	3.34	25.44	4.42	100.00
South	31.03	40.64	1.06	2.26	21.91	3.10	100.00
Total	19.75	48.00	1.26	2.94	24.12	3.93	100.00