

EDITORIAL

We are offering our readers a series of articles on the links between the countries of Catalan culture and the Mediterranean sea. Talking about the Mare Nostrum in this spring of 1991 brings to mind the recent war in the Gulf. The Mediterranean sea, a meeting-point for Europe, Africa and Asia, joins widely differing cultural and religious traditions. At present, the borders between development and poverty, between modernity and tradition, gious, can be clearly seen in the tensions have become more evident and a great deal of political wisdom wounds that have been opened and nal order conceived on the basis of Mediterranean and the Near East might, but must arise as a consequence of effective measures against poverty, against domination and against intolerance. Respect for human rights and the rights of peoples is the best guarantee for the stability of the countries of the Mediterranean and the Near East.



between the secular and the reli- Mediterranean area. The existing as a result of the war in the Gulf will be needed if we are to heal the progress towards a new internatio- respect for diversity. Peace in the can not be imposed by military

Pierre Deffontaines, the French geographer who in 1948 published a thought-provoking book on the Mediterranean, said that the great wealth of the peoples bordering our sea is their diversity, to the extent

that one can speak of a kind of original race produced through the multiple contacts that have always taken place along the Mediterranean coastline. He also said that nowhere had the individual been so highly valued as in the Mediterranean region. People of modest means know how to earn respect, and the recognition of human dignity plays an important part in coexistence. In a world determined by social, economic and political forces of a collective nature, insistence on the value of individuals can help create more humane living conditions. The area around the Mediterranean has given humanity one of its most impressive artistic heritages, fundamental works of philosophy and religious thinking and a way of life that is open to progress. The Mediterranean sea has a special influence on the Catalanian area. Part of this area is formed by islands. Our islands are a privileged example of Mediterranean culture. Millions of people visit Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza, Formentera and the town of l'Alguer to discover our ancient history, the gentle landscape and a modernity that has been assimilated without much difficulty. On the mainland, the sea shapes our ways of life from Roussillon to Valencia. Barcelona concentrates fabulous cultural and artistic power, gives international prominence to the Catalan political institutions and is a hot-bed for human contact and innovation.



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