

ITALY'S BALKAN STRATEGIES

19th & 20th CENTURY

EDITED BY

VOJISLAV G. PAVLOVIĆ



BELGRADE
2014

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(19th – 20th CENTURY)

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Sous la direction de

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PREFACE

The Balkans have been the last of Europe's regions to undergo the process of national awakening. The Eastern Question, i.e. the long and difficult retreat of Ottomans from Europe, lasted throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century, from the First Serbian Uprising of 1804 to the Balkan wars of 1912. Within only a few years, from 1912 to 1918, the latter and the World War I, completely changed the map of the Balkans. The demise of four, centuries old empires, those of the Ottomans, Habsburgs, Romanovs and Hohenzollerns - not only liberated the Balkans from foreign rule, but also freed the region for the first time from foreign influences. The old motto "Balkan to Balkan peoples" finally became reality. Nevertheless, the short interwar period brought neither stability nor democracy to the region. The territorial conflicts among the Balkan nations, between recently formed states, or even inside some of them, along with marked tendencies for personal rule, kept the region in a state of tension. Foreign involvement became once again the dominant factor in the Balkans during World War II. The brutal and devastating Nazi occupation was followed by a Cold War type of division. When Greece joined the European Economic Community in 1981, the region commenced its journey towards Europe, which, for the countries of the Western Balkans, is still on-going.

The history of the Balkans in the last two centuries is comprised of an interminable sequence of uprisings, wars and – unfortunately – violence, but also of an extremely rich and rewarding mixture of cultures and nations. The difficulty of transforming the Empires of medieval origins, such as Habsburg and Ottoman ones, into national states, can in itself explain much of the ethnic strife that characterised the recent history of the Balkans. The gradual or sequential type of national awakening of the Balkan nations was responsible for a considerable delay in the formation of national states. While the Greek nation gained its independence in 1830, the ex-Yugoslav republics obtained international recognition as late as 1992.

The slow and gradual process of national awakening was conditioned by foreign influences, since the decomposition of the Ottoman Empire paved the

way for the division of its European part into zones of influence between the Habsburg and Romanov dynasties, as was the case after the Berlin Congress. The vacuum created by the fall of the Empires permitted France and Italy to try their hand at organising Central Europe and the Balkans, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The Cold War logic shaped the evolution of the region until the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Among the foreign influences in the Balkans, the Italian one was probably the last to express itself, but certainly not the least important. From the early 19th century, the Italian national movement, and later the Italian kingdom, was first a source of inspiration, and then a potential ally; finally, it would become an economic and political rival for the Balkan nations. Yet, the history of the two shores of Adriatic evolved in similar if not identical stages. The *Risorgimento* ended in 1870 and most of the Balkan states won their independence in 1878. The liberal Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, while the Balkan states opted in their turn for one alliance or the other among the Concert of European powers at the turn of the century. The World War I brought to an end the respective national unifications on both shores of Adriatic and set the stage for their conflict or – in some cases – their alliances, in view of their respective strategies during the interwar period. The brief and inconclusive Italian war in the Balkans (1940-1943) ended in utter defeat, and opened the way for a different type of relations between Italy led by Christian Democrats and communist (with the exception of Greece) Balkan states. Economy and culture were the basis of relations between Italy and the Balkans in the post World War II period.

The four periods of shared history, the classification of which is easier if one follows the chronology proper to Italian history, are as follows: *Risorgimento*, Liberal, Fascist and Christian Democrat Italy. In each of these periods, the Italian strategy followed a distinct and well defined logic. If the Unification of Italy was an absolute priority in the first period, its economic and territorial expansion, or shall we say, irredentism and colonial-like ambitions towards the Eastern shore of Adriatic, characterised the second. The desire for the expansion of Fascist political, economic and cultural influence was the main motive for a series of regional alliances, conflicts and territorial adventures in the Balkans between the two wars. In the beginning, the fragile Italian democracy after 1945 first saw the Balkans as a menace, mainly due to the territorial dispute over Venezia Giulia, only to consider it afterwards as a potentially important market for its growing industry and a sort of a first line of defence against the countries of the Soviet bloc.

The papers in this volume follow the aforementioned chronological division. The study of each period is based firstly on a comprehensive analysis of the Italian strategy and afterwards examined in the case studies of its various aspects. The geographical range of the papers covers mainly the ex-Yugoslav area, along with the papers focused on specific topics of Greek, Bulgarian and

Albanian history. The notion of strategy is understood as a set of the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation focused on the attaining a pre-defined objective. In the case of the Balkans, the general objective of furthering Italy's foremost interests was formulated in different manners in accordance with the imperatives of the given period.

During the *Risorgimento* period, the Balkans were seen first as an ally in a joint uprising against the common Habsburg enemy following Mazzini's strategy of national revolutions in Europe. Piedmont statesmen, as Francesco Guida explains, in a more *Real politics* analysis, tried to convince Vienna that it should look to the Balkans for compensation, if not for the motive for abandoning its possessions in Italy. The Balkan affairs were also one of the first occasions for Italy's diplomacy to participate in the Concert of European powers, as described by Antonio D'Allessandri, while Garibaldi became the prototype of the national hero for the Serbian cultural elite following a pattern explained by Monica Priante.

The end of the era of the national unifications of the 1860's – which, as far as the Balkans were concerned, was confirmed at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 – forced Italy to conform its Balkan strategy to the mechanism of the Concert of Powers. The Triple Alliance of 1881, as Luciano Monzalli writes, was the essence of Italy's foreign policy, and the Balkans were a part of the alliance agreement inasmuch Italy was supposed to obtain some sort of compensation in the case of Austria's expansion to this region. The said compensation, which in Rome was understood exclusively to be in the form Trieste and Dalmatia (the life in these provinces under Austrian rule is described by Catherine Horel), did not prevent Italy from actively developing its Adriatic strategy (Fabrice Jesne) or the one concerning Serbia (Ljiljana Aleksić-Pejković). The nascent conflict between Italy's strategy of expansion in the Balkans, based on the terms of the London Treaty of 1915, as depicted by Dragoljub R. Živojinović, announced Mussolini's expansionist strategy for the Balkans.

The Fascist strategy of occupying the vacuum created by the demise of the Empires that had governed the Balkans for centuries had numerous facets. It made use of the catholic institutions in Yugoslav Macedonia (Stanislav Sretenović) and Bulgaria (Svetlozar Elderov), culture in Yugoslavia (Alberto Basciani), and sheer force in the case of Albania (Biser Petrov) and Greece (Stelios-Pericles Karavis).

The defeat of Fascism and the capitulation of Italy in 1943 put an end to the aggressive and expansionist kind of Italy's Balkans strategies. Italy governed by Christian Democrats was for the first time forced to defend itself from its aggressive Balkan neighbour – Tito's communist Yugoslavia (as described by Miljan Milkić and Saša Mišić). The conflict ended after the London memorandum of 1954 solved the issue of the Free Territory of Trieste. Therefore, Italy was able to conceive a new strategy of economic and cultural expansion, as described by Francesca Rolandi in the case of Trieste as a center of economic and

cultural exchange with Yugoslavia. Furthermore, writes Massimo Bucarelli, Rome saw the Balkans and especially Yugoslavia as a buffer zone on its eastern frontier that was ensuring its first line of defence from the East.

Italy's Balkan strategies were an important element in the evolution of Italy's foreign policy and in its state-building process. The Balkans were involved in the process of Italy's national unification only to later be seen as a potential compensation for its lack of colonies. The Balkans proved to be the economic, cultural and military battleground on which Mussolini's Italy demonstrated its ability to act as a Great Power. Its failure to do so had a salutary effect on the democratic governments after 1945, which consequently inaugurated a strategy of close economic and cultural cooperation with the Balkans that resulted in great mutual advantage.

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Vojislav G. Pavlović

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THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE (1848-1870)

Abstract: Italy's interest in the Balkans rose in the wake of the revolutionary year of 1848, due to the plans of the great Italian political thinker Giuseppe Mazzini. His ideas on the common fight of the Italians, Polish émigrés gathered around Prince Adam Czartorisky, and the nations of the Balkans and Southern Europe, against the Habsburg Monarchy, even though they remained unheeded, set a pattern for the following period. The leadership of the *Risorgimento* in the next decade passed into the hands of Count Cavour, who approached it from the standing point of European diplomacy. He was able to obtain the French support that led to the success in the battles in Lombardy and the Italian unification. Cavour's thoughts on the Balkans were limited as he saw to region as a possible compensation for the Habsburg possessions in Italy. Another hero of the *Risorgimento*, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was seen as a possible liberator of the Balkans, following the example of his expedition of the Thousand in Sicily. However, Garibaldi's *red coats* never came to the Balkans, and Italy's involvement was limited to few and far between diplomatic initiatives. Cultural and religious ties were more frequent and more important.

Keywords: *Italy, Balkans, Risorgimento, 1848-1870*

Interest in the Balkans is deeply rooted in Italy but the region became the object of historical research mostly after World War II with the publication of the fundamental work by Angelo Tamborra, *Cavour and the Balkans*¹. Without

¹ A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani* (Turin: ILTE, 1958). It must also be noted that Franco Valsecchi wrote his studies at about the same time which were somewhat similar or complementary to those of Tamborra. These studies about Italy and the Crimean crisis are collected in the well-known volume entitled *Il Risorgimento e l'Europa: l'alleanza di Crimea* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1968) - there are other editions with different title variations.

the intention to do so, Tamborra gave rise to a branch of study that included many scholars, some of which were still very young and had never met him. Of course, not all the studies that claim to be within or linked to this school of thought have the depth, the precision or the originality of the founder's work.

The Balkans have been and continue to be the object of increasing research in Italy, further in relation to more recent historic events (20th century) than those that took place during the Risorgimento period. The Italian foreign and military policies under Fascism widely accounted for the growing interest in the Balkan Peninsula from the 1920s through the 1940s², but many studies pertaining to the Balkan area, and especially Yugoslavia, were also written at the end of the twentieth century.³ However, less is known about the Italian policy towards the Balkans during the *liberal* period, that is to say after 1861. The scarce historical literature about this decade (up until 1870) is of interest for this essay no less than the much richer material on the Risorgimento period up to the completion of Italian national unity.

The Italian interest in the Balkan Peninsula is a geographical *dogma*. Without going into details, the era of the Maritime Republics (such as Genoa and Venice) is instructive in this respect. Suffice it to say that the political and revolutionary events inspired by the idea of national unity were a confirmation of the ties between the two geographic areas and their populations which dated back to the end of the eighteenth century (a good example is the failed project of Rigas Fereos)⁴ and the first decades of the nineteenth century before the "outburst" of 1848. The lively Italian Philhellenic movement of the 1820s was a case in point.⁵

The best known political thinker of the Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini, did not ignore the Balkans; in fact, he focused some of his keen analyses on the

² The most recent works are: F. Caccamo, *L'Italia e la "Nuova Europa": il confronto sull'Europa orientale alla Conferenza di pace di Parigi (1919-1920)* (Milano: Luni, 2000); Idem, *Il Montenegro negli anni della prima guerra mondiale* (Roma: Aracne, 2008); A. Basciani, *Un conflitto balcanico. La contesa fra Bulgaria e Romania in Dobrugia del Sud. 1919-1940* (Cosenza: Periferia, 2001); Idem, *La difficile unione. La Bessarabia e la Grande Romania 1918-1940* (Roma: Aracne, 2007); E. Gobetti, *Dittatore per caso: un piccolo duce protetto dall'Italia fascista* (Napoli: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001); Idem, *L'occupazione allegra. Gli italiani in Jugoslavia (1941-1943)* (Roma: Carocci, 2007); M. Bucarelli, *La Jugoslavia nella politica estera di Mussolini, 1924-1937* (Bari: B. A. Graphis, 2006); L. Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia, 1914-1924* (Firenze: Le lettere, 2007); Idem, *Il sogno dell'egemonia: l'Italia, la questione jugoslava e l'Europa centrale (1918-1941)* (Firenze: Le lettere, 2010); St. Trinchese and F. Caccamo eds., *Rotte adriatiche tra Italia, Balcani e Mediterraneo* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2008); A. Basciani and A. D'Alessandri eds., *Balcani 1908. Alle origini di un secolo di conflitti* (Trieste: Beit, 2010); P. Adriano, G. Cingolani, *La via dei conventi: Ante Pavelic e il terrorismo ustascia dal fascismo alla guerra fredda*, (Milano: Mursia, 2011).

³ These are too numerous to mention; see the very recent volume A. D'Alessandri and A. Pitasio eds., *Dopo la pioggia. Gli Stati della ex Jugoslavia e l'Albania (1991-2011)* (Lecce: Argo, 2011).

⁴ L. Marcheselli ed., *Rigas Fereos. La rivoluzione, la Grecia, i Balcani* (Trieste: Lint, 1999).

⁵ *Risorgimento greco e filellenismo italiano*, catalogue of the exhibition held at Palazzo Venezia in Rome from March 25th to April 27th 1986 (Roma: Edizioni del sole, 1986) containing many essays.

region. His thought did include Southeast Europe even if his political activities did not.⁶ At the peak of the 1848-generated atmosphere – and against the widespread opinion of the time – he pointed out the fact that not all the Slav and Orthodox population sympathized with Russia and was willing to join the great Slav project, later defined as Pan-Slavism. In his view, the Slavs of the Balkan area could follow the example of Poland, the Slav country he favoured, or turn to the West.⁷ Indeed, the Polish émigré faction situated at Hôtel Lambert in Paris, led by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski and the militants within the Polish democratic emigration did not fail to advise Balkan politicians (there is the famous case of their *Conseils* given to Garašanin⁸ during his drafting of *Načertanije* in 1844) in the revolutionary two-year 1848-49 period to preserve the unified front of different nationalities against the House of Habsburg. This advice was not heeded: the Hungarian Serbs, assisted by volunteers from the Principality of Serbia, chose to fight against the troops of the Pest government, as *de facto* allies of the imperial forces and of the ban of Croatia Josip Jelačić.

As his thoughts and views on international politics evolved, Mazzini began to devise a project for a Danubian-Balkan Confederation which would solve the fundamental problem of relations between the different nationalities. While advocating the view that national identity should not be exclusively based on ethnic or linguistic factors, Mazzini no doubt had in mind the specific political mission of the “historic nations” (Hungary, Poland) should have and also the peculiar conditions of Central-Eastern Europe, and especially the Balkans, where different nationalities lived next to each other without defined or natural borders. It was therefore very difficult to set political limits on respecting the rights of each ethnic group. For that reason, Mazzini and his followers supported the idea of a Confederation, an idea which was backed and endorsed by many, even some who were unsympathetic to Mazzini. Marco Antonio Canini was not his follower: urged by prominent Hungarian emigrants as well as Garibaldi and even Victor Emmanuel II, he went to the Balkans in 1862 to encourage the Romanian and Serbian political leaders, along with the Bulgarian Georgi Rakovski, to build a Confederation on the ruins of the Turkish and Austrian Empires that were to collapse following a *symphone et synchrone* revolution. In 1868, he recounted his adventures in French in his book *Vingt ans d'exil*, published in Paris by Baudry.⁹ However, such federal and

⁶ A. D'Alessandri, “L'Europeismo mazziniano tra teoria e realtà: il caso degli slavi del Sud”, in F. Guida ed., *Dalla Giovine Europa alla grande Europa* (Roma: Carocci, 2007), 129-146.

⁷ F. Guida, “Mazzini e il problema delle nazionalità con particolare riguardo all'Europa orientale”, in *Le lotte secolari di italiani e bulgari per la creazione di uno Stato indipendente* (Sofia: Gutenberg 2006), 299-321.

⁸ D. Mackenzie, *Ilija Garašanin: Balkan Bismarck* (Boulder (Co); East European Monographs 1985); S. Mattuglia, “Alle origini della “nazione” in Serbia. Il Načertanije di Ilija Garašanin”, *Clio*, 2004, XL, 5-26.

⁹ F. Guida, *L'Italia e il Risorgimento balcanico. Marco Antonio Canini* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984), 253-260.

confederal projects would not be realized during the nineteenth century but later, in the twentieth century, and would involve only a part of the southern Slav population within the framework of Yugoslavia (1918-1991).

In the two-year revolutionary period of 1848-49, the interaction between Italian and Balkan politics varied in intensity. The Kingdom of Sardinia constituted the stronghold of the anti-Austrian struggle in Italy. Due to the major crisis spreading through the Habsburg Monarchy, the Sardinian governments of the empire carried out far reaching political activities on the international stage. In this context even the government of Turin was compelled to take an interest in the struggle of the Hungarian Serbs against the revolutionary Pest government. Its position was similar to that of the Polish government-in-exile: it was fundamental for the Danubian-Balkan nationalities not to fight each other in order to join forces in the struggle against Austria. For this reason the Turin government sent the Consul, Marcello Cerruti, to Belgrade with the mission to secure the support of the Principality of Serbia for the Hungarian cause; the Serbian government would then convince the Hungarian Serbs to follow suit. Cerruti's mission (which has attracted the attention of many historians)¹⁰ was not successful: the armed resistance of the Serbs of Vojvodina led by the Patriarch Rajačić remained a thorn in the side of Kossuth and his followers. Nevertheless, Cerruti's activities confirmed the connexion between the Italian issue and the Eastern Question in all of its aspects. Cavour would successfully pursue this line of policy a few years later.

Camillo Benso di Cavour was a political figure who linked the Italian issue to the Eastern Question. He did so by sending 20,000 men to fight in Crimea alongside French, English and Turkish troops, against the will of the greater part of public opinion in the Kingdom of Sardinia. Opposition to this intervention was widespread in Piedmontese political circles because the public disapproved of the cordial relations established between Paris and Vienna. With the necessary approval of the king (as in the proverbial expression *les ministres passent, le Roi reste*), the government took responsibility for the decision without procuring any compensation for Piedmont. According to the standard historical interpretation, by intervening militarily in the ongoing Eastern crisis Cavour aimed at gaining the right to participate in the peace congress (held in Paris in 1856) where he would present the Italian case not as a project for unification of the country but rather as a request for the elimination of Austrian influence in the peninsula and the political and territorial strengthening of the Kingdom of Sardinia. The leading biographer of the Piedmontese statesman, Rosario Romeo, was in agreement with this interpretation, although he acknowledged that nothing concrete was conceded to Piedmont.¹¹ On the oc-

¹⁰ A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani*, 91-95; P. Fornaro, *Risorgimento italiano e questione ungherese: 1849-1867. Marcello Cerruti e le intese politiche italo-magiare* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1995), 38-48.

¹¹ R. Romeo, *Cavour* (Milano: RCS, 2005), 248

casation of the peace conference, Cavour realized that, despite his ideological affinity for the conservative British democracy, he could not count on the British government since it was disinterested in the Italian affair. It was France alone that could help wring the Italian peninsula away from Austrian influence.¹² Historiography praises full success of this farsighted strategy: in 1856 both the French and English government merely raised the issues concerning the occupied Papal State and the reforms to be carried out in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but as soon as 1858 their willingness to intervene in Italy became much stronger. That year, as is known, Napoleon III and Cavour signed the agreement of Plombières and envisaged Austria's ousting from the Italian peninsula, which was then to be divided into four large states bound in a federation to be presided over by the Pope. The intervening events of 1859, however, did not go in favour of the two statesmen's stratagem and after a year and a half of turmoil (the war in Lombardy, the unionist revolts in the central states of Italy, the expedition of the Thousand in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the occupation of the Pontifical State), Italian national unification was achieved with the exception of Lazio and Veneto which remained outside of the newly constituted Kingdom of Italy proclaimed on 17 March 1861.

The linking of the Eastern issue with the Italian one produced a positive outcome. An event which took place in South-eastern Europe at the beginning of 1859 proved to be a portent of what happened that same year on Italian soil. On 17 January and 5 February 1859, Colonel Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected Prince of Moldavia and Walachia by the assemblies in Iași and Bucarest convened for that very purpose. This was not merely a temporal and accidental link between the Italian and the Romanian events. After the signing of the Paris agreement, Cavour had become involved in Romanian affairs. At that time, the Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia were not under the heavy-handed protection of Russia, defeated in the Crimean war, but had been placed under the collective care of all Great Powers. In substance, their aim was to gain policymaking powers concerning the unification of these two Principalities into one national state, as was the desire of the patriotic Romanian public opinion. On this issue the European powers were divided among themselves. France and Russia (which had been enemies during the war) were both in favour of unification; Piedmont sided with them in accordance with Cavour's plans, whereas the Prussian government's support was rather tepid. Austria and England were opposed to unification: Austria feared any political change and, in particular, the formation of a Romanian national state¹³ which would naturally attract the Romanians within her bor-

¹² U. Marcelli, *Cavour diplomatico: dal Congresso di Parigi a Villafranca* (Bologna: Forni 1961); M. G. Tocco, *Cavour e la guerra di Crimea: il problema italiano e la questione d'Oriente* (Roma: Sguera 1967).

¹³ In the middle of the war, and with the consent of the belligerent nations, the Austrian troops occupied the two Romanian Principalities. They acted as what we nowadays refer to as *peace-*

ders; England was against further weakening of the Ottoman Empire which had become something of a British *protégé*. Before supporting the unification, Cavour brought forth a proposal which was not entirely in line with the principle of nationality (without however denying it completely): he suggested that the Dukes of Modena and Parma leave their Italian possessions – to the benefit of the Kingdom of Sardinia – and rule over the Principalities of Moldavia and Walachia instead.¹⁴ This was a proposal intended for the Viennese government but nothing came of it. The Piedmontese statesman then toed the political line in favour of national unity, which was wholeheartedly supported by Napoleon III.¹⁵

After the Crimean war, the system of international relations was shaken. Russia succumbed to the military intervention of France, England and Piedmont on the side of the Ottoman Empire, while Austria and Prussia remained non-benevolently neutral. During the Paris peace congress of 1856 and the following international conferences, other issues were dealt with as well. One of these concerned the change in the international status of the Principality of Serbia, which was now placed under the protection of all Great powers rather than Russia alone. The Serbian *knez* Miloš Obrenović (who had come back to power in 1858) said that having “six masters is like having none”. On the other hand, Garašanin, the author of the 1844 *Načertanije*, the Serbian national program, envisaged Serbia tied to the Western powers, France and England, and the liberation of the Serbs still living in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ Many of them were living in Bosnia, a province Belgrade did not lose sight of.

In government cabinets, however, even in London and Paris, other projects were being devised for the Bosnian territory, especially in the wake of the French-Austrian-Piedmontese conflict. Austria had to cede Lombardy to the Kingdom of Sardinia, which within the next year and a half - thanks to the expedition of the Thousand and other speedy turns of fortune - became the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. In order to complete the unification of the penin-

keeping force interposing themselves between the Russian and Turkish armies. Vienna hoped to prolong the occupation once the war was over or even to annex the Principalities to the Austrian Empire, a possibility that other European states were not willing to tolerate. Thus the troops of General Coronini-Cronberg were forced to withdraw. See L. Boicu, *Austria și Principatele Române în vremea războiului Crimeii (1853-1856)* (Bucharest, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1972). The Austrian military action caused apprehension in Belgrade: on this subject see A. D'Alessandri, “La Serbia e l'occupazione dei Principati Danubiani durante la crisi d'Oriente del 1853-1856”, *Annuario dell'Istituto romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica di Venezia*, 5, 2003, 311-319.

¹⁴ R. Romeo, Cavour, 249-250; A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani*, 25-28.

¹⁵ On the French emperor's attitude see E. Di Rienzo, *Napoleone III* (Roma: Salerno 2010). For an analysis of how the Romanian issue was viewed in Italy see A. D'Alessandri, “La pubblicistica italiana e l'unione dei Principati danubiani: gli scritti di Oddone di Castelvetro”, *România Orientale*, XVI, 2003, 63-85.

¹⁶ See note 8, but in the opinion of Stevan K. Pavlowitch, the *Načertanije* was an “ambiguous” program: S. K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia. La storia al di là del nome* (Trieste: Beit, 2010) 67.

sula, Lazio and Veneto still had to be included in the new Italian state. A few politicians believed that this could be achieved by trading Bosnia – Herzegovina. This hypothesis was advanced by the French Minister Thouvenel and suggested to the Russian government; the Russians however, were not favourably inclined to Austrian expansion in the Balkans. The British Prime Minister Palmerston was also sceptical about the feasibility of this idea: he doubted that Vienna would accept the plan and cede Veneto. The project was elaborated by Isacco Artom, a close collaborator of Cavour, shortly after the latter's death: the Italian government would have to buy Bosnia – Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire at the cost of five million pounds and later exchange that province with the Austrian government for Veneto. The plan was never realized, but it was nevertheless a further effort to link the Balkan issue to the Italian one. Furthermore, it clearly demonstrated that European governments viewed what had happened in 1878 as the *de facto* annexation of Bosnia – Herzegovina by the Habsburg Empire.¹⁷

The province had long caused problems to the sultan. Until the middle of the century, local administrators and the ruling class, both entirely Muslim, had struggled for greater autonomy. Moreover, the Muslim element had opposed the Tanzimat reforms implemented by many sultans and especially the 1839 *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane signed by Sultan Abdülmecid I. The equality of all the subjects irrespectively of their religion (the *Hatt-i Hümayun* of 18 February 1856) was not popular among those who had been privileged until then. In addition, after the middle of the nineteenth century, the Christian element bore the Ottoman domination with increasing difficulty. In 1857-58, there was a revolt in Herzegovina led by Luka Vukalović, followed by revolts in Bosnia under the *haiduk* leaders such as Petrović and Ćosić. The turmoil continued in 1861 and 1864, until Vukalović fled to Russia. Montenegrin forces came to the aid of the rebels and strengthened their resistance.

These events were greatly influenced by the Expedition of the Thousand in 1860, taken by many as an example to be followed on the Dalmatian shores. Such views were held by the Serbian intellectual born in Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Matija Ban, who kept in touch with Italian democratic circles. Plans for a landing on the Eastern Adriatic coast under the leadership of Garibaldi were devised between 1860 and 1866 until Austria suffered a new defeat by the Italo-Prussian alliance. In that war, however, Garibaldi's volunteers fought in Trentino while the southern Slav population waited in vain for the crisis to spread to their territory. Political initiatives typical of Cavour had only seemingly been replaced by (or integrated into) Garibaldi's expedition plans, but something like this took place only when the great revolt in Bosnia – Herzegovina broke out in 1875. On this occasion, Italian and European public opinion came to the rescue of the rebels and many volunteers came from Italy

¹⁷ A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani*, 201-206.

and other countries to fight for the cause of national identity and in the name of Garibaldi, or for the anarchist and socialist ideals.¹⁸



Expedition of the Thousand

Fabrice Jesné's assessment of the Italian Balkan policy during the following decades as "sous-produit du système colonial"¹⁹ cannot be applied prior to 1861 when the Balkans were certainly not seen as a territory for potential expansion (a substitute for colonies) of the pre-unification states and they would not be seen as such even by the Kingdom of Italy until the acquisition of Veneto (1866) and Rome (1870). Italian diplomacy and those involved in economic and commercial activities certainly had reason to focus their attention on South-eastern Europe. Rade Petrović,²⁰ a Bosnian historian with close ties to Italy, went so far as to say that with the arrival of the first Italian consul to Sarajevo

¹⁸ M. Deambrosis, "La partecipazione dei garibaldini e degli internazionalisti italiani alla insurrezione di Bosnia ed Erzegovina del 1875-76 e alla guerra di Serbia", in R. Giusti ed, *Studi garibaldini e altri saggi* (Mantova, Museo del Risorgimento 1967) 33-82; Idem, "Garibaldini e militari italiani nelle guerre ed insurrezioni balcaniche: (1875-1877)", *Giuseppe Garibaldi e le origini del movimento operaio italiano (1860-82): atti e memorie*, 1983-84, 19, 29-51.

¹⁹ F. Jesné, *Les nationalités balkaniques dans le débat politique italien, de l'Unité au lendemain des Guerres balkaniques (1861-1913). Entre invention scientifique, solidarité méditerranéenne et impérialisme adriatique*, PhD awarded at Sorbonne on September 23, 2009.

²⁰ R. Petrović, "I primi rapporti diplomatici tra la Bosnia Erzegovina e il Regno d'Italia (1861-1878)", in R. Tolomeo ed., *Il fallito modello federale della ex Jugoslavia*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2005), 219.

in 1863, the young Cesare Durando, close relations were established between Italy and Bosnia rather than Italy and Turkey. However, the time was not ripe for Italy to become a strong national state with ambitions in the Balkans.

Nor did Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had considered an expedition to the Balkans for a long time²¹, engage in that region but fought instead in France (although fatigued and weakened) and many years before that in South America when he had still been vigorous and physically fit. He actually did not have time to transform his interest in the Balkans and Central Europe into concrete action. In the 1840s and 1850s, before the great successes of 1860, there had been no occasion to act, whereas after the expedition of the Thousand many of Garibaldi's projects and proposals envisioning an expedition beyond the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic sea were mooted. His return to Sicily in 1862 was supposed to be a prelude to an expedition to Greece, and not to Rome as it eventually turned out.²² Greek Radicals (*rizospastes*) hoped that the *red coats* would march on Constantinople just as they had marched on Naples. This way, all the Greeks still living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire would be reunited with their blood brothers from the Kingdom of Greece and the Hellenic *Megali idea* would be realised.²³ The episode of Aspromonte is correctly interpreted²⁴ as the shifting point within the time frame from 1860 to 1866 because it changed Garibaldi's objectives and sparked the delusions of the Balkan populations (Greeks, Albanians, Southern Slavs). His pursuit of the *Rome and Venice* project, however, was a much more important factor in the failure to mount an expedition lead by Garibaldi to the European Danubian and Balkanic areas, as pointed out by Antonis Liakos²⁵

The international political situation was a decisive factor preventing Garibaldi from heading to Central and Southern Europe. Montenegro was a case in point. In fact, the negotiations with Prince Nikola Petrović-Njegoš (who became the Montenegrin *knjaz* in 1860) went ahead to some degree. The Montenegrins - secluded in their mountains and taking advantage of a geographic factor, or rather of an orographic one - had always resisted submission to the Sultan and fought against the Ottomans despite their small numbers. The Prince promised 10,000 men to the Turin government in case Garibaldi's expedition landed in the vicinity of Montenegro and arms and money were

²¹ A. Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l'Europa: impegno militare e prospettive politiche* (Roma: Army Staff Historical Office, 1983), 52-63.

²² Garibaldi surprised his ally, Victor Emmanuel II, when he wrote to him from Sicily informing him there were no conditions for an expedition to Greece - as expected by the king - and that the time was right to undertake the march on Rome instead, as imagined in 1860. "The Greek affair is a rotten one, I will speak of it with V. E. when we are in Rome." *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, first series, II, 607.

²³ F. Guida, "Considerazioni sulla 'megali idea' ellenica", *Clio*, XXVI, 1990, 1, 147-157.

²⁴ A. Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l'Europa*, 52, 85.

²⁵ A. Liakos, *L'unificazione italiana e la grande idea: ideologia e azione dei movimenti nazionali in Italia e in Grecia, 1859-1871* (Firenze, Aletheia, 1995).

supplied to him. As soon as news of this agreement leaked, Paris and Saint Petersburg made clear they were against it. Especially the Emperor, the traditional protector of Montenegro, vetoed such a project. The Russian government was not concerned about the difficulties such a project could create for Turkey and Austria. Instead, these troubles would not work in favour of an autonomous and revolutionary initiative with the prospect of undermining Russian influence and creating better conditions for the revolution to expand eastwards in the name of the principle of nationality with negative repercussions for the stability of the Czarist Empire.²⁶

At the same time, some people tried to get Garibaldi interested in the Macedonian issue, which would come to the fore a few years later, in the decades following the Treaty of Berlin.²⁷ A memoir by an unknown author²⁸ was not enough to spark an expedition or initiate a well-planned project. This work is noteworthy because it demonstrates that Garibaldi probably did not have a firm grasp of the nationality issues in the Danube valley and Balkan area (since he issued an appeal to the Christians²⁹ to fight against the Ottomans, including in it the Albanians who were 70% Muslim). He was, however, humble enough not to suggest political solutions regarding the borders. He merely suggested a confederal solution, as Mazzini had done, in the declaration "To the people of the East" in 1862, which Marco Antonio Canini, with his deep knowledge of the Balkans,³⁰ apparently drafted. As for the Macedonian issue, Garibaldi was perhaps not able to judge which nationality had a stronger claim on Macedonia but a certain preference for Greece became obvious in the years to come: in

²⁶ A. Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l'Europa*, 60-61. The case of Montenegro was also important because it pushes a discussion about the Montenegrin national identity. The formation of a Montenegrin nation appears to have been a very peculiar process, central to which was the prince who belonged to a dynasty of bishops. On this subject see A. Pitassio, "The building of nations in South-Eastern Europe. The cases of Slovenia and Montenegro: a comparative approach", S. Bianchini and M. Dogo eds., in *The Balkans. National identities in a historical perspective* (Ravenna: Longo, 1998), 33-60. On the delicate subject of *nation-building* recent Italian historiography has produced contributions such as G. Brucciani *La scrittura della nazione: storia, lingua e fede nel Risorgimento bulgaro, 18-19 sec.* (Pisa: Plus, 2009) and B. Mitrovic, *Ricerca della verità e liberazione nazionale: Leopold von Ranke nella storiografia serba* (Trieste: Deputazione di storia patria per la Venezia Giulia, 2006).

²⁷ For more details on the Macedonian question see M. Dogo *La dinamite e la mezzaluna: la questione macedone nella pubblicistica italiana: 1903-1908* (Udine: Del Bianco, 1983) and Idem, *Lingua e nazionalità in Macedonia: vicende e pensieri di profeti disarmati, 1902-1903* (Milano: Jaca book, 1985).

²⁸ A. Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l'Europa*, 61-62 (this memoir is deposited at the Museum of the Risorgimento in Rome, folder 52, file 1). The Greek author (or naturalized Greek of Armenian origin) brought Garibaldi's attention to the fact that the Balkan Slavs could become masters of that region which was particularly complex from ethnic point of view.

²⁹ See the correspondence with Elena Ghica (Dora d'Istria); among others a more precise dating can be found in A. D'Alessandri *Il pensiero e l'opera di Dora d'Istria fra Oriente europeo e Italia* (Roma: Gangemi, 2007) 196-197.

³⁰ F. Guida, *L'Italia e il Risorgimento balcanico. Marco Antonio Canini, 176-179.*

1866-67 Italian volunteers were dispatched to Crete and Greece. That preference of the Garibaldian movement was confirmed by the expedition of 1897 (concluded with the battle of Domokòs) and the 1912 expedition to Drisko, not far from Ioannina.³¹ The first of these Garibaldi-type expeditions on Hellenic soil took place in the period in question; it should be noted that historians have long proposed excessive and fanciful figures for the number of Italian volunteers which fought against Turkish troops. In fact, they were much fewer in number and felt disappointed with the situation on the ground, not unlike the Philhellenic volunteers in the 1820s. Nevertheless, those men gave evidence of their political ideals (the presence of Garibaldi's young sons illustrates this point), not least the solidarity between different nationalities fighting for their freedom.³²

The ambition of Italy's first king, Victor Emmanuel II of Savoia, to place his second-born son, Vittorio Amedeo, on the Greek throne after the overthrow of Otho of Wittelsbach-Bavaria in 1862 had a lot to do with Italian interest in the Balkans. Walter Maturi³³ named this failed attempt *Operation Amedeo*. The Greek ruling class and the entire population in fact favoured Queen Victoria's son, Prince Alfred; however, having realised that the British were not interested, Prince William of Denmark took the name of George I, King of the Hellenic people.

The plan was confined to the King's entourage (even though political and diplomatic figures were involved) and was not shared by the main exponents in the government who merely went along with it at best. Thus, the plan did not play a role in the way Italian public viewed the events in the Balkans. Nevertheless, had it been successful and had a prince of the House of Savoy become a king of Greece, it would have had important consequences on the relations between Italy and Greece as well as the Italian presence in the Balkans in general.

A certain degree of similarity with *Operation Amedeo* is evident in an attempt to involve some of the South-east European states in the project of

³¹ F. Guida, "Ricciotti Garibaldi e il movimento nazionale albanese", *Archivio storico italiano*, CCCXXXIX, 1981, 1, 97-138; Idem, "Ettore Ferrari e il volontarismo garibaldino nel Sud-est europeo", in A.M. Isastia ed., *Il progetto liberaldemocratico di Ettore Ferrari* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1997), 61-72; "L'ultima spedizione garibaldina in Grecia (1912)", in *Indipendenza e unità nazionale in Italia e in Grecia* (Firenze: Olschki, 1987) 191-220. For a more recent overview see E. Cecchinato, *Camicie rosse: i garibaldini dall'unità alla grande guerra* (Roma, Laterza 2007); also G. Pécout, "Philhellenism in Italy: political friendship and the Italian volunteers in the Mediterranean in the nineteenth century", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 2004, 9/4, 405 - 427. The previously referred Fabrice Jesné's doctoral thesis also deals with the support of Italian public opinion (especially the democratic fraction) for the Hellenic cause.

³² L. Callivretakis, "Les garibaldiens et l'insurrection de 1866 en Crète. (Le jeu de chiffres)", *Indipendenza e unità nazionale in Italia ed in Grecia* (Firenze, Olschki 1987) 25-34, 163-179.

³³ W. Maturi, "Le avventure balcaniche di Marco Antonio Canini nel 1862", in *Studi storici in onore di Gioachino Volpe* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1958), 559-643; F. Guida, "Marco Antonio Canini e la Grecia: un mazziniano suo malgrado", *Balkan Studies*, 1979, XX, 343-392.

the creation of a Danubian-Balkan Confederation envisaged in 1862 among the Hungarian émigré movement (headed by Kossuth and Klapka). The main promoter of such an idea in the Balkan capital cities was the above-mentioned Canini. On one hand, the confederation project was similar to Mazzini's ideas as mentioned above; on the other, it was a remarkable change in the Hungarian attitude towards the other nationalities in the Danube area. Although the Romanians of Transylvania and Hungarian Serbs had fought against the Magyar national revolutionary government in 1848-49, the confederation formula now required their collaboration as well as that of the united Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia³⁴ and of the Principality of Serbia with the national Hungarian movement. The purpose of which was putting an end to the domination of the House of Habsburg and the Ottoman Sultan and establishing a vast new multi-ethnic state inhabited by all the various nationalities of the region. This project failed too. Even Canini pointed out how unstable the basis for such a project was because each nationality had the ambition to create its own national state on as large a territory as possible and political leaders were not willing to become the subjects of a supra-national entity. After Austria's military defeat in 1866, this was confirmed by the compromise (*Ausgleich*) reached between Austria and Hungary. Having realised the weakness of his Empire in conflicts with France and Prussia in 1859 and 1866 respectively, Franz Josef decided to come to an agreement with the moderate faction of the Hungarian leading class.

Contrary to the hopes of those in favour of a great Confederation, many regions of South-east Europe were obviously left out of this fundamental political novelty: Serbia in the first place, Moldavia and Walachia which already had a kind of *de facto* autonomous status verging on independence, and the regions still under Ottoman sovereignty. Italian politicians and public opinion had no influence on the political situation of Central Europe up to 1918. It is difficult to estimate how many of those politicians and how much of public opinion preferred the *Ausgleich* to a confederation.³⁵ Some of the Balkan regions in the Balkan area, from Banat to Croatia, found their place in the new Austro-Hungarian arrangement resulting from the 1867 Agreement. Croatia, for example, obtained a certain degree of autonomy within Hungary: the *Nagodba* was signed in 1868 between the Kingdom of Hungary and the King-

³⁴ For the federal plans which involved the Romanian territory see E. Costantini, "Quale Stato? Proposte federaliste nei processi risorgimentali italiano e romeno", in F. Guidam ed., *Italia e Romania verso l'Unità nazionale* (Bucarest: Humanitas, 2011), 108-123.

³⁵ The Italians came to terms with the new Double Monarchy but there were those who hoped for its dissolution which would lead to the absorption of the Austro-German population in Germany or the creation of a large Danubian state on the pattern of the old and abortive confederative solution. See F. Guida, "L'Europa danubiana in un'ottica occidentale," in F. Guida ed., *Dalla liberazione di Buda all'Ungheria del Trianon. Ungheria e Italia tra età moderna e contemporanea* (Roma, Lithos, 1996), 101-111. See also A. Tamborra, "Il compromesso austro-ungherese del 1867 e l'Italia", *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 1967, LIV, 3, 359-371.

dom of Croatia and Slavonia and, referring to the *Pragmatica Sanctio* of 1712 (confirmed in 1722), it recognized the Croatian people as a political nation with their own territory as well as autonomous legislature and government. Despite this concession, the Croatians lamented their unfavourable financial conditions and strong influence of Hungarians or philo-hungarians on their society and Parliament (*Sabor*). Dalmatia was actually left out of the *Nagodba* since it was in the Austrian part of the Empire. The status of the town and port of Fiume (Rijeka) – later considered by the Hungarians as a “*separatum sacrae regni coronae adnexum corpus*” – was not properly regulated. At the time, the government of Florence didn't entirely grasp what was happening in that city and in the coastal region of great interest to the Italians.³⁶ Certainly nothing had been done by the Italian government regarding these events, but the war of 1866 was the main cause of such remarkable novelty involving one of the populations of the Balkan Peninsula.

After the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in March 1861, Italy became more active in the Balkans from the political point of view. The moment had not yet come to exert political influence in the nearby peninsula or to expand to it. However, some parts of the Balkans were strategically important for Turin in view of its policy towards Austria. One of the priorities of the Kingdom of Italy was the annexation of Veneto, which had failed in 1859, and hence the planning of military operations on the Eastern Adriatic coast. This issue has been extensively dealt with by Italian historians, especially by Angelo Tamborra. Magyar political émigrés such as Kossuth, Klapka, Türr and Pulszky were involved in plans to liberate Veneto. Many plans were devised but nothing materialised: the Veneto issue was eventually resolved in a different way. It started with a classic diplomatic maneuver by Bismarck leading to a conflict in which Austria succumbed to Prussia, not least because she was forced to deploy her forces in the south-east against Italian troops. It is true that Austrians won the battles, on land (Custoza) and at sea (Lissa), but it is also true that if Emperor Franz Josef had not had to defend the Italian border and had been able to direct all his forces against the Prussian army, perhaps the conflict could have had a different outcome. As mentioned above, in the war 1866, Garibaldi also led his men in Trentino, a region which would not become Italian until the end of World War I. Hungarians, Greeks and other nationalities awaited in vain for the arrival of the *red coats* or an overwhelming Italian assault on Austria's southern provinces.³⁷

“Autant qu'un processus géopolitique, le Risorgimento fut en effet un phénomène intellectuel: plusieurs visions de l'Italie, plusieurs projets étati-

³⁶ An entire volume of *I documenti diplomatici italiani* (first series, X) covers the events of 1868 but not a single one of the 811 documents contained in it is about the *Nagodba*.

³⁷ A. Tamborra, “Questione veneta e progetti di azioni garibaldine dalla Dalmazia all'Europa centrale”, in *Conferenze e note accademiche nel I centenario dell'unione del Veneto all'Italia* (Padova: Società cooperativa tipografica 1967), 81-95.

ques en sont issus et influencent les débats sur la politique étrangère du nouveau royaume,” as Fabrice Jesné put it.³⁸ In fact, after its creation and until at least 1870, the Kingdom of Italy did not have a clear policy towards the Balkans. Rome and Veneto were priorities and Italy observed what was going on in the big European capitals instead in South-east Europe. Only a few individuals, adherents of the democratic and radical currents, imagined that the incorporation of Rome and Veneto would be completed at the same time as the settlement of the Eastern issue. In fact, the events of 1866 and 1870 – favourable for the Italian state – had nothing to do with the developments in the Balkans. A good example of Italy's limited interest and cautious attitude towards the Balkan region is contained in a dispatch dated 22 June 1868 and sent by Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Luigi Federico Menabrea, to Italian Minister in Berlin, Luigi de Launay, on the subject of the Italian attitude towards the Principality of Serbia: “Our commercial interests in Serbia are of no account, so it is a rightly respectful sentiment towards countries whose interests are greater that we should not be among the first to express our ideas concerning the issue which directly involves the material interests of those foreigners in that Principality”. This was a reference to the abolition or modification of the capitulations granted to foreigners.³⁹ Therefore, despite the projects of Victor Emmanuel II, Garibaldi and others, there were no concrete political or military activities during the first decade in the life of the Kingdom of Italy linking the future of the two peninsulas, apart from Garibaldi's expeditions to Crete in 1866 and 1867 mentioned above.

Interest in the Balkans was not confined to politicians and merchants alone; it was shared by intellectuals and writers. A case in point was Niccolò Tommaseo⁴⁰ born in the Dalmatian town of Sebenico (Šibenik) where the Italian-speaking portion of the population⁴¹ kept cultural links with the Italian peninsula, and co-habited with people of Slav stock who used a Slav language. As a learned man, Tommaseo explored the national cultures both of the southern Slavs and the Greeks and published collections of their folk ballads.⁴² He was also a protagonist in some of the phases of the Italian Risorgimento, specifically in the new and ancient experience of the Republic of Venice by supporting with Manin when the Venetian population rebelled against Austrian domination. Following the brief existence of the Republic he went into

³⁸ F. Jesné, *Les nationalités balkaniques dans le débat politique italien, de l'Unité au lendemain des Guerres balkaniques (1861-1913)*, 6.

³⁹ *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, first series, X, 423.

⁴⁰ J. Pirjevec, *Niccolò Tommaseo tra Italia e Slavia* (Padova, Marsilio, 1977); T. Agostini, ed., *Daniele Manin e Niccolò Tommaseo: cultura e società nella Venezia del 1848*, (Ravenna: Longo, 2000).

⁴¹ L. Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia: dal Risorgimento alla grande guerra* (Firenze: Le lettere, 2004).

⁴² *Canti popolari toscani illirici greci*, collected and illustrated by Niccolò Tommaseo (Venezia: Girolamo Tasso, 1841).

exile in Greece, on the island of Corfu, which was the capital of the United States of the Ionian Islands, a British protectorate. However, Tommaseo was disappointed to learn that the Heptanese had pan-Hellenic tendencies, that they desired and worked towards *enosis* (union) with the Kingdom of Greece and were thus willing to sacrifice their Venetian cultural heritage. During the 1850s, the Italian and the Greek language did not have equal status. The distinguished banished chose to return to Italy and spend most of his life in Florence. He did not see the unification of the seven islands and Greece in 1864, which came to fruition due to the political intervention of Britain.

Even before the creation of a united Italian state, there were those who feared the formation of a Slav state across the Adriatic Sea. After World War I, the so-called Adriatic issue became crucial in the relations between Italy and the newly-formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. As early as the Risorgimento, there had been some controversy between Italian and Slav patriots regarding the ethnic and historical borders. In particular, a sharp exchange took place between the Venetian Marco Antonio Canini, and the Croatian Eugen Kvaternik, who wrote for Italian newspapers during the 1860s. The debate centered on the Istria peninsula and the region which the Italians called Venezia Giulia. It was fierce⁴³, but Venice and the entire Adriatic region were still in the hands of the House of Habsburg, and even after the annexation of Venice to Italy the conflict between Yugoslavs and Italians remained merely verbal.

The other force at work in the Balkans was the Catholic Church. Its actions were not convergent with that of the Risorgimento, despite the fact that the Pope Pius IX was initially considered a liberal and favourably inclined to the national cause. This impression still prevailed when, on 6 January 1848, Pius IX published his *Litterae ad orientales* calling for a reunion between the Church of Rome and the Eastern Churches with specific attention to the Orthodox people of the Balkan region. This was the modern version of an old project dating back to the Counter-Reformation and bore witness to the work of *Propaganda Fide Congregatio*. Reactions from the Orthodox bishops and Patriarch of Constantinople were heated and hostile.⁴⁴ The Pope made a serious mistake for not consulting them and ignoring the tensions between the two Churches in the past decades.⁴⁵ Perhaps he thought his action was

⁴³ F. Guida, *L'Italia e il Risorgimento balcanico. Marco Antonio Canini, 156-159*; J. Pirjevec, *Niccolo Tommaseo tra Italia e Slavia* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1977), 164-172. Kvaternik's son Slavko and nephew Eugen Dido became known as exponents of Croatian nationalism in its worst form, the *ustaša* regime during the World War II.

⁴⁴ A. Tamborra, *Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa: due secoli di confronto e dialogo: dalla Santa Alleanza ai nostri giorni* (Cinisello Balsamo, Edizioni paoline, 1992), 91-111. This work has recently been translated into Russian: *Katoličeskaja Cerkov' i russkoe pravoslavie: dva veka protivostojanija i dialoga* (Moskva, Biblejsko-Bogoslovskij Institut Sv. Andreja, 2007).

⁴⁵ Greek patriots, for example, and especially those in the islands, had accused the Catholics (protected by France) of not supporting their national struggle during the 1820s and preferring

feasible after his predecessor Gregory XVI had been paid a visit by Emperor Nicolas I, a unique event in history. His decision, however, clearly demonstrated that there was another approach to the Balkans and its peoples emanating from Italy.

It should be noted that religious propaganda produced considerable consequences in the struggle for national liberation in the Balkans. In 1860, when the debate sparked by the Pope's letter had more or less been settled, part of the Bulgarian intellectual and economic *élite* living in Constantinople, led by Dragan Tsankov, strove to obtain religious independence for they believed it would be a jumping-off ground for demanding political independence. This struggle was directed against the Greek Church and aimed at the proclamation of a Bulgarian Church loyal to the Pope. A union with the Catholic Church of Rome would still allow for the preservation of the Oriental rite in the Bulgarian language, as was the case with the Greek Catholic Churches of Ukraine and Transylvania.

A union with Rome would also bring an end to the submission to the Greek patriarch. The speedy and effective reaction of Russia suppressed such plans: the first archbishop placed at the head of the new ecclesiastical organisation was the elderly Archimandrite, Iosip Sokolski, who was forced to withdraw to a monastery and Tsankov's project failed.⁴⁶ Ten years later, the Bulgarians were able to establish their own Church led by an Exarch⁴⁷ and independent of Rome. A few years later, at the 1876 Constantinople Conference, the Great Powers considered the borders of Exarchist jurisdiction opportune for those of an autonomous Bulgarian state within the Ottoman Empire. These borders were envisaged for Greater Bulgaria according to the terms of the San Stefano peace agreement but were then reduced at the Congress of Berlin. Thus, the above-mentioned Pope's initiative had something to do with Balkan national movements.

Albania also became an area of great interest for Italy at the end of the nineteenth century. This interest, however, was not evident during the period under consideration in this paper. Exchanges between the Italian and Albanian coasts of the Ionian Sea were similar to those with the Hellenic world, not least because the Ionian islands maintained the cultural and commercial heritage from the years of Venetian domination. Theodoros Karussos was the president of the Senate (i.e. government) when it proclaimed the unification of the Ionian islands with Greece in 1864 and the parliament that ratified that decision elected Stefanos Padovàs as president, both were of Italian origin. In other words, the Heptanesus was an actual bridge between the Italian and Hel-

to remain under the rule of Sultan. See F. Guida, "Il Patriarcato di Costantinopoli, la Chiesa ortodossa greca e il Regno di Grecia", in A. Pitassio, ed., *La costruzione dello Stato nell'area ex-ottomana*, (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2006) 41-55.

⁴⁶ A. Tamborra, *Chiesa cattolica e ortodossia russa: due secoli di confronto e dialogo*, 207-219.

⁴⁷ R. J. Crampton, *Bulgaria crocevia di culture* (Trieste: Beit, 2010) 74-84.

lenic world, and their links were not cut by the narrow channel of Corfu.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, these relations were confined to commerce or cultural activities carried out by a few intellectuals from Southern Italy. This fact arouses some curiosity: in fact, following the great Albanian migrations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries some 200,000 Albanians lived (and still live) in Italy, a number equal to a fifth of the Albanian population in the Ottoman Empire. However, the Albanian *Rilindja* (re-birth, awakening) appeared in Southern Italy due to intellectuals such as Gerolamo de Rada since the middle of the century and in the following decades.⁴⁹ Thus the Albanians were not particularly relevant to the relations between Italy and the Balkan area during the Risorgimento period until 1870.

The twenty years spanning from the revolutionary 1848 to the capture of Rome in 1870 by Italian troops witnessed the repeated intertwining of the events in the Italian and Balkan Peninsula. There were some periods of greater attention, collaboration, interaction; and other periods when the people on either side of the Adriatic and Ionian seas operated and acted independently from each other. However, common initiatives, political rather than military, collaboration, as well as economic, cultural and religious exchanges, left a legacy that cannot be neglected.

⁴⁸ The island was a regular stop for ships leaving the south of Italy and heading to the north along the Adriatic routes. Recruits from the south, travelling to northern Italy, sometimes deserted in that foreign land. An attempt to attack southern Italy was prepared in Corfu, not unlike that realised by Garibaldi, with the aim to recapture the throne for a member of the Bourbon family or a descendant of Murat. See F. Guida, "L'unione delle isole ionie alla Grecia e la stampa italiana", in P. Moschonas ed., *Praktika tou E' diethnous panioniou sinedriou*, tomos 2 (Argostoli 1989), 181-187; Idem, "Le isole jonie nel carteggio consolare italiano dei primi anni sessanta dell'Ottocento", *Rassegna iberistica*, 56, Roma 1996, 203-215.

⁴⁹ N. Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais. La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala 2007) 136-138, 170-180, 204-209; for later period see S. Skendi, *The Albanian national awakening. 1878-1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); F. Fabricatore, *Il contributo arbresh alla questione balcanica* (Castrovillari: Grafica Pollino, 2009). For more details on the Albanians and Risorgimento see K. Xoxi, *Shqipetarët dhe Garibaldi* (Tiranë: 8 Nentori 1979).

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*THE MUSLIM QUESTION IN SERBIA:
THE 1862 BOMBARDMENT OF BELGRADE AND THE
NEWBORN KINGDOM OF ITALY*

Abstract: In this essay, the author deals with the crisis between the Principality of Serbia and the Ottoman Empire following the Turkish bombardment of Belgrade in June 1862. The main part of the article discusses the Italian attitude towards those events in an attempt to discover the authentic policy of the Kingdom born the previous year (March 1861). The Serbian affairs were the first international test for the new Italian State. After the unification, the Italian policy in the Balkans became more prudent than that of the Risorgimento years (for example in 1849), as the attitude of the Turin government illustrated during the Conference on Serbian affairs held in Constantinople.

Keywords: *Principality of Serbia; Eastern Question; Bombardment of Belgrade; Kanlidja Conference; Italian Risorgimento; Italian foreign policy; Italian Eastern policy.*

“The core of the Eastern Question today is in Belgrade”, said the Italian ambassador in Constantinople, Camillo Caracciolo di Bella, in January 1863. The Italian diplomat had the opportunity to follow the evolution of the crisis between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire which had exploded shortly before that, in June of 1862, following the Turkish bombardment of the city. Having been recently appointed a representative of the Turin government in Constantinople, he soon became aware of the strategic and political importance of the small Principality of Serbia, not only for the Balkans but also for the overall international equilibrium. It was in Belgrade, Camillo Caracciolo di Bella was convinced, that “in the eventuality of conflict, the Powers would determine the system of their alliances, because the Serbian population is the

most important among the Slavs of Turkey, the only one which could seriously change Europe with some national attempt, given the centrality of its position and the patriotism of its inhabitants".¹ The political importance of the Balkan area and Serbia in particular for the Kingdom of Italy had already been realised. It dated back to the revolutions of 1848, when the connection between the Italian and Eastern questions was clearly established. The first official Italian diplomatic mission in Belgrade was established in 1849. It was entrusted to the Consul, Marcello Cerruti, sent by the Vincenzo Gioberti government of the Kingdom of Sardinia. This consular post remained very important even after the proclamation of the Unification in 1861. The entire South-East of Europe was in a constant turmoil and continuous transformation. Italy had not yet completed the process of national unification (i.e. the Venetian and Roman questions) and, above all, needed to prove herself on the international stage as a new and united nation. For these reasons Eastern and Mediterranean Europe remained crucial zones of strategic interest for Italy, wherein the rivalry between the Powers was considerable and conflict likely.

This paper focuses on the political situation of the newborn Kingdom of Italy and on Serbia during the crisis in the wake of the Turkish bombardment of Belgrade in June 1862. The events that shook the capital of the small Balkan Principality the bombardment of Belgrade are well known. Less known, however, is the position that Italy took in this period. Through the reconstruction and analysis of this specific episode, we will comprehensively examine the significance that the Balkan area had for Italy in that period.

In March 1861, after the proclamation of unification, there were many questions that Italy had to address. The most important goal to reach was the economic, monetary, legislative and administrative unification. In addition to the difficult issue of the backward Southern part of Italy, there were also problems of international politics related to the uncompleted process of the national state's formation (from 1861 to 1870, Italy's diplomatic activity was entirely focused on this objective).² In any case, the main issue of foreign policy, the resolution of which was necessary in order to address all other problems, was of a formal nature. To become legitimate, the new unified State needed the official recognition of other countries, and, in particular, the Great Powers.

Shortly before the Italian unification, the Count of Cavour entrusted Marcello Cerruti with the duty of carrying out a new mission to the Ottoman Empire. The latter was supposed to complete an inspection of all the Sardinian consulates in the East. In the instructions given to the diplomat, the head of the Piedmont government affirmed that the existing connections between the Eastern and Italian Question were numerous and intimate; that the possibility of a positive outcome of the Italian struggle for an independent state depend-

¹ Both citations in C. Caracciolo di Bella to E. Visconti Venosta, Pera, 29 January 1863, *I documenti diplomatici italiani* (henceforth DDI), series I, vol. III, 296.

² G. Perticone, *La politica estera italiana dal 1861 al 1914* (Torino: Eri, 1961), 6.

ed, at least in part, on the situation of the inhabitants of the Danube Valley.³ Besides, Cerruti was charged with gathering information that could be useful for defining Italian interests in the Eastern Question, and allowing Italy to take advantage, at some future date, of the changes that seemed to await the states of Eastern Europe. Cavour spoke to this effect in September 1860, in the midst of the great events that were taking place in Italy. Garibaldi had already entered Naples. Shortly afterwards, the Piedmont army began to march towards the south of the peninsula. The head of the Sardinian government, therefore, made efforts to create a network of international relations that would foster and guarantee the Italian unification. He identified in the questions of Eastern Europe an important resource for defending the interests of his country and for gaining advantages that might accrue from a change in international relations. Cavour was influenced by what had happened during the two major crises in the recent past: the crisis of 1848-49 and that of 1854-56. In both cases, the national questions of the Danubian-Balkan population had been at the center of events. Cavour's intuition proved true and, shortly after his premature death (in June 1861), the legitimacy of the new Italian state had to be defended at the same table where the Eastern and Balkan Question were discussed.

During the same period, there were important changes taking place in Serbia. In late September 1860, the elderly Prince Miloš Obrenović passed away and was succeeded by his son Mihailo (for the second time) on the throne of the Principality. His second reign (1860-1868) was characterized by his particular attention to foreign policy, which was his main interest.⁴ When he received the *berat* of investiture from the pasha of Belgrade on behalf of the sultan on 19 November 1860, Prince Mihailo underlined the dignity of the Obrenović dynasty and his intention, notwithstanding the obligations of faithfulness and loyalty towards the Sublime Porte, to govern for the good of his nation and with regard to their rights and interests. This, as the Italian historian Angelo Tamborra has written, was "an alert, a first warning that one did not have to await a supine acquiescence at all, but a well-made decision about the road towards even more complete autonomy, then independence".⁵ To begin with, Prince Mihailo wanted to address the question of Muslim/Turkish subjects residing in Serbia. In the spring and summer of 1861, he sent Ilija Garašanin on a mission to Constantinople.⁶ Mihailo intended to have all the Ottomans leave Serbia, excluding those who lived in the Kalemegdan fortress, since their pres-

³ Cavour to Cerruti, Turin, 18 September 1860, published in A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani* (Torino: Ilte, 1958), 389-393.

⁴ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle-London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 65.

⁵ A. Tamborra, "La politica serba del Regno di Sardegna", *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, Roma 1951, I-II, 68. See also the opinion of Slobodan Jovanović, *Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila* (Beograd: Geca Kon, 1933), 145.

⁶ D. Mackenzie, *Ilija Garašanin: Balkan Bismarck* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985), 233-236.

ence was a source of frequent incidents with the Serbian population and thus of additional tension between the Serbian and Ottoman authorities. This request was part of the larger strategy that aimed at the complete independence of the country and was typical of the way of thinking widespread in the new Christian Balkan States. The perception that the peasants had of the Muslims living on the territory of their semi-independent states was a mixture of ethnic, religious, political and economic motives. At the popular level (and even more so at the government level), the dismantling of the Ottoman power was envisaged by means of expulsion of all the Muslims perceived as usurpers of wealth and power by virtue of their ethnic and religious affiliation.⁷ Especially in Serbia, there were large concentrations of the Muslim population both inside and outside the fortresses. According to the 1862 statistics, out of the twelve thousand resident Muslims, nearly ten thousand were civilians and less than three thousand military personnel.⁸ From Belgrade's point of view, this was a situation incompatible not only with the regulations of the Sublime Porte, but also (and above all) with the aspirations for a complete political and economic freedom of the country. As in the case with other national movements in the Balkans in the nineteenth century, such aspirations could not be accomplished without the complete expulsion of Muslims.⁹

In Constantinople, however, the Serbian delegate took a more conciliatory attitude. Garašanin's consultations with the representatives of the European Powers contributed to the reduction of Serbian claims, at least for the moment, concerning the question of the Muslims living outside fortresses. The Serbian government understood that it was impossible to obtain the removal of the entire Muslim population from the Principality, notwithstanding the fact that the letter of the law was in favor of this solution. In an interview with the Italian minister in Constantinople, Giacomo Durando, Garašanin gave his assurances as to the limitation of his requests for carrying out police and surveillance measures over that population. This was, Durando concluded, a position that would facilitate a settlement with the Porte and guarantee the unanimous support of the Great Powers¹⁰. The arguments put forth to support the Serbian requests in the summer of 1861 were based, in fact, on a very particular point formulated in the following terms in the first of a series of *memoranda* compiled by Garašanin:

⁷ M. Dogo, "La guerra dei centosessant'anni, ovvero lo sfratto dei Musulmani dai Balcani", in A. Pitassio ed., *Nazioni e nazionalismi nell'Europa sudorientale, Europa Europe*, 1995, IV, 1, n. 1, 42.

⁸ M. B. Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), vol. I, 316.

⁹ M. Dogo, "The Balkan-Nation States and the Muslim Question" in S. Bianchini and M. Dogo, eds., *The Balkans. National Identities in a Historical Perspective* (Ravenna: Longo, 1998), 67.

¹⁰ Archivio storico diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari esteri, Roma (hereinafter ASDMAE), Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Durando to Cavour, 24 April 1861.

“L'intérêt réciproque de la Porte et de la principauté de Serbie exige incontestablement qu'un arrangement définitif soit fait le plus tôt possible dans la question du séjour des musulmans en Serbie hors des forteresses. Outre que ce séjour est contraire au hatt-i-chérif impérial de 1830, une longue expérience vient nous convaincre qu'une bonne administration intérieure, l'uniformité et le maintien des lois, les mesures de sûreté et de bien-être public y trouvent des difficultés insurmontables”.¹¹

Without getting into technical particulars of the question, it should be said that the response of the Ottoman Porte - in which it tried to reconcile the interests of the sovereign Power and of Serbia, as well as those of their two respective populations (Christian and Muslim) - was judged unsatisfactory and inefficient by Garašanin, who was supported by the French representative. In this regard, Cerruti, Durando's successor as the Italian representative to the Ottoman court, observed that, if the mission of Prince Mihailo's delegate failed, the question was destined to become serious, “and the Royal government would not unlikely find itself committed as a guarantor Power, which I will try to avoid as long as possible until we have orders from Your Excellency”.¹²

The Serbian government did not, however, ask for the expulsion of all Muslim subjects. It insisted on the observance of the Ottoman Porte's decisions of 1830: “le gouvernement serbe”, – one of the *memoirs* presented by Garašanin to the Ottoman government read, “n'a jamais élevé la voix contre les Musulmans qui se trouvent dans les forteresses et qui composaient jusqu'à présent la garnison, mais seulement contre les Musulmans demeurant hors des forteresses”.¹³ In addition, the annulment of the *hatt-i-şerif* regulations of 1833 regarding the city of Belgrade was requested on account of it being the origin of the dualistic solution of the question of Muslim residents in Serbia: while in the entire country they were compelled to live within the bounds of fortresses (*hatt-i-şerif* of 1830), in the capital of the Principality, they could reside wherever they liked (*hatt-i-şerif* of 1833). In this respect, the Serbian government claimed, the whole city of Belgrade was considered an integral part of the Ottoman fortress and, furthermore, was placed in an anomalous situation: there were two police forces, two civil jurisdictions, but not a mixed court that could settle the conflicts derived from such a situation.¹⁴ While for the Serbs Belgrade was the capital of their country, the Ottomans regarded it as one of their most important strongholds in the European part of the Empire

¹¹ *Mémoire présenté à la Sublime Porte par M. Garachanine, envoyé en mission extraordinaire à Constantinople par le prince Michel, au sujet du séjour des Musulmans en Serbie, hors des forteresses*, [without date but produced in August 1861], in *Archives diplomatiques. Recueil de diplomatie et d'histoire* (Paris: Amyot, 1861), vol. IV, 148-149.

¹² ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Cerruti to Ricasoli, 31 July 1861.

¹³ *Deuxième Mémoire de M. Garachanine, en réponse au mémoire de la Sublime Porte*, 8 August [1861], in *Archives diplomatiques*, 1861, vol. IV, 437.

¹⁴ *Dernier Mémoire de M. Garachanine à S. A. Aali-Pacha en quittant Constantinople*, [without date but produced in August 1861], 442.

and had no intention of relinquishing their control over it. Indeed, the Turkish fortress and its garrison in Belgrade, situated in the north of the Principality, hindered the development of the city rising above it and ensuring the Ottoman control over the entire country.¹⁵

Applying its usual dilatory strategy, the Ottoman government, though declaring itself generally inclined to compromise regarding the Serbian requests, proposed the establishment of a mixed commission with a view to resolving the question of the residence and property of the Muslims outside the fortresses, except the situation in Belgrade, the status of which was deemed special:¹⁶ “Quant à la question de Belgrade”, a note from the Ottoman government read, “la Sublime-Porte a déjà déclaré dans ses notes d’autrefois et récentes qu’elle ne renoncera pas à son droit consacré par les *hatti-chérifs*”.¹⁷ In late summer of 1861, therefore, Garašanin’s mission ended without any result. Solution was not found for any of the crucial questions and Serb-Ottoman relations rapidly deteriorated to the point of rupture in the summer of 1862. As it often happened in the Balkans, these events involved the European Powers as well, and this involvement prevented a disastrous outcome of the situation. Marcello Cerruti did not fail to inform the Turin government of the possible developments in the relations between Serbia and Turkey. The Italian representative interpreted Belgrade’s attitude as “a deliberate intention on the part of the Serbian government to preserve a freedom of action for a not too distant break with the Ottoman Government”.¹⁸ Cerruti’s conviction was based on the proceedings of the *Skupština* session held in August in Kragujevac when the failure of Garašanin’s mission and the occupation of the areas on the Serbian borders, were seen as a threatening response to the requests presented to the Sultan. For these reasons, one of the *Skupština*’s decisions was to request the immediate removal of the Turkish troops from the Serbian frontier. Meanwhile, Prince Mihailo’s endeavour to obtain arms for Serbia continued.

The policy of the Kingdom of Italy is particularly interesting in this context. Having been heavily involved in Danubian and Balkan policy (following the example of the Kingdom of Sardinia) and being a signatory of the treaty of Paris in 1856, the newborn Italy found itself forced to stop pursuing an active policy in the area. In comparison with the Kingdom of Sardinia’s earlier

¹⁵ M. Dogo, “La imperfetta fondazione della moderna Belgrado: i vincoli della dipendenza”, in M. Dogo and A. Pitassio eds., *Città dei Balcani, città d’Europa. Studio sullo sviluppo urbano delle capitali post-ottomane 1830-1923* (Lecce: Argo, 2008), 142.

¹⁶ *Réponse de la Sublime-Porte au Mémoire qui lui a été présenté par M. Garachanine, envoyé extraordinaire du prince de Serbie*, [without date but produced in August 1861], in *Archives diplomatiques*, 1861, vol. IV, 158-160.

¹⁷ *Réponse de la Sublime-Porte au deuxième Mémoire de M. Garachanine* [without date but produced in August 1861], 450.

¹⁸ ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Cerruti to Ricasoli, 23 October 1861.

dynamic action in the Danubian-Balkan area, Angelo Tamborra spoke of the “muted tone” of Italian policy in Serbia by the end of 1861. That policy was no longer conducted by the Sabaudian Piedmont, but rather by the new Kingdom of Italy, a country which was suffering from issues of its internal consolidation and conspicuous international responsibility. In connexion with the recent proclamation of unity, and the struggle to obtain international recognition, Italy, guided by Baron Bettino Ricasoli, took a conciliatory attitude in favour of the Balkans’ stability. In that delicate period, the primary consideration was to effect reconciliation between the Christian and Ottoman/Muslim population. Therefore, the instructions sent to Marcello Cerruti in charge of the Constantinople Legation were as follows:

“a policy of conciliation seems to us, given the present conditions, the most healthy and useful one for both sides equally. Conforming your statements and conduct to these maxims, you will strictly interpret the views of H.M. government and will thus avoid, I am convinced, any divergence with either the Ottoman Porte or with the other powers, simultaneously preserving the sympathies of the Christian populations of the East for Italy”.¹⁹

The Italian government and its diplomats were aware that the situation in Belgrade was extremely heated. When the crisis between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire erupted in June 1862, it was the first test at the international level for the Kingdom of Italy. The representatives of the government of Victor Emmanuel II had to defend the legitimacy of the just completed unification process before the plenipotentiaries of the European Great Powers. Ricasoli was worried about the unrest in Serbia and professed that it was of vital interest for the Belgrade government to adopt a moderate and conciliatory policy so as not to compromise all that had been previously achieved. He was actually concerned about the weakness of his own country within the international community and unpreparedness to face a possible Eastern crisis. In fact, the Italian minister in Constantinople, General Durando, had mentioned to Cavour as early as April 1861 that the position of Italy in the East was so weak that it was excluded from the periodic meetings held by the representatives of Great Powers which had signed the 1856 Treaty of Paris.²⁰ The Italian envoy was not invited mostly because of the opposition of the Austrian representative on account of the non-recognition of the new title of King of Italy replacing that of the King of Sardinia existing on the treaty of Paris. The problem of recognition was compelling because of the internal difficulties that had compromised the existence of the Italian state and certain external difficulties (the fear of an Austrian victory and the hostility of the European Great Powers with the exception of England, which was the first Power to recognise Italy on 30

¹⁹ DDI, I series, vol. I, Ricasoli to Cerruti, Turin, 12 December 1861, 525-526.

²⁰ Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Durando to Cavour, 10 April 1861.

March 1861).²¹ The reasons for hostility towards the Italian unification lay in the prevailing and revolutionary character of the principle of nationality, the great idea that had created the new State.²²

In Serbia, on the other hand, the internal and external tensions, particularly those in relations with the Ottoman government, grew day after day. The break-down of relations between Belgrade and the Ottoman Empire took place in June 1862 in connexion with the bombardment of the Serbian capital by the Turkish artillery from the Kalemegdan fortress. The threat of bombing Belgrade had always been in the offing whenever the clashes between the Serbs and the Turkish administration and army had emerged. A case in point is the event of the spring of 1859: the Ottoman pasha, irritated by frequent clashes between the Christian population and the Turkish militias, began to suspect that the Serbs intended to attack the guard posts of the fortress. He then summoned the consuls of Great Powers and threatened to bombard the city in retaliation; however, the foreign consuls stepped in and the attack never occurred.²³ In fact, the entire affair had to do with the crisis between Turin and Vienna. According to Astengo, the representative of the King of Sardinia, it was orchestrated by the Austrian consul who was looking for a pretext to arm the fortress and circulated rumours of an Austrian attack on Belgrade in case the Serbs decided to be the Italians' ally in a prospective war against Austria in northern Italy. The Austrian consul "invented a revolutionary project of the Serbs versus Ottomans, he set the day and the time and decided to mention it to the Pasha, who is a good man, and induce him to write of it to Constantinople and declare to the resident consuls in Belgrade that the gravity of the circumstances forced him to consider arming the citadel, given his determination to bombard the city if a single shot be fired by the Serbs against the Ottomans".²⁴ This episode provided a further confirmation of the connexion between the process of Italian unification and the political situation in the countries of the Central-Eastern region of the European continent and, specifically, the small Principality of Serbia.

In 1859, however, the situation remained under control. It was quite different in June 1862 when the incidents between the Ottoman militia and Serbian population took place. These had nothing to do with the machinations of foreign consuls as it was the case in 1859 (according to the available information). This time, the bombardment of Belgrade was a demonstration of force.

²¹ P. Pastorelli, *17 marzo 1861. L'Inghilterra e l'Unità d'Italia* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2011), 133-157.

²² E. Anchieri, "Il riconoscimento del Regno d'Italia", in *Atti del XL Congresso di storia del Risorgimento italiano* (Roma: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1963), 17-18.

²³ The episode has been remembered by B. Mitrović, "Una polis nazionale? Il ruolo di Belgrado nella storia serba (1830-1914)", in *Città dei Balcani, città d'Europa*, 68.

²⁴ Archivio di Stato di Torino, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Consolati nazionali, Belgrado, Astengo al Ministro degli Esteri, 1 May 1859; the document was fully published by L. Banjanin, "Francesco Fortunato Astengo, console del Regno Sardo a Belgrado", *Studi Piemontesi*, 1999, XXVIII, 1, 189-191.

Its purpose was to remind the Serbian government and population of their submission to the Ottoman Empire. The political and diplomatic consequences were enormous. It seemed that a conflict between Serbia and the Ottoman government could erupt at any moment. It was not to be, due to the diplomatic intervention of the Powers-signatories of the Treaty of Paris. Prince Mihailo saw the event as manna from heaven as it provided him with an opportunity to bring up the problem of the Turkish military occupation and the presence of the Muslim subjects in Serbia.²⁵ Although this was a perfect opportunity to provoke a conflict with Turkey, the international context and, above all, the mediation of Garašanin prevented an escalation of hostility. Russia, politically handicapped by its defeat in the Crimean war, was not in a position to lend its support to Serbia in a potential conflict, while France had to defer to England's attitude. London, along with Vienna, sided with the Ottoman Empire. The only viable solution was a diplomatic one.²⁶ Prince Mihailo expected political support from Russia and France. The successful outcome of the crisis depended on the cooperation of these two Powers.²⁷ On French initiative, a conference of the protecting Powers was summoned in Constantinople.²⁸

Italy had a marginal role in the handling of this crisis. It was no surprise since the conference was the first important test at the international level for the new State. Count Giuseppe Greppi, Chargé d'Affaires, represented Italy on that occasion. Cerruti was entrusted with another mission, whereas the Marquis Caracciolo di Bella had not yet arrived in Constantinople. In the months that passed between the departure of Cerruti and the arrival of the new Italian minister, Greppi was in charge of the important Constantinople Legation. In the instructions sent by General Durando, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Rattazzi government, the Italian representative was requested to agree with France, as was customary for Italy in that period when dealing with foreign policy matters. The conference on Serbia presented an important occasion for Italy to try and consolidate her own position at the international level. It was the first time that a representative of King Victor Emmanuel II took part in an international conference as the representative of Italy. The Italian diplomacy feared that Austria would object to its participation,²⁹ as it indeed did, on the grounds that the Kingdom of Italy was not a signatory of the Treaty of Paris.

²⁵ S. K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia. La storia al di là del nome* (Trieste: Beit, 2010), 77.

²⁶ D. Todorović, "Šta je uticalo na Srbiju posle bombardovanja Beograda 1862. g. da se ne odluči na rat protiv Turske", *Arhivski almanah*, 1962, 4, 221-231. For diplomatic activity leading to the solution of the crisis see Ž. Djordjević, *Čukur-Česma 1862. Studija o odlasku Turaka iz Srbije* (Beograd: Nolit, 1983), 220-279.

²⁷ G. Jakšić, V. J. Vučković, *Spoljna politika Srbije za vlade kneza Mihaila: Prvi balkanski savez* (Beograd: Istorijiski institut, 1963), 122.

²⁸ On the conference proceedings see also J. Dajković, "Beograd i slučaj na Čukur Česmi. Bombardovanje Beograda", *Godišnjak Muzeja Grada Beograda*, 1957, IV, 313-326.

²⁹ R. De Cesare, *Il conte Giuseppe Greppi e i suoi ricordi diplomatici (1842-1888)* (Roma: Tipografia del Senato, 1919), 170-171.

Before delving deeply into this matter, we should remember that by the summer of 1862 the international status of the new Kingdom had significantly improved since the preceding year. Among the major Powers, only Austria still disputed the legitimacy of the Italian state. In fact, on 2 July, Russia recognised the Kingdom of Italy for the sake of future amicable relations with France and, shortly after, Prussia followed St. Petersburg's example.³⁰ The Italian monarchy was seen as the only instrument capable of containing further revolutionary and republican dangers in the Italian peninsula. Thus, at the opening of the conference on the Serbian affairs on 22 July, Austrian hostility towards Italy remained isolated. As Greppi witnessed, the opposition to the participation of an Italian representative had been manifested by Austria prior to the conference (tacitly supported by the Ottoman government which feared an Italian vote in favour of the Serbs).

“Russia's recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, which took place soon after that of Prussia, ensured a very warm support for us; then the Cabinets in London and Paris, faithful to the tradition of friendship with us, sent precise instructions to their ambassadors in Constantinople, because a representative of Italy had already secured a place in the conference to which he had aspired, and influenced the Cabinet of Vienna in such a manner that His Excellency Baron Prokesch announced that he was no longer opposed to my intervention and that he would limit his actions to accepting the title of the Italian delegate during the deliberations with reservations?. It is also my opinion that the Serbian affairs are getting worse every day and that this gives us a very strong reason to press for the meeting of the Conference and overcome the difficulties mentioned above - certain difficulties pale in comparison to the great interests on which the conference will deliberate”³¹

The Austrian ambassador Baron Prokesch-Osten, declared that he could neither take part in the deliberations nor sign an official act together with King Victor Emmanuel's envoy unless the latter acted in the name of the King of Sardinia, whose government was one of the signatory powers of the Paris Treaty of 1856.³² A passage taken from Greppi's memoirs recounted what happened a few days later, during the second session of the conference, when he read a counter argument (agreed upon with Caracciolo di Bella, who still had to be officially accredited to the Porte):

“It has been noted that the observations made by the Austrian ambassador in the first session were unique and special in this occasion and no one could have approved them. The Austrian Internuncio then rose

³⁰ Anchieri, “Il riconoscimento del Regno d'Italia”, 35-36.

³¹ DDI, I series, vol. II, 576, *Copy of a letter sent on 13th July 1862 from Greppi to Caracciolo di Bella*.

³² ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, *Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Copie de la déclaration faite par M. l'Internonce d'Autriche à l'ouverture des Conférences sur l'état de Serbie le 22 juillet 1862*, attached to the report from Caracciolo di Bella to Durando, 22 July 1862.

to declare, in his turn, that he had not intended to oppose the presence of the representative of Italy, but to make a simple observation about Count Greppi's right, as there had been recent cases of kings who, having expanded their territory, did not change their first title. And he cited the example of the annexation of the provinces of Holland and Germany to France, on which occasion Napoleon had not changed the title of the Emperor of the French. The incident ended there, as the Austrian representative did not encounter support for his thesis among other representatives of his government. The conference took its course [...] Since that day [...] the right of our diplomatic agents abroad to take part in international conferences, as representatives of the new Italy, was no longer been contested".³³

The reasons for Greppi's and Caracciolo's actions were clearly explained in a letter which the latter sent to the French ambassador in Constantinople:

"La réserve que S.E. l'Internonce d'Autriche a lue à l'ouverture des Conférences sur les Affaires de Serbie, nous a paru au Comte Greppi et à moi, après l'avoir lue à plusieurs reprises, un peu trop explicite et absolue, non pas dans le fond, mais plus-tôt dans la forme et dans les termes que M. le Baron Prokesch a cru devoir employer. En effet, on pourrait peut-être supposer que le Ministre d'Autriche regarde la restriction qu'il a faite relativement au titre de Roi d'Italie non pas comme spéciale et exclusive de son propre gouvernement, mais comme posée en principe vis-à-vis de toutes les Puissances signataires du Traité de Paris. Ne croyez vous pas [indéchiffrable] quelque sorte infirmer la reconnaissance du Royaume d'Italie dans ses conséquences et dans son application"?³⁴

Behind the formality, therefore, there was the essential requirement not to question Victor Emmanuel II's title of King of Italy as a symbol of Italy's unification, which must remain beyond dispute.

However, a conference about Balkan affairs was not expected to bring about such difficulties. The decision to get involved in the Balkans was first made by the Piedmont government and then reaffirmed by the Italian government. The growth of Italian importance on the international stage started with the Crimean War, which sparked such changes in the political conditions of Europe that it brought about the unification in a short period of time. The diplomatic consolidation of the new Kingdom started at the conference table discussing the Balkan problems, and, more generally, those pertaining to the Eastern Question. This point should not be neglected.

The protestations of the Viennese representative also remained unheeded because there was a series of crises to resolve. Difficulties of such a formal nature were unimportant in comparison with the major issues discussed at the conference. Developing an ever stronger interest in the Balkan area, Austria

³³ De Cesare, *Il conte Giuseppe Greppi*, 172.

³⁴ ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, *Copie d'une lettre que le M. le Marquis Caracciolo a adressée à S.E. l'Ambassadeur de France le 26 juillet 1862*, attached to the report from Caracciolo di Bella to Durando, 30 July 1862.

understood that it would be advisable to concentrate on the Serbian question instead of prolonging the debate about such formalities with their diplomatic colleagues. At the time, Vienna's objective was to maintain *status quo* and to prevent the formation of a common front of the Balkan nations against the Ottoman Empire or, even worse, the siding of Russia with such a front.³⁵ The grave situation of Serbia in the summer of 1862 undermined the stability of the Balkan area. After the recent losses in Italy, it was the last thing that the Austrian government desired. This attitude, as confirmed by Giuseppe Greppi's analysis, was based on the fact that France and Russia supported the aspirations of the Christian population in the Balkans to the detriment of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, a dogma typical of British policy. 'The antagonism of the two Western Powers,' wrote Caracciolo, 'is manifest in the matters of Serbia.'³⁶ This antagonism had characterised the Eastern Question for nearly fifteen years (1856 to 1870), throughout the period when the English and the French reigned supreme in the affairs pertaining to the Ottoman Empire. The manoeuvring space of Russia was limited by the decisions of the Treaty of Paris; Austria had to deal with the serious problems on the Lombardy battlefields; Prussia and Italy were undergoing a full transformation.³⁷ Austria was slowly and discretely approaching the French and Russian position and had started to develop her policy of expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire which would receive a full recognition at the Congress of Berlin.³⁸ The Austrian attitude, in any case, appeared not to have been as clear-cut at the time as portrayed many years later in Greppi's memoirs. In his instructions to Caracciolo di Bella, Durando affirmed that 'besides, it would be dangerous for us to show little respect for the treaties that govern the conditions of the vassal Principalities of the Porte, since England, with whom we must not compromise our friendship, and Austria, to whom we do not want to present the occasion to form an alliance with the English, are proposing to restore rather than diminish the authority of the Ottoman Government.'³⁹ The Italian foreign policy at that moment, as has already been stated, was aligned with that of France, although Prime Minister Rattazzi refuted accusations to that effect in a speech given before the Chamber of Deputies on 1 December 1862:

"But you were servile, it is said, in your policy in the East. No, gentlemen, our policy in the East was to support the principle of nationality.

³⁵ C. Horel, "La politica orientale dell'Austria-Ungheria (1867-1908)", in A. Basciani, A. D'Alessandri eds., *Balcani 1908. Alle origini di un secolo di conflitti* (Trieste: Beit, 2010), 33.

³⁶ ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti della legazione in Costantinopoli 1861-1862, pacco 811, Caracciolo di Bella to Durando, 6 August 1862.

³⁷ F. Cognasso, *La questione d'Oriente, I: Dalle origini al congresso di Berlino* (Torino: Edizioni de "L'erma", 1934), 236.

³⁸ G. Greppi, "Souvenirs d'un diplomate italien à Constantinople (1861-1866)", *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 1910, 24, 384.

³⁹ DDI, I serie, vol. III, Durando to Caracciolo di Bella, 5 July 1862, 496.

We believe that we should support this principle because it is the foundation of our institutions and our very origin, and in other places we cannot reject the very principle on which we have established ourselves. And if this principle of nationality is the principle of our policy in the East, of Italian policy, it is also that of French policy. If we agree with it, can it be said for this reason that we are subservient in that respect to French policy"?⁴⁰

However, the unexpected crisis caused by the bombardment of Belgrade (almost six months prior to that speech) caught the Italian government unprepared, and it advised its diplomatic representatives to act in agreement with France. It did so in the weeks preceding the signing of the final protocol of the conference: "S'il ya urgence votez avec la France; dans le cas contraire pour montrer de la déférence à la Russie vous demanderez d'en référer à votre gouvernement"⁴¹. Regardless of the words which Rattazzi uttered in public, that was exactly what happened during the conference in Constantinople in the summer of 1862.

"I was not able to do – Caracciolo wrote after the closing of the conference – more than I did for the support of the liberal cause, as I was restrained by the instructions which did not allow me to take any action without the agreement of the two representatives of France and Russia; I could not deviate from any of their opinions, so any time I took part in the discussion I had no other task than to support the proposals of those plenipotentiaries that were wider and more favourable to Serbia"⁴².

Italy, in particular, was not at the time in a position to take initiative and thus adopted a policy of compromise trying to reconcile the support for the Balkan nations with the obligations and requirements derived from her newly-acquired status as the sixth European Great Power. It should be noted that at the time when the conference on Serbia began in Constantinople, the Italian government was dealing with Garibaldi's new expedition in the South, the objective of which was the annexation of Rome. On 29 August, the expedition failed due to the bloody clash on the Aspromonte between the Italian army and the volunteers led by Giuseppe Garibaldi. In these circumstances, it was necessary to maintain a presence at the international level, and, above all, in the Eastern affairs. The strategy adopted by the newborn Kingdom of Italy can be summarised in a single word: prudence. The spirit of the new Italian policy in the East was the same as that of the policy Ricasoli had formulated at the end of 1861: the prudent policy of reconciliation, geared towards the maintenance of good relations both with the Ottoman Government and the Chris-

⁴⁰ G. Scovazzi ed., *Discorsi parlamentari di Urbano Rattazzi* (Roma: per gli eredi Botta, 1880), vol. VI, 183.

⁴¹ ASDMAE, Ministero degli Affari Esteri 1861-1867, Rapporti del consolato in Costantinopoli 1861-1867, busta 875, Registro dei telegrammi in partenza, no. 72, Caracciolo di Bella to Durando, 13 August 1862.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Caracciolo di Bella to Durando, 9 September 1862.

tian peoples and governments still under its control. All the subsequent Italian Foreign Ministers adhered to this policy and never failed to align themselves with the attitude of the government of Napoleon III, which sought to maintain a balance between the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and Serbian rights and claims. In the opinion of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Edouard Thouvenel, the conference on the events of Belgrade was supposed to favour the conditions of a peaceful coexistence between the Serbs and Ottomans.⁴³

The final protocol of the conference, signed on 8 September 1862, was a compromise solution which prevented the explosion of a conflict but did not succeed in guaranteeing peace between Serbian and Ottoman authorities.⁴⁴ The problem of the Muslim population in Serbia, as well as the issue of the remaining Turkish fortresses and garrisons, was resolved five years later, on 6 May 1867, when the last group of Turkish soldiers left the Principality. After four hundred years of occupation, the territory of Serbia was free.⁴⁵ Serbia's next aim would be to secure a complete political independence of the country.

As far as Italy was concerned, having left behind the period of the battles of the Risorgimento, it turned to forging her new Eastern and Balkan policy. That new policy excluded revolutionary solutions to any problems (whether internal or external). Even the parallel foreign policy initiatives of King Victor Emmanuel II turned out to be failures, as revealed by the mission of the Venetian Marco Antonio Canini (he visited the Balkan capitals in the summer of 1862 and stayed in Belgrade in August and September).⁴⁶ Other methods prevailed, such as international diplomacy and the control of internal political life - both designed to secure order and preserve the equilibrium among the European Powers and the stability of their alliances. In particular, Italian foreign policy was constrained by the close relationship with, and dependence on, France to which the Roman question was tied. It was not before the fall of the Second French Empire that Italy could act with more independence. The French alliance having failed, the Italian government found itself isolated on the international scene. At the time of the Congress of Berlin, this weakness prevented Italy from adopting an active policy.

In conclusion, Camillo Caracciolo di Bella seems to have aptly summarised the Italian policy in a speech given before the Italian Senate on 12 July 1878: "Italy went to the Congress of Berlin as a disinterested power; her plan

⁴³ Thouvenel à de Flahault, Paris, 28 juin 1862, in L. Thouvenel ed., *Le secret de l'Empereur. Correspondance confidentielle et inédite échangée entre M. Thouvenel, le duc de Gramont et le général comte de Flahault 1860-1863* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1889), vol. II, 328.

⁴⁴ "Protocole sur l'affaire de Serbie, signé à Constantinople le 8 septembre 1862", in *Archives diplomatiques*, 1863, vol. I, 244-251.

⁴⁵ For a wider study see T. W. Riker, "Michael of Serbia and the Turkish occupation", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, no. 34 (vol. XII), 133-154; n. 35 (vol. XII), 1934, 409-429; n. 36 (vol. XII), 1934, 646-658.

⁴⁶ On Canini and his stay in Belgrade see F. Guida, *L'Italia e il Risorgimento balcanico. Marco Antonio Canini* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984), 194-198.

could be reduced to two principles: the maintenance of the Ottoman power over the Balkans reconciled with the respect for all the surrounding nations and the interests of the Christian population”.⁴⁷ Obviously, that statement still illustrated Ricasoli’s old policy formulated more than fifteen years ago. It was the growing rapprochement with Germany and the ancient rival, Austria-Hungary, in the framework of the Triple Alliance that would give more determination to the Eastern and Balkan strategies of the Kingdom of Italy.

⁴⁷ C. Caracciolo di Bella, *Dieci anni di politica estera, discorsi e note* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1888), 30.

Monica Priante

Sveučilište u Zagrebu

GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI: HERO IN THE PIEDMONT OF THE BALKANS. THE RECEPTION OF A NARRATIVE OF THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO IN THE SERBIAN PRESS

Abstract: The construction of a national hero is one of the most rewarding aspects of the nation-building process in the nineteenth century. With his victories and defeats, adventurous and romantic life, Giuseppe Garibaldi became one of the internationally most popular and celebrated modern heroes. In case of Serbia, the process of reception was accompanied by that of “appropriation”. The adoration of Garibaldi was indeed promoted through *topoi* of the Italian Risorgimento, but it was also an expression of specific local tensions and projects.

Keywords: *Hero, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Serbian press, 19th century.*

This essay will analyze the process by which Giuseppe Garibaldi came to be perceived as a hero in the Serb public opinion¹ (both in the Principality of Serbia and among Serbian citizens in the Habsburg Monarchy) during the second half of the nineteenth century. As historian Lucy Riall has written, after a relatively humble beginning Garibaldi became one of the most popular heroes of the world in the 1800s.² His fame and appeal crossed national boundaries; he was in fact the first hero to achieve world-wide recognition by means of the

¹ V. Krestić, *Istorija srpske štampe u Ugarskoj* (Beograd: Zavod udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Istoriski institut, 2003); M. Kisić, *Srpska štampa 1768-1995: istorijsko-bibliografski pregled* (Beograd: Biblioteka PRESS dokumenti, 1996); J. Škerlić, *Istorijski pregled srpske štampe 1791-1911* (Beograd: Srpsko novinarsko udruženje, 1911).

² L. Riall, *Garibaldi, L'invenzione di un eroe* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007).

press. However, as the image of a national hero is a product of cultural and social construction rather than of historical events, it lends itself to endless revisions and variations. Therefore, I will try to explain when and how “General Giuseppe Garibaldi”, to whom Jovan Jovanović³ referred to as “the light of justice and freedom sent by God” and “the honor of our century”,⁴ became a “hero” in the eyes of the Serbian élite.

The Serbian press followed the events of the Italian Risorgimento with great interest. In the early 1860s, Piedmont, Cavour, Victor Emanuel and Garibaldi had already been established as role models on the Serbian public scene. However, it would not be comprehensive, if not entirely wrong, to view the Serbian press' interest in the Risorgimento as a passive process of diffusion. On the contrary, the Risorgimento was perceived in Serbia through the active process of “creative reception”, as explained by Peter Burke:

“Receiving Ideas creatively means adapting them to a new context. More precisely, this adaptation involves participating in a double movement. The first stage is that of de-contextualization, dislocation or appropriation; the second, that of re-contextualization, relocation or domestication.”⁵

On the basis of Burke's argument, two different phases can be distinguished in the construction of the hero Garibaldi. The first phase, “appropriation”, took place between 1860 and 1861, when - as well as showing considerable enthusiasm for his adventurous life and military victories - the Serbian press already seemed aware of his popularity. Press reports, biographies, news of victories and a number of articles translated into Serbian demonstrated the impact of his fame far beyond the peninsular boundaries. The satirical newspaper *Komarac*⁶ ironically noted in its “useful vocabulary for a good conversation” column⁷:

“Garibaldi – we know who he is [...]. After all, he is a man who does not need to be dead to be glorified as, because of his deeds, he is already acclaimed as immortal. He is blessed in this world and the other!”⁸

The beginning of the second phase – “domestication” - coincided with the key event for Garibaldi's incorporation into the international heroic Pantheon - his disastrous expedition to Rome in 1862. During the battle at Aspromonte (a mountain range near Reggio Calabria) against the royal Italian army, Garib-

³ Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833-1904) was one of the most prominent figures in Serbian literature during the second half of the 19th century. He wrote a vast number of patriotic, political and satirical poems.

⁴ J. Jovanović Zmaj, “Garibaldiju” in *Druga pevanja* (Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1895), 80.

⁵ P. Burke, *The European Renaissance: centres and peripheries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 9.

⁶ *Komarac: šaljivi list sa ilustracijama* (The Mosquito, illustrated satiric magazine), Novi Sad, 1861-1869. *Komarac* quickly became very popular due to its “pungent” satire and illustrations. Jovan Jovanović Zmaj was a contributor. See Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 63.

⁷ *Komarac*, 20, October 1861 and following.

⁸ *Komarac*, 10, November 1861.

aldi was wounded and prevented from marching on the papal state. In the following months, the general lay in hospital barely alive. He was, however, becoming increasingly viewed not only as a brave military leader, but also a laic saint and martyr for his country; both perceptions were fundamental in the construction of a modern national hero. As historian Alberto Mario Banti has written, courage is an essential quality of a national hero, but there is more to it: the willingness to sacrifice oneself; to die for one's country.⁹ For the Serbian élite, 1862 marked not only the year of Garibaldi's martyrdom, but also the beginning of the domestication phase. In order to understand this process, "we need to examine not only the repertoire of features appropriated but also the logic of their selection and their use to construct a distinctive style".¹⁰ In the Serbian press, the wounding of Garibaldi at Aspromonte was not only absorbed, but also reframed in the local context since it served to raise the hopes and expectations of the Serbian élite in Vojvodina. For the Serbs of Vojvodina, the betrayal of Garibaldi by the Italian government became a metaphor of their own betrayal, their disillusionment with the Serbian government which failed to declare war on the Ottoman Empire after the bombing of Belgrade in 1862. Garibaldi's experience thus primarily served to legitimate the expectations and disappointments of the Serbian public opinion. After Garibaldi's defeat, the press equally attacked those guilty of betraying and wounding the hero and those who had prevented the redemption of Serbs in the Balkans. The narrative of Garibaldi's deeds, his suffering and the betrayal by his government became a means for the Serbs discuss their own disappointments. The Italian hero was a hero of all the oppressed people irrespective of his own nationality.

After this brief introduction, this paper will examine the Serbian press during the two phases: the "appropriation" phase (the military triumph of 1860) and the "domestication" phase (the martyrdom of 1862). It will then analyze a few of Garibaldi's obituaries to show how the process of construction and domestication of a hero was completed by 1882, the year of Garibaldi's death.

The Sword and the Pen: the Creation of a National Hero

In the nineteenth century, the political and cultural élite was aware that "the people's connection to their nation is emotional rather than rational. These emotional attachments were shaped, tapped into and evoked through the mobilization of symbols and images that had been imprinted deep in our psyche".¹¹ In order to complete national unification, the "sword" was not sufficient; the

⁹ A. M. Banti, *L'onore della nazione. Identità sessuali e violenza nel nazionalismo europeo dal XVIII secolo alla Grande Guerra* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005), 220-221.

¹⁰ Burke, *The European Renaissance*, 9.

¹¹ R. Roach Pierson, "Nations: Gendered, Racialized, Crossed With Empire", in I. Blom, K. Hagemann, C. Hall eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and gender order in the long nineteenth century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford International Publishers, 2000), 42.

“pen” would also be needed. In the first place, there was a distribution of literary and artistic works (novels, poems, prints, illustrated calendars, dramas, paintings, melodramas) and particularly magazines and newspapers, which Danilo Medaković, the founder of the *Srpski dnevnik*,¹² described as “the heart of nation”.¹³ Forceful and effective formulas were introduced into the political vocabulary, thereby generating growing consent¹⁴ regarding the idea of a unified nation.¹⁵ The use of stories, myths and symbols from national tradition and context gives us insight into the transformation of political action into dramatic action.¹⁶ The nation was interpreted as a community with a common origin; images and terms were borrowed from the religious tradition, while acts of sacrificing oneself for one's country were exalted.¹⁷ Newspapers published stories (both written by local authors and translated from the foreign press), poems, images, lithographs and literary supplements along with political commentaries and biographies of the “nation's great men and women”.¹⁸ Since 1848, revolts and insurrections became a very popular topic, although such themes were subject to censorship. Accounts of wars and revolutions provided positive role models – as well as blackened negative ones – and prepared the ground for the emergence of charismatic figures of “national heroes”.

Who was a hero? A hero was a real or mythical individual whose actions and sacrifices embodied the values, ideals and aspirations of a social group. He was a symbol of the community and an example of how to behave within the group. Heroes were usually described as persons defending the territory or values that the community considers fundamental.¹⁹ A national hero had to be willing to sacrifice himself for the community; in other words, he had to voluntarily renounce his own life for the construction of a nation.²⁰ Heroes

¹² *Srpski dnevnik* (The Serbian Chronicle), Novi Sad, 1852-1864. “Liberal ideas, national expression, the journal had a pro jugoslav orientation. Strong opponent of Prince Mihailo Obrenović's autocratic government”. Because of its liberal orientation, the authorities suppressed the magazine in 1864. See Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 61; Skerlić, *Istorijski pregled*, 40-41.

¹³ Skerlić, *Istorijski pregled*, 40-41.

¹⁴ The concept of nation used here corresponds to Anthony D. Smith's definition: “a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members”. See A. D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 13.

¹⁵ Of course, élites were recruited from a very scarce urban population. In 1886, the rate of illiteracy in Serbia was 70% and press shops were rare; in fact, the first press shop was opened in Belgrade in 1831. See M. Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije (1790-1918)*, (Beograd: Prosveta, 1989), II, 64.

¹⁶ G. L. Mosse, *La nazionalizzazione delle masse* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1975), 34.

¹⁷ Banti, *L'onore della nazione*, 171.

¹⁸ The literary supplement *Podunavska* with *Novine Srpske* (Serbian Gazette); *Sedmica* with *Srpski dnevnik*. See Skerlić, *Istorijski pregled*, 12.

¹⁹ P. Centlivres et al., *La fabrique des héros* (Paris: Editions MSH, 1998), 35.

²⁰ M. Todorova, *Bones of Contention* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 483-484.

were often more revered for their willingness to sacrifice for the community than for their ultimate achievements. The construction of a modern hero was mainly inspired by the martyrdom of saints and *Imitatio Christi*.²¹ In fact, the connection between politics and religion was central to modern heroism. This was evident in Europe, where Christianity much contributed to the legitimacy of political powers. In some cases, a national hero was also a saint (“saint kings” in Serbia²²) and instrumental for the development of a state religion.²³

Garibaldi became a sacred hero due to this combination of military-political force and martyrdom.²⁴ He was portrayed as a “winner and loser, loser and winner”,²⁵ valiant combatant, loyal, honest, handsome, strong, but also sorrowful and long-suffering. Garibaldi also had other personal qualities which enabled him to promote himself with great success: his handsome appearance, picturesque clothes (unusual hat, poncho, Nazarene-style long hair, red shirt), adventurous life, simple manners and his austere lifestyle in Caprera. His popularity was immense outside of Italy. In England, people were enchanted with him; in the USA they wanted him to lead a war against slavery; and the Serbs hoped that Garibaldi and his followers would intervene in Bosnia²⁶ or Montenegro.

1860-1862: From General to Hero

From the outbreak of the war in Italy, the main Serb newspapers, *Srpske novine*²⁷ and *Srpski dnevnik*, followed the events with great interest. *Srpske novine* featured a column dedicated to “Italy”. In this section, all kinds of news were reported: insurrections, mobilization of the Austrian army, arms race in Piedmont, parliamentary debates, demonstrations of young people and students, anti-Austrian feelings and national ideals. Since 1859,²⁸ *Srpske novine* also published the column “Vojno polje u Italiji” (The Battlefield of Italy), giving much prominence to Garibaldi and his military victories in Lombardy. As historian Liljana Aleksić-Pejković has emphasized, *Srpske novine* only re-

²¹ Banti, *L'onore della nazione*, 218.

²² S. Marjanović-Dušanić, *Sveti kralj: kult Stefana Dečanskog* (Beograd: CLIO, 2008).

²³ Centlivres et al., *La fabrique*, 11.

²⁴ Banti, *L'onore della nazione*, 222.

²⁵ M. Isnenghi, “Garibaldi”, in M. Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria. Personaggi e date dell'Italia unita* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1997), 30.

²⁶ Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, “Dobrovoljci u oslobodiljačkim ratovima Srba i Crnogoraca”, *Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa održanog u Kikindi 11. i 12. aprila 1996* (Beograd: Institut za Suvremenu Istoriju, 1996), 27-43.

²⁷ *Srpske novine* (*Serbina Journal*), Belgrade 1834-1919. Official journal of the Serbian government. See Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 55-56.

²⁸ In April 1859, the “second war of independence” began. This war would see Piedmont and France allied against Austria. In August 1859, the conflict ended and the conference was summoned in Zurich. Piedmont obtained Lombardy from Austria. The same year, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany were also ceded to the Kingdom of Piedmont after the plebiscites.

published what had been written in the foreign press, but the editorial staff chose which articles to translate and publish, and, in doing so, expressed their sympathy for the Italian cause.²⁹ However, after publishing some articles which the authorities disapproved of, the editorial staff was replaced in April 1860,³⁰ and after a series of liberal editors-in-chief, the newspapers switched to a more conservative line. Significantly, in the first issue under the new editorial board, the term "Italy" was replaced by "Sicily", "Kingdom of Naples", and "Papal Kingdom". *Srpski dnevnik* was also sympathetic to the Italians, but took care to avoid clashes with Serbian censors. The news published was based on both Serbian official dispatches and Garibaldi's proclamations.

In 1860,³¹ Garibaldi's victories in Sicily increasingly drew the attention of the Serbian press and the public grew more interested in the events in Italy.³² *Srpski dnevnik* published several articles about Garibaldi and the expedition to Sicily.³³ The papers heaped praise on Garibaldi's military victories, proclaiming that "his name weighs more than an army".³⁴ He was said to have been clever, a good sailor,³⁵ endowed with great military genius. Garibaldi was depicted as the chief of a brave and valiant group of combatants fighting a morally weak army (the Bourbons). To describe his victories over the Bourbon army, *Srpski dnevnik* wrote:

"A large professional army against a small group of men; but the explanation lies in the enthusiasm and firmness of the ideals they fight for [...] There is a lack of collaboration and motivation [in the army] - the very same elements which are extremely strong among the followers of Garibaldi; they are the core elements of their mission. The army consists of the most passionate and fanatic political activists. All of the rebels are one with their general, and this makes his leadership strong and indisputable. Moreover, Garibaldi is aware of the Bourbon's weak points: demoralization and dissatisfaction of the people are more helpful than a 1000-soldier army".³⁶

²⁹ Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Srpska štampa i ratovi za oslobodjenje i ujedinjenje Italije 1859-1866 godine", *Istoriski časopis*, XX, 1973, 269.

³⁰ *Srpske novine* 12, April 1860.

³¹ In June 1860, Garibaldi and his followers left for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The expedition resulted in the annexation of the southern territories to Piedmont. On 17 March 1861, the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed. The process of unification would be completed in the next ten years with the annexation of Veneto and Venice (1866) and Lazio and Rome (1870).

³² For example, the Consul of France used to meet with the consul of Sardinia and groups of young intellectuals in public places to read the news and comment on the Italian successes, propose toasts to Victor Emanuel, Garibaldi, Cavour and Napoleon and occasionally laugh at the Austrian army. see Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Srpska štampa", 264.

³³ "Pokret Sicilijanski i Garibaldi", *Srpski dnevnik* 26 May– 30 May 1860; "Novi pohod Garibaldi", *Srpski dnevnik*, 18 August – 21 August 1860.

³⁴ *Srpski dnevnik* 1, May 1860.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, May 1860.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21, August 1860.

The newspaper also closely followed the news from the Kingdom of Sardinia and approved of Garibaldi's offer to Victor Emanuel, King of Sardinia of the Kingdom of Naples' territories which he had conquered. On 17 March 1861, Victor Emanuel took the title of King of Italy.

After these initial successes of the Italian Risorgimento both nationally (the conquered territories) and internationally (the recognition by powerful nations), a parallelism emerged which was to last for a long time in the writings of the intellectual and political Serbian élite. It was the parallelism between Serbia and Piedmont, between the houses of Obrenović³⁷ and Savoia.³⁸ An example can be found in the opening article of *Srpski dnevnik* of 14 May 1861 which analyzed the Eastern situation and the opinion of the Serbs from the Ottoman Empire:

“From this side of the Sava, we are looking forward to the moment when the sun from the East and the Serbian nation will shine, the moment when the Serbs will solve the Eastern problem, and receive what they deserve in Europe as a reward for their history and national character [...] The Eastern problem must be solved. There is no doubt that Serbia has to partner with the Great Powers in order to solve this problem. The circumstances of the Eastern problem are such that all attention is focused on it: *in this moment Serbia is to the Serbs in Turkey what Sardinia is to the Italians*”.³⁹

The appropriation contained in the use of the expression *Piedmont of the Balkans* is noteworthy. It referred not only to the Italian Risorgimento as an archetype for the promotion of a national movement,⁴⁰ but above all to the consent and support of the Great Powers. Besides, the use of a well-known and successful model would have appeal for larger groups of followers.

This could be regarded as a “first phase” in the interplay between Italy and the Balkan cause which also depended on diplomatic favor and international recognition. In other words, if the Great Powers had recognised the “Italian problem” and Piedmont's new status, they should have also been aware of the “Serbian problem” and the “Eastern question”.

In 1860/1861, the Serbian press displayed a general admiration for King Victor Emanuel and the diplomatic skills of Count Cavour. The Serbian élite had great confidence in, and were very loyal to, the official politics in Belgrade and the ruling dynasty (restored in 1858). It was thought that the Obrenović

³⁷ The Obrenoviés ruled over Serbia from 1815 to 1842 and again from 1858 to 1903.

³⁸ The House of Savoy ruled over Italy from the proclamation of the Italian kingdom in 1861 to the proclamation of the Italian Republic in 1946.

³⁹ Emphasis of the author. *Srpski dnevnik* 15, May 1861.

⁴⁰ M. Dogo, “Movimenti risorgimentali in Europa sud-orientale: appunti di lavoro per una prospettiva comparata” in « *Romània Orientale*, 17 (2004), *L'Europa d'oltremare. Contributi italiani al IX Congresso Internazionale dell'Association Internationale d'Études du Sud-Est Européen* (Tirana, 30 agosto-3 settembre, 2004) (Roma: 2004), 32-33.

dynasty would one day play the same role as the House of Savoy in Italy and become the spearhead of the national movement. Therefore, the cultural model was made of men “who were ready to face death in regular armies loyal to the Institutions of the State”.⁴¹ Garibaldi was considered a brave soldier and a great combatant, but he gained their support because he was considered a “disciplined revolutionary”,⁴² a man who was loyal to the King.

In this period, Garibaldi was fascinating when fighting for the kingdom and the unification of Italy, but disquieting and threatening in the role of adventurer and revolutionary. It was difficult to have confidence in this rash combatant, this “clever and good sailorman”,⁴³ because “so far he has shown not to be right in the head, so you can never know”.⁴⁴ By the end of 1861, it was feared that Garibaldi's actions against the papal state could compromise the whole Italian situation, and public opinion looked at looked at Caprera with concern.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, in 1862, the news of Garibaldi's expedition to “liberate” Rome was met with extremely enthusiastic reactions in the Serbian press. The *Srbobran*⁴⁶ wrote: “everyone in Italy is rushing to follow Garibaldi's banner”, “Garibaldi leaves with an expedition to liberate Rome”, “Garibaldi, against a confused and hesitant army, shouts: Rome or death”, “royal soldiers deserting to follow Garibaldi, the favorite of the people”.⁴⁷

What had changed in the meanwhile?

Two years after the Expedition of the Thousand, the political situation in Serbia had already changed and was about to change even further during the summer of 1862. In 1860, Mihailo Obrenović had been restored to the throne with a clear agenda: “In 1815, his father [Miloš Obrenović] had led the insurrection in the Pashaluk of Belgrade; much more ambitious than his father, he wanted to lead an insurrection of the whole of the Balkans, creating a state of South Slavs in the Balkans, led by Serbia.”⁴⁸ In order to accomplish this, he adopted a two-fold policy: internally, he made efforts to create a regular army, and, in foreign policy, to make alliances with other Balkan countries. Underestimating the time needed for the building of an army, there was a

⁴¹ Banti, *L'onore della nazione*, 228-229.

⁴² Isnenghi, “Garibaldi”, 31.

⁴³ *Srpski dnevnik* 5, May 1860.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 22, September 1860.

⁴⁵ Caprera is an isle of Sardinia where Giuseppe Garibaldi lived. Because of his austere life, the isle also became a symbol in the story of Garibaldi's life, “the place for the sanctity of that great man”, see: D. Menegozzi, “Un corpo grande come l'Italia. La moltiplicazione del corpo di Garibaldi e le reliquie di cenere”, *Storia e Futuro*, 15, 2007, 6.

⁴⁶ *Srbobran* (Serbian defender), Novi Sad 1861-1866. It was a political magazine of conservative-clerical orientation initially subsidized by the Belgrade government and then by Vienna. Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 64.

⁴⁷ *Srbobran* 12, August 1862.

⁴⁸ S. Jovanović, *Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila* (Beograd: G. Kon, 1933), 145.

widespread feeling in the country that a war was imminent. The bellicose propaganda reasoned as follows: “so far we have fought without an army (the first and second insurrection under Karadjordje and Miloš); now that we have got an army, what are we waiting for”? The “war fever” gripped the intellectual urban population. This sentiment would peak following the tragic events of July 1862:

“On 3 July 1862, a Serbian boy was killed by the Turks in Belgrade [...] This was the beginning of a conflict between the Serbs and Turks. The fight lasted the whole night and ended only at the break dawn, when Garašanin⁴⁹ and the commander of the fortress of Belgrade, Ašir Pasha, came to an agreement. July 4th was a quiet day, aside from some minor gunfire. But on the morning of 5 July, cannon fire was opened on the city unexpectedly and without reason. The bombing lasted four and a half hours, but it was not very dangerous as the Turkish artillery was useless; the citizens, however, were thrown into panic.”⁵⁰

The bombing of Belgrade led to turmoil which was not resolved by the Constantinople conference⁵¹ convened for the purpose of reaching a diplomatic solution. The *Srbobran* wrote on 29 July:

“So the conference of Istanbul is not yielding any results! The Turks will stay in the fortress of Belgrade!- What does Serbia think about this? [...] To defend the personal rights and properties of her sons against Turkish barbarity, Serbia has tried the way of diplomacy, but this is a fallacious way; there is no way for Serbia to claim her own rights but to go to war.”⁵²

Hence, *Srpski dnevnik* wrote:

“This is the moment when the eastern knot will be untied or cut off. [...] The core of the eastern problem, nowadays, is not any more about when but how. The knot must be untied; the question is only whether it is going to be untied or cut off, whether it is going to be brought to an end by diplomacy or by sword? [...] We are facing an imminent war, and we cannot predict the outcome. Because when a Serbian cannon fires, the Ottoman Empire will fire back and this will unsettle the whole of Europe.”⁵³

At this point, which *Srbobran* described as the most critical “from the time when our heroes rebelled to free our imprisoned country”,⁵⁴ they considered Italy to be an “ally for insurrection”.

⁴⁹ Ilija Garašanin was a Serbian premier and foreign minister from 1861 to 1867.

⁵⁰ Jovanović, *Druga vlada*, 338-339.

⁵¹ During the conference the Ottomans demanded an immediate dissolution of the Serbian army whereas Serbia insisted on the expulsion of the Ottomans (both soldiers and civilians) from her territory including the abandonment of the remaining four fortresses garrisoned by the Ottoman troops. S. K. Pavlović, *Srbija Istorija iza imena* (Beograd: Clio, 2004), 69.

⁵² *Srbobran* 29, July 1862.

⁵³ *Srpski dnevnik* 10, August 1862.

⁵⁴ *Srbobran* 17, August 1862.

In January 1862, *Srpski dnevnik* reported:

“The phrase “in spring” is on the lips of all state officials. What will be the first problem to be raised is still unknown: the Italian Problem, or the Eastern Problem, or both. The Italian government is provoking, every move in Italy leads to war, Garibaldi is writing letters and proclamations; all eyes are on Rome and Venice”.⁵⁵

By the end of June, Garibaldi landed on the coast of Sicily and *Srpski dnevnik* wrote:

“Protests have started everywhere in Italy since the the news broke that Garibaldi was in Sicily. We are certain that in the next issues we will have important news both from Italy and Serbia”.⁵⁶

The Italian problem seemed to have been reopened. News from Italy were on the front pages of Serbian newspapers: “There are two main questions absorbing the energy of diplomats - the Serbian problem and the Italian problem - but it is thought that diplomacy will not be able to solve them”.⁵⁷ In this tense atmosphere, the South of Italy was in the spotlight. The press wondered how Garibaldi planned to “liberate” Rome and when Serbia would also rise in revolt and “liberate” Belgrade. During the entire month of August, *Srpski dnevnik* wrote about the Serbian and Italian problem.

This was the beginning of the “second phase” of the interplay between the Italian and the Eastern problem. Unlike the first phase, there was no enthusiasm for diplomatic means of settling the problems. Rather, there was a belief that the two nations should revolt at the same time and liberate their capital cities. As *Srbobran* wrote, quoting the Italian newspaper *L'opinione*,⁵⁸ “Just like the Italians have a right to Rome, so the Serbians can lay claim on Belgrade and free it from the Ottomans”.⁵⁹ At the military and propaganda level, the two “questions” were considered to be inseparable: one would support the other and lead to success so ultimately both nations would be free from foreign control:

“The die is cast; there is no doubt that in a few days a bloody war between Turkey and Serbia will start? [...] since a fight begun with the sword can only be finished with the sword. The Serbian government was not wrong about this; the arms race undertaken in the preceding period has been totally justified. The main part of the national army is already organized, and in Valjevo and Belgrade legions of liberators are ready and await the final word. But who will give this decisive word? [...] The Eastern problem is heading in the same direction as the Italian one, that is to say, towards its final solution. [...] In Sicily, Garibaldi

⁵⁵ *Srpski dnevnik* 20, January 1862.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18, August 1862.

⁵⁷ *Srbobran* 5, August 1862.

⁵⁸ See also *Srpski dnevnik* 4, August 1862.

⁵⁹ *Srbobran* 5, August 1862.

has conquered the coastal city of Catania. He has proclaimed himself a dictator in Sicily.⁶⁰

The articles in the Serbian press became more and more insistent that the waiting was exasperating, describing the bombing of Belgrade as “an event that had happened yesterday, which is still an open wound bleeding hot blood”,⁶¹ and demanding an immediate answer. Moreover, the news that filtered down from the diplomatic conference suggested that war was unavoidable. In fact, it seemed impossible to find an agreement in Constantinople and that Ottoman Empire was no longer interested in negotiating. The news from Italy were duly published and conveyed the atmosphere of insurrection. There were reports that the volunteer army already numbered more than 14,000 men and that in Sicily Garibaldi was met by crowds who welcomed him as a savior. “People everywhere love him and wait for him with songs and olive branches screaming ‘Rome or death’”.⁶² After the Expedition of the Thousand, the Turin government was said to have been on the verge of chaos. Lengthy reports were published daily about the arrested demonstrators and the deserting officers:

“Among the regular army, dissatisfaction is wide-spread; no one wants to fight against Garibaldi. 37 officers resigned when they were ordered to fight against Garibaldi. [...] Garibaldi’s proclamation can be read everywhere [...] It seems that the time for Italy has come and that the forthcoming events will affect other countries in the world”.⁶³

Having heard that Garibaldi was in Calabria, *Srbobran* wrote: “we are sure that in the next issues we will have important news coming from Italy, as well as from Serbia”.⁶⁴ On the Serbian side, in fact, the situation seemed similar:

“Turkey is arming itself to the teeth and sending an army towards Serbian borders. News comes from Serbia of the change of the minister who was against the war, because the war, as the knez and the people desire it, cannot be avoided”.⁶⁵

But on 29 August 1862, Garibaldi was wounded in a clash against the Savoy army. *Srbobran* wrote:

“Italy is now the scene of important events and, even more so, fateful consequences. If the news sent through the last telegrams is true, Garibaldi, the soul of the Italian movement, and the Italian kingdom, was shot and arrested. This news pierces the hearts of the Italians like lightning, for they consider Garibaldi their first patriot”.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ *Srpski dnevnik* 18, August 1862.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 11, August 1862.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 14, August 1862.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21, August 1862.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18, August 1862.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21, August 1862.

⁶⁶ *Srbobran* 22, August 1862.

On 8 September, the ambassadors in Constantinople came to an agreement.⁶⁷ The hope of a popular insurrection still existed, but this illusion was short-lived. The solution of the Italian problem came to a halt. The press lingered over the invocations for Garibaldi and his wounding and tried to find a reason for his failure. The press sought for the guilty parties, accused the Rattazzi government and Napoleon of following a diplomatic line - the same line that had corrupted the choices of the Serbian government - as well as of having nipped in the bud the liberation of Rome and the rescue of the Serbs in the Balkans. The betrayal of Garibaldi became a symbol through which the sense of one's own disillusionment was vented. In the Novi Sad-based satirical magazine *Komarac*, a false and ironic proclamation to Serbia by Garibaldi was announced:

“Glory to you, Serbia!

They shot at you and me both - they wounded you just as they have wounded me - now you are at peace and so am I ... your Abdul and my Vittorio do not know what it means to be deeply wounded - and if they know, maybe they do not care - mine cures me with an amnesty, yours with the Ferman⁶⁸ - my situation is worse, because I know myself to be guilty, and this hurts; you at least live in the conviction that you have behaved in a wiser, more correct and irrefragable manner.”⁶⁹

The sacrifice and martyrdom of Garibaldi in Aspromonte contributed to his transformation from historical character into a hero celebrated in the entire western world. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that heroes also represent ideological positions, for the Serbian élite (particularly of the Vojvodina), Garibaldi becomes a heroic character which is strictly related to the political and cultural Serbian context. The newspapers described in detail Garibaldi's physical and psychological suffering, and discussed the causes of and reasons for the events in Aspromonte. These articles were marked by their dramatic power, which gives a political idea a more compelling form better than other forms of propaganda (proclamations, hymns...): the wounding of Garibaldi transformed him into a collective symbol of the incarnation of the still subdued people which wanted to free themselves, but were betrayed by *Realpolitik*.

The worship of the hero was established and so Giuseppe Garibaldi became not just a valiant combatant of 1860, but also the “Italian hero”,⁷⁰ the “dying hero”,⁷¹ the “hero of the south”,⁷² the “hero of Caprera”,⁷³ and, in addition, the “Martyr”,⁷⁴ or the “national martyr”.⁷⁵

⁶⁷ The Turkish civilians had to leave Serbia, and only the two main frontier fortresses remained under the Ottoman control, including the one in Belgrade. Pavlović, *Srbija Istorija iza imena*, 69.

⁶⁸ Imperial edict.

⁶⁹ *Komarac* 30, September 1862.

⁷⁰ *Srbobran* 9, September 1862.

⁷¹ *Srpski dnevnik* 21, October 1862.

⁷² *Srbobran* 7, September 1862.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30, September 1862.

⁷⁴ *Srpski dnevnik* 2, October 1862.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4, September 1862.

Garibaldi heroic status was definitely confirmed in 1882, the year of his death. In the obituaries, “hero” was indeed the most often used word, either as a metonymy: “heroic heart”⁷⁶ or “heroic breath,”⁷⁷ or referring to his strength on the field of battle (“heroically fought”).⁷⁸ While Victor Emanuel was honest and loyal and the followers of Garibaldi were valiant and loyal, the epithet of hero was used only for Garibaldi and the Serbian people.⁷⁹ Most of the obituaries took a biographic or more precisely a hagiographic form, and exalted Garibaldi’s death through a sort of a laic apotheosis.⁸⁰ So the biography (usually the main part of the obituary), employed the same elements and stereotypes of the traditional “Garibaldine” narrative and recounted the intense life of Garibaldi; a series of heroic episodes progressively developed from his childhood in Nice through a number of heroic acts inspired by the love for the fatherland (South America, the defense of the Roman republic, the Expedition of the Thousand, Aspromonte). This *topos* can be illustrated by the following sentence:

“Garibaldi was in his famous red shirt; he bore a sword in his hand and heroically fought for the freedom of his people. His heroism, his sacrifice, his incredible self-abnegation, his simple lifestyle (a typical characteristic of his), and above all the burning love for his country - that is what made him the most popular man in Italy.”⁸¹

In addition to this, there was the cult of a martyr who had freely chosen to sacrifice his own life for the country:

“Two great ideas governed the entire life of this great Italian patriot: the freedom and unification of the Italian people. He thought about these sublime ideas during the day, and he dreamt about them at night; for them he fought against hundreds of furious combatants and took hundreds of the enemy’s bullets, sacrificing the dearest blood of his heroic heart for these ideas.”⁸²

The obituaries were not just a platform for celebration of the hero, but also a medium for interpreting the local politics. In the article entitled “Garibaldi” in *Srpska nezavisnost*, the apotheosis of Garibaldi was used to criticize Belgrade’s

⁷⁶ *Srpsko kolo* 27, May 1882; *Srpsko kolo* (Serbian circle) Novi Sad 1881-1888. It represented the liberal party in Serbia. Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 90. *Videlo* 26, May 1882; *Videlo* (Light) Belgrade 1880-1922. (the organ of the Progressive Serbian Party). Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 87.

⁷⁷ *Orao, narodni ilustrovani veliki kalendar za godinu 1883* (The Eagle, great national illustrated almanac of the year...), Novi Sad, 50.

⁷⁸ *Srpsko kolo* 27 May/8 June 1882; *Srpska Nezavisnost* 25, May 1882; *Srpska Nezavisnost* (Serbian independence) Belgrade 1881-1903 (the organ of the National-Liberal Party). Kisić, *Srpska štampa*, 90.

⁷⁹ There was one exception, however: “In that period, he married a Creole woman, Anita, who heroically followed him till death in the field of battle in Italy”. It was Anita’s devotion to Garibaldi rather than herself that was deemed heroic. *Orao*, 1883, 51.

⁸⁰ L. Riall, *Garibaldi*, 458.

⁸¹ *Srpska Nezavisnost* 25, May 1882.

⁸² *Srpsko kolo* 27, May 1882.

policy, making a comparison between Garibaldi/Victor Emanuel and the Serbian princes:

“Let us take Karadjordje and Miloš as an example. They too are redeemers of their people just like Garibaldi. Nevertheless, there is a difference, a great difference of consciousness. The liberators of the Serbian people immediately took rewards for their service, and the greatest service demanded the greatest reward: in return for the liberation of their people they assumed rule over that people. This, which is the greatest reward, has consumed our Garibaldi to the marrow; and to the people, absolved from their debt, it has sometimes seemed that they paid the redeemers more than their worth”⁸³

The article follows: “Garibaldi has given power to Victor Emanuel, who as an intelligent man- and here one notices the difference with Karadjordje and Miloš – has humbly accepted that Garibaldi was the one who governed Italian hearts as he himself was too poor and impotent to materially repay the man who had given him three kingdoms”. And the article concluded: “For such a king is worthy of sacrifice, for such a king is worthy of conquering cities and lands, he is worthy of acts such as those of Cavour and Garibaldi”.⁸⁴ The same comparison was made in *Videlo*:

“Let us make a parallel between Victor Emanuel and Cavour and the Serbian prince and his little Cavour [...] in this country and with these government leaders, it would not be worth acting like a Cavour, nor like a Garibaldi”!⁸⁵

Besides the obituaries of June 1882, there was another text which illustrated the worship of Garibaldi. It was an article with illustrations published in the most important Serbian illustrated almanac: *Orao, veliki ilustrovani kalendar*⁸⁶ in 1883. Why am I mentioning *Orao*?⁸⁷ In the words of a contemporary writer:

“No book, foreign or Serbian, is connected to the people as much as a calendar. Commonly, this book, which contains religious hymns and handbook for interpreting dreams, is consulted daily out of necessity as much as habit; it is consulted to obtain advice on any matter, and the most important family events are recorded in it. [...] The calendar is a book of the people like no other”.⁸⁸

⁸³ *Srpska Nezavisnost* 25, May 1882.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Videlo* 2, June 1882.

⁸⁶ *Orao*, 1883. Figures: on the cover portrait, 15-16: “The national hero Garibaldi on the field of battle leading his volunteers”; 17-18: “Magnificence and triumph of the national hero Garibaldi in Rome after his death” and the article entitled “Giuseppe Garibaldi. The Italian national hero”, 50-58.

⁸⁷ M. Knežević, “Stevan V. Popović i veliki ilustrovani kalendar Orao”, *Književna istorija*, 38/128-129, 2006, 359-380; M. Knežević, “Književni rad Stevana V. Popovića”, *Norma*, 12/1, 2006, 7-26.

⁸⁸ M. Savić, “Naši kalendari za 1882. godinu, Orao–Godišnjak”, *Srpske ilustrovane novine*, 21 October 1881.

By means of long biographies and portraits of “benefactors of the Serbian people”, *Orao* tried to familiarise its readers with the important figures from history, culture or current Serbian affairs. Every year the calendar opened with the full page image of a person (usually Serbian⁸⁹) who was particularly important in the Serbian culture and society.

Orao declared to have chosen Garibaldi as a paragon of virtue, and his life story was told according to the usual clichés used by *Orao* to recount the biographies of the “benefactors of the Serbian people”, praising heroism and virtue. It was followed by the list of favours done to the Serbian nation or, in this case, the favours that Garibaldi would have liked to do for Serbia.

“Garibaldi also loved the small, but heroic, Serbian people; he has helped it as best he could in its fight for freedom - that is why we have to remember him”; “Garibaldi has given his life for his country; his heart could feel the death of other peoples and it is not his fault that he could not help the people suffering under the Turkish yoke in the Balkans”.- The article concluded: “Although during the 19th century nothing good has been done, the life and actions of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the greatest and true Italian national hero, will be an important achievement and pride of this century”.⁹⁰

Being both a cultural and a social phenomenon,⁹¹ the construction of a national hero was subject to changes in various historical periods and different cultural, socio-political and geographical contexts. The process by which Giuseppe Garibaldi became a “hero” in the Serbian press reveals two issues. On one hand, there were the circumstances which produced the hero. On the other hand, it suggests the need to analyse the image of a national hero as a political symbol whose actions projected the ideals, values and needs of his political and social context. This is a process that could be described as dynamic and enduring: “the life of the hero offers a universe of interpretations in which we often find what we are looking for”.⁹²

⁸⁹ The exceptions were Prince Nikola I Petrović Njegoš (1877), the Emperor Alexander II (1878), the Emperor Alexander III (1882), Garibaldi (1883), Emperor Francis Joseph (1899).

⁹⁰ *Orao*, 1883.

⁹¹ Centlivres Pet al., *La fabrique*, 137.

⁹² *Ibid.*

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THE BALKANS AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE IN ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1882-1903¹

Abstract: This essay focuses on Italy's relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary, her partners in the Triple Alliance, with special reference to her Balkan policy during the 1882-1903 period. Italy found herself in a somewhat contradictory position as her national aspirations were directed towards the acquisition of Italian-populated lands under the rule of her Austrian ally (Trentino, Gorizia, Dalmatia). Pasquale Mancini, the Foreign Minister in the Depretis cabinet, abandoned the old Mazzinian liberal view of Austria as an arch-enemy of Italian people and embarked on a policy designed to come to terms with Vienna since such arrangement was deemed indispensable for any measure of success in international politics. This was envisaged to be realised through Italy's accommodating attitude and active co-operation with Austria-Hungary in her pursuit of political and territorial expansion in the Balkans on the ruins of the declining Ottoman Empire. In return for this friendly attitude and assistance in the Balkans, Italy should receive from Austria the lands she coveted and fulfil her irredentist ambitions. Mancini's concept was carried on without success by a string of his successors reflecting the constraints under which Italian foreign policy operated between her difficult Triple Alliance partners, on one hand, and France and Britain, who stood in the way of her colonial ambitions, on the other.

Keywords: *Italy, Austria-Hungary, Triple Alliance, 1882-1903, Balkans*

The Triple Alliance as instrument of Italy's policy in the Balkans, 1882-1896.

The decision to establish ties with the Austro-German bloc, with the conclusion of a defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany in May 1882 known as the Triple Alliance, was the political response that the Liberal

¹ This article is based on what we wrote more extensively in Luciano Monzali, *The Italians of Dalmatia. From Italian Unification to World War I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) (Italian edition 2004).

ruling class devised to react to the deep crisis in Italy's foreign policy at the end of the 1870s.² The crisis in bilateral relations between Rome and Vienna in 1876-1880 had been triggered by a series of territorial claims against Austria-Hungary in much of the Italian Liberal press and by Italy's attempts to counter Austrian policy in the Balkans through collaboration with the Russians - to obstruct Vienna's action over the course of the application of the Treaty of Berlin.³ The deterioration in Italo-Habsburg relations took place at the time of Italy's political isolation. The relations with Bismarckian Germany were poor, on account of Rome's independent policy.⁴ France and Britain were dissatisfied with Italian opposition to these country's designs on Tunisia and Egypt. The Italo-Austrian tension - which threatened to turn into open military conflict between the summer of 1878 and the spring of 1880⁵ - faced the Savoy government with a difficult choice: the pursuit of a foreign policy based on open antagonism with Austria-Hungary, aimed at supporting Balkan nations and the creation of a Franco-Russian-Italian alliance against Austria, or an attempt to bring about an improvement in Italo-Habsburg relations through the conclusion of a treaty of political alliance and/or territorial guarantee that would entail the renunciation of claims to the Habsburg lands in the short term, but allow Italy to establish close ties with the Austro-German bloc and influence its international course of action.

The Italian ambassadors, Robilant in Vienna and Edoardo de Launay in Berlin, proclaimed the need for closer ties with Austria, whose political weight was constantly growing as a result of its Balkan successes (the conquest of Bosnia-Herzegovina) and the marked improvement in relations with Berlin, culminating in 1878, in the abolition of the article in the Treaty of

² On the genesis of the Triple Alliance: L. Chiala, *Pagine di storia contemporanea. III. La Triplice e la Duplice Alleanza (1881-1897)* (Turin: Roux, 1898); G. Salvemini, *La politica estera italiana dal 1871 al 1915* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1970); R. Petriani, *Neutralità e alleanza. Le scelte di politica estera dell'Italia dopo l'Unità* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987); A. F. Pribram, *The secret treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921); F. Salata, *Per la storia diplomatica della Questione Romana. Da Cavour alla Triplice Alleanza* (Milan: Treves, 1929), 83 *et passim*; W. L. Langer, *European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890* (New York: Knopf, 1931); L. Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza. Storia diplomatica 1877-1912* (Milan: ISPI, 1939); L. Albertini, *The origins of the War of 1914* (London-New York: Oxford University Press, 1952-1957), I; F. Feller, "Der Dreibund. Europäische Diplomatie vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Ibid*, *Vom Dreibund zum Völkerbund. Studien zur Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen 1882-1919* (Salzburg-Munich, Oldenbourg, 1994), 19-81; H. Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund. Europäische Grossmacht- und Allianzpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002).

³ On Italian fears of the alleged Austrian plans for expansion into Salonika and Albania: Archivio di Stato di Forlì (henceforth ASF); Papers of Giuseppe Tornielli (henceforth Carte Tornielli), Tornielli to Maffei, April 29, 1879, portfolio 1; *Documents diplomatiques français 1871-1914* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1929), (henceforth DDF), I, 2, docs. 387, 460.

⁴ See Bismarck's outbursts of anger with Italy reported by the French ambassador Saint-Vallier: DDF, I, 2, docs. 440 and 476.

⁵ Still useful in this connection: L. Chiala, *Pagine di storia*, II, 1-72. See too: DDF, I, 3, docs. 11, 32, 33, 36, 38, 46, 54; Petriani, *Neutralità e alleanza*.

Prague referring to the possibility of a plebiscite in Schleswig-Holstein and in 1879, in the stipulation of the Austro-German Dual Alliance, a pact of mutual defense against Russia and Italy. According to Launay and Robilant, Italy had to abandon an anti-Austrian Balkan policy and instead work with Vienna, with a view to exploiting Habsburgs' expansionism to its own advantage. Cooperation with the Habsburg Empire would make it easier to keep an eye on its actions and, potentially, gain territorial advantages: in Launay's view (recorded in April 1879), Italy would be able to trade her effective support for better frontiers in the Alps and on the Isonzo river in the near future.⁶ The expediency of relying on the "Eastward push" of the Habsburg empire to solve the question of Italy's northern and eastern borders was a classic theme of the Italian Right's foreign policy (diplomats such as Launay, Robilant, Corti and Alberto Blanc), but alien to left-wing Liberals. For them to accept the idea of an alliance with Vienna and Austria's expansion to the East, it was necessary to break with traditionally negative perception of the Habsburg Empire.

Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, a member of parliament and jurist from Campania who was foreign minister in the fourth Depretis cabinet from 1881 to 1885, was instrumental in revising the principles of Liberal Left and the change in Italo-Austrian relations.⁷ The Campanian politician re-examined Italian foreign policy and outlined a new program in which he sought to bring together ideas and themes drawn from progressive as well as moderate Liberalism.⁸ He saw the creation of an alliance with the Austro-German powers as a crucial factor if Italy were to undertake effective international action; an alliance between Italy and the Germanic states was now possible since there had been a "complete cessation of the age-old hatred and rancor between the Italian and German peoples, after the latter had withdrawn over the Alps for good, with Italy having been restored to the complete independence to which she was entitled"⁹ This relationship of alliance, established at the same time as a marked political rapprochement with Great Britain, the major naval power in the Mediterranean, would permit the Savoy kingdom to increase its inter-

⁶ *I Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Libreria dello Stato-Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, Rome, 1952- (henceforth DDI), II, 11, doc. 492, Launay to Depretis, April 8, 1879. See too *ibidem*, doc. 550.

⁷ On Mancini and his career as a jurist and politician: Z. Ortensio ed., *Pasquale Stanislao Mancini: l'uomo, lo studioso, il politico* (Guida: Naples 1991); A. Droetto, *Pasquale Stanislao Mancini e la scuola italiana di diritto internazionale del secolo XIX* (Giuffrè: Milan 1954); C. Zaghi, *P. S. Mancini, l'Africa e il problema del Mediterraneo 1884-1885* (Rome: Casini, 1955); T. Scovazzi, *Assab, Massaua, Ucciali, Adua. Gli strumenti giuridici del primo colonialismo italiano* (Turun: Giappichelli, 1998), 74 *et passim*. See too the considerations of Afflerbach: Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund*, 99 *et passim*.

⁸ P. S. M., *Discorsi parlamentari di Pasquale Stanislao Mancini* (Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1896-97), eight vols.

⁹ *Ibidem*, VIII, 553, speech at the session of December 7, 1881.

national weight and conduct a dynamic and effective foreign policy. Mancini took the ideas of Launay and Robilant on board and forged ahead with the efforts to achieve a political rapprochement with Germany and Austria-Hungary that had already been initiated by the Cairoli government and the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry, Maffei, in 1880 and early 1881.¹⁰ As early as the summer of 1881, Mancini laid down the main lines of a new Italian policy in the Balkans, no longer antagonistic to Austria but, on the contrary, compatible with the designs and interests of the Habsburg Empire. In the minister's view, it was not possible to claim that the expansion of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans was the antithesis of any Liberal aspiration and of the nationality principle which "in the muddle of different races and languages that characterizes the Balkan peninsula, cannot find expression with the same simplicity and clarity of form that fortunately obtains in Italy, for example".¹¹ Indeed, it was in the Italian interest to promote Italo-Habsburg cooperation in the Balkan area with a view to exercising a beneficial and favorable influence on local population. Essentially, the eastward impetus which Germany was imparting to Habsburg policy was not contrary to Italy's interests: "rather than isolating ourselves in unproductive and spiteful aspirations of opposition, whose results, moreover detrimental to our influence, could unfortunately be seen at the Congress of Berlin, it was better to allow Austria-Hungary at this point to carry out the mission that the Berlin accords have assigned it within certain limits in part of the Balkan peninsula".¹²

Discarding the old Mazzinian view of Austria as the absolute negation of Italian political values, Mancini regarded the Habsburg Empire as a positive factor, a civilizing force, in the Balkans. And over the following years Italian diplomacy actually lent its support to the Habsburgs in the Balkans by accepting Austrian hegemony in Serbia and backing Vienna's attempts to dispute Russian supremacy in Bulgaria.¹³ This was an attempt to establish friendly cooperation between Italy and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, which should bring Rome out of its diplomatic isolation and facilitate, in the event of a future international crisis, the attainment of Italian territorial objectives not in opposition to, but as an ally of, Vienna.¹⁴

¹⁰ On Cairoli's and Maffei's attempts to come to terms with Austria-Hungary and Germany: DDI, II, 13, docs. 497 and 699; *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1922-27) (henceforth GP), 3, docs. 533, 534, 535; Pribram, *The secret treaties*; Petrigani, *Neutralità e alleanza*, 271-4; Langer, *European Alliances*, cit.; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 45, *et passim*.

¹¹ DDI, II, 14, doc. 119, Mancini to Toranielli, July 28, 1881.

¹² DDI, II, 14, doc. 109, Mancini to Launay, July 23, 1881.

¹³ On Italy's Balkan policy in the 1880s and 1890s: A. Tamborra, "La crisi balcanica del 1885-1886 e l'Italia," in *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 1968, 371-96; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 101 *et passim*; Petrigani, *Neutralità e alleanza*.

¹⁴ The Austrian diplomatic records present a positive view of Mancini as an Italian minister who wished to implement a policy of friendship with Austria-Hungary: *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*,

The negotiations for the conclusion of the Triple Alliance,¹⁵ carried out in the spring of 1882 and mainly conducted by Mancini, Blanc (Secretary-General of the Italian Foreign Ministry) and Robilant, and the text of the tripartite treaty signed on 20 May of that year clearly reflected the desire to cooperate with Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and create legal instruments (a treaty of alliance) obliging the Habsburg Empire to take Italian objectives and interests into account and prefiguring a scenario in which Austria would request Italy's military and political assistance at the cost of major territorial concessions.

The various Italy-inspired articles of the Triple Alliance treaty of 1882 created the conditions for Italo-Austrian negotiations in the event of war between Austria-Hungary and Russia or conflict in the Balkans, on the basis of Italian aid to Vienna in exchange for territory. The formulation of *casus foederis*, which provided for an automatic Italian military intervention only in the event of France's attack on Germany (article II) or an attack by two or more Great Powers (article III), and excluded entry into war in case of a conflict involving the small Balkan states and provision of military support without a *quid pro quo* in the event of a conflict between Russia and Austria-Hungary, strongly favored Italy. The promise of simple neutrality in the event of a conflict provoked by a member of the alliance (for instance, Vienna's aggression against Turkey, Serbia or Russia) allowed Italy the possibility to trade her intervention for concessions.

In the light of the Depretis-Mancini government's diplomacy in 1881-1885, it is evident that Robilant, Mancini's successor at the Foreign Ministry (1885-1887), continued the policy outlined by his predecessor during the negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance. In an unstable international context, when the Franco-German antagonism and the rivalry between Austria-Hungary and Russia might provoke conflict that would activate the Triple Alliance, Robilant succeeded in negotiating new and more stringent commitments on the part of Vienna and Berlin. Robilant maintained Mancini's policy of offering Italy's cooperation in the Balkans to facilitate further expansion of the Habsburg Empire in exchange for territorial reward. He made this clear in a letter written to Nigra, ambassador in Vienna, in March 1886: "Obviously the moment has not yet come to speak of this, but if the circumstances were such that Austria were to seriously consider altering the situation in the Balkan peninsula to its advantage, not a minute should be lost in putting our cards on the table [...]. The line of the Isonzo and Tyrol *feraient une affaire*, and with this, and on condition of taking Tripolitania from Turkey, I would have no difficulty in letting Austria go as far as Salonika".¹⁶

Vienna (henceforth, HHSTA), *Politisches Archiv* (henceforth PA), XI, portfolio 99, Ludolf to Kálnoky, May 7, 1885, ber. On this see too F. Salata, *Guglielmo Oberdan secondo gli atti segreti del processo, carteggi diplomatici e altri documenti inediti* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1924), 267.

¹⁵ GP, 3, docs. 536 *et passim*; DDI, II, 14.

¹⁶ DDI, II, 19, doc. 396, Robilant to Nigra, March 30, 1886.

The change in the international situation, with the resurgence of French nationalism at the instigation of General Georges Boulanger and the outbreak of Austro-Russian rivalry in Bulgaria, compelled Chancellor Bismarck to assign growing importance to the alliance with Italy. Aware of the shifts favorable to Italy, Robilant opened negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance: in November 1886, he proposed the conclusion of an additional treaty to that of 20 May 1882.¹⁷ This draft of a supplementary treaty envisaged another *casus foederis* to Italy's benefit: should France extend its occupation, sovereignty or influence to Morocco or Tripoli, and Italy be forced to go to war in defense of its Mediterranean interests, then Germany and Austria-Hungary would intervene militarily. Of particular importance was Article II of the draft, which clearly expressed one of the political objectives that Italy had been pursuing since the beginning of the 1880s, i.e. control of Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy and linking Italy's aims of expansion with it. The first part of the article stipulated the restraint from any territorial modification along the Ottoman-ruled coasts and islands of the Adriatic and the Aegean Sea to detriment of contracting parties. If it proved impossible to maintain the *status quo* in these regions and if one of these territories were to be occupied to the advantage of Rome or Vienna, "this occupation will only take place after a preliminary accord between the two aforesaid Powers, based on the principle of a mutual compensation satisfying the interests and well-founded needs of the two parties".

The Italian proposals met with strong resistance from Austria-Hungary: Vienna had no interest in military commitments in North Africa or giving up her independence policy in the Balkans, and feared that Italy might ask for Italian-populated Habsburg territories as compensation for further Austrian expansion. But it was German pressure and the danger of cooperation between Italy and Russia in the event of war between Vienna and St. Petersburg that induced the Austrians to put aside their doubts and accept a great deal of the Italian requests.

On 20 February 1887, a new series of accords was signed by the Triple Alliance. It comprised three treaties, one common to the three Powers, ratifying the renewal of the alliance, one between Italy and Germany and one between Austria-Hungary and Italy.¹⁸ In addition to committing both states to preserving the territorial *status quo* in the East, the agreement with Germany guaranteed that country's military and political assistance to Italy in the event of a war between Italy and France over North Africa. The Italo-Austrian treaty is of particular importance. At its heart was Article I (which became Article VII in the renewed treaty of 1891). To a great extent, it echoed Robilant's pro-

¹⁷ Draft of supplementary treaty, November 23, 1886, enclosed in Robilant to Launay, November 23, 1886, DDI, II, 20, doc. 302. The text of the draft is also published in GP, 4, enclosure 1 with doc. 836.

¹⁸ *Testo del trattato separato tra l'Italia e l'Austria-Ungheria*, February 20, 1887, in DDI, II, 20, doc. 540; also published in GP, 3, doc. 571, and Pribram, *The secret treaties*.

posal of November 1886 to the effect that the two powers should concert their policies if the *status quo* changed in the Balkans and the Ottoman territories in the Adriatic and Aegean, and take a common stance in case of a temporary or permanent occupation of certain territory in that area. Such an agreement was to be founded on the principle of reciprocal compensation for any “territorial or other” advantage obtained by one of the contracting parties.

Francesco Crispi, one of the protagonists of Giuseppe Garibaldi’s expedition to Sicily in 1860 and a prominent exponent of the Liberal Left for over two decades, re-entered government in April 1887, as Minister of the Interior in the Depretis cabinet, after many years of political isolation¹⁹ and committed himself to pursuing foreign policy laid down by Mancini and continued by Robilant. Crispi assumed the leadership of the government and the post of Foreign Minister after Depretis’s death in July 1887²⁰ and proclaimed himself a keen supporter of the Triple Alliance, which he regarded as a means of strengthening Italy’s international standing. He devoted all his energies to imparting cohesion and internal solidity to the alliance, which had hitherto been lacking and making it more useful to Italy. Crispi’s efforts to forge a concrete political cooperation with Berlin were an undeniable success. The German diplomatic corps and Bismarck showed that they appreciated the seriousness of intentions and the energy of the ex-Mazzinian and cordial relations were established between Berlin and Rome towards the close of 1880s. These found public expression in the meetings between Bismarck and Crispi in Germany²¹

¹⁹ C. Duggan, *Francesco Crispi 1818-1901: From Nation to Nationalism* (London-New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) is the best biography of this politician; also useful are sections devoted to Crispi in: G. Volpe, *Italia moderna*, I (Florence: Sansoni, 1973) (1st ed. 1943-51); S. Romano, *Crispi. Progetto di una dittatura* (Milan: Bompiani, 1973); see too F. Fonzi, *Crispi e lo “Stato di Milano”* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1972).

²⁰ There is still no satisfactory study of Francesco Crispi’s foreign policy from 1887 to 1891 and from 1893 to 1896; from the extensive existing literature we can cite: G. Salvemini, “La politica estera di Crispi,” in *Ibid.*, *La politica estera italiana*; G. Carocci, “Alberto Blanc ministro degli Esteri (1893-1896),” *Clio*, 2003, no. 4, 545 *et passim*; R. Mori, *La politica estera di Francesco Crispi (1887-1891)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973); E. Serra, *La questione tunisina da Crispi a Rudini ed il “colpo di timone” alla politica estera dell’Italia* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1967); F. Curato, *La questione marocchina e gli accordi italo-spagnoli del 1887 e del 1891* (Milan: Comunità, 1961), two vols.; W. L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935); A. Sandonà, *L’irredentismo nelle lotte politiche e nelle contese diplomatiche italo-austriache* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1932), II and III; C. Giglio, *L’articolo XVII del trattato di Uccialli* (Como: Cairolì, 1967); *Ibid.*, “Crispi e l’Etiopia,” in *Rassegna storica toscana*, 1970, 1, 71-83; C. Conti Rossini, *Italia ed Etiopia dal trattato di Uccialli alla battaglia di Adua* (Rome: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1935); Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 131 *et passim*; Albertini, *Le origini della guerra*, vol. I; C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists. British Foreign Policy 1878-1902*, (London: Macmillan, 1967); P. Milza, *Français et italiens à la fin du XIXe siècle. Aux origines du rapprochement franco-italien de 1900-1902* (Rome, Ecole française de Rome, 1981), two vols.

²¹ On Italo-German relations in 1887-1890: Langer, *European Alliances*; M. Mazzetti, *L’esercito italiano nella Triplice Alleanza. Aspetti della politica estera 1870-1914* (Naples: ESL, 1974), 53 *et passim*; N. Rich, *Friedrich von Holstein. Politics and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and Wilhelm II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), I, 193-203, 247-8.

and the Italo-German military accords of 1888. Crispi's attempts to establish close political collaboration and solidarity with Austria-Hungary proved less successful. Rome tried to exploit the Bulgarian crisis and the resurgence of Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans to curry favour with Vienna by supporting Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, Prince of Bulgaria.²² At the same time, it used the bugbear of Russian expansionism to try to form an Italo-Austro-British alliance in defense of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the independent Balkan states. Austrian acceptance of the Italo-British exchange of notes in February 1887, the Austro-Italo-British understanding of 12 December 1887, and the Italian adherence to the Austro-Romanian alliance in 1888 were the results of this intense diplomatic action on Crispi's part. Notwithstanding Crispi's efforts, however, it proved impossible to persuade Vienna to conclude a secret bilateral understanding regarding the eventuality of the Ottoman Empire's collapse. Nor were there any Italo-Austrian accords on military and naval cooperation against the Russians and French: despite Crispi's eagerness,²³ they could not be reached because of suspicions on the part of the Habsburg government. The goal of Italy's pro-Austrian and anti-Russian Balkan policy was to create the juridical and political conditions for future application of the compensation article of the Triple Alliance treaty: Austria's Eastward drive, the possible Habsburg conquest of Ottoman territories and a Russian-Austrian war were all situations that could force Vienna to seek Italy's military backing, and thus allowed the Rome government to demand some of Austria's Italian-inhabited provinces in exchange. By encouraging Austria's influence in the Balkans and further to the East and fueling the Austro-Russian rivalry, Italy was becoming an indispensable partner for Vienna: in the light of these considerations, Crispi's attempt to broaden the Italian political and military commitments in connection with the Austro-German allies and his pro-Austrian policy were part of Mancini's and Robilant's policy of supporting Austria's Eastward expansion in return for territorial rewards. In Crispi's view, Italy and Austria needed one another:

"Austria in turn needs Italy, which, on certain occasions, could render her considerable services. Austria, secure in the Alps and the Adriatic, would have full freedom of action in the East, where her true interests lie and where she may be assailed by her true enemies. [...] For our part, I would say that it is in Italy's interest that Austria does not break up. She is a great barricade against potentially more dangerous adversaries, which are best kept far away from our frontiers. In the light of this, there

²² On this: Francesco Guida, *La Bulgaria dalla guerra di liberazione sino al trattato di Neuilly 1877-1919. Testimonianze italiane* (Rome, Bulzoni, 1984; F. Guida, A. Pitassio and R. Tolomeo, *Nascita di uno Stato balcanico: la Bulgaria di Alessandro di Battenberg nella corrispondenza diplomatica italiana 1879-1886* (Naples: ESI, 1988).

²³ A detailed reconstruction of the Italo-Austrian military negotiations at the end of the 1880s in Mazzetti, *L'esercito italiano, 95 et passim*. On the Italo-Habsburg relations under Crispi: Aflerbach, *Der Dreibund, 231 et passim*.

ought not to be any problems between Italy and Austria. That of the borders will, one day or the other, be solved amicably.²⁴

The great difficulty that Italian policy encountered in the Balkans stemmed from the Habsburg refusal to deal with Rome on equal footing – that region was regarded in Vienna as Austro-Hungary's exclusive sphere of influence. The objectives of Crispi's pro-Austrian policy were clearly understood by the Habsburg government: the Ambassador in Rome, Karl von Bruck, noted in June 1888 that at the root of Crispi's plans of military cooperation lay the dream of obtaining Trentino as compensation for Austria-Hungary's expansion in the Balkans.²⁵ This accounted for Kálnoky's rejection of the proposals to conclude military accords against the Russians and bilateral agreements on the Ottoman territories.²⁶ Failing to understand the mentality and attitude of the Habsburg establishment, the Italian ruling class still believed that the spontaneous and peaceful transfer of Italian-populated territories was possible, and view Germany as a mediator that could, due to Vienna's political and military dependence on that country, play a decisive role in reaching such agreement. Crispi shared this hope. This conviction is central to understanding Italian attitude on the occasion of the second renewal of the Austro-Italo-German treaty of alliance.

After the fall of the Crispi government in early 1891, his successor Rudini, aware of the Habsburg and German opposition to further German commitments in the Balkans,²⁷ continued the negotiations started by Crispi by asking for a lumping of the 1887 accords into a single treaty and better safeguarding of Italian economic needs. But he focused his attention chiefly on the Mediterranean, requesting additional German support for Italian policy in Africa and a declaration confirming that the alliance was not anti-British in character.²⁸

The Triple Alliance was renewed on 6 May 1891 in Berlin, partly due to the fact that the Germans and Austro-Hungarians accepted some of the Italian

²⁴ DDI, II, 23, Crispi to Nigra, July 31, 1890, doc. 654.

²⁵ Bruck to Kálnoky, June 16, 1888, in Sandonà, *L'irredentismo*, III, 151-2; Albertini, *The origins of the War of 1914*, cit., I. For more Bruck's observations of Crispi's aims: Mazzetti, *L'esercito italiano*, 79-80. On the fear, widespread in the Habsburg diplomatic corps, that much of the Italian Tyrol would be ceded to Italy in the event of a military victory of the Triple Alliance against Russia or France see: GP, 10, Eulenburg to Hohenhole, November 10, 1895, doc. 2499.

²⁶ On this: GP, 4, docs. 917, 920, 921; Mazzetti, *L'esercito italiano*, 53 *et passim*.

²⁷ Rudini to Launay and Nigra, March 15, 1891, DDI, II, 24, doc. 124; *ibidem*, Launay to Rudini, March 22-31, 1891, doc. 144; *ibidem*, Nigra to Rudini, April 2, 1891, doc. 186; GP, 7, docs. 1398, 1399.

²⁸ Rudini to Launay, April 6, 1891, DDI, II, 24, doc. 197; *ibidem*, Rudini to Launay, April 15, 1891, doc. 221 (a French translation of the same dispatch is published in GP, 7, doc. 1410). On the negotiations that led to the renewal of the Triple Alliance: Pribram, *The secret treaties*; Fellner, "Der Dreibund"; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 168 *et passim*; Albertini, *The origins of the War of 1914*, cit., I.

demands.²⁹ The three treaties of 1887, stipulating different obligations between the contracting parties, were conflated into a single text: in the new Article IX, Germany agreed to support any Italian decision against the *status quo* in North Africa and potential occupation of certain territories in that region; a protocol was also signed promising mutual trade concessions and encouraging development of closer political cooperation with Great Britain in central and western Mediterranean.³⁰

Therefore, Italian attempts to invigourate the Triple Alliance and bring it more into line with their own interests met with partial success. While gains were made in the commercial sphere with the Italo-Austrian and the Italo-German trade agreements of 1891,³¹ the negotiations failed to bring about effective and cogent political cooperation with Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and any real improvement in the living conditions of the Italian and Italo-ophile population in the Habsburg Empire. The political and commercial conflict with France, the poor relations with Russia and the futility of Italo-British relations – with London being hostile to Italian expansionistic designs in Africa³² – rendered any Italy's international initiative difficult and made Rome highly dependent on Austria-Hungary and Germany. The attempts of the Rudini, Giovanni Giolitti and Crispi governments to improve relations with France in 1891-1894 failed largely because Paris, strengthened by the conclusion of the Franco-Russian defensive alliance in the early 1890s, desired Italy's humiliation and her leaving the Triple Alliance.³³ Austrian reluctance to strengthen the alliance with Italy discouraged Crispi's policy and forced him to imbue Italian diplomatic action with a great deal of initially unintended ambiguity.

²⁹ On the last phase of the negotiations leading to the renewal of the Triple Alliance: GP, 7, docs. 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414, 1416, 1417; Pribram, *The secret treaties*; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza, 173 et passim*.

³⁰ The text of the treaty of the Triple Alliance signed on May 6, 1891, is reproduced in: Pribram, *The secret treaties*; GP, 7, doc. 1426.

³¹ On the commercial treaties between Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany: U. Cova, "I rapporti di politica commerciale fra Austria e Italia (prima metà del XIX secolo-1915)," in *Ibid.*, *Commercio e navigazione a Trieste e nella monarchia asburgica da Maria Teresa al 1915* (Udine: Del Bianco, 1992), 195 *et passim*; E. Del Vecchio, *La via italiana al protezionismo. Le relazioni economiche internazionali dell'Italia (1878-1888)* (Rome, Camera dei deputati, 1979), I, 453 *et passim*; *Ibid.*, "Il regime doganale tra l'Italia e l'Austria-Ungheria (1887-1892)," *Clio*, 1972; *Ibid.*, "Penetrazione economica italiana nell'area degli slavi del Sud (1878-1896)," *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, 1985, 2, 201 *et passim*.

³² On Italo-British relations in the 1890s: C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists. British Foreign Policy 1878-1902*, (London: Macmillan, 1967); C.J. Lowe, F. Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940* (London-Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 28 *et passim*; P. Silva, *Il Mediterraneo dall'Unità di Roma all'impero italiano* (Milan, ISPI, 1942), 314 *et passim*; C. Seton Watson, "Adua 1896: timori e perplessità britanniche," *Studi piacentini*, 1993, 13, 117 *et passim*.

³³ On Italo-French relations: P. Guillen, *L'expansion 1881-1898* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Paris 1984); Serra, *La questione tunisina*, cit.; Milza, *Français et italiens à la fin du XIXe siècle*, I, 3-169, II, 479-578; A. Billot, *La France et l'Italie. Histoire des années troubles 1881-1899* (Paris, Plon, 1905), two vols.

Conscious of Austrian suspicions over Italy's influence in the western Balkans and the Adriatic, Crispi and his Foreign Minister, Blanc, stepped up since 1894 Italian cultural and economic penetration of Albania, Epirus and Macedonia, and showed greater interest in the national reawakening of the Albanians³⁴ and the Koutsovlach population³⁵ which could be used as catspawns to keep in check Habsburg, Serbian or Greek expansionism in the region. Another element of Crispi's Balkan policy indicative of his awareness of the fragility of Italo-Austrian relations was the decision to strengthen relations with Montenegro through the marriage of the Prince of Naples, Victor Emmanuel of Savoy, and the daughter of King of Montenegro, Jelena. Celebrated in October 1896, this marriage had a clear political objective, i.e. to secure that Italy had "a base in the Balkan peninsula in the event of war in the East".³⁶

The dramatic aggravation of Italy's international position in 1895, caused by political and economic conflict with France, the coldness of Italo-British relations and the outbreak of war in Ethiopia, deeply saddened Crispi. In January 1896, during his conversations with Nigra, Blanc and Sidney Sonnino, Crispi complained about the lack of Austro-German support for Italian foreign policy³⁷ and declared that it was necessary to associate the two allies with Italy "in all questions in which France will be our enemy".³⁸ It was also necessary to acquire better guarantees in case of change in the Balkan *status quo* – if the Ottoman Empire was carved up, Italy would be entitled to her share.³⁹

The Eastern Adriatic and the Balkans in Italian Foreign Policy, 1896-1903.

The defeat at Adowa and Crispi's political downfall thwarted his plan to modify the terms of the alliance with Vienna and Berlin. His successor, Antonio di Rudini, the head of the government that brought together all the opponents of Crispi, with Onorato Caetani and Emilio Visconti Venosta as Foreign Minister, was faced with a difficult political situation. For several months the

³⁴ On the attitude of Italian diplomacy toward the Albanian question in 1890-1896 there is interesting documentation in: DDI, II, 23, doc. 730; DDI, II, 24, docs. 293, 305, 335; DDI, II, 27, docs. 341, 456, 485, 644, 705; F. Crispi, *Questioni internazionali* (Milan: Treves, 1913), 237 *et passim*.

³⁵ On Italian support for the attempts by the Koutsovlach populations of Albania and Macedonia to obtain an autonomous cultural and political organization: DDI, II, 26, Catalani to Blanc, March 18, 1895, doc. 979; DDI, II, 27, Blanc to Catalani, April 1, 1895, doc. 2; *ibidem*, docs. 29, 60, 90; G. Carageani, "Gli aromeni e la questione aromena nei documenti dell'archivio storico diplomatico del Ministero degli affari esteri italiano (1891-1916)," *Storia contemporanea*, 1987, 5, 929-1007.

³⁶ Crispi, *Questioni internazionali*, 240-1. For references to Crispi's role in the marriage of Prince of Naples and the Montenegrin princess see Farini, *Diario*, 636, 676, 724.

³⁷ DDI, II, 27, doc. 782.

³⁸ DDI, II, 27, doc. 796.

³⁹ DDI, II, 27, doc. 793. Further information on Crispi's intentions in: GP, 11, docs. 2798, 2799, 2800; Pribram, *Les traités*, 308-13; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 203-4.

principal aim of Rudini's foreign policy was to bring the war with Ethiopia to an end, a goal that was not achieved before the October 1896 Treaty of Addis Ababa.⁴⁰ Another major problem that confronted Rudini was the renewal of the Triple Alliance. In a dangerous international situation, Rudini decided to abandon the plans for modification conceived by his predecessor and limited himself to declaring his readiness to renew the treaty. It was renewed without any modification by allowing the time to lapse for any denunciation.⁴¹

The period of Crispi's government had painfully demonstrated the untenability of a political and economic conflict with France: better relations with Paris were indispensable in order to strengthen the Italian position in the Mediterranean and Africa, and make the country less dependent on Berlin and Vienna.⁴² Rapprochement with France was even more urgent in view of the useless Italo-British friendship: Great Britain had frowned on Crispi's attempts to create a major colonial empire in East Africa and was suspicious of Italy's desire to increase its influence in the Mediterranean where London was defending the highly favourable *status quo*.

As the risk of a military conflict between France and Italy faded since 1896 and the improvement in Italo-French relations, the Triple Alliance lost much of its significance for Rome as a means of defending against possible French aggression, but retained its usefulness for other purposes, for instance in Balkan politics. Rudini remained convinced, just as Mancini, Robilant and Crispi had been, that the compensations arrangement envisaged by the Triple Alliance could provide Italy with the opportunity to obtain much of the Italian lands possessed by Austria in case of the Ottoman Empire's break-up and further Habsburg expansion in South-Eastern Europe.

The resurgence of national and religious conflicts in the Ottoman Turkey since mid-1890s (the Armenian uprisings, Greek revolt on Crete, Bulgarian and Macedonian guerrilla warfare in Macedonia)⁴³ suggested a decline of

⁴⁰ On the foreign policy of the Rudini governments: Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 215 *et passim*; F. Curato, "La politica estera italiana dopo la caduta di Crispi secondo i nuovi documenti diplomatici italiani," in *Ibid.*, *Scritti di storia diplomatica* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1984), 351-79; E. Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1950); *Ibid.*, *La questione tunisina da Crispi a Rudini*; E. Decleva, *Da Adua a Sarajevo. La politica estera italiana e la Francia 1896-1914* (Bari: Laterza, 1971), 15 *et passim*; L. Monzali, *L'Etiopia nella politica estera italiana 1896-1915* (Parma, Università di Parma, 1996); A. Francioni, *Medicina e diplomazia. Italia ed Etiopia nell'esperienza africana di Cesare Nerazzini (1883-1897)* (Siena: Nuova Immagine, 1997); C. Giglio, "Il trattato di pace italo-etiope del 26 ottobre 1896," in *Studi storici in memoria di Leopoldo Marchetti* (Milan: Direzione dei Musei del Risorgimento e di Storia contemporanea, 1969), 65-80; Afflerbach, *Der Dreieck*, 413 *et passim*.

⁴¹ DDI, III, 1, doc. 104.

⁴² In this connection: DDF, I, 12, doc. 321, Billot to Berthelot, March 13, 1896; *ibidem*, Billot to Hanotaux, May 26, 1896, doc. 390.

⁴³ An in-depth examination of the national conflicts within the Ottoman Empire and the attitude of European Powers is given in Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, cit. A fine study of the Armenian question is the one by F. Sidari, *La questione armena nella politica delle grandi poteri dalla chiusura del Congresso di Berlino del 1878 al trattato di Losanna del 1923* (Padua, CE-

the Ottoman Empire and the likely prospect of its partition among European Powers.⁴⁴

The subsequent evolution of Habsburg policy in the Balkans confirmed the usefulness of the Triple Alliance to Italian diplomatic action. The new Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, the Polish Count Agenor J. Goluchowski,⁴⁵ was concerned about the situation in the Balkans and welcomed Russia's overtures – she wanted peace in Europe in order to concentrate on expansion in the Far East – so he agreed to reconciliation with the government in St. Petersburg. On the occasion of Francis Joseph and Goluchowski's visit to St. Petersburg in April 1897, Habsburg and Russian diplomats reached a verbal agreement on certain common principles and objectives concerning the Balkans.⁴⁶ This understanding marked the resumption of Austro-Russian cooperation in the Balkans after decades of hostility and rivalry: it was a cooperation based on the assumption that it fell to Austria-Hungary and Russia to determine and control political developments in Turkey-in-Europe. However, no binding decisions were made as to what to do in the event of the break-up of the Ottoman Empire; that matter was deferred to some subsequent bilateral Austro-Russian accord.

The Austrian government provided the German diplomatic corps with detailed and complete information on the contents and meaning of the agreement.⁴⁷ The information received by Italy was much vaguer and not accurate:⁴⁸

DAM, 1962). See too: *Documenti diplomatici italiani sull'Armenia*, Florence, 1999-2000, second series, vols. 1, 2, 3. On Macedonia: *Austro-Hungarian Documents relating to the Macedonian Struggle 1896-1912* (Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976); F. Adanir, *Die makedonische Frage, ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1908* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979); Marco Dogo, *La dinamite e la mezzaluna. La questione macedone nella pubblicistica italiana 1903-1908* (Udine: Del Bianco, 1983); *Ibid.*, *Lingua e nazionalità in Macedonia. Vicende e pensieri di profeti disarmati (1902-1903)* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1985).

⁴⁴ Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 198; Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, cit.

⁴⁵ On the appointment of Goluchowski: F. Engel-Janosi, *Österreich und der Vatikan 1846-1918* (Graz: Verl. Styria, 1958), I, 254 *et passim*.

⁴⁶ On the Austro-Russian verbal understanding of April 1897: Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*; F. ROY Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo. The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary 1866-1914* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 227 *et passim*; *Ibid.*, "Österreich(-Ungarn) unter den Grossmächten," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. VI, part 1 (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989), 293 *et passim*; E. Walters, "Austro-Russian Relations under Goluchowski 1895-1906," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 1952-54, 76-9; P. Pastorelli, "Albania e Tripoli nella politica estera italiana durante la crisi d'Oriente del 1897," *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1961, 3, 391 *et passim*; Albertini, *The origins of the War of 1914*, I; W.M. Carlgren, *Iswolsky und Aehrenthal vor der bosnischen Annexionskrise. Russische und österreichisch-ungarische Balkanpolitik 1906-1908* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1955), 7 *et passim*; Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund*, 465 *et passim*. See too *Documents diplomatiques suisses/Documenti diplomatici svizzeri/Diplomatische Dokumente der Schweiz 1848-1945* (Bern: Benteli Verlag, 1979), (henceforth DDS), 4, docs. 202, 238.

⁴⁷ GP, 12, part I, doc. 3126. See too GP 12, part I, docs. 3124 and 3125.

⁴⁸ DDI, III, 2, docs. 8, 13, 20. In this connection: Pastorelli, "Albania e Tripoli," 395-7; A. Duce, *L'Albania nei rapporti italo-austriaci 1897-1913* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983), 30 *et passim*.

nothing was said about the territorial arrangement in the Balkans in the case of collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Habsburg determination to keep Italy out of discussions on the future of the Balkans relented during the summer of 1897. This was due to various factors: first of all, Russia had reservations as to the creation of an Albanian state and the Austrian annexation of the territories occupied in 1878; that, in turn, rendered the Austro-Russian understanding fragile and ambiguous, and prompted Vienna to seek a partial recognition of its own Balkan designs in Rome. The growing Italian political, economic and cultural penetration of Albania also prodded the Ballplatz to try to curb Rome's initiatives through a bilateral political understanding.⁴⁹

A verbal understanding on Albania was reached on the occasion of Goluchowski's visit to Monza on 6-8 November 1897, during his talks with Umberto I, Rudini and Visconti Venosta. This was put into writing a few years later with an exchange of letters between the two governments between December 1900 and January 1901. The two governments agreed on the need to maintain the *status quo* in Albania and in the event of a change they decided to favor autonomous movements and to cooperate in order to reconcile their respective interests.⁵⁰

It is interesting to note, however, that while Habsburg diplomacy agreed to collaborating with Italy on the Albanian question, it refused to do so with regard to the problems of Macedonia and Serbia. There was an evident desire to maintain a hegemonic role in the region underpinned by viewing the Balkans as the Habsburg monarchy's *Lebensraum*. The Italian attempts to discuss the Eastern Question with Austria and Germany, and to cooperate – for example, that of Visconti Venosta in October 1896⁵¹ – were always met with indifference and rejection.

The Pelloux government (1898-1900), with Felice Canevaro and Emilio Visconti Venosta as successive Foreign Ministers, and the Giuseppe Saracco government (1900-01), with Visconti in the same post, carried on with Rudini's course of foreign policy, i.e. a marked improvement in relations with France and Great Britain and maintenance of the Triple Alliance. This improvement in the country's international standing prepared the ground for the ambitious

⁴⁹ On the Italian penetration of Albania in those years, which gained impetus under the Crispi government: DDI, III, 1, doc. 228; *ibidem*, III, 2, docs. 9, 174, 251; Duce, *L'Albania*; E. Maserati, "L'Albania nella politica estera italiana degli anni 1896-1901," in *Ibid.*, *Momenti della questione adriatica*, 29-67; H. D. Schanderl, *Die Albanienpolitik Österreich-Ungarns und Italien 1877-1908* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 59 *et passim*; Volpe, *Italia moderna*, cit., I, 318 *et passim*, II, 100 *et passim*.

⁵⁰ On the Italo-Austrian negotiations on Albania, Goluchowski's visit to Monza and the first verbal and then written understanding: DDF, I, 13, doc. 353; Pastorelli, "Albania e Tripoli"; Duce, *L'Albania*, 35 *et passim*; E. Serra, "Note sull'intesa Visconti Venosta-Goluchowski per l'Albania," *Clio*, 1971, no. 3, 441-52; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 220-1.

⁵¹ DDI, I, 1, doc. 237, Visconti Venosta to Lanza and Nigra, October 9, 1896; *ibidem*, doc. 248, Lanza to Visconti Venosta, October 16, 1896; GP, 12, part 1, docs. 3065, 3066, 3067, 3070.

attempt of the Giuseppe Zanardelli government⁵² (in office since February 1901), with Giulio Prinetti as Foreign minister,⁵³ to make Italy a leading power in European and Mediterranean politics.

The reason for the formation of the Zanardelli-Prinetti government in 1901 was Victor Emmanuel III's intention to channel Italian politics into a more democratic and reformist direction after the conflicts during the preceding years which had culminated in the assassination of Umberto I. The creation of this executive was motivated also foreign policy reasons. Unlike his father, who favoured close cooperation with Austria and Germany, Victor Emmanuel had ambitions and plans to make Italy a decisive factor in European politics, capable of competing with other Great Powers. The new king showed a great interest in Balkan policy, in which he believed Italy should play an important role and oppose Habsburg and Russian designs for hegemony: his marriage to Jelena of Montenegro had brought him into direct contact with the turbulent reality of the Balkan and Slav nations, to which he would pay close attention throughout his reign, often displaying an excellent grasp of the situation.⁵⁴

The Zanardelli-Prinetti government⁵⁵ intended to conquer new political and economic space in the Balkans and the Mediterranean: to this end, it set out to consolidate relations with Paris and improve relations with Russia, which had been poor since the 1880s due to Italy's participation in the Triple

⁵² Fundamental to understanding of Zanardelli's ideas in the field of international politics is the fine essay by E. Decleva, "Giuseppe Zanardelli: Liberalismo e politica estera," in *Ibid.*, *L'incerto alleato. Ricerche sugli orientamenti internazionali dell'Italia unita* (Milan: Angeli, 1987), 109-44. On Giuseppe Zanardelli and his political thinking: C. Vallauri, *La politica liberale di Giuseppe Zanardelli dal 1876 al 1878* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1967); R. Chiarini, *Giuseppe Zanardelli e la lotta politica nella provincia italiana: il caso di Brescia (1882-1902)* (Milan: Sugarco, 1976); Decleva, *Da Adua*, 131 *et passim*.

⁵³ On this: P. Pastorelli, "Giulio Prinetti ministro degli Esteri (1901-1902)," *Nuova Antologia*, 1996, 2197, 53-70, in particular 55-6.

⁵⁴ No satisfactory and well-documented political biography of Victor Emmanuel III has been written to date; we will confine ourselves here to mentioning: G. Volpe, "Principio di un regno," in *Ibid.*, *Scritti su Casa Savoia* (Rome, Volpe, 1983), 155-81; S. Bertoldi, *Vittorio Emanuele III* (Turin: UTET, 1989), 77 *et passim*; D. Mack Smith, *Italy and its Monarchy* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1989); DDS, 4, docs. 345, 434. On the son of Umberto I's positions in international policy: *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914* (London: HMSO, 1927); (henceforth BD), 1, docs. 286, 366; DDI, III, 7, doc. 11; Serra, *Barrère*; Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund*, 431 *et passim*. On the young king's interest in the Adriatic and the Balkans: GP, 18, doc. 5775; DDF, I, 16, doc. 374; B. Von Bülow, *Memoirs of Prince von Bülow* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1931-32).

⁵⁵ On Prinetti as foreign minister see: Decleva, *Da Adua*, 145 *et passim*; Pastorelli, "Giulio Prinetti"; Semper, "Prinetti e l'Austria-Ungheria," *Nuova Antologia*, 1909, 900, 577 *et passim*; E. Serra, *L'intesa mediterranea del 1902. Una fase risolutiva nei rapporti italo-inglesi* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1957); F. Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della guerra. La politica estera di Tommaso Tittoni* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1934-41), I, 77-195; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*; Albertini, *Le origini della guerra*, I; *Ibid.*, *Venti anni di vita politica* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1950), I, vol. 1; M. Behnen, *Rüstung-Bündnis-Sicherheit. Dreibund und informeller Imperialismus 1900-1908* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985), 19 *et passim*.

Alliance. At the same time, however, Prinetti and Zanardelli wanted to preserve the Triple Alliance and conform it to their own aims without sacrificing Italian interests to those of their allies. Hence Prinetti's policy was not opposed to the Triple Alliance: he wanted to turn it into a more flexible instrument that would be more advantageous to Italy.⁵⁶

The Foreign Minister no doubt achieved a major diplomatic successes in his relations with Great Britain and France. Exploiting Franco-British rivalry, Prinetti was able to obtain from London a formal recognition of the Italian right to take possession of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica on 11 March 1902.⁵⁷ The Lombardian politician also showed great skill in his dealings with France. Taking advantage of French ignorance of the exact text of the Triple Alliance, with the Prinetti-Barrère exchange of notes (concluded in June 1902), he won major concessions in return for an Italian commitment to remain neutral in the event of a Franco-German war provoked by Berlin, a promise perfectly compatible with the Triple Alliance obligations – France's green light for conquering Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and promise to remain neutral in the event of an Italo-Habsburg war. As Pietro Pastorelli has observed, with the Prinetti-Barrère accord, "Italy acquired the security of having a neutral France at her back and not a possible enemy" if the Triple Alliance fell apart.⁵⁸

The results achieved by the Zanardelli-Prinetti government in their relations with the Triple Alliance partners and Russia were much less satisfactory. The pursuit of greater influence in the Balkans quickly led to a marked deterioration in the relations between Rome and Vienna. Vienna was concerned about Zanardelli's rise to power and the uninhibited and straightforward style of the new Foreign Minister, unlike that of the cautious and prudent Visconti Venosta. Various problems emerged in the relations between the two states over the following months. Some of them were long-standing. For instance, the fact that King Umberto's visit to Vienna in 1881 had not yet been returned by Francis Joseph, who refused to go to Rome out of respect for the Holy See,⁵⁹ remained a grave affront to Italian pride. In the Balkans, the consolidation of Italian influence in Montenegro and Ottoman-ruled Albania alarmed Vienna.⁶⁰ The dissension between Italy and Austria was also aggravated by the fact that the former demanded to be recognized by the Habsburg government as a primary interlocutor in Balkan policy, on a par with Russia.⁶¹ But, as has already been pointed out, Habsburg diplomacy refused any recognition of Italy as a Balkan Great Power equal to Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Austro-Hungarian

⁵⁶ On this: Decleva, *Da Adua*, 173 *et passim*; *Ibid.*, *Zanardelli*, 130-5.

⁵⁷ BD, 1, docs., 352, 355, 356, 359, 360, 361; Serra, *L'intesa mediterranea*.

⁵⁸ Pastorelli, "Giulio Prinetti," *cit.*, 69.

⁵⁹ Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia*, I, 173-4; DDI, III, 7, doc. 8.

⁶⁰ On the Italian penetration into Albania and Montenegro: DDF, II, 1, docs. 4, 365; *ibidem*, II, 2, doc. 201; *ibidem*, II, 3, doc. 62.

⁶¹ DDI, III, 5, doc. 751, Prinetti to Nigra, August 31, 1901.

ruling class was also perturbed by the strong resurgence of anti-Austrian irredentism in Italy. Italian public opinion, and Liberal political establishment in particular, was sensitive to the fate of Italians in Austria and ethnic conflicts in Tyrol, Venezia-Giulia and Dalmatia. At the turn of the twentieth century, even population traditionally loyal to the Habsburgs, such as the Italians of Trentino and Gorizia, was dissatisfied with the policy of the Austrian government which failed to protect their national rights. This discontent was so widespread that the defense of Italian national rights, traditionally a concern of Liberals alone, became a central theme of “non-national” groups like the Italian People’s parties of Trentino and Gorizia or certain socialists.⁶²

In 1902, the renewal of the Italo-Habsburg commercial treaty of 1891,⁶³ the negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance and Victor Emmanuel III’s visit to Russia caused a grave crisis in the relations between Rome and Vienna.

From the end of 1901 to the summer of 1902 feverish diplomatic negotiations were conducted for the renewal of the Italo-Austrian and Italo-German trade agreements and the Triple Alliance.⁶⁴ Prinetti wanted to renew the Triple Alliance, but not for use against the French. He saw it rather as a way of protecting Italian economic interests and, above all, a means of wielding influence in the Balkans and securing a diplomatic solution to the Italian national question.

It was not surprising then that – apart from commercial matters and the Libyan question – the requests for modification of the treaty of the Triple Alliance presented by Prinetti largely concerned Articles VI and VII relating

⁶² On political life in Trentino and South Tyrol and the attitude of the Liberal, Socialist and People’s parties to the national question in these years, the writings of Umberto Corsini remain fundamental. We refer the reader to: U. Corsini, *Problemi di un territorio di confine. Trentino e Alto Adige dalla sovranità austriaca all'accordo Degasperi-Gruber* (Trent: Comune di Trento, 1994); *Ibid.*, *Il colloquio Degasperi-Sonnino. I cattolici trentini e la questione nazionale* (Trent: Monauni, 1975), in particular 117 *et passim*; *Ibid.*, “Problemi politico-amministrativi del Trentino nel nesso provinciale tirolese, 1815-1918,” in F. Valsecchi, A. Wandruszka eds., *Austria e province italiane 1815-1918. Potere centrale e amministrazioni locali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981), 213-57. See too: A. Canavero, A. Moioli eds., *De Gasperi e il Trentino tra la fine dell’800 e il primo dopoguerra* (Trent: Reverdito, 1985); M. Garbari, *Vittorio de Riccabona (1844-1927). Problemi e aspetti del liberalismo trentino* (Trent, Società di Studi trentini di Scienze storiche, 1972); *Ibid.*, “L’irredentismo nel Trentino,” in R. Lill, F. Valsecchi eds., *Il nazionalismo in Italia e in Germania fino alla prima guerra mondiale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983), 307-46; R. Schober, “Il Trentino durante il periodo di unione al Tirolo,” *Austria e province italiane*, 177-212; S. Benvenuti, *I principi vescovi di Trento fra Roma e Vienna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), 273 *et passim*. On Venezia-Giulia in the first decade of the 20th century: M. Cattaruzza, *Socialismo adriatico. La socialdemocrazia di lingua italiana nei territori costieri della Monarchia asburgica: 1888-1915* (Manduria: Lacaita, 2001); E. Maserati, *Il movimento operaio a Trieste dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1973); A. Millo, *L’élite del potere a Trieste. Una biografia collettiva 1891-1938* (Milan: Angeli, 1989).

⁶³ DDF, II, 1, doc. 294; *Ibid.*, II, 2, doc. 535.

⁶⁴ These events have been detailed by numerous historians, including: Tommasini, *L’Italia alla vigilia*, I; Pribram, *The secret treaties of Austria-Hungary*; Fellner, “Der Dreibund”, 51 *et passim*; Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*.

to the Balkans and Italy's territorial compensation. In February 1902, he proposed a new draft of Articles VI and VII.⁶⁵ On one hand, he asked his two Allies to commit themselves to opposing any attempt by "any third Great Power" to alter the *status quo* in the Balkans and, in particular, of the territories still under Ottoman rule, to detriment of any member of the Triple Alliance. On the other, Prinetti re-wrote Article VII on compensation to the effect that Austria-Hungary and Italy should undertake "to apply their efforts to ensure that any modifications of the *status quo* are made in the direction of autonomy"; however, if the two powers "saw the need to modify the *status quo* in these regions," the occupation of Balkan territories would only take place after an agreement between Italy and Austria-Hungary was reached on the basis of mutual compensation for any territorial or other advantage.⁶⁶

The Austrians and Germans were unanimous in rejecting Prinetti's proposals. Germany was opposed to extending its political commitments to the Balkans,⁶⁷ Austria-Hungary was unwilling to accept new constraints and reluctant to extend its cooperation with Italy to the entire Balkan region. Prinetti dropped his requests for modification of Articles VI and VII and asked for a simple promise of an Italo-Austrian agreement on Macedonia, similar to that on Albania.⁶⁸ Goluchowski refused to make any separate agreement with Italy advancing a rather specious argument that the Macedonian question, unlike the Albanian one, formed part "of the great Eastern Question, regulated by international treaties comprising not just Italian and Austro-Hungarian, but also European, interests".⁶⁹

The outcome of the negotiations was not very positive for the Italian government, forced to accept the lapse of the commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary and the renewal of the Triple Alliance treaty without any changes (30 June 1902); the only consolation for Prinetti was the Habsburg renunciation of Tripolitania, a further step in the diplomatic preparation for the Italian conquest of that African region.

Far from yielding good results, Prinetti's negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance aggravated the relations between the the Triple Alliance members. Italo-Austrian relations continued to deteriorate even after Prinetti's retirement from the office following a stroke he suffered in January 1903 - Admiral Enrico Costantino Morin replaced him, first *pro tempore* and then permanently.⁷⁰ The difficulties connected with the opening of an Italian university in Austria-Hungary made no small contribution to the anti-Austrian

⁶⁵ DDI, III, 6, *Nuovo testo per gli articoli VI e VII*, enclosed with Prinetti to Lanza, February 26, 1902, doc. 182; GP, 18, part 2, doc. 5729.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ GP, 18, part 2, doc. 5731, Bülow to Wedel, March 9, 1902.

⁶⁸ DDI, III, 6, doc. 329, Prinetti to Nigra, April 7, 1902.

⁶⁹ DDI, III, 6, doc. 379, Nigra to Prinetti, April 15, 1902. See too *ibidem*, docs. 389, 425.

⁷⁰ DDF, II, 3, docs. 57, 115; Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia*, I, 194-7.

shift in Italian public opinion.⁷¹ The abortive attempts to set up a department of Italian law at the Innsbruck University and the consequent anti-Italian reactions among Tyrolean Germans triggered off anti-Habsburg and irredentist demonstrations in Italy in May 1903 on the scale that had not been seen for many decades;⁷² Anti-Austrian irredentism was again widespread and popular among Italian students and intellectuals, which made the relations between Rome and Vienna a very delicate matter. In Austria-Hungary, these events aroused great irritation⁷³ despite Morin's attempts to play them down.⁷⁴ The reaction of the Austrian government was twofold. On one hand, it endeavoured to consolidate diplomatic relations with Russia, working closely with her in the Balkans and preparing two plans for reforms in the Ottoman-ruled Macedonia in 1903 (the February Memorandum and the Mürzsteg Pact) with the purpose of excluding Italy, securing Austro-Russian supremacy over the Ottoman territories in question,⁷⁵ and ensuring Russian friendship in the event of war against Italy. On the other, Vienna decided to build up its military forces on the Italo-Austrian border and prepare herself for armed conflict.⁷⁶ Austrian rearmament was duly noted in Italy⁷⁷ and increased political tensions which further weakened the Zanardelli government. Under barrage of accusations and seriously ill, Zanardelli handed in his resignation on 21 October 1903.

⁷¹ On this A. Ara, "La questione dell'università italiana in Austria," in *Ibid.*, *Ricerche sugli austro-italiani e l'ultima Austria* (Rome: Elia, 1974), 9 *et passim*.

⁷² DDI, III, 7, docs. 493, 495, 498, 507, 511, 515, 519, 520, 554; DDF, II, 3, docs. 266, 270; Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia*, cit., I, 204 *et passim*.

⁷³ GP, 18, part 2, doc. 5779.

⁷⁴ GP, 18, part 2, doc. 5777.

⁷⁵ On this: DDI, III, 7, docs. 360, 362, 363, 366, 387, 389, 391; DDF, II, 3, docs. 87, 89, 103; GP, 18, part 1, docs. 5507, 5508, 5514, 5522, 5539, 5612, 5621, 5626; Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia*, I, 211 *et passim*; Bridge, *From Sadowa*, 257 *et passim*.

⁷⁶ Bridge, *From Sadowa*, 257 *et passim*.

⁷⁷ DDI, III, 7, doc. 328, Baccelli to Nigra, February 2, 1903.

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THE SERBIAN QUESTION IN ITALY'S BALKAN POLICY UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Abstract: In the first, Eastern phase of the foreign policy of the modern Italy, which lasts up to 1878, the South Slavs were seen as allies in its national struggle against Austria. Among the South Slavs, the Serbs and Serbia, due to its geostrategic position and importance for the solution of the Eastern question, were pushed to the forefront in the 1860. Therefore Italy accepts a part of Serbia national programme, the gathering of Serbs and South Slavs inside Turkey inside a national state headed by Serbia. During the second, mediterano-colonial phase, based upon the Triple Alliance, the alliance with the South Slavs is abandoned and the alliances were sought among the North-Albanian Muslim tribes. During the third, Eastern and Tripolitanian phase, after 1896, when Serbia becomes a main strategic obstacle to the German Drang nach Osten, the Serbian question merges with Yugoslav one, and becomes a key element of balance between two blocks, the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance, whose member is Italy.

Keywords: *Italy, Serbia, Austro-Hungary, Russia, Serbian question, Montenegro, albanophilia, balance of power in the Adriatic.*

The projects for the creation of Confederations in the Balkans were mainly due to existence of the real danger that the Ottoman Empire could disintegrate in the 1830s and that, because of the serious internal disturbance in the neighbouring Austrian Empire, the main beneficiary of such break-up would be Russia, on account of her influence with the South Slavs. These projects were mooted within the framework of the existing balance of power in Europe, and took several forms, the so-called Swiss confederations stretching from the Alps to the Black Sea –, Danubian one with Hungary as a leading force, Bal-

kan with Greece as dominant state and others. Therefore, even those political circles in Italy which sought to facilitate their national liberation from Austria and unification by revolutionary events in the East had to take in account the co-called "Slav problem", the main dilemma of the contemporary European policy, i.e. how to found a solution for the national question of Slavs, - all of whom, with the exception of Russians, had been under foreign rule - without it taking the form of a their union under the aegis of Russia, and thus assuring it's the supremacy in Europe and "descend" on the Mediterranean (the so-called "Cossacks Europe"). According to Count Cavour, the Slav "small streams" had to be prevented from flowing into the large Slav sea of Tsarist Russia stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic. Those Italian circles which sought for allies in their national struggle against Austria among the nations in Europe living under the foreign rule, increasingly counted on the South Slavs. This was the way to tie the Italian affairs to the Eastern question to which the Serbian question was central due to the fact that Serbian people lived both in Turkey and Austria. Among the South Slavs at that time two movements were at the forefront of the national action. The Illyrian movement in Croatia, the majority of whose members were educated in Venice and Lombardy, strove for the unification of South Slavs. The Serbian youth, many of which educated in the West, was imbued with the spirit of national unity of the Serbs from both Empires and their firm spiritual connection with other South Slavs in Austria. Both factions saw in Italy a natural ally for the application of the nationality principle to the Balkan peninsula. The leading Serbian circles, - consisting of a limited political and social stratum in Serbia, and even more so in Montenegro, but also including a wider circle of Hungarian Serbs- , hoped that a European crisis triggered by the Italian question might bring about the accomplishment of at least some of their national goals which they, therefore try to link in some way with Italy's interests.

Since foreign policy of Italy underwent different phases prior to the First World War depending on whether the interests of national liberation or some other state interests were prevalent at the time, the views of Italian leading circles on the Eastern and Serbian question changed accordingly. This paper will provide a brief overview of these main political concepts, underpinning motives and circumstances which conditioned them insofar they were directly concerned with the Serbian people's struggle for national liberation. The key period in this context was 1878-1881 and the turn of the 20th century.

I

The Italians had mixed feelings for the South Slavs which then were called the Illyrians.¹ The Croats were rather hated because of the large number of Croa-

¹ At that time, the South Slavs were considered to be direct descendent of the ancient Illyrians, the tribe which had inhabited the western part of the Balkan peninsula before the settling of the

tian regiments in the Austrian occupation forces, who were held responsible for the horrors of the Austrian military regime in Northern Italy. Politicians were mistrustful of Montenegrins and the South Slavs under Ottoman rule who were, being Orthodox Christians, susceptible to Russia's influence. Therefore, since the formation of the two Serbian states, Serbia and Montenegro, in mid-1830s, the Italian politicians have mixed feeling towards them. The dilemma had to do, the on one hand, with the importance of the Serbian people as potential ally in Italy's national struggle against Austria in view of its geopolitical position, but on the other, it had to take in account the final objective of Serbian national movement – a unified and independent Serbian national state to be created by gathering of the Serbs and other South Slavs around Serbia as its core. This dilemma changed its intensity in the course of time but remained a permanent feature of all Italian political forces.

Among motley and often very faint views of Italian politicians and publicists on the rearrangement of Southeast Europe two approaches crystallised before the 1848-49 revolution, only to take a definite shape after 1856 when the Kingdom of Sardinia became one of the guaranteeing powers of the Ottoman Empire's integrity.²

Slavs. Their name, however, survived in the western Balkans. The leaders of national movement in Croatia called themselves Illyrians, and the whole movement, which propagated a union between the South Slavs was named Illyrian. There were several terms in political-diplomatic vocabulary: Serbian, South Slav, Serbian-South Slav and Serbian-Yugoslav; with the strengthening of national movements in the Balkans, the name Yugoslavs and Yugoslav movement prevailed, at first for the western South Slavs in Austria, and since 1860s the name Serbo-Yugoslav became common for the entire South Slav population, with the exception of Bulgarians, and an eventual future South Slav state was referred to as Yugoslavia.

² Archivio storico – diplomatico. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma. (hereinafter ASDMAE) Turchia, Registri copialettere, 1226 e 1227; Turchia, Rapporti Constantinopoli, 1446 e 1447; Rapporti Belgrado, 863 e 864; Serbia, 1409 e 1410; Belgrado, Reg. copialettere, 268; Romania e Serbia, Reg. copialettere, 1201, Consolato Serajevo, 507; I documenti diplomatici Italiani. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma. Serie I; serie II, vol. I-V. (hereinafter DDI); Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, S. Burzanović, *Montenegro nella politica d'Italia. Documenti I, 1861-1875* (Podgorica: Istorijски institut Crne Gore, 2011).

A. Anzilotti, *Italiani e Jugoslavi nel Risorgimento* (Roma: La voce, 1920). C. Balbo, *Dalle speranze d'Italia* (Milano: C. Signorelli, 1932), M. Walter, "Le avventure balcaniche di Marc' Antonio Cannini nel 1862". in *Studi storici in onore di G. Volpe*, II (Roma: G. Volpe, 1978), 628-643; A. Tamborra, *Imbro I. Tkalac e l'Italia* (Roma: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1966), 68-78, 98-105, 108-115; Idem., *Cavour e i Balcani* (Torino: ILTE, 1958), 11-67, 345-376; G. Pierazzi, "Mazzini e gli Slavi dell' Austria e della Turchia", in *Atti del XLVI Congresso di storia del Risorgimento italiano* (Città di Castello: Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, 1974); D. Djordjević, "The Influence of the Italian Risorgimento on Serbian Policy during the 1908-1909. Annexation Crisis", *Balkanica* 3, (Beograd 1972), 334-337; N. Stipčević, "Marko Antonio Kanini i Srbija", *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* (hereinafter JIČ), 3-4, 1976, 129-158. G. Renato, "Venecija i Jadransko pitanje 1848-1849". JIČ, 1-2, 1977, 75-89; Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "I rapporti tra l'Italia e la Serbia negli anni sessanta del XIX secolo", *Archivio storico italiano*, 1979, CXXXVII, 581-598; Idem., *Politika Italije prema Srbiji do 1870. godine* (Belgrade, Istorijски institut, 1979); Idem., "Les relations entre l'Italie et le Monténégro jusqu'en 1881" in, M. Isailović, *Le Monténégro dans les relations internationales* (Titograd: Institut d'histoire de la République socialiste de Monténégro, 1984), 167-192.

The comprehensive application of the nationality principle to the Balkans affecting both Turkey and Austria. The main advocate of this kind of approach to the Balkans, which concerned the Serbs and other South Slavs and also changed and matured over the years, was the ideologue and leader of the left revolutionary-democratic wing of the Italian national movement (Partito d'Azione italiano), Giuseppe Mazzini. He was among the first in Europe and definitely the first among the Italians, to declare himself in favour of this approach that was a part of the then prevalent theory of bourgeois – revolutionary democracy which should have been realised by the subjugated European nations. In the case of Balkans, the revolution of subjugated nations was supposed to destroy both the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires, in order to create a Confederation which in itself would represent an obstacle both to the expansion of absolutistic Russia as well as to the feudal restoration in those nations where it still existed, such as Hungary and Poland. That was also the way to achieve a thorough democratisation of political life in Italy which would be unified on republican basis. Through his epistles Mazzini was the first in Europe to reject, even prior to the 1848-49 revolution, any pan-Slav or Austro-Slav solution as well as the historical claim of Hungary above all, but also of Greece and Italy, on the territories inhabited by other nations. The just aspirations of the Serbs and other South Slavs to constitute their own national states on the ruins of European part of Turkey and Austria were advocated before Italian and European public opinion. As early as 1857, the right of the Serbs to create a federation consisting of Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia and Bulgaria was recognised. They were looked upon as brethren and allies in the struggle for nationality principle; a number of Italian volunteers spontaneously joined the Balkan insurgents, Serbian ones in Herzegovina in particular.

Bringing Austria, a non-Balkan power, in the Balkans. This concept adapted the inclination of liberal Europe to preserve Austria as an element of balance of power counterweighing Russia to Italy's requirements. Through the so-called "orientalisation" and "balkanisation" of Austria i.e. her expansion at the expense of the Christian lands under Turkish rule – Danubian Principalities, Bosnia, Herzegovina and others – Italy would free herself from Austrian supremacy and constitute itself within her Alpine borders. Therefore, moderate liberals and monarchists led by the Savoy dynasty would strengthen their position in the Italian movement. Austria would be preserved as an Austro-Slav state and together with the also preserved Turkey remained an important element of the extant European balance of power; German pressure on Italy from the north would be channelled towards Southeast Europe. This concept, which was a brainchild of the Sardinian historian, publicist and public figure, Casare Balbo, was embraced by the conservative and moderate liberal wing of the Italian movement, the so-called "historical right wing" with Count Cavour, his followers and the dynasty. With the dominance of right wing in Italy's

political life, *the idea about leaving Bosnia – Herzegovina to Austria in return for the Italian regions* revived in Italian diplomacy and public in every major European crisis. After the national unification in 1870 it became an axiom of both the right and the left political parties that Italy would have to receive “compensation” if Austria were to expand in the Balkans; it carried on in the twentieth century as it found its expression in Article 7 of the Triple Alliance agreement.

The oscillations of Count Cavour's Balkan policy in terms of Serbia and her future were placed within this frame of mind. He conceived Serbia as part of a Danubian confederation, nationally divided and under Hungarian domination, or merged with Austria, according to Balbo's ideas, in order to facilitate the unification of Italy. The alternative being Serbia as a national centre around which the South Slavs would gather under Turkish rule. The first two solutions ran contrary to united and independent Serbian state on the basis of nationality principle. The third solution meant an alliance with Serbia against Austria entailing all the consequences which were feared at the time – that Russian influence would be established in the neighbouring peninsula all the way to the Adriatic, through the agency of a Serbo-South Slav state. Although Count Cavour was the first Italian statesman who expressed the latter thought in respect of Serbia, for him the main potential ally of Italy among the nations in the East and the main future bulwark against Russia's drive south-westwards would remain Hungary nevertheless. Serbia would still be consigned to the role of an intermediary between the Hungarians and the Serbs and Croats in Hungary, and serve as a base for transit of arms in case of a new anti-Austrian movement in Hungary.

As part of the “big plan” of Victor Emanuel (1861-1862) and in agreement with Garibaldi's right wing of the Action Party, a new compromise combination of Marc Antonio Cannini emerged which envisaged the splitting of the Balkans and Danube region in two: a Danubian confederation led by Hungary in the north and another confederation in the south led by Greece. Besides a revolutionary break-up of Turkey and Austria, the unconcealed goal was to prevent the national constitution of Serbs and other South Slavs by using the historical right of Hungary and Greece; liberated from Turkey and Austria, but also divided and under domination of non-Slav nations, they could not serve as Russia's tool. Dalmatia and other parts of the old Venetian Republic (Republica di San Marco) in which the Italian minority was mixed with the South Slav majority would be preserved for the future unified Italy.

Serbo-South Slav state within Austria or independent. Besides divided opinions as to partial or radical solution of the Eastern and Serbian question at the expense of European domains of Turkey, there was also a dilemma about whether Austria should be dismembered or preserved as Great Power. That divergence of views had two components: the question of borders between the future Italy

and Yugoslavia (Slavia del Sud) in the north and northeast and strong feelings for and pretensions to the “historical legacy” of Venice (Trieste, Trentino, Istria, Dalmatia) and the choice between German pressure from the north and Slav pressure from the east. Since 1862 the dilemma was entertained, and after the war against Austria in 1866 openly professed: what was more dangerous for Italy - an independent Serbo-South Slav state or that within the framework of Austria? Some people considered that the expansion of the Habsburg Empire at the expense of Turkey and its transformation in an Austro-Slav Empire would render easier the unification of Italy up to the Soča river and Tyrol and at the same time preserve a buffer zone between Italy and the Germandom in the north. “Alas, we will be in a difficult situation if two feet from the barrier that is the little Soča river we see the raised flag of the young Serbia in the Julian Alps,” wrote not a moderate liberal but a revolutionary democrat as early as 1862.³ Others believed, on the contrary, that an Austro-South Slav Empire in which the Slav element would be increased and become equal to the German and Hungarian element, with Vienna as its capital, and the vast material and military potential of Germany behind it, would involve the entire Austro-South Slav area in the economic penetration of the Germandom southwards. Italy's economic drive towards the Danube basin and further towards Southern Russia would be cut off, and the borders with Austria, which included the future Yugoslavia within, would remain permanent. By creating a South Slav state around the nucleus of Serbia as an antithesis of Austro-Slavism this pressure would be relieved. Italy would be able to take her part in economic streaming towards the Danube; there would be a prospect that the pretensions on Trieste, the Julian region and western, or perhaps the whole of, Istria be materialised if dealing with the weaker Slav opponent – with the eventual relinquishment of Dalmatia. In these combinations, there was a clear realisation that the Yugoslavs, cornered between Austrian centralism and Germanisation and the hegemonic exclusiveness of the Hungarian national movement, would be forced to turn to Russia.

Serbia as a South Slav Piedmont led by Prince Michael (Mihailo) within the boundaries of Turkey. This concept quickly matured following the failure of plans for Danubian confederation (1862-1863).⁴ It became an official political postulate after the conclusion of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867

³ A. Anzilotti, *Italiani e Jugoslavi*, 113.

⁴ Following the collapse of the 1848-49 revolution Hungarian emigration accepted the plan for the gathering of Danube-Balkan nations in a confederation led by Hungary as the political programme of its struggle against Austria. This plan was seen as the only possibility to prevent another intervention by Russia; also, it was the way to overcome national antagonisms between the Hungarians and the neighbouring subjugated nations while preserving the historical right of Hungary – the old political framework in which the Hungarians had a dominant position. Due to the strengthening of national consciousness among the Danube-Balkan nations, the plan underwent changes, but any new formula preserved the above-mentioned historical-legal

under direct influence of two factors – the need to preserve the extant balance of power in Europe after 1866 until internal difficulties in Italy had not been overcome and the increasingly apparent pretensions of Austria and Russia towards the Balkans during the crisis there in 1866-67. This concept took its shape through consular reports from Belgrade and Sarajevo and the lively activities of two pro-Yugoslav persons, Imbro Tkalac, Croatian publicist, and Medo Pucić, a writer from Dubrovnik, who had connections with certain officials from the Italian Foreign Ministry. In their screeds they bestowed the role of a unifier of South Slavs on Serbia. The instructions sent to Legations in Constantinople, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sarajevo thoroughly discussed and developed the idea that a strong Serbian Kingdom or some other aspirations and interests of South Slavs under Turkish rule would constitute a serious hindrance to attempts at assimilation which would benefit Russia; that there was still ample time to guide the South Slav national movement in such manner so that it did not contravene the interests of the West; that for that reason it was very important for Western Powers to support the government of Prince Michael to grow into sufficiently strong point of attraction which could neutralise the aspirations of pro-Russian fraction: “Policy of South Slavs should be inspired by the memory of the Serbian Empire”. And also: “As long as Serbia stays the point of attraction in the South Slav movement, it does not seem that Italy could be induced because of her own interest to oppose those turns of events which would consequently bring about the victory of national independence.”⁵ As can be seen, the Italian government, which was too weak to oppose actions of Russia and the rearranged Austro-Hungary on their own, accepted in principle and officially Serbia as Piedmont of the South Slavs under Turkish rule and especially tactics of the moderates and the strict control over the so-called activist faction. In fact, the radical solution of the Eastern question was being postponed. Both Austria and Turkey were preserved as elements of the balance of power, and the formation of South Slav state and the delineation of her borders with Italy were delayed. This line of policy was, however, abandoned as early as 1868 when Prince Michael was assassinated. In view of the Rome government, with the new under-aged Serbian Prince and the pro-Hungarian orientation of the new regime in Serbia and Croat politicians, the territorially expanded Serbia, even under Turkish sovereignty, would contribute to solution of the Eastern question favourable to Austro-Hungary. Rome was not willing to facilitate such solution, although the fact that the new regime in Serbia did not tie itself to Russia did cause satisfaction.⁶

framework. Count Cavour later formed an organisational centre of Hungarian emigration in Sardinia and then in Italy.

⁵ ASDMAE, Turchia, Registri copialettere, pacc. 1226, annesso No. 8, Firenze a Bucharest e a Belgrado 10.VI 1867; *ibid.*, No. 4, Firenze a Serajevo 18. XI 1867. No di Reg. 205.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pacc. 1227, Firenze a Serajevo 12. VII 1867, No 9, No. di Reg. 60 ; Firenze a Serajevo 22.IX 1868, No 1, No di Reg. 103.

For all these reasons, Italy's policy towards the Serbian question until 1878 was reluctant and half-hearted. The strengthening of the internal autonomy in Serbia, the preservation of the *de facto* independence of Montenegro and the introduction of reforms in the insurgent Serbian lands in the Ottoman Empire were supported diplomatically. In doing so, the Kingdom of Sardinia, and then the unified Italy until she had been internationally recognised, were involved in the Eastern question and consolidated their position as one of the guarantee powers of the Ottoman Empire. The final solution of national question for the Serbs and other Balkan nations was not wanted at all. Their movement was welcome only insofar it facilitated a favourable diplomatic situation for Italy by bringing pressure to bear on Austria. The Eastern question was thus just means to achieve easier and sooner the unification of Italy and not a political goal in itself. Nevertheless, the wish to considerably improve the conditions in which the Balkan Christians lived in Turkey, to ensure or broaden their autonomy if it already existed, and provide for their national affirmation so that they did not have to seek for protection in Russia and further weaken Turkey with their resistance, however justified, was general and genuine even among Italian conservative political circles.⁷

It should be noted that even such half-hearted policy of Yugoslavia towards the Serbian question made Serbia's moral standing and her attraction for the subjugated neighbouring nations grow. Italian Consuls in Belgrade were the first to refer to her as South Slav Piedmont (1861) and bring that expression in European diplomatic and political vocabulary.⁸ This policy encouraged the leading personalities of Serbia, Montenegro and Serbian movement in general to persist in their aspirations for national liberation; both the conservatives in power and the democratic opposition tried to follow the example of Italy in terms of tactics and methods. Emulating Mazzini's "Young Italy", the Serbian liberals founded "The Unified Serbian Youth" (*Ujedinjena omladina srbska*, 1866-1872). In the twentieth century, the Italian Risorgimento served as a model for the "Young Bosnia" and the revolutionary military organisation "Unification or Death" (*Ujedinjenje ili smrt*, with its newspaper "Piedmont") in Serbia. Both the official moderate liberals and the unofficial revolutionary democrats in Italy appraised their own and European public of the aims of the Serbian national movement, presenting it as being in the interest of democratic Europe and stressing that there was a rising tide among the South Slavs in the Balkans which was not willing to blindly follow Russia.

II

During the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878, both the moderate liberals and the revolutionary democrats, "historical right wing" and "historical left wing",

⁷ DDI, serie I, vol. II, doc. 476, 490-497.

⁸ ASDMAE, Rapporti Belgrado, pacc. 863, Belgrado 9.XII 1861, rapp. No 9.

which took turns in office during that time, were inclined to *link the question of the Italian lands within Austro-Hungary with the Serbian question*.⁹

The events caused by the Serbian insurrections in Herzegovina and Bosnia in the summer of 1875, and particularly the prospects that Austria-Hungary would expand at the expense of the insurgent regions, made great impression in Italy and stir the public, especially the leftist opposition. Sincere sympathy with the sufferings of the South Slavs in Turkey and the wish that they be finally liberated revived the solidarity with Serbian people from the time of Risorgimento, Mazzini and Garibaldi and aroused the traditional hatred against Austria as common "centuries-lasting enemy". The old conviction that, if Austria expanded in the Balkans, the Italian lands which had remained under her rule after 1866 would be ceded to Italy was widespread again. A wave of euphoria for the application of the nationality principle to Serbs and other South Slavs in Turkey but also for the completion of Italy's own unification got hold of the entire country.

In a wide range of political views, a few concepts were crystallised:

a) *Status quo for Turkey's territorial integrity with reforms in the insurgent areas*. Relevant political circles, mostly right-wing but also those belonging to the moderate left-wing, considered that the nationality principle in the Balkans was connected to the compensations that Italy was due to receive for the sake of political and strategic balance with the neighbouring Great Power. However, both the rightists and moderate leftists – the latter upon their coming to office in March 1876 – were constrained by Italy's isolation in foreign policy, eruptive internal situation and the realisation that peaceful "rectification" of the Austri-

⁹ Archives diplomatiques du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Paris, Correspondance politique, Italie (ADMAE); Staatsarchiv (SA), Wien, Politisches Archiv (PA); *Documenti diplomatici concernenti gli Affari d' Oriente presentati dal ministro degli Affari Esteri (Melegari) nella tornata del. 3.III 1877*, No XII. Roma; *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, Serie II, vol. VI-X.

Un Italiano (F. Chabod), *La politica estera italiana 1875-1916* (Bitonto: Nicola Garofalo, 1916), chapter III; G. Bordano Brabanti, *Serbia. Ricordi e studi slavi* (Bologna: Societa editrice delle Pagine sparse, 1877); A. Tamborra, *Garibaldi e l' Europa* (Salerno: Jovane, 1961), 67-71; M. Deambrosis, *La partecipazione dei Garibaldini e degli internazionalisti italiani all'insurrezione di Bosnia ed Erzegovina del 1875-1876 e alla guerra di Serbia* (Vicenza: Comitato provinciale dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento, 1978), 33-82; Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell' Italia moderna*. VI, 1871-1896 (Milano: Feltrinelli 1974a), 101-142; Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Italija u velikoj istočnoj krizi 1875-1878", *Balkanica*, VI, 1975, 147-166; Idem., "Italija i srpsko-turski ratovi, *Istorijski časopis* (IČ), XXXII, 1986, 153-186; Idem., "Francuska i Italija i drugi srpsko-turski rat 1877-1878", in V. Stojančević, *Drugi srpsko-turski rat i oslobodjenje jugoistočne Srbije* (Belgrade: SANU, Odeljenje istorijskih nauka, 2001), v. 28, 43-56; P. Baldelli, "La politica estera della Sinistra: il banco di prova della questione d'Oriente 1876-1878", *Storia e politica*, XX, I, 1881, 90-135; D. Šepić, "Talijanski iredentizam i istočna kriza 1875-1876", in Naučni skup povodom 100-godišnjice ustanaka u Bosni i Hercegovini, drugim balkanskim zemljama i istočnoj krizi 1875-1878. godine (Sarajevo 1977), 211-214; Nikša Stipčević, *Dva preporoda: studije o italijansko-srpskim kulturnim i političkim vezama u XIX veku* (Belgrade: Prosveta 1979); Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Italijanski dobrovoljci u Hercegovini, Crnoj Gori i Srbiji 1875-1878", in P. Kačavenda, N. Popović, M. Manić eds., *Dobrovoljci u oslobodilačkim ratovima Srba i Crnogoraca. Zbornik radova* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1996), 27-43.

an border was not realistic. This time Austria's expansion to the East was thus not wanted; on the contrary, the way was sought to prevent it. Therefore, the efforts of the Tree Emperor's League to improve living conditions of the rebellious population (*status quo améioré*) but preserve Turkey's territorial integrity were energetically supported. As far as autonomy of Bosnia – Herzegovina was concerned, i.e. the creation of a new state of the Serbian people at the southern borders of Austria, both Italian governments, the rightist and the moderate leftist, were in agreement with the energetic resistance of the Austria-Hungary. A solid Serbo-South Slav state, with Russia behind it, as it was believed, on the right coast of the Adriatic, just across Italy, was dimly viewed – the same was true of giving a port to Herzegovina or Montenegro. "Such a state would be a wasp's nest from which elements of disturbance and disorder would constantly emerge," claimed Luigi Amedeo Melegari, the Foreign Minister.¹⁰

This policy was motivated, apart from the above-mentioned circumstances, by the fact that after the absorption of Rome in 1870 there was no need to pursue an active foreign policy and revolutionary alliance with the oppressed nations. Besides, the main protagonists on the left wing took different views on the Eastern question. Depretis, the Foreign Minister in a moderate left wing cabinet, as well as his predecessor Melegari, a moderate liberal with rightist tendencies, thought that the division of Turkish spoils came to pass too early for Italy as she did not have the necessary space for manoeuvring to benefit from it. The old revolutionary, Count Cairoli believed, on the contrary, that that division of spoils should have never taken place.¹¹

Concurrent solution of the Serbo-South Slav and the Italian question was advocated by the extreme left wing and Count Cairoli. The old soldier of Risorgimento, loyal to his ideological principle which had been the foundation of Italy's liberation and unification, was consistently in favour of solidarity and brotherhood with all nations on the way to their national liberation and opposed to a policy of compensations. The approach of the "extreme left wing", which was already socialist, was to wrest the Serbian movement out of the political orbit of the Russian Orthodoxy, and to definitely solve both the Serbo-South Slav and the Italian question in a wide European context with the aid of Italy's revolutionary action and materiel and men from abroad. Collecting

¹⁰ SA, Wien, Italien XI, F. 86/1876. Rom den 22.VII 1876, No 37, A – B. „ Un tel fait [un port de l' Adriatique à la Herzégovine ou au Monténégro] qui paraîtrait du premier abord de peu d' importance, dérangerait le commerce des deux états [Italy i Austria-Hungary], et serait un mauvais précédent, nuisible à la tranquillité générale“ (Ibid., Rom den 5.VIII 1876, No 44, A – I). "... tout changement à l' état des choses actuel ne pourrait qu' être contraire à l' Italie, aussi bien une annexion de telle ou telle province à l' Autriche-Hongrie, qu' un agrandissement de la Serbie. Il en serait de meme de l' asquisition d' un port par le Monténégro – en réalité ce port serait à la disposition d' une Puissance que l' Italie n' a pas d' intérêt à voir se rapprocher d' elle... (ADMAE, Correspondance politique, Italie, vol. 46. Rome le 27. VIII 1876, No 82).

¹¹ P. Baldelli, "La politica estera della Sinistra", f. I, 98, 101.

of money, food, equipment, arms and volunteers for the Serbian insurgents in Herzegovina as well as Montenegro and Serbia took place during the first two years of the Eastern Crisis and caused a stir in Italian public. However, this attempt of the Italian "extreme" left wing to link the irredentism with the Serbian question languished in the face of European Great Powers' and the Italian government's resistance combined with the insufficient strength of Balkan peoples, and Serbia in particular, to free themselves on their own.

The nationality principle as a supplementary element in the extant Balkan and European balance of power was supposed to come into play if the stalemate at the battlefield brought about new negotiations at the conference table in which the voice of Italy would be heard. The moderate left wing became an interpreter of conservative tendencies upon its coming to office, and the old solutions were somewhat modernised. Suspicion of Russia, which gripped the left wing as much as the right wing, still outweighed the suspicion of Austria. But with compensation for Italy in Trieste and Trentino at least and with the guiding of the South Slavs towards the autonomous status within Turkey, the nationality principle would be met to a certain extent while the integrity of Turkey and Austria-Hungary would be preserved as elements of the European balance of power. In fact, a unified and independent Serbo-South Slav state would not be formed on the other side of the Adriatic. Even though the South Slavs could not be denied the right to a common state, the fear was that if it should be too weak, it would become a sort of Russian client. Or, if it proved to be able to resist the pressure coming from Russia, it might become too strong and thus a threat to Italy. However, since the fall of 1877 [F. Crispi's mission] the expectations that any power would oppose the Austrian occupation of the rebellious provinces, and still less support Italy's pretensions to Trieste and Trentino, became illusory.

The neutral settlement of the Eastern question on the basis of national development and the balance of power between the Balkan nations was the final concept of that part of the left wing headed by Count Cairoli which held office since November 1877. But due to the external isolation of Italy and the internal turmoil which paralysed the government at the time when Europe was in a commotion after the fall of Adrianople there was no concrete plan of action. At the Berlin Congress, Montenegro's outlet to sea in the Bar bay materialised due to the persistence, skill and far-sightedness of Italian delegates rather than the mature political assessment of the ruling radical left. "A port in the hands of Montenegro could not indeed constitute a serious danger to Italy, but there is also no particularly important Italian interest in that matter", read an official instructions for the congress. Nevertheless, the opinion of the chief delegate, Count Corti, that "it is better with a view to Italy's special interests to grant the Bar bay to Montenegro rather than Turkey" was accepted; it was also thought

that for the cession of Spič to Austria-Hungary “a minimal territory which essentially does not change anything, it is obtained in return to have Bar as an obstacle in the hands of a state [Montenegro] the future of which seems more certain than that of Turkey”.¹² With this kind of decision, the future would show that Italy set foot on the other side of the Adriatic.

III

After the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878, Italy's Eastern policy, included that towards the Serbian question, underwent a change as a consequence of the combined effect of the same old factors from the time of the Eastern Crisis and some additional factors. *Status quo* on the basis of the Berlin agreement in respect of Turkey's integrity in Europe remained a covert form of resistance to the spread of Russian and Austrian influence in the Balkans, which ever was on the rise at any given moment. But now it was also the reflection of a transformed awareness of its own weakness in face of Austria-Hungary and the inability to defend with determination Italy's interests in the Eastern question before European public opinion. On account of French and English policy in the Mediterranean Italy sought for support since 1882 in the alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. This new orientation had an immediate and manifold effect on the Serbian question.¹³

Albanophilia as anti-Austrian, anti-Serb and anti-Montenegrin component of the new Eastern policy. Fierce irredentist feelings for the provinces in Austria-Hungary, frustrated during the Eastern Crisis, were channelled since the end of 1878, under the veil of a consistent defence of the nationality principle, towards the Muslim tribes in Albania (the so-called “preservation of the national integrity of Muslim community”). This was seen as the only available counterweight to the increased pressure of Austria-Hungary in the southern part of the Adriatic, along with that in the northern part; this was also the only available tactics to keep in check Austria-Hungary in Italy's immediate neighbourhood without straining mutual relations too much. Apart from that, the advocating of the as wide as possible territory for Albanian Muslims lay foundation for their eventual autonomy within Turkey and the consequent gratitude to Italy. Italy's Albanophilia created in itself a community of interests with Turkey, the Albanian movement (the Albanian League) and Austria-Hungary which was anti-Serb. Through the support of the extreme political pretensions

¹² DDI, serie II, vol. X, doc. 167, 218 and 228, 156, 222, 248.

¹³ DDI, serie II, vol. XII - XIII; Un Italiano, *La politica estera italiana*, 47-158; Bogumil Hrabak, “Italijanski konzul u Skadru B. Berio o arbanaškom pitanju 1876-1878”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1978, 25-37; Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *Les relations entre l'Italie et le Monténégro*, 185-188; Ideù., “Razgraničenje Crne Gore na osnovu Berlinskog ugovora (1878-1881) kao platforma za zakret u istočnoj politici Italije”, in B. Kovačević ed., *Međunarodno priznanje Crne Gore. Zbornik radova* (Podgorica: Istorijski institute Crne Gore, 1999), 165-176.

of the Albanian movement backed by Austria-Hungary not just national and state interests of Montenegro, and later Serbia, in the direction of the southeast Adriatic coast were thwarted, but also legitimate national rights of the Serbian people in the wider hinterland of that coast, in the Old Serbia and Macedonia. In doing so, the previous relatively Slavophile policy of Italy in the Balkans was abandoned; instead of the South Slavs, more specifically Serbian people and its two states, Albanian Muslims became the vehicle of a new policy. Considerations which had been isolated during the Eastern Crisis and not acted upon by the official Italy – that the organised Albania and Albanian people were the chief obstacle to the “South Slav invasion” in the direction of the Adriatic sea and the west – were now more readily accepted.¹⁴ The opposition to the expansion of Montenegro in that direction and the pronounced anti-Montenegrin attitude during the process of border delineation between that country and Turkey in 1879-1880 (around the towns of Plav, Gusinje and Ulcinj) became a platform for Italy's change of foreign policy. Because Montenegro became to a certain extent, by obtaining an outlet to sea in 1878-1880, a political factor in the balance of power between Italy and Austria-Hungary in the Adriatic, their rivalry in Northern Albania spilled into their policy towards Montenegro and the wider Serbian hinterland of the Adriatic. The local Serbian population was an obstacle to the territorial penetration of Austria-Hungary in the direction of Albania, and Italy thus, contrary to Vienna, did not support and prod its extermination at the hands of Ottoman authorities and fanatical Muslims, particularly Albanians. But she did not oppose it too much so as not to stand out from other Powers; still, she was favourably disposed towards a certain diminishing of the Serbian demographic element in the direction of the sea.

The marginalisation of the Serbian question. The unexpected abandonment of the policy of an alliance with Serbian people by Italy, categorical demands of her public opinion to cease, on account of internal situation, an active policy in the East and the insufficient or non-existent support to Montenegro and Serbia at the time of border delineation between them and Turkey were not without their consequences. Mutual sympathies between the official and unofficial circles, public and people in Italy and Serbia faded away and finally extinguished. There was no single vote in the Italian parliament in 1880 in favour of the incorporation of Ulcinj to Montenegro. The changed geo-political and strategic position, the intensity and direction of the national-liberation action of Serbia and Montenegro after 1878, apart from the fact that these two countries were not easily accessible for Italian investments, contributed to the marginalisation of Italy's political interest for them and the Serbian question in general. It was only the Rumelian crisis (1885-1886) that revived this mutual interest from

¹⁴ ASDMAE, Turchia, Rapporti, pacc. 1452, Scutari 24.VIII 1875, No 119. DDI, serie II, vol. VI, d. 348, 394-378; Ibid., Scutari 28.VIII 1875, No 122, DDI, vol. VI, d. 402-407; Scutari 22.I 1877, s.n., e 5.III 1875, No 240, DDI, Vol. VIII, dok. 84, pp 103-107 e d. 186, 217-222.

the state of stupor which lasted throughout the entire Mediterranean-colonial phase of Italy's foreign policy.¹⁵

The Serbian-Bulgarian armed conflict of 1885-1886 became a platform for the new alliance agreement with Austria-Hungary. The Triple Alliance treaty of 1882 did not deal with a case of disturbance of the balance of power in the Balkans as established in 1878 but it did impose by the virtue of its sheer existence the abatement of Italian irredentism in the provinces within Austria-Hungary and the restraint towards the eventual initiatives of Vienna's Balkan policy. That did not change the inherited conviction from the time of Risorgimento and Count Cavour that Italy was bound to receive some sort of "compensation" in case of any alteration of the balance of power in the Balkans to the benefit of Austria-Hungary. Although the Italian government did not have a clear concept for the final solution of the Eastern question, the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict was seen as an opportunity to extract a formal recognition of Italy's interests in the Balkans.

During this crisis Italy was especially concerned that the balance of power between Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Balkans established in 1878 did not change in favour of the former. Nevertheless, despite the occasional hesitation caused by the lack of scruple on the part of the Allied power to interfere over the back of Serbia in the acknowledged sphere of others and thus disturb the balance in the Balkans, it was the fear of Russia's increased influence in the peninsula – as so many times before – that prevailed. Under the pretext of defence of the nationality principle, the anti-Russian policy was reflected in all phases of the crisis, in a direct or indirect form, on reactions to Serbia's demands and interests. In the process, Italy's Balkan interests were formally sanctioned: the provision for the preservation of *status quo* was supplemented by the provision which called for the exchange of opinion with Austria-Hungary regarding the possible compensations should that status be changed. Therefore, Italy came out of the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict with the strengthened position within the Triple Alliance (Articles 7-8 of the agreement).

Following this short intermezzo the relations with Serbia went back to their previous numbness. At the turn of the century the Serbian Minister in Rome was flabbergasted when he found out that the officials in the Foreign

¹⁵ Arhiv Srbije (AS), Ministarstvo inostranih dela Kraljevine Srbije (MID), Izveštaji iz Rima: 1885, I/11, F-II; za 1886, I/9, F-II; Mikroteka, Serija I (Italija), rolna 34-35, Izveštaji iz Beograda za 1883-1886. ASDMAE, Serbia, pacc. 1412 e1413; Turchia pacc. 1238 e 1147. Documenti presentati alla Camera dei Deputati del Ministro degli Affari Esteri (Di Robilant), Libri verdi, No 51, *Rumelia Orientale*, Roma 1886.

Un Italiano, *La politica estera italiana*, 364-378; A. Tamborra A., "La crisi balcanica del 1885-1886". *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, LV, III, 1968, 371-396; Idem., "Il primo ingresso degli Italo-Albanesi nella politica balcanica (1885-1886)", *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, LXVII, 1908, 339-345; Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Italija i srpsko-bugarska kriza 1885-1886. Godine", *Istorijski časopis*, XCII-XCIII, 1995-1996, 125-145.

Ministry did not know that people in Serbia speak the same Serbian language as in Montenegro. It was on account of Montenegro, and due to its geographic proximity, that the forthcoming developments would bring about different relations.

Montenegro became the main political and economic stronghold of Italy on the other side of Adriatic. In the changed strategic and security situation in which Italy found herself after 1896 Montenegro with its 70 km of sea coast was more than just a physical obstacle to Austria-Hungary's descend on the Adriatic. With the increased interest of Italian investment in the coastal area of Montenegro, and the town of Scutari (Skodra) area and the marital connection between the Savoy and Montenegrin dynasty, this small country became "a door to the Balkans" for the extension and strengthening of Italy's economic and political influence in Northern Albania. Its significance as an anti-Austrian component of Italy's Albanian policy rapidly grew in prominence. Still, Prince Nikola's endeavours to reach a political agreement on the eventual division of Albanian territory as well as the suggestions of certain Italian unofficial persons for a union of Montenegro and Northern Albania were ignored by the official Italy. She still preferred an agreement with her Austro-Hungarian ally than with Montenegro.¹⁶

IV

The circumstances which influenced the attitude towards the Serbian question during the two phases of Italian foreign policy, the Eastern-Balkan and Mediterranean-colonial were as follows:

Congruence and antagonism between the general strategic goals and interests, tactics and methods of Italy, Serbia and Montenegro in respect of the Eastern question. The struggle for the liberation of fellow countrymen and the unification in a single state based on the nationality principle, Austria as an enemy and the instigation and exploitation of crises in the Balkans in order to achieve their political goals were common features. Antagonism came to the fore on the occasion of the first attempt at cooperation in 1848-49 in connection with the so-called Italy's "historical hinterland", the former Venetian domains with the majority Yugoslav population. The Eastern question was a diplomatic wherewithal, and its radical solution was not wanted whereas it constituted a main political objective for the Serbian movement. The idea of Austria's compensation in Bosnia – Herzegovina in return for her provinces in

¹⁶ Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Italija i Crna Gora tokom poslednje dve decenije XIX veka", Istorijski časopis, XLV-XLVI, 1998-1999, 149-176; Idem., "Srpsko pitanje u strateškim opredeljenjima Italije u XIX veku", in *Zbornik u čast akademiku Vasiliju Krestiću*, (Belgrade: Glas Odeljenja istorijskih nauka SANU, 2012).

Italy was present 1878. It was a nightmare for all Serbian politicians. Since 1879 Italy's Albanophilia was detrimental to Serbian national interests in Old Serbia and Macedonia. During the First Balkan War of 1912-13, it thwarted, along with Austria-Hungary, political, strategic and economic interests of Serbia and Montenegro relating to Albania; it also ran contrary to the "Balkans to Balkan peoples" principle insofar it brought about direct interference from Italy and her Austrian ally in the creation and government of the new Albanian state.

The importance of the Serbian people among the South Slavs (due to its numbers, central geographical position, the fact it populated the border areas of Turkey and Austria, and the fact it had two national states the status of which were either *de facto* or internationally recognised) *and the reputation and influence of Serbia on the South Slavs in Austria*. There was not a single Italian government that could overlook the experience from the Hungarian revolution of 1848-49. Of interest was also the national and foreign policy program of Serbia as a framework for Serbian, Yugoslav and wider Balkan projects. The Yugoslav component of the Serbian question directly interfered with Italy's policy towards the western Yugoslav lands. The increasing importance attributed to Montenegro and Serbia since 1858 – the latter became Italy's chief ally among the Danube and Balkan nations – compelled Italian diplomacy to accept, at least in part, the national and foreign policy program of a unified Serbian, and later Yugoslav, state. It was not before 1878-1880 that the Serbian question stopped being perceived as a function of Italy's national liberation goals in respect of the Italian ethnic area in Austria-Hungary.

Splicing together of the Adriatic and Eastern question. The extension of the anti-Austrian component of Italy's foreign policy to Albania extended to Southern Adriatic the problem of the balance of power between the two countries which had hitherto been confined to Northern Adriatic. This, in turn, made political situation in the hinterland of Southern Adriatic under Ottoman rule relevant as well – the Eastern question now had a new organic component, the Adriatic balance of power. Since 1878, factor of that balance became Montenegro with its sea coast and its ties with Northern Albania.

V

In a new international and Balkan constellation at the turn of the century, Italy, defeated in her colonial policy in 1896, was neither militarily and politically prepared to nor in the frame of mind for the redrawing of the map of Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. The one clearly defined interest was to prevent an influence of any power, and Austria-Hungary in particular, from becoming dominant in Albania. Therefore, the *status quo* in the Turkey - in -Europe was still the aim of her Balkan policy with its twofold impact – anti-Austrian and anti-Russian which was now manifested, due to Russia's involvement in

the Far East, through efforts to expand and strengthen own influence in the Balkans. In such framework, the so-called "return" of Italy to her Eastern orientation in foreign policy had certain features as far as the Serbian question was concerned.¹⁷

The first feature was a preference for *status quo* in the Balkans and, if that was untenable, the solution in accordance with nationality principle in agreement with Austria-Hungary. A written exchange of opinion with the Allies suggested a future autonomous Albania; without precisely determined borders, she seems to have tacitly encompassed the parts of Old Serbia and Macedonia. This commitment of Italy for the solution of the Eastern question, in accordance with the nationality principle, was as much an instrument of her anti-Serbian and anti-Montenegrin policy in Albania as it was directed against the new acquisitions of territory on the part of Austria-Hungary.

The second feature was the treatment of Serbia and the Serbian question as a component of Italy's anti-Austrian policy in the Balkans. Serbia's efforts

¹⁷ *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, serie III (1876-1907) e IV (1908-1914); *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*. I-VII, ed. SANU, Beograd 1982 – 2012.

Un Italiano, *La politica estera italiana*, 449-970; L. Bissolati, *La politica estera italiana dal 1897 al 1920. Scritti e discorsi* (Milano: Teves, 1920); A. De Bosdari, *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande guerra e di alcuni fatti. Appunti diplomatici* (Milano: Mondadori, 1929); W. Vucinich, *Serbia between East and West, the Events od 1903-1908* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954); A. Torre, "Italia e Albania durante le guerre balcaniche", *Rivista d'Albania*, 1940, II, III e IV, 174-183, 223-233, 363-383; Idem., "Il progettato attacco austro-ungarico alla Serbia del luglio 1913". *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe* : per il suo 80. compleanno (Bologna: Sansoni, 1958) , II, 999-1018; D. Djordjević, *Izlazak Srbije na Jadransko more i konferencija ambasadora u Londonu 1912. godine* Belgrade 1956; Idem., *Milovan Milovanović* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1962), 65-82; G. Salvemini, *La politica estera dell'Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Firenze : G. Barbera, 1950); R. Jovanović, "Jedan inostrani otpor prodiranju italijanskog kapitala u Crnu Goru", *Istorijski zapisi*, 3, 1961; M. Vojvodić, "Serbia and the First Balkan War: Political and Diplomatic Aspects" in Bela K. Kiraly, D. Djordjević eds., *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars* (Boulder : Social Science Monographs 1967), 240-259 e Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Political and Diplomatic Importance of the Balkan Wars" in Bela K. Kiraly, D. Djordjević eds., *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars* , 371-385; L. Albertini, *The Origins of the War 1914* (London: Oxford University Press 1967), I-II; S. Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967); Savo Skoko, *Drugi balkanski rat 1913* (Belgrade: Vojnoistorijski institut, 1968), 32-37, 159; Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, "Doprinos obnavljanju srpsko-engleskih odnosa (1903-1906)", *Istorijski časopis*, XVIII, 1971, 429-449; A. Guiccioli A. *Diario di un conservatore* (Milano : Edizioni del Borghese, 1973) I; Annali della Facoltà di Scienze politiche a.a. 1978-79, 15, *Materiali di Storia* 3, : Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *I rapporti fra l'Italia e la Serbia nel XX secolo 1903-1914*. 50-58, e 88-103, F. Guida, *La missione di Bosdari a Sofia (1910-1913) nel contesto dell'azione diplomatica italiana nei Balcani*; A. Tamborra, "The Rise of Italian Industry and the Balkans (1900-1914)". *The Journal of European Economic History*, I, 1, 1974, 87-120; E. Masserati, *Momenti della questione adriatica. Albania e Montenegro tra Austria ed Italia* (Udine: Del Bianco, 1981); S. Ercole, *La penetrazione economica italiana nei territori degli Slavi del Sud, Storia contemporanea*. 2, XII, 1981, 217-153. Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, *Italija i jadranska železnica*, IČ, XXXIV, 1987, 255-270; D. Milić, "Les relations avec le Monténégro dans le cadre de la politique économique générale de l'Italie envers les Balkans jusqu'à l'année 1915" in *Le Monténégro dans les relations internationales* (Titograd: Istorijski institute Crne Gore, 1984), 195-206; Mihailo Vojvodić, *Srbija u međunarodnim odnosima krajem XIX i početkom XX veka* (Belgrade: SANU 1988); Idem., *Razgraničenje Srbije i Crne Gore s Albanijom 1912-1913*, IČ, XXXVI, 1989.

since the last quarter of the nineteenth century to pull herself away from the economic and political orbit of Austria-Hungary and defend herself and the Balkans from Vienna's imperialist pretensions renewed to a certain extent the former solidarity of interests between Serbia and Italy. This time, however, the common interests were not just, as in the time of Risorgimento, national-political but also had increasingly strong material background (the influx of Italian capital from 1902 to 1905, the opening of Italian market for the livestock import from Serbia, the financial participation in Serbia's project to build a railway connecting the Danube with the Adriatic sea). In particular, the direction of Serbia's development towards the Adriatic sea, which would made the Serbian political and ethnic area stretching from the Danube to Southern Adriatic basin and Montenegrin coast a bulwark against Austria-Hungary's descend on Albania, suddenly revived Italy's political interest in Serbia and the Serbian question.

The third feature was that the Serbian question was a vehicle through which Italy steered her way between the two blocs of Great Powers. The envisaged Danube-Adriatic sea railway not just opened the door for the possible Italian economic expansion to the northeast Balkans but also put a spoke in the wheel of a massive Austro-German investment in the railway system making way to the Balkans and Near East which had been evident since the beginning of the twentieth century. This Serbian project was the first occasion on which the congeniality of Italian interests in the Balkans with those of the rival bloc of Great Powers manifested and the allied relation with Austro-German powers showed signs of weakening. Political mediation between England and Serbia for the sake of their restoring diplomatic relations, disrupted due to the assassination of the Obrenović royal couple, against which Austria-Hungary set their face served the same purpose.

The fourth feature was an irresoluteness of Serbia's national and foreign policy program. An alliance of Balkan states was envisioned as a resolution of the nationality question in the Balkans and as a permanent obstacle to penetration of any Power in the Balkans, whether by the division of territory or staking out recognised sphere of interests; in particular, a pro-Austrian and pro-Italian autonomous Albania was opposed, and the potential division of Albanian territory with Montenegro and Greece was a political expression of the resistance to any such combination. The so-called "neutral solution" in the Balkans expounded by Italy envisaged an exclusively defensive agreement between the Balkan states for the maintenance of external and internal political status quo in European Turkey and decisively opposed its division between Balkan states until the Balkan Allies' successful campaign in the war against Turkey in 1912. There were two common elements in both Serbia's and Italy's programme. The first one was the *status quo améloré* which was only temporary for the former and should last until she was capable of securing her interests and until Russia was capable of supporting them whereas the latter

saw it as permanent and the only acceptable option. They also had in common an anti-Austrian sentiment but the rest of the Serbian formula which called for resistance to all non-Balkan powers was clearly designed against Italy's pretensions as well i.e. her programme of autonomous Albania chalked out together with her Austrian ally. The national-liberation in the Serbian formula was reduced to the acknowledgement of "the development of Rumelia nations" (that is to say the nations under Ottoman rule in the Balkans) based on the nationality principle but without defining it in terms of territory while Albania's autonomy was expressly guaranteed in the Ioannina and Scutari vilayet and "all the regions excluded from the reform action".

The fifth feature was the division of opinion regarding Serbia's outlet to the Adriatic sea as a sublimation of her national, economic and political-strategic interests. In view of the large part of Italian public, business circles interested in investment in the Balkans as well as many officials of the Foreign Ministry, the strengthened and enlarged Serbia with an outlet to sea would be a partner in the struggle against Austria-Hungary's hegemony in Southern and Eastern Adriatic; Italy would have many opportunities for economic penetration in the Balkans and she would improve her relations with the South Slavs in Austria-Hungary. In public opinion, the pressure applied by mighty Austria-Hungary on the small Serbian neighbour was increasingly perceived as a repetition of Italy's own history. The Triple Alliance oriented government after 1910 did not want to oppose Austria-Hungary because it believed it was easier to control and constrain her in Albania, and also because it took a dim view of the strengthening of Slav element in the Adriatic. The enlarged and strengthened Serbia was rather seen as a competitor for the dominance in the Adriatic than a potential ally against Austria-Hungary. A weak Albania susceptible to Italian influence was preferred to a strong Serbia which would entrench there. The pro-Austrian attitude of the government and Austria-Hungary's pressure on Serbia during the war campaign in the autumn of 1912 met with condemnation on the part of the opposition parties, the entire left wing, the press and public opinion; all of them vehemently demanded that the Balkan Allies be ensured all the spoils of their victory "in accordance with the unanimous feeling of the country".

The sixth feature was the prevalence of an anti-Slav component. The Triple Alliance -oriented government struggled to withstand this public pressure was weary of the division of Albania between the Balkan Allies and the creation of a large Slav state stretching to Durazzo. It also feared that Austria-Hungary might become, through economic and political pressure on Serbia, a beneficiary of all her acquisitions so that a Serbian port might become an Austrian one. Based on the estimate that the Triple Alliance was stronger and more useful bloc than that of Entente Powers, the Italian government aligned themselves with the Austrian ally in a common resistance to "Slav deluge"; the Triple Alliance agreement was renewed a year and a half before it had expired. On

this occasion, just like in all previous crises in the Balkans, with the exception of the brief period in 1867-1868, it was a pro-Austrian stance that prevailed in Italy's dilemma between Germandom and Slavdom. Finally, the entire Italian public would come to accept the compromise solution which prevented the excessive Austrian influence – an independent Albania and compensation to Serbia for the fact that she was denied an outlet to sea in the shape of a railway connection with the port in the San Giovanni di Medua.

Vacillations of Italian public in the inter-allied conflict with Austria-Hungary, between supporting Serbia which hindered Austria's expansion and the aims of Italy's big ally were gradually resolved in favour of the latter: "the Slav danger", the *Tribuna* wrote, was already present; the new peace in the Balkans was a Slav peace; a vast Slav bloc was being formed covering two thirds of Europe from the North sea to the Aegean. The Triple Alliance supporters among the Italian politicians favoured the second Balkan alliance and vigorously opposed Austria-Hungary's intention to attack Serbia although not motivated by Serbia's interests but rather those of Romania which was associated to the Triple Alliance and in order to preserve general peace. Nevertheless, thus Italy *de facto* enabled the denouement of Serbia's struggle for national liberation and unification, which had been lasting nearly a century: in its natural political framework. Therefore, Italy faced the final dilemma – either Austria-Hungary in the Balkans or a Serbo-Yugoslav solution of the Serbian question.

With Austria-Hungary's ultimatum and declaration of war to Serbia in the summer of 1914, the question of the application of Article 7 of the Triple Alliance agreement was opened. This Italy's failure to make work the strategy of compensation as stipulated in the said article of the Triple Alliance, was followed by the its last attempt to conform her territorial ambitions in the Balkans with the Serbo-Yugoslav question. The London Treaty of April 1915, concluded between the Entente Powers and Rome without Serbia's knowledge, envisaged the division of the Balkans between Italy, Serbia and the considerably reduced but still preserved Austria-Hungary as an element of balance. But this attempt was nipped in the bud in the final stages of the First World War.

VI

The most important circumstances which influenced the shaping of Italy's political plans, besides it being the recognised third factor in the balance of power between Austria and Russia in the Balkans since 1904, were as follows:

The first one was a change balance of power in the Adriatic. In the trial of strength between Italy and Austria-Hungary in the Adriatic, with Montenegro as a third factor since 1878, there were no important changes during the Mediterranean-colonial orientation of Italy's policy. With Montenegro's becoming the main political and economic stronghold of Italy on the other side of the Adriatic at the turn of the century, with the international project

of a Danube-Adriatic railway, and in particular with the territorial outlet of Serbia to the Adriatic sea in 1912, the nature of the regional balance of power was changed. It became a matter of relations between the two blocs of Great Powers and also a matter of relations within the Triple Alliance, the members of which were both Italy and Austria-Hungary.

The second circumstance concerned the changed geo-political position of Serbia. She was transformed from the first and immediate obstacle to Austro-German economic penetration towards the East into *the main strategic obstacle in the Balkans* to the German *Drang nach Osten* and thus capable of tipping the scales in the balance between the two blocs of Great Powers.

The third circumstance concerned Europeanization of the Serbian question. Since the Annexation Crisis of 1908/1909 it coalesced with the Yugoslav question and became the chief disintegrating factor in Austria-Hungary and thus threatened European balance of power. And when after the Second World War Serbia became the main and strongest link in the defence line of the Entente Powers in the Balkans against the expansion policy of the Triple Alliance, the fate of the entire Balkan hinterland of the Near East depended on Serbia's independence or demise.

VII

Therefore, it can be said that since both Serb states were underdeveloped and not easily accessible in terms of communications, Italy's relations with them in the nineteenth century were strictly political; it was not before the end of that century that these relations acquired a new economic dimension with Italian investment in the regions of Montenegro and Northern Albania and the change in Serbia's geo-political position. Secondly, the Italian national question developed within the broader manoeuvring space that the Serbian one as it was not directly concerned with the anti-Russian component of European balance of power; and that component was, in the eyes of European and Italian diplomacy and public, of paramount importance in dealing with the Serbian question. Throughout all the critical moments until the First World War the fear of "Slav invasion" on the other side of the Adriatic prevailed over other considerations. Nevertheless, the feeling that both nations would eventually stand together against their natural enemy, Austria-Hungary, which had emerged during the national-liberation struggle in the 1860s, were constantly present in Italian public and diplomacy despite occasional slowdowns, the official alliance with Vienna and the latent fear of Russia. That feeling was passed over to new generations of Italians and rekindled in all the forthcoming crises in which the Serbs found themselves in 1875-1878, 1908-1909 and 1914. Thirdly, historical development confirmed that the concepts of Italian revolutionary democrats and their ideologue Mazzini were accurate in the main lines and historically justified: that the seed of destruction of the Habsburg Monarchy lay in the Serbs and other South Slavs and that the final solution of

the Italian question was not possible without the radical solution of the Serbian and Yugoslav question through the demise of both Turkey and Austria. However, historical development also demonstrated that the former solution was permanent whereas the Yugoslav framework of the Serbian question did not survive.

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L'ITALIE FACE A LA QUESTION ADRIATIQUE, 1861-1915: ASPECTS STRATEGIQUES ET IDEOLOGIQUES

Résumé : Dans les décennies qui suivent son unification, l'Italie doit se doter d'une politique étrangère. L'espace adriatique est ainsi découvert, entre 1861 et 1878, en tant que frontière stratégique de première importance, autour de laquelle l'Italie se trouve toutefois dans une position vulnérable face à l'Autriche. L'adhésion à la Triple Alliance doit entre autres permettre de geler les positions des deux puissances rivales dans la région. Au sein de la sphère de décision et de l'opinion publique italiennes, toutefois, plusieurs courants nourrissent des ambitions qui vont aller croissantes avec la renaissance de la rivalité austro-italienne au début du XX^e siècle, pour culminer à l'occasion de l'intervention italienne de 1915 aux côtes de l'Entente. A cette occasion, des revendications territoriales maximalistes jadis peu audibles sont mobilisées pour légitimer notamment les ambitions italiennes en Dalmatie, au nom surtout de la sécurité stratégique du pays.

Mots clés : *Géopolitique ; Adriatique ; Italie ; Diplomatie ; Opinion publique*

La politique italienne dans la région adriatique, qui constitue, de la Vénétie Julienne à la mer Ionienne, sa frontière orientale, a généralement été appréhendée soit à travers le prisme de l'irréductibilisme, un phénomène politique à l'audience intermittente mais qui demeure faible jusqu'au début du XX^e siècle,¹ soit à travers celui des alliances diplomatiques et militaires en Europe, autour notamment du dilemme rencontré par l'Italie unifiée dans sa relation à l'Autriche : faut-il, dans la lignée des trois « guerres d'indépendance », continuer à la considérer comme une ennemie – au risque de subir une énième défaite – ou

¹ Pour une présentation bibliographique et factuelle complète, M. Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale. 1866-2006* (Bologne : Il Mulino, 2007), 392.

au contraire se concilier ses bonnes grâce au risque de se heurter à la France ?² On voit ici que la problématique de l'irrédentisme et celle des alliances se rencontrent, mais d'autres facteurs doivent à notre avis être mis en relation pour reconstituer l'écheveau culturel et politique complexe qui contribue à la définition, des lendemains de l'Unité au renversement des alliances de 1915, d'une politique italienne en Adriatique.³

A vrai dire, l'Italie, État de constitution très récente, était à la recherche d'une politique étrangère en tant que telle et pas seulement dans le secteur adriatique. L'important renouvellement de l'historiographie de la colonisation italienne a montré l'élaboration d'une politique d'expansion outre-mer qui ne concernait pas que la classe politique, mais mobilisait aussi milieux économiques et opinion publique.⁴ Nous nous inspirerons de cette démarche pour tenter de situer la question adriatique dans le faisceau de débats qui contribuèrent à la définition d'une politique étrangère italienne dans les décennies post-unitaires. L'utilité d'une telle réflexion réside à notre sens avant tout dans la connexion de moments historiques qui sont généralement considérés isolément, depuis le moment unitaire jusqu'à la Grande Guerre en passant par le temps de la Triple Alliance. Nous considérerons également que la définition de la politique adriatique de l'Italie n'est pas que le fruit de combinaisons élaborées dans les chancelleries, dans la mesure où le processus de décision est influencé par les débats de politique étrangère, mais aussi intérieure, au sein de l'opinion publique de l'Italie libérale.

On considère généralement que l'opinion publique naît tardivement en Italie, du fait d'un certain nombre de retards politiques, culturels, sociologiques et économiques qui empêchent l'apparition d'un espace public aussi précocement qu'au Royaume-Uni, en France ou en Allemagne.⁵ Ce retard fe-

² Pour un état des lieux de l'historiographie italienne sur la question des alliances, cf. F. Martelloni, « La "Triplice Alleanza" e l'Adriatico. Dalla convenzione navale ai piani di guerra (1900-1909) », *Ricerche Storiche*, 2010-2, 299-347 ; pour l'historiographie autrichienne, cf. H. Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund. Europäische Grossmacht- und Allianzpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienne: Böhlau Verlag, 2002), 983.

³ Plusieurs travaux ont pris en compte « l'opinion publique » ou les « milieux » – diplomatie, armée, marine principalement – en tant que « facteurs de la puissance » : L. Goglia, R. Moro, L. Nuti, dir., *Guerra e pace nell'Italia del Novecento. Politica estera, cultura politica e correnti dell'opinione pubblica* (Bologne: Il Mulino, 2006), 645. ; P. Levillain, B. Vigezzi, dir., *Opinion publique et politique extérieure. V. 1, 1870-1915*, Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome et le Centro per gli studi di politica estera e opinione pubblica à Rome du 13 au 16 février 1980 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981), 691. ; G. Petracchi, dir., *Uomini e nazioni. Cultura e politica estera nell'Italia del Novecento* (Udine: Gaspari Editore, 2005), 244. D'autres ont cherché à mettre en perspective la « question adriatique » à l'échelle de l'époque contemporaine : F. Caccamo, St. Trinchese, dir., *Adriatico contemporaneo. Rotte e percezioni del mare comune tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 2008), 367. ; C. Ghisalberti, *Adriatico e confine orientale dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2008), 198.

⁴ Sur ce renouvellement, cf. D. Natili, « Il colonialismo nell'Italia liberale : fronte interno e gruppi di pressione tra storiografia e ricerca », *Memoria e ricerca*, 29, 2008, 123-144.

⁵ Qui sont significativement les trois cas envisagés par Jürgen Habermas dans son étude canonique sur l'espace public : J. Habermas, *L'espace public. Archéologie de la publicité comme dimension*

rait coïncider la naissance de l'opinion publique en Italie avec le déclin général de cette institution, que l'ère des masses verrait progressivement passer d'une communauté de personnes privées usant de leur raison pour débattre de problèmes d'intérêt général à une foule manipulable à l'envi. Le second XIX^e siècle est pourtant en Italie à la fois le moment de l'unité nationale, celui du triomphe du parlementarisme, du développement de la presse et de l'accroissement du lectorat.⁶ En Italie comme ailleurs en Europe, il semble que l'on assiste plutôt à la formation d'un espace public complexe et polyphonique tendant à associer aux débats sur la définition de l'intérêt général des secteurs de plus en plus larges de la population,⁷ comme l'ont montré les travaux sur la politisation des campagnes.⁸

Si l'on admet qu'il existe un espace public dans l'Italie de la fin du XIX^e siècle, reste à savoir quelle place y occupent les questions de politique étrangère. Des questions aussi fondamentales que celle de l'unité nationale ou de l'adoption d'un régime constitutionnel peuvent mobiliser bien au-delà du lectorat bourgeois. En revanche, les subtilités de la diplomatie sont certainement plus lointaines, y compris dans nos sociétés contemporaines : nul doute qu'un sondage sur le régime taliban de Kaboul réalisé aux États-Unis avant le 11 septembre 2001 aurait suscité la plus grande perplexité auprès des sondés. Faut-il en déduire que la politique étrangère est, dans le cas de l'Italie libérale, le domaine réservé par excellence d'un cercle étroit gravitant autour du roi, de la cour, du gouvernement, de l'Etat-major et de quelques parlementaires?⁹ Certes, le *Statuto albertino* donne au roi des prérogatives considérables en la matière;¹⁰ de même la diplomatie secrète est pratiquée par toutes les chancelleries, y compris dans les démocraties. Dans le cas italien, l'intervention de 1915 illustre de façon spectaculaire le poids de cercles restreints au sein de la classe dirigeante dans la prise de décision, en l'occurrence contre l'avis de la très grande majorité de la population. Toutefois, il nous semble réducteur

constitutive de la société bourgeoise (Paris: Payot, 1978), 324. Sur le topos du retard italien et, plus généralement, pour une analyse de la pertinence du concept d'opinion publique appliqué à l'Italie du XIX^e siècle, cf. G. Civile, « Per una storia sociale dell'opinione pubblica : osservazioni a proposito della tarda età liberale », *Quaderni Storici*, 104, 2000-2, 469-504.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 472-473.

⁷ G. Eley, « Nations, Publics and Political Cultures : Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century », in C. Calhoun, dir., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass. – Londres: The MIT press), 1992, 289-339.

⁸ Collectif, *La politisation des campagnes au XIX^e siècle, France, Italie, Espagne, Portugal. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'École française de Rome en collaboration avec l'École Normale Supérieure (Paris), l'Universitat de Girona et l'Università degli Studi della Tuscia-Viterbo* (Rome : École française de Rome, 2000), 376.

⁹ R. J. B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers. Italian Foreign Policy before the First World War* (Londres – New York – New Rochelle: Cambridge University Press), notamment chapitre 1.

¹⁰ Notamment l'article 5 : C. Brice, *Monarchie et identité nationale en Italie (1861-1900)* (Paris : Editions EHESS, 2010), 30-31.

d'opposer à une caste militaro-politique manipulatrice une opinion publique amorphe voire inexistante. Si la décision est bel et bien forcée en dernier lieu par des groupes numériquement très restreints, les termes du choix sont le fruit de décennies de débats au sein d'un espace public bourgeois élargi.

Les questions de politique étrangère sont fréquemment l'objet de débats articulant des savoirs techniques extrêmement précis ayant trait aux choses diplomatiques et militaires, mais aussi à des populations et des territoires étrangers parfois fort lointains et méconnus, et des mots d'ordre de portée politique très générale concernant notamment le devenir de la nation – comment garantir sa puissance, sa sécurité, son intégrité territoriale – ce qui pose aussi souvent la question de la forme de son régime politique, lequel peut-être considéré, selon les événements internationaux et selon les secteurs de l'opinion, comme un atout ou un handicap, comme un facteur légitimant ou au contraire disqualifiant. Selon Geoff Eley, l'Europe orientale et méridionale dans son ensemble connut tardivement la formation d'une sphère publique, laquelle coïncida avec l'entrée dans l'ère du nationalisme et fut marquée par la conscience d'un retard à rattraper par rapport à l'Europe occidentale.¹¹ La situation italienne est donc loin d'être exceptionnelle. De la même façon, l'entrée des thèmes de politique étrangère dans un espace public élargi est commune à l'ensemble des pays européens au second XIX^e siècle. Les progrès techniques dans la transmission de l'information y prennent une large part, chemin de fer, télégraphe puis téléphone permettant aux journaux de mobiliser des équipes de correspondants à l'étranger.¹² Les opinions publiques sont elles-mêmes plus réceptives à des questions qui intéressent de plus en plus la souveraineté nationale, et non plus seulement le patrimoine du prince. En somme, les questions internationales intègrent un corpus de « connaissances sociales » définies comme des idées acceptées de façon a-critique.¹³ Il nous semble toutefois que la technicité des questions de politique étrangère requiert de façon privilégiée la médiation de l'expert.¹⁴ Les crises balkaniques et orientales de la fin du XIX^e siècle nous semblent précisément constituer un lieu privilégié de la rencontre entre la diplomatie traditionnelle des congrès, l'intérêt neuf des pu-

¹¹ G. Eley, « Nations, Publics and Political Cultures : Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century ».

¹² G. Licata, *Storia e linguaggio dei corrispondenti di guerra. Dall'epoca napoleonica al Vietnam* (Milan: Guido Milano Editore, 1972), 205.

¹³ J.H. Plumb, « La diffusione della modernità », *Quaderni Storici*, 42, 1979, 887-911, cité in G. Civile, « Per una storia sociale dell'opinione pubblica », 477.

¹⁴ La figure de l'expert est définie comme suit dans un ouvrage récent : « *By experts we mean professionally qualified individuals who were recognized as such by their peers and/or by a wider public (...). The status of the expert is not necessarily fixed ; rather, it is highly dependent on the currently dominant economic, social and political circumstances. Moreover, it is always a result of cultural ascriptions and communicative negotiations* », in M. Kohlrusch, K. Steffen, S. Wiederkkehr, dir., *Expert cultures in Central Eastern Europe : the internationalization of knowledge and the transformation of nation States since World War I* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2010), 10.

blics européens pour les questions de politique internationale, et la médiation opérée par le duo journaliste-expert, dont les figures se superposent d'ailleurs fréquemment. La question d'Orient constitue en effet un saisissant cocktail de marchandages territoriaux, de violence sanguinaire propre à captiver les foules, et de complexité historique, géographique et ethno-linguistique nécessitant l'intervention de pédagogues plus ou moins qualifiés. La crise balkanique, tout particulièrement, tiendrait ainsi à la fois du *scramble* colonial, du fait divers sanglant et de la leçon de choses.¹⁵

1861-1878 : une lente prise de conscience du rapport de forces en Adriatique

Les penseurs du *Risorgimento* avaient nourri les plus grands espoirs pour l'Italie unifiée : l'addition des forces, elles-mêmes souvent surévaluées, de chacun des États pré-unitaires, augmentées par l'effet de masse du nouvel État, devaient lui conférer un poids considérable lui permettant de compter en Europe et dans le monde. Devant la Société Nationale pour la Confédération italienne, Emilio Broglio prophétisait ainsi le primat économique de l'Italie :

« L'Italie trouvera dans le libre échange des marchandises avec toutes les nations de la terre une source d'enrichissement général et diffus ainsi qu'un facteur d'alliance et de paix, et pourra peut-être aspirer de nouveau à une phase de primat. Tous ses peuples tendent depuis des siècles à l'unité ; la nature italienne, plus qu'aucune autre, est réticente et timide, non sans raisons graves et profondes : eh bien ! le lien fédéral peut nous offrir à la fois les avantages de la variété et ceux de la naturelle liberté individuelle. Alors l'Italie, à laquelle seule la force fait défaut, pourra fièrement se lever et marcher en majesté au devant des nations ».¹⁶

Il est vrai qu'au milieu du XIX^e siècle, la statistique est balbutiante¹⁷ et que la perception de la puissance des États n'est pas toujours le reflet exact de la réalité, les guerres révélant plus sûrement la hiérarchie internationale. En outre, les

¹⁵ Cf. une étude consacrée aux conséquences du coup d'État de 1903 en Serbie sur l'imaginaire britannique relativement à ce pays : S. G. Markovich, « British perceptions of Serbia and the Balkans, 1903-1906 », Paris, *Dialogue*, 2000.

¹⁶ « *L'Italia troverà (...) nel libero scambio di prodotti con tutte le nazioni della terra una sorgente di agiatezza generale e diffusa, e nello stesso tempo un vincolo d'alleanza e di pace, e potrà forse ancora una volta aspirare ad una nuova fase di primato : tutti i popoli tendono da secoli all'unità : la natura italiana, più d'ogni altra, è riluttante e ritrosa, nè senza gravissime e riposte ragioni : ebbene! troviamo nel vincolo federativo i vantaggi dell'unità con quelli della varietà e della naturale libertà singolare : allora Italia, a cui sola manca la forza, potrà sorgere superba e camminare maestosa al cospetto delle nazioni* », in Broglio, (Emilio), « La Confederazione nelle sue attinenze economiche », in Collectif, *Discorsi detti nella pubblica tornata della Società Nazionale per la Confederazione Italiana ai 27 di settembre 1848 in Torino dai socii Gioberti, Freschi, Broglio, Tecchio, Berti e Carutti* (Turin: Girolamo Marzorati, 1848), 37.

¹⁷ Pour une analyse comparée de la naissance de la statistique en France, au Royaume-Uni, en Allemagne et aux États-Unis, cf. A. Desrosières, *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993), 180-259.

études prospectives sur la puissance potentielle de l'Italie unifiée furent conduites au premier XIX^e siècle, alors que les économies européennes étaient encore largement agraires ; elles ne pouvaient certes pas prévoir l'ampleur de la dette léguées par les guerres d'indépendance, ni la lenteur du décollage industriel de l'Italie, qui en ferait durablement « la dernière des grandes puissances ». ¹⁸ En outre, tant que l'Italie était un État virtuel, il n'était guère aisé de savoir quel serait son environnement géopolitique, soit qu'elle prenne une forme confédérale à l'échelle péninsulaire, soit qu'elle ne soit qu'une extension limitée du royaume de Sardaigne. Ce dernier s'étend finalement à pratiquement toute la botte, prenant une configuration méditerranéenne inédite pour les dirigeants subalpins, lesquels étaient habitués à manœuvrer au sein d'un espace limité à l'Europe occidentale et centrale. Leur principale activité méditerranéenne consistait à protéger l'île de Sardaigne contre les incursions barbaresques. Avec l'annexion des territoires de l'ex-république génoise, lesquels lui furent octroyés par le congrès de Vienne, le royaume sarde trouva véritablement une dimension méditerranéenne, qu'illustra pleinement la guerre victorieuse contre Tripoli en 1825. En revanche, la présence sarde en Adriatique était minime, si l'on excepte les opérations navales dans le cadre des guerres anti-autrichiennes. A la veille de l'Unité, la Sardaigne, les Deux-Siciles et la Toscane entretenaient toutes un consulat général à Trieste, mais alors que Naples entretenait treize délégations consulaires en Adriatique, Turin n'en avait qu'une seule à Fiume. ¹⁹ La politique de l'Italie unifiée en Adriatique était donc entièrement à créer.

Afin de faire le tableau des représentations de l'Adriatique et de sa fonction stratégique au moment de l'Unité, nous partirons d'un texte célèbre, la *Géographie militaire de la péninsule italienne* de Felice Orsini, patriote romagnol surtout connu des Français pour son attentat raté contre Napoléon III. ²⁰ Une dizaine d'années avant l'Unité, il écrivit un traité dont la fonction était d'offrir aux officiers servant dans les différentes armées italiennes un patrimoine de connaissances sur la péninsule, en insistant sur les dangers d'invasion et les moyens de les repousser. La forme très classique de la monographie nous permet de disposer d'une description de la côte adriatique italienne au milieu du siècle. Les côtes italiennes dans leur ensemble apparaissaient malsaines, sous-peuplées, fragmentées de marais et de torrents et sous-équipées en routes et en ponts. Sur la façade adriatico-ionienne, Orsini comptait 27 ports, pour la plupart minuscules et sans équipements. En outre, dix étaient aux mains

¹⁸ R.J.B Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers*.

¹⁹ Anonyme, *Almanacco Reale del Regno delle Due Sicilie per l'anno 1857* (Naples: Dalla Stamperia Reale, 1857) ; Anonyme, *Almanacco toscano per l'anno 1859* (Florence, Stamperia granducale, 1859) ; Anonyme, *Il nuovo Palmaverde. Almanacco storico amministrativo del Regno d'Italia* (Turin: Tipografia di Carlo Fontana, 1859).

²⁰ F. Orsini, *Geografia militare della penisola italiana* (Turin: Cugini Pomba e comp. Editori, 1852), 422; *ad nomen in Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1949).

de l'Autriche : trois en Vénétie et sept en Istrie. Pire, les deux seuls ports en mesure de jouer un rôle stratégique étaient Venise et Trieste. Sur le reste de la façade orientale de la péninsule, seule Ancône disposait d'un port de quelque importance, mais il était totalement indéfendable. Au sud, Tarente bénéficiait d'un site exceptionnel mais était totalement en déshérence.

Un décret royal de 1857 fit de La Spezia la principale base navale du royaume de Sardaigne, mais l'arsenal ne fut inauguré qu'en 1869. Entretemps, l'Italie avait mis la main sur le plus ancien arsenal de l'Adriatique, celui de Venise, qu'elle entreprit de moderniser entre 1869 et 1873. En 1865, une commission gouvernementale choisit Tarente comme site d'implantation d'un nouvel arsenal. Il fallut toutefois plus de 15 ans d'études et de débats avant que la loi du 29 juin 1882 ne lance les travaux.²¹ Le choix de Tarente allait s'avérer propice à une politique méditerranéenne tournée vers l'Afrique, mais impropre au face-à-face avec l'Autriche en Adriatique :

« On ne trouve jusqu'à Ancône qu'un simulacre de fortifications à Brindisi, et même un port aussi important que celui de Bari est sans défense, de même que de nombreux autres ports. Celui de Venise enfin dispose de fortifications qui n'ont rien d'extraordinaires ».²²

La prise de conscience de la difficulté de la position stratégique italienne en Adriatique face à l'Autriche se fit en deux temps. En 1866, la défaite navale de Lissa, et sa jumelle terrestre de Custoza, « durant lesquelles s'écroulèrent l'estime de soi et l'image militaire de l'armée et de la flotte du tout jeune royaume »²³ prirent place dans une catégorie de la mémoire collective italienne que Mario Isnenghi qualifie de « défaites ignominieuses ». On remarquera ici que, bien avant la prise de conscience de la faiblesse économique et démographique de l'Italie unifiée, sa faiblesse militaire est éclatante, en particulier face à l'ennemi autrichien. Si la guerre franco-prussienne précisa le cadre géopolitique global dans lequel l'Italie unifiée allait devoir évoluer – un monde dangereux dans lequel n'importe quel État pouvait finir démembré et où l'Italie n'avait pratiquement plus aucun appui²⁴ – c'est la crise d'Orient de la deuxième moitié des années 1870 qui fixerait la situation en Adriatique pour plusieurs décennies.

La crise d'Orient de 1875-1881 constitue en effet la véritable entrée de l'Italie unifiée sur la scène internationale. Après la conquête de la Vénétie en

²¹ A. Tajani, *La nostra marina militare : cronistoria della marina italiana (1848-1899), cenni biografici, l'evoluzione storica e tecnica della marina italiana, il naviglio, gli stabilimenti marittimi, miscellanea* (Rome: E. Loescher, 1900), 99-105.

²² « Fino ad Ancona non c'è che un simulacro di fortificazioni che a Brindisi, e varii porti, come per esempio quello importante di Bari, sono scoperti. Infine Venezia è fortificata ma non straordinariamente », A. Tajani, *La nostra marina militare*, 112-113.

²³ M. Isnenghi, « Le due battaglie perdute, per terra e per mare, in cui precipitano l'autostima e l'immagine militare dell'esercito e della flotta del Regno neonato », in M. Isnenghi, « Le gloriose disfatte », *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 109-1, 1997, 23.

²⁴ B. Vigezzi, *L'Italia unita e le sfide della politica estera, dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica* (Milan: Unicopli, 1997), 9.

1866 et la prise de Rome en 1870, l'Italie n'est plus elle-même un enjeu des relations internationales, et l'on peut estimer la « question italienne » réglée. En règle générale, la première décennie post-unitaire est le moment d'une prise de conscience des forces et faiblesses réelles du nouvel État. C'est le temps des grandes enquêtes statistiques, à l'image de l'enquête Jacini sur l'agriculture.²⁵ En matière de politique étrangère, la crise d'Orient du milieu des années 1870 constitue le premier grand rendez-vous international depuis la guerre franco-allemande de 1870-1871, et les affaires balkaniques représentent pour l'Italie unifiée une première occasion de participer véritablement au directoire des puissances. Ce baptême du feu permet donc à l'opinion publique, mais aussi aux sphères dirigeantes elles-mêmes, de prendre conscience de la réalité des forces dont dispose le pays et des enjeux stratégiques que lui impose son assise territoriale. Si l'opinion publique situait ces grands enjeux plutôt à l'Ouest – en 1875 la France est encore dirigée par des républicains conservateurs favorables à la papauté – et au nord-est au contact de l'Autriche, le sud-est allait apparaître comme un échiquier de toute première importance, l'Italie découvrant de nouveaux enjeux de sa sécurité en Adriatique et dans les Balkans. Après Lissa, la marine italienne était moralement en déliquescence, ce qui ne l'empêchait pas dans les faits de soutenir la comparaison avec sa rivale autrichienne. En termes d'infrastructures portuaires, l'Autriche disposait d'un léger avantage, Trieste surclassant Venise et Ancône. Toutefois, en dehors de l'Istrie, qui comprenait également la magnifique rade de Pola, le littoral autrichien était peu mis en valeur.²⁶

À la suite de l'insurrection des Serbes en Bosnie-Hérzégovine de 1875, la Gauche italienne, arrivée au pouvoir l'année suivante, avait envisagé une expédition en Albanie, essentiellement pour sacrifier au volontarisme patriotique très vague qu'elle professait en matière de politique étrangère. La mission de reconnaissance du capitaine de vaisseau Vittorio Arminjon et du major Egidio Osio avait conclu à la possibilité théorique d'une occupation de l'Albanie par un corps expéditionnaire italien, qui aurait sans doute pu, en dépit de grandes difficultés logistiques, triompher des maigres garnisons turques.²⁷ Il eût fallu toutefois que la marine italienne dispose de la maîtrise de la mer. Il était sans doute trop tôt pour qu'elle ne tire les bénéfices du programme de réarmement engagé par le nouveau ministre de la marine, Benedetto Brin.²⁸ Dans l'hypothèse d'une action dans les Balkans, le problème majeur était celui du sous-équipement du sud. Le port de Brindisi était exigu, ensablé et sans protection.

²⁵ A. Carraciolo, *L'inchiesta agraria Jacini* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973).

²⁶ La décision d'implanter un arsenal à Pola remontait à 1848, mais sa construction ne débuta qu'en 1856. La structure connut son principal développement entre 1865 et 1881. I. Zingarelli, *La marina italiana* (Milan: Treves, 1915), 125.

²⁷ F. Jesné, « Les nationalités balkaniques dans le débat politique italien, de l'Unité au lendemain des Guerres Balkaniques (1861-1913) », thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris 1, 2009, 183-189.

²⁸ P. Cabanes, dir., *Histoire de l'Adriatique* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 459.

Un repli sur Tarente n'était pas non plus envisageable. En bref, l'unité avait légué à l'Italie l'ancienne frontière maritime turco-napolitaine, mais pas les moyens nécessaires à sa mise en valeur ni à sa défense. Le déséquilibre stratégique en faveur de l'Autriche s'accrut considérablement avec la saisie par la maison des Habsbourg de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine. Au vu de l'isolement dans lequel se trouvait l'Italie, il était d'ailleurs évident qu'elle aurait le dessous dans une confrontation armée avec sa voisine orientale. Les opérations décisives auraient d'ailleurs lieu en Vénétie et l'Adriatique ne serait qu'un front secondaire.

La persistance d'ambitions adriatiques

Brunello Vigezzi a montré que la défaite française de 1871 représente pour les élites italiennes un moment d'apprentissage accéléré et dramatique des nouvelles conditions en matière de relations internationales.²⁹ On peut dire que la décennie 1870 est celle de la perte des illusions puisque la crise d'Orient fait la preuve irréfutable de l'isolement de l'Italie mais aussi de la précarité de sa situation stratégique en Adriatique. Une telle phase d'apprentissage est bien entendue propice aux erreurs, d'autant que, par calcul ou par naïveté politique, beaucoup en Italie ne veulent pas voir la réalité de la situation, et s'en remettent à la rhétorique, à la mobilisation des souvenirs récents pour conjurer les périls et agiter des revendications illusives. On peut d'ailleurs peut-être comparer ce moment illusoire à celui que connut la France en 1848. Pour beaucoup, en effet, le retour de la république présageait nécessairement d'un nouveau moment de gloire nationale qui éclipserait les honteux renoncements de la monarchie de Juillet. La situation stratégique avait pourtant considérablement évolué depuis les guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire, et la France de 1848 n'était certes pas de taille à affronter l'Europe, même pour libérer l'Italie, la Pologne et les autres nations opprimées. C'est du moins ce que les républicains modérés eurent le courage de reconnaître, à la différence d'un Napoléon III qui chercha toujours à mobiliser la gloire nationale pour conforter sa légitimité défaillante.

Le modérantisme italien dut lui aussi composer avec les secteurs les plus patriotards de l'opinion publique et de la classe politique elle-même. De toutes les régions où l'Italie pouvait avoir des intérêts stratégiques, l'Adriatique concentra au cours des années 1870 l'essentiel de l'attention de ces secteurs. Il est vrai que la crise d'Orient ne pouvait manquer de faire se tourner les regards vers l'est. En outre, le patriotisme recrutait alors encore majoritairement au sein de gauches très liées à la France, ce qui limitait les velléités irrédentistes de ce côté. Une étude classique du phénomène irrédentiste date précisément de 1876 le réveil de l'irrédentisme, dix ans après la paix de 1866 qui avait vu l'Italie renoncer à ses revendications outre Isonzo³⁰.

²⁹ B. Vigezzi, *L'Italia unita e le sfide della politica estera, dal Risorgimento alla Repubblica*.

³⁰ A. Sandonà, *L'irredentismo nelle lotte politiche e nelle contese diplomatiche italo-austriache*, v. I (Bologne: Nicola Zanichelli, 1932), 64 et sq. Au sujet des ambitions italiennes en 1866, Giuseppe

L'extrême-gauche était numériquement faible, mais parvenait à garder une certaine audience dans le cadre d'un débat public limité à des secteurs étroits de la population. Elle obtint ses pics de visibilité et d'audience lors des crises austro-italiennes qui ponctuèrent les décennies post-unitaires. On citera notamment le congrès de Berlin de l'été 1878, l'affaire Oberdan en 1882, la répression des mouvements en faveur d'une université italienne en Autriche et les affrontements à la faculté de droit d'Innsbrück en 1904. L'irrédentisme était toutefois dirigé presque exclusivement vers « Trente et Trieste », plus rarement l'Istrie, mais quasiment jamais la Dalmatie.³¹ Toutefois, l'idée d'une action de diversion en Dalmatie dans le cadre d'une guerre contre l'Autriche semble avoir toujours circulé parmi les austrophobes italiens, et ce grâce au croisement de deux thématiques : celle du souvenir des interventions garibaldiennes – qui restèrent d'ailleurs souvent à l'état de rumeurs ou de projets – du *Risorgimento* à la guerre d'Orient d'une part, et la conviction que l'Autriche-Hongrie était un organisme politique malade prêt à se désagréger sous l'action des mouvements nationaux slaves notamment.

En résumé, l'Adriatique était un enjeu stratégique pour l'Italie dans l'hypothèse d'une guerre avec l'Autriche que la Triple Alliance rendait hautement improbable. Dans ce cas, l'Italie se serait trouvée dans une position très difficile car elle aurait eut le plus grand mal à protéger l'axe de communication vital qui longe sa façade adriatique face à un ennemi insaisissable, pouvant surgir de n'importe lequel des nombreux replis de sa très longue côte dalmate. L'Italie n'aurait d'ailleurs pas pu rendre les coups, la flotte autrichienne étant solidement retranchée à Pola.³² La perspective d'une action dans les Balkans survit cependant dans les écrits et les discours d'un secteur ultra-minoritaire dans l'opinion, celui des rares irrédentistes qui s'intéressent spécifiquement aux Balkans. Pour être minoritaires et isolés, ces discours existent et sont prêts à être

Stefani montrait dans un texte déjà ancien que le roi, le président du Conseil Ricasoli ainsi que les diplomates les plus liés aux exilés hongrois étaient favorables à une avancée jusqu'en Istrie. Le ministre de la Marine, Agostino Depretis, avait même donné consigne à la marine de saisir plusieurs îles dalmates. Le général Lamarmora, qui dirigeait les opérations militaires, était au contraire totalement opposé aux revendications outre-Isonzo. G. Stefani, « L'Adriatico nelle guerre del Risorgimento », in A. Tamborra, dir., *Italia del Risorgimento e mondo danubiano-balcanico. Atti del convegno organizzato dall'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, Comitato di Trieste e Gorizia, tenutosi a Trieste dal 28 al 30 aprile 1956* (Udine: Del Bianco, 1958), 139-156. Francesco Martelloni conteste toutefois cette vision, établissant une distinction entre revendications « risorgimentales » (le Trentin et l'Istrie) et « impérialistes » (la Dalmatie) : F. Martelloni, « La "Triplice Alleanza" e l'Adriatico. Dalla convenzione navale ai piani di guerra (1900-1909) », *Ricerche Storiche*, 2010-2, n. 25, 307.

³¹ Citons une exception notable, celle du prétendu « testament de Garibaldi » dû à Enrico Croce. Ce programme de revendications comprenait la Dalmatie toute entière et même Cattaro et l'Albanie. Il n'eut toutefois qu'une diffusion très limitée. E. Croce, *Testamento politico del generale Garibaldi e lettera memoranda agli italiani, colla carta politico-etnografica della nuova Europa* (Paris: Savine, 1891), cité in T. D. Djuvara, *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie (1821-1913)* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1914), chap. LXXXIII.

³² J. Gooch, *Esercito, Stato e società in Italia, 1870-1915* (Milan, Franco Angeli, 1994), 149.

mobilisés lorsque la perspective d'un affrontement austro-italien reprend de la vraisemblance au début du XX^e siècle.

Genèse des revendications italiennes outre-Adriatique

L'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine par l'Autriche-Hongrie en 1908 fit rejouer les craintes de 1878, mais cette fois dans un contexte bien différent. Le décollage industriel des premières années du XX^e siècle permettait à l'Italie de disposer de ressources accrues ; en outre, la chute de Crispi en 1896 avait permis un rapprochement avec la France. Bref, l'alliance autrichienne n'était plus la planche de salut qu'elle pouvait être à la fin des années 1870. Elle demeurait certes le cadre stratégique de la politique italienne, et fut renouvelée en 1912. À l'été 1914, le chef d'État-major était d'ailleurs prêt à engager les troupes italiennes aux côtés des Austro-Allemands, avant que le choix de la neutralité dans les premiers jours d'août ne le contraigne à revoir ses plans de fond en comble.³³ Il est vrai que depuis les premières années du XX^e siècle, le dispositif militaire italien se redéployait progressivement vers l'Est. En 1898 et 1899, deux voyages de l'État-major dans le Trentin et le Frioul avaient révélé la totale faiblesse de la frontière du Nord-Est, tous les crédits pour les chemins de fer et les fortifications ayant été employés contre la France.³⁴ À partir du début de l'année 1909, les États-majors de l'armée et de la marine étudiaient la possibilité d'une action anti-autrichienne en Adriatique ; on envisageait surtout de bloquer la marine austro-hongroise dans ses ports. Toutefois, la nécessité de saisir Valona (Vlorë) et une base en Dalmatie revenait fréquemment dans les rapports.³⁵ Les bureaux de l'État-major s'étaient d'ailleurs attelés à la planification de débarquements sur la rive orientale de l'Adriatique. Ces opérations étaient jugées impossibles au nord de Zara (Zadar), car le corps expéditionnaire italien se serait trouvé trop exposé à une attaque du gros des forces austro-hongroises déployées sur l'Isonzo ainsi qu'à l'hostilité des populations du « plateau croate » (*altiplano croato*). Les projets offensifs reposaient donc sur le Monténégro, soit que ses forces appuient un débarquement dans la région de Raguse (Dubrovnik) en vue de menacer Mostar et Sarajevo, soit que les troupes italiennes débarquent directement dans le port monténégrin d'Antivari afin de menacer la base autrichienne de Cattaro (Kotor).³⁶ Si la réalisation d'un tel projet aurait certainement rencontré des difficultés militaires et logistiques considérables, elle restait plausible sur un plan diplomatique,

³³ G. E. Rusconi, *L'azzardo del 1915. Come l'Italia decide la sua guerra* (Bologne, Il Mulino, 2005), 36.

³⁴ J. Gooch, *Esercito, Stato e società in Italia*, 149.

³⁵ M. Gabriele, G. Friz, *La politica navale italiana dal 1885 al 1915* (Rome; Ufficio storico della Marina militare, 1982), 333. ; F. Martelloni, « La "Triplice Alleanza" e l'Adriatico. Dalla convenzione navale ai piani di guerra (1900-1909) », *Ricerche Storiche*, 2010-2, 332-342.

³⁶ *Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore*, G22-52, « sbarchi sulle coste dalmate », « sbarchi sulle coste monténégrine ».

l'Italie ayant patiemment augmenté son influence au Monténégro, à travers notamment le mariage en 1896 du futur Victor-Emmanuel III avec la princesse Hélène.³⁷

En annexant les deux ex-provinces ottomanes – où elle était militairement présente depuis 1878 – l'Autriche-Hongrie était censée avoir acquis un avantage stratégique écrasant en Adriatique.³⁸ Ce thème se popularisa dans la presse et la littérature italienne au point qu'il devint un lieu commun du débat politique, répété à l'envi en 1915 alors qu'un engagement aux côtés de l'Entente se laissait entrevoir. Italo Zingarelli, journaliste au *Corriere della Sera*, exposait le péril autrichien en ces termes :

« La côte autrichienne de l'Adriatique, qui présente, comme on l'a dit, de nombreux obstacles naturels, offre plusieurs refuges sûrs et de puissantes bases navales à la flotte de la monarchie danubienne. Des bases de torpilleurs sont disséminées tout le long de ligne de côte, soit, en allant de Pola vers le canal d'Otrante, à Lussino, Zara, Sebenico, Spalato et Raguse. Après les derniers événements balkaniques Sebenico a été choisie comme base navale et se trouve sous le commandement d'un contre-amiral. Fiume, où se trouvent des bassins pour navires de tout tonnage, est également une base aérienne. Cattaro et Pola sont également deux places extrêmement fortes, toutes deux bases aériennes ».³⁹

La question du déséquilibre stratégique n'était pas neuve, et avait notamment été versée au débat récurrent sur la légitimité de l'alliance autrichienne. En revanche, elle intègre l'argumentaire déployé en faveur des annexions adriatiques au moment des débats sur l'intervention de 1915. Comme dans tout litige territorial, ce corpus articule des arguments historiques, culturels, économiques et stratégiques. C'est toutefois ces derniers qui semblent avoir été le plus volontiers convoqués pour la revendication de la Dalmatie, tant il est vrai que son italianité comme son intérêt économique étaient moins flagrants que dans le cas de Trieste.

³⁷ C. Duggan, *Creare la nazione. Vita di Francesco Crispi* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2000), 862., et A. Sbutega, *Storia del Montenegro. Dalle origini ai giorni nostri* (Soveria Marinelli: Rubbettino, 2006), 310.

³⁸ La Première Guerre mondiale montra que la configuration du littoral istro-dalmate se prêtait parfaitement à la guérilla maritime, laquelle contraignit le commandement italien à renoncer à la mythique « bataille décisive » au profit d'un harcèlement des forces ennemies dans leurs bases grâce à des moyens légers. Ferrante, (Ezio), « La marine italienne pendant la Première Guerre mondiale », in M. Ostenc, dir., *La marine italienne de l'Unité à nos jours* (Paris: Economica, 2005), 53-86.

³⁹ « *La costa austriaca dell'Adriatico, alle cui difficoltà naturali si è già accennato, offre varî tranquilli rifugi alla flotta della Monarchia danubiana e potenti basi navali. Lungo tutta la linea costiera sono disseminati stazioni per siluranti – dirigendosi da Pola verso il canale d'Otranto – a Lussino, Zara, Sebenico, Spalato e Ragusa. Sebenico è stata scelta come stazione navale dopo gli ultimi avvenimenti balcanici. ed è al comando di un contrammiraglio. Fiume, dove si trovano bacini per grandi e piccole navi, è altresì una base per apparecchi aerei. Due potentissime piazzaforti sono Cattaro e Pola, ambedue basi per aerei* », in I. Zingarelli, *La marina italiana* (Milan: Treves, 1915), 124.

Dans les mois qui précèdent l'intervention italienne, le Président du Conseil, Antonio Salandra, et son ministre des Affaires étrangères, Sidney Sonnino, hésitèrent longtemps avant de prendre un parti, la neutralité permettant à la fois de se tenir prêt à attaquer l'Autriche en cas de défaite des empires centraux, et d'obtenir des compensations en cas de victoire de ces derniers. De la sphère de décision émanèrent alors des conseils de revendications adriatiques minimales, susceptibles d'être obtenues d'une Autriche-Hongrie affaiblie mais non anéantie. Pour le secrétaire général des *Esteri*, Giacomo De Martino, il fallait se concentrer sur l'Albanie;⁴⁰ c'est ce que croyait également le chef d'État-major de la marine, pour qui la possession de Valona permettrait de clore l'Adriatique pour peu que l'on parvienne à mettre la main sur Pola et au moins sur les îles de Cherso (Cres) et Lussino (Lošinj).⁴¹ Avant même de devenir le ministre des Affaires étrangères de Salandra, Sonnino le poussait à une politique active en direction de Valona ; il estimait en effet que la saisie du port albanais serait utile à l'Italie dans tous les cas de figure.⁴² De fait, l'ilot de Saseno (Sazan) est occupé avant que Sonnino ne fasse son entrée au gouvernement ; il faut dire que la Grèce, dont les deux camps belligérants se disputent les faveurs, avance en Épire et paraît convoiter Valona. Le contentieux italo-grec était vieux de plusieurs années et devait être intégré à la situation nouvelle engendré par le conflit européen.⁴³ Une fois Sonnino devenu ministre des Affaires étrangères, l'Italie occupe le port de Valona le 31 décembre 1914.

Dès le 16 février 1915, toutefois, Sonnino transmettait à l'ambassadeur à Londres, Guglielmo Imperiali, le brouillon des conditions d'une entrée en guerre de l'Italie aux côtés de l'Entente. Dès cette première version, les revendications italiennes comprennent, en plus du Trentin, de l'Istrie et des îles du Quarnero, de Valona, la Dalmatie toute entière.⁴⁴ C'est entre les 26 et 27 février que Sonnino et Salandra décidèrent de passer à l'action, en consultant d'abord les chefs d'État-major et le roi avant d'approcher les pays de l'Entente, et ce tout en lançant des manœuvres dilatoires destinées à éviter que les puissances centrales ne lancent à l'Italie un ultimatum trop précoce.⁴⁵

Une fois la décision prise, le duo put s'appuyer sur la presse interventionniste, active depuis l'été 1914, et au sein de laquelle le *Giornale d'Italia* jouait un rôle majeur. Il était l'organe officieux du gouvernement de Salandra,

⁴⁰ *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (désormais *DDI*), s. 5, v. 2, d. 795, rapport de De Martino à Sonnino, Rome, 11 février 1915.

⁴¹ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 750, mémoire 157 rr. p. de Thaon Di Revel à Sonnino, Rome, 1^{er} février 1915.

⁴² B. Vigezzi, *I problemi della neutralità e della guerra nel carteggio Salandra-Sonnino (1914-1917)* (Milan: Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1962), 18 et sq.

⁴³ Jesné, (Fabrice), « Militaires et diplomates italiens face aux déplacements contraints de populations dans les Balkans. Enjeux politiques et territoriaux », in O. Forcade, Olivier, dir., *Les réfugiés dans l'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (Paris, Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2008), 113-130.

⁴⁴ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 816, d. r. sp. 1 de Sonnino à Imperiali, Rome, 16 février 1915.

⁴⁵ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 868, l. p. de Sonnino à Salandra, Rome, 26 février 1915, et 874, l. p. de Salandra à Sonnino, Rome, 27 février 1915.

co-fondateur de ce quotidien avec Sonnino. Depuis les premières années du siècle, le groupe de Sidney Sonnino tentait de structurer les forces politiques conservatrices et soutenait de plus en plus clairement un programme impérialiste d'abord porté par les nationalistes. Étant donné le poids politique du *Giornale d'Italia*, nous avons cherché à caractériser ses efforts de mobilisation de l'opinion publique en faveur d'annexions adriatiques. Du dépouillement de ce journal, ressortent quelques éléments marquants. D'abord, la faiblesse relative de la présence de la question adriatique dans les colonnes du périodique jusque dans les dernières semaines précédant l'intervention. Ensuite, le caractère vague et peu informé des revendications.

En septembre 1913, l'un des plus célèbres journalistes italiens, Luigi Barzini, avait mené une enquête dans les Terres Irrédentes pour le *Corriere della Sera*.⁴⁶ Le reportage rendait compte des tensions nationales croissantes dans ces régions et fit forte impression. A la fin de l'année 1914, l'irrédentiste dalmate Antonio Cippico avait écrit dans le *Giornale d'Italia* une série d'articles exaltant l'italianité de la Dalmatie, et se vantait d'avoir l'appui « des plus hauts personnages du gouvernement », lesquels s'en défendaient en privé.⁴⁷ Les premières semaines de 1915 marquent en revanche une pause, l'essentiel de la question adriatique relevant plutôt des suites de la question de Valona. En janvier-février 1915, l'essentiel des titres étaient consacrés à un tremblement de terre dans les Abruzzes et aux opérations caritatives qui s'ensuivirent, Salandra confiant à Sonnino la nécessité de « digérer le tremblement de terre » avant d'engager l'Italie dans le conflit.⁴⁸

Ce n'est qu'à partir du mois d'avril que la question adriatique occupe régulièrement la une du *Giornale d'Italia*. Toutefois, un article paru dès mars peut nous éclairer sur la connaissance de la question adriatique que pouvait avoir alors l'opinion italienne. Significativement intitulé « Studiamo le Terre Irredenti », il apparaissait dans l'édition du 17 mars 1915, sur la fameuse *terza pagina* qui avait fait l'originalité du journal et où intervenaient les plus grandes plumes du libéralisme.⁴⁹ On y insistait sur la nécessaire pédagogie de la situation en Adriatique, en recommandant des ouvrages dus à deux irrédentistes, Arturo Galanti et Adriano Colocci. Galanti avait écrit un ouvrage sur l'Albanie, lequel avait été édité et promu par la société *Dante Alighieri*,⁵⁰ ainsi que divers articles consacrés à l'expansion italienne dans les Balkans et à l'irrédentisme.⁵¹

⁴⁶ D. Corucci, *Luigi Barzini (1874-1947)* (Pérouse: Quattroemme, 2000), 32.

⁴⁷ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 688, Imperiali à Sonnino, t. cab. rr. 147/17, Londres, 23 janvier 1915. En réalité, Salandra considérait ses initiatives comme intempestives, du moins en janvier 1915 : *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 697, l. p. de Salandra à Sonnino, Rome, 25 janvier 1915.

⁴⁸ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 2, d. 671, l. p. de Salandra à Sonnino, Rome, 22 janvier 1915.

⁴⁹ « Studiamo le Terre Irredenti », *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 17 mars 1915, 3.

⁵⁰ A. Galanti, *L'Albania. Notizie geografiche, etnografiche e storiche* (Rome, Dante Alighieri, 1901), 261.

⁵¹ Par exemple A. Galanti, (Arturo), « L'Italia furori de' suoi confini politici », *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, 27, 1890, 1013.

Adriano Colocci, patricien toscan, était de toutes les causes, de l'émancipation des peuples balkaniques à l'irrédentisme en passant par la colonisation. Aventureur, il était aussi polygraphe et publia des ouvrages sur les sujets les plus divers. Comme beaucoup d'irrédentistes, le début du siècle le vit passer de la démocratie au nationalisme ; bien avant le début du conflit mondial, il exaltait la latinité de la Méditerranée et appelait à contenir les Slaves. En 1915, il se joignit au chœur des revendications maximalistes en Adriatique.⁵²

A vrai dire, ces deux auteurs étaient plutôt d'obscurs plumitifs que des experts reconnus. Toutefois les nécessités du moment conduisirent la rédaction du *Giornale* à faire feu de tout bois et à exhumer ces travaux confidentiels. L'article de pédagogie irrédentiste recommandait également les productions de l'institut géographique De Agostini, de Novare, notamment une « *carta etnica della Regione Veneta e terre finitime* ». ⁵³ Dans un ouvrage de propagande yougoslave paru en français au début de 1918, on avait beau jeu de moquer le retournement soudain des faiseurs d'opinion italiens, que l'on datait tout particulièrement de la création, le 9 mai 1915, de l'association *Pro Dalmazia Italiana* :

« Après avoir voté [son] ordre du jour, l'Association « Pro Dalmazia Italiana » s'est prodiguée de mille manières pour faire connaître son évangile, favorisant l'institution de comités et de sous-comités à travers toute l'Italie, publiant des livres, des articles de journaux et de revues, des opuscules, des cartes géographiques de la Dalmatie, donnant des conférences publiques, en un mot faisant une propagande des plus intenses, comme on n'en fit pas même, dans n'importe quelle partie du monde, pour les questions les plus vitales qui agitent l'Europe en guerre ». ⁵⁴

⁵² A. Colocci, *Prima l'Adriatico !* (Florence: Ferrante Gonnelli, 1915), 56, et *Carta base per raggruppamento delle Nazionalità nell'I. R. Monarchia e Stati limitrofi* (Novare: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1915). Cf. S. Anselmi, *ad nomen in Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, v. 27.

⁵³ A. Dardano, *La regione veneta e le Alpi nostre : dalle fonti dell'Adige al Quarnero. Carta etno-linguistica* (Novare: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1915).

⁵⁴ Dalmaticus, *La question de la Dalmatie* (Genève : Georg et Cie., 1918), 9. L'ouvrage offre un panorama très complet des publications italiennes en faveur d'une annexion de la Dalmatie : M. Alberti, *Adriatico e Mediterraneo* (Milan: Rava et Cie, 1915) ; G. Cassi, *Il mare Adriatico Sua funzione attraverso i tempi* (Milan: Hoepli, 1915) ; Collectif, *La Dalmazia : sua italianità, suo valore per la libertà d'Italia nell'Adriatico* (Gênes: Formiggini, 1915) ; Anonyme, *L'Adriatico : studio geografico, storico e politico* (Milan: Treves, 1915) ; I. Baccich, *Fiume, il Quarnero e gl'interessi d'Italia nell'Adriatico* (Turin: L'Orà Presente, 1915) ; A. Dudan, *Dalmazia e Italia* (Milan, Rava et Cie, 1915). Ces travaux étaient présentés comme des écrits de circonstances, en contradiction avec le savoir géographique et géopolitique accumulé dans les décennies post-unitaires : Collectif, *Geografia storica moderna, etc.*, v. I (Milan: Francesco Pagnoni, 1857) ; A. Amati, *Il confine orientale d'Italia* (Milan: Editori della biblioteca utile, 1869) ; G. Boccardo, *Nuova Enciclopedia Italiana*, v. 11 (Turin: Unione Tipografica Editrice Torinese, 1881) ; A. D'Alia, *La Dalmazia, le regioni limitrofe e l'Adriatico* (Bologne, Zanichelli, 1914) ; R. Fabris, *Il confine orientale d'Italia* (Rome, Alessandro Manzoni, 1878) ; G. Mazzini, *Lettere slave*, [1857], in Collectif, *Edizione nazionale degli scritti editi ed inediti di Giuseppe Mazzini*, v. 69, "politica" v. 20, 15-37 ; E. Giaccone, *Nuovo dizionario geografico universale ad uso del popolo italiano*, 2e éd. (Florence: Casa Ed. Nerbini, 1913) ; G. Prezzolini, *La Dalmazia* (Florence: Libreria della Voce, 1915) ; L. Schiaparelli, *Manuale completo di geografia e statistica per uso delle famiglie, degl'istituti d'educazione privata e delle scuole classiche, tecniche, normali e magistrali del Regno d'Italia*, 13e éd. (Turin: T. Vaccarino, 1879) ; A. Saffi, *Le provincie*

Depuis près d'un demi-siècle, l'irréductibilisme italien s'était effectivement concentré sur le Trentin et l'Istrie et ignorait généralement la Dalmatie ; c'est dans les semaines précédant l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie en mai 1915 que cette revendication fut véritablement formulée. A partir d'avril, le litige territorial austro-italien en Adriatique fut ainsi régulièrement évoqué en une du *Giornale d'Italia*. Dès le 3 avril, l'éditorial affirmait que le principe des nationalités, qualifié de discutabile, devait s'effacer devant les arguments stratégiques, selon lesquels l'essentiel de la côte autrichienne devait revenir aux Slaves, à la condition que l'Italie soit en possession de positions fortes qui n'étaient pas précisées.⁵⁵ A la fin du mois, le journal expédia un correspondant en Dalmatie. Les trois étapes du voyage d'Achille De Benedetti renvoyaient des échos différents : de Zara, il insistait sur l'italianité monumentale et culturelle, autour des souvenirs de Rome et Venise. De Spalato (Split), il mettait en avant les vexations dont les Italiens étaient victimes. Enfin, il reconnaissait l'exiguïté de la communauté italienne de Raguse mais insistait sur l'italophilie de la population.⁵⁶

Les revendications étaient variées et généralement assez vagues, mais tranchaient avec pratiquement un demi-siècle d'irréductibilisme dans la mesure où elles faisaient plus ou moins ouvertement fi du principe des nationalités et ne se limitaient plus à l'Istrie. Le journal officieux de Salandra et Sonnino recueillait et distillait en somme les revendications les plus maximalistes qui seraient incluses dans le pacte de Londres signé par les mêmes à la fin du mois d'avril.⁵⁷ Bien qu'il fût secret, il n'en était pas moins contesté en privé par Luigi Albertini, directeur de l'autre grand journal libéral, le *Corriere della Sera*, dont la ligne était pourtant moins proche des nationalistes que celle du *Giornale d'Italia*. Pour Albertini, Salandra et Sonnino avaient commis l'erreur d'abandonner Split à la Serbie et Fiume (Rijeka) à la Croatie.⁵⁸

En quelques semaines, une frénésie expansionniste s'était emparée des libéraux, qui puisaient dans un répertoire de revendications ancien mais qui

italiane soggette all'Austria (Trieste: Circolo Garibaldi, 1891); N. Tommaseo, *La questione dalmatica riguardata ne'suoi nuovi aspetti* (Zara: Battara, 1861); Anonyme, *L'Italia sotto l'aspetto fisico, storico, letterario, artistico e statistico* (Milan: Francescos Vallardi, 1878), 3 v. ; Anonyme, *Enciclopedia moderna illustrata : Dizionario universale di cognizioni utili, compilato da professori delle singole specialità (piccolo lexicon Vallardi)* (Milan: Vallardi, 1898-1904), 10 v. ; P. Valussi, *L'Adriatico in relazione agli interessi nazionali dell'Italia* (Udine: Jacob et Colmegna, 1871).

⁵⁵ « L'Italia, la Russia, gli slavi e l'Adriatico », *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 3 avril, 1.

⁵⁶ A. De Benedetti, « Crociera d'un nostro redattore nella Dalmazia. Tre giorni a Zara. Speranze italiane, rigori austriaci », « Il "Giornale d'Italia" in Dalmazia. Italiani e croati a Spalato », « Il "Giornale d'Italia" in Dalmazia. Speranze dei croati dalmati », « Il "Giornale d'Italia" in Dalmazia. La sorte della "Nizza adriatica" », 29 avril, 1^{er}, 4 et 9 mai 1915, 1, 1-2, 3 et 9.

⁵⁷ *DDI*, s. 5, v. 3, d. 470, accords de Londres, 26 avril 1915. Par l'article 5, l'Italie recevait la Dalmatie autrichienne et ses îles au nord du cap Planka ; le reste de la province devait être neutralisé et attribué aux Serbo-Monténégrins. L'article 6 lui attribuait la région de Valona, du fleuve Voïussa au nord de la Chimara.

⁵⁸ L. Albertini, *Epistolario 1911-1926*. t. 1, *Dalla guerra di Libia alla Grande Guerra*, (Milano: Arnaldo Mondadori Editore, 1968), XXXV + 387.

avait toujours été parcellaire et ultra-minoritaire. En 1919, le duo Orlando-Sonnino tentera la même opération de récupération des mots d'ordre nationalistes, sans succès face à l'intransigeance des alliés et à la lassitude de l'opinion publique, qui donna lors des élections de novembre une majorité aux partis les plus éloignés de l'expansionnisme, socialistes et populaires ; comme en 1915, toutefois, les aspirations du peuple italien seront bafouées, le coup de force fasciste relançant une politique d'aventure dans les Balkans.

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TRIESTE ET FIUME, DEUX ASPECTS DE L'IRRÉDENTISME ITALIEN 1867-1914

Résumé: L'irrédentisme italien a ciblé son action sur deux cités portuaires de la côte adriatique, Trieste et Fiume, dont la situation administrative et la composition ethnique avaient peu de similitude. Dans la structure dualiste de la Monarchie des Habsbourg, la première appartenait à la partie autrichienne, et elle était peuplée par une majorité italienne et une minorité de Slovènes, tandis que la seconde représentait le débouché sur l'Adriatique de la Hongrie, avec une majorité relative italienne et une forte minorité croate. Dans les deux cités, l'action italienne était dirigée contre l'autorité centrale, mais elle avait comme cible privilégiée surtout la minorité slave. Le conflit, à la fois politique et national, se déclinait dans l'administration locale et dans la vie culturelle et associative, amplement commenté et relaté par la presse locale des deux communautés. Le Royaume italien tout proche et l'importance de la communauté italienne, accordaient une importance singulière au mouvement irrédentiste triestin. En revanche, l'éloignement de Fiume et son isolement dans une région exclusivement croate, rendaient l'action italienne moins efficace.

Mots clés: *L'Autriche-Hongrie, Trieste, Fiume, irrédentisme, Italiens, Slovènes, Croates.*

Pourquoi tenter de comparer, dans le cadre d'une étude sur l'irrédentisme italien, deux villes que la situation juridique et la taille très différentes semblent au contraire éloigner ? La littérature contemporaine ne s'embarrassait pas de ces scrupules et les rapprochait volontiers, tant pour des raisons de concurrence économique, que pour des raisons politiques. Dans l'abondante production des irrédentistes, l'Adriatique et le Trentin sont les points de fixation des revendications italiennes : or la quasi totalité de ces territoires sont sous administration autrichienne – on verra la thématique particulière du port franc de

Trieste – tandis qu'une infime proportion revient aux Hongrois sous la forme du *corpus separatum* de Fiume et de la côte dalmate sous l'administration autonome du gouvernement de Croatie-Slavonie.

La concentration des revendications italiennes sur Trieste s'explique aisément par l'importance commerciale et économique de son port dont découle un poids démographique considérable. Mais pourquoi Fiume plutôt que Zara (Zadar), Spalato (Split) ou encore Ragusa (Dubrovnik) ? Ces cités portuaires sont également possession autrichienne et à cet égard ne bénéficient naturellement pas de l'attention que la monarchie accorde à Trieste, elles sont de bien moindre taille et ne peuvent en aucun cas lutter contre la capitale de l'Istrie, elles sont en quelque sorte considérées comme déjà « perdues » et l'argumentaire se concentre ici sur la culture et la résistance en matière scolaire. Fiume en revanche constitue l'unique débouché maritime de la Hongrie dualiste et recueille elle aussi tout l'intérêt du gouvernement hongrois qui veut développer son potentiel économique – contre Trieste et l'Autriche à terme – et y investit donc beaucoup en hommes et en infrastructures.

Les deux grands ports de la monarchie habsbourgeoise ont donc plus d'un point commun, à quoi on peut rajouter l'ancienneté de la domination des deux entités, autrichienne et hongroise, sur les deux villes. L'écart de taille entre elles n'est donc pas déterminant pour notre propos, il n'y aurait pas de « size dependency » en matière d'irrédentisme, c'est ce que nous allons essayer d'examiner dans cette contribution. Il nous semble en effet que la comparaison est pertinente malgré les différences de taille et de poids économique.

Dans les deux cas, l'autorité est exercée – directement ou indirectement – par une population extrêmement minoritaire, Allemands (Autrichiens) et Hongrois vue par les autochtones comme un élément étranger. Les élites locales sont italiennes mais relèvent respectivement de Vienne et de Budapest. Les populations slaves (Slovènes et Croates) qui forment le troisième élément constitutif de la population sont en retrait : avant la fin du siècle elles sont peu implantées en ville mais peuplent au contraire l'hinterland qui est au mieux mixte comme en Istrie (Italiens, Slovènes et Croates) ou presque homogène (Croates et Slovènes) en Dalmatie septentrionale. Les Allemands et les Hongrois sont absents de ces régions et n'exercent donc pas d'influence démographique en dehors de la ville-même. S'il n'y a pas de « size dependency » en ce qui concerne l'irrédentisme, on peut avancer qu'il existe en revanche une « distance dependency » qui joue incontestablement en faveur de Trieste. L'éloignement du *Regno* et des régions de fort peuplement italien affaiblit la capacité et les outils de résistance des Italiens, c'est aussi une des raisons de l'importance de Trieste face aux cités dalmates plus lointaines. L'absence de continuité territoriale est un élément essentiel du fonctionnement et à terme du succès de l'irrédentisme. L'influence et le poids démographique des *regnicoli* est considérable à Trieste mais reste peu mesurable à Fiume qui est bien moins attractive pour l'émigration italienne en provenance du *Regno*.

Enfin Trieste est une ville véritablement cosmopolite, ce que n'est pas Fiume : Grecs, Turcs, Britanniques, Suisses, Levantins de toutes origines, juifs, se sont mêlés et se mêlent à Trieste dont les opportunités commerciales et désormais industrielles attirent les entrepreneurs. Or il semble que ce mélange n'entre pas dans le discours irrédentiste et on pourrait donc suggérer que dans ce cas précis, le nationalisme n'est pas forcément l'ennemi du cosmopolitisme. L'argumentaire irrédent ne cible pas les étrangers : il entièrement tourné contre le pouvoir central et les Slaves. Dans les deux cas Allemands et Hongrois sont considérés – tout est relatif – comme des égaux, alors que les Slaves sont systématiquement rabaissés. L'irrédentisme fait son miel des stéréotypes et des images de l'autre véhiculés par la presse, notamment illustrée, de l'époque.

La base de l'irrédentisme reste identique pour les deux villes mais nous allons voir que le contenu et la manière de le formuler varie considérablement selon un certain nombre de critères : forces en présence, historicité, distance (par rapport au pouvoir central et au *Regno*), poids économique de la ville.

Deux sociétés très différenciées

Même si l'on ne peut pas parler de cosmopolitisme pour Fiume, le caractère multinational et multiconfessionnel des deux villes est évident. La majorité de la population demeure certes italienne et catholique, mais la plupart des slaves, Slovènes et Croates, sont également de confession catholique, ce qui n'est pas sans conséquence sur le plan politique, nous y reviendrons. En 1910 Trieste est la quatrième ville de la monarchie derrière Vienne, Budapest et Prague (de peu) ; elle fait presque jeu égal avec Lemberg, à l'extrémité orientale de l'Empire.

Population de Trieste en %	1880	1890	1900	1910
Italiens	61,36	63,53	65,41	51,83
Slovènes	18,13	17,6	13,81	24,79
Allemands	3,54	4,51	4,97	5,16
Croates et Serbes	0,08	0,25	0,25	1,04
Total	144844	157466	178599	229510

Le nombre de citoyens italiens, les *regnicoli* est alors évalué à 30 000 personnes¹ sur 38 597 étrangers.² La présence des militaires est très relative et proportion-

¹ E. Curtis, « Die Bevölkerungsstruktur von Triest im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert », in Gerhard Dienes (dir.), *Translokale. Neun Städte im Netz 1848-1918*, Catalogue d'exposition (Graz: Stadtmuseum, 1996), 87.

² Guerrino Perselli, *I censimenti della popolazione dell'Istria, con Fiume e Trieste, e di alcune città della Dalmazia tra il 1850 e il 1936* (Fiume: Unione Italiana, Università popolare di Trieste, Trieste-Rovigno, Centro di ricerche Storiche Rovigno, Etnia IV, 1993), 430.

nellement faible en comparaison d'autres villes de l'Empire, ce qui est le cas également à Fiume.³ Si l'on regarde maintenant les statistiques hongroises pour Fiume,⁴ on en tire immédiatement un certain nombre de constats :

Population de Fiume en %	1880	1890	1900	1910
Italiens	43,25	44,11	44,9	48,61
Croates	38,08	36,51	19,24	25,95
Slovènes	12,47	10,46	8,96	4,69
Magyars	1,82	3,6	14,32	13,03
Allemands	4,26	5,06	7,29	4,64
Total	20981	29494	38955	49806

La proportion des Italiens se maintient voire augmente, ce qui contredit bien entendu la propagande irrédentiste qui présente les deux villes comme « envahies » par des hordes slaves. À Fiume c'est même le contraire qui se produit puisque le nombre de Croates et de Slovènes baisse considérablement, pour deux raisons essentielles : assimilation et émigration. À l'inverse de ce qui se passe dans la Hongrie de l'intérieur, l'augmentation du nombre de Hongrois n'est pas tant due à l'assimilation des autres composantes (Allemands, juifs), qu'à l'arrivée continue dans la ville de fonctionnaires et employés de l'État central. On en veut pour preuve que ces personnes disparaissent quasi totalement après 1918, elles ne se sont pas enracinées. La magyarisation n'a pas lieu, tout comme Trieste n'est pas germanisée, malgré les discours alarmistes des irrédentistes. Il est plus difficile de mesurer ce qui se passe dans les environs : à Trieste, les communes du *territorio* sont largement slovènes, ce qui a des effets non seulement sur la politique municipale mais après 1907 et l'introduction du suffrage universel en Autriche, aussi sur l'équilibre des partis politiques. Barriera Nuova, Barriera Vecchia, Città Nuova, Città Vecchia San Giacomo et San Vito sont à moitié italiennes, mais les *sobborghi* de Trieste (Chiadino, Chiarbola, Cologna, Gretta, Guardiella, Roiano, Rozzol, Santa Maria Maddalena inferiore, Santa Maria Maddalena superiore, Scorcola) sont à majorité slovène. Au recensement de 1890 on leur ajoute Barcola, puis en 1900 Servola et Longera qui sont situées sur l'Altopiano.⁵ Fiume en tant que *corpus separatum* est dans une situation différente et c'est la commune mitoyenne de Sušak qui sert de repli aux Croates puisqu'elle appartient à la juridiction croato-slavone.

³ La garnison de Trieste comptait 2 392 hommes en 1910. Ils sont compris dans les recensements. À titre indicatif ils sont 3 623 à Brünn pour 125 000 habitants et plus de 10 000 à Lemberg, ville dont la population est comparable à celle de Trieste, mais dont l'importance stratégique pour la monarchie est plus grande. Fiume a environ 900 militaires en 1900, ce qui aussi relativement modeste par rapport à d'autres villes de Hongrie. Les garnisons sont un élément du multiculturalisme.

⁴ Rappelons que dans la partie autrichienne de la monarchie le recensement prend en compte la langue usuelle (*Umgangssprache*) alors que la partie hongroise enregistre la langue maternelle.

⁵ Toutes sont agrégées à la ville en 1921. Perselli, *I censimenti della popolazione dell'Istria*, 430.

Les Slaves de Trieste sont confrontés à l'irrédentisme italien mais jouissent en revanche d'une certaine sollicitude du pouvoir central (au grand dam des nationalistes), tandis que les Croates de Fiume sont dans une situation plus complexe : face aux Italiens farouchement autonomistes, et dans une certaine mesure aux Hongrois, mais dans les deux cas l'essentiel de la confrontation oppose Italiens et Slaves. À cet égard Fiume est un cas particulier dans l'histoire des relations entre Hongrois et Croates et on ne peut pas comparer les tensions qui existent entre le pouvoir central hongrois et le gouvernement de Croatie-Slavonie avec la situation à Fiume qui introduit un élément tiers, les Italiens, et qui repose sur un statut juridique qui échappe (à leurs dépens) aux Croates. La volonté de réunification du royaume triunitaire de Croatie-Slavonie-Dalmatie butte non seulement sur l'hostilité de Vienne, mais aussi sur l'opposition des élites italiennes du littoral (*Küstenland*).

La diversité nationale et linguistique est atténuée par une certaine homogénéité religieuse, mais les chiffres sont ici très trompeurs :

Les confessions religieuses en 1910	Fiume	Trieste
Catholiques	96,58	94,9
Orthodoxes	0,49	0,86
Luthériens	0,76	0,82
Calvinistes	0,33	0,25
Juifs	1,66	2,39

L'apparente domination des catholiques dans les deux villes reflète bien sûr le fait que la majorité de la population est composée d'Italiens, Slovènes et Croates. Mais les Allemands et les Hongrois sont eux aussi le plus souvent catholiques. Les calvinistes de Trieste sont des Suisses pour la plupart tandis que ceux de Fiume ne sont pas des « étrangers », mais des Hongrois ! Les luthériens sont essentiellement des Allemands. Les orthodoxes de Trieste sont des Serbes et des Grecs, voire des Arméniens (certains étant toutefois catholiques ou protestants), mais à Fiume ce sont surtout des Serbes. Les juifs semblent constituer un groupe très modeste au regard de nombreuses autres villes de l'Empire : là encore le nombre ne correspond pas à la réalité sur le terrain. La communauté juive de Trieste est composée de juifs italiens de rite séfarade et de juifs allemands venus de tout l'Empire et dont le rite est ashkénaze. Leur rôle dans la vie économique et culturelle de la ville est inversement proportionnel à leur poids numérique, à tel point qu'ils sont vus – en partie à juste titre – par les Slovènes, comme des alliés du nationalisme italien. À Fiume leur position est différente puisque la communauté est formée de juifs italiens en très petit nombre, et de juifs hongrois. Le facteur juif et par conséquent l'antisémitisme ne joue pratiquement aucun rôle à Fiume alors qu'il en va tout autrement à Trieste : dans le conflit entre Croates et Italiens à Fiume, les juifs n'apparaissent pas comme un élément d'instrumentalisation et ils ne sont pas actifs en tant

que tels. Leur visibilité est en revanche évidente à Trieste, ils sont acteurs de la politique municipale et de la vie associative au travers d'activités caritatives, culturelles, sportives.

Les juifs représentent à la fois la population la plus polyglotte, mais aussi la plus alphabétisée. Fiume figure à cet égard honorablement parmi les autres villes de Hongrie et largement au-delà des chiffres enregistrés pour la Dalmatie et même certaines régions de Croatie-Slavonie : en 1880, 60,73 % des hommes et 46,67 % des femmes savaient lire et écrire,⁶ et ce pourcentage continue à augmenter régulièrement (74,19 et 59,18 en 1890),⁷ le retard des femmes étant une constante qui ne s'efface que progressivement. L'enseignement est en italien, tout comme à Trieste, ce qui vient relativiser une fois de plus la prétendue magyarisation et son corollaire la germanisation. Ainsi même si le pourcentage de locuteurs du hongrois augmente à Fiume, il reste presque entièrement circonscrit aux Hongrois eux-mêmes et ce sont eux qui apprennent l'italien et non l'inverse! En 1880, 2,30 % des habitants parlaient le hongrois et ils étaient 5,93 % en 1890,⁸ ce qui représente certes plus du double mais dans le même temps la population hongroise a elle aussi augmenté.

En effet si l'on regarde de nouveau les statistiques de la population, on est frappé par l'essor enregistré dans les deux villes durant la décennie 1900-1910 : à Fiume il se fait indubitablement au profit des Hongrois et à Trieste au profit des slaves. Objectivement il ne semble pas raisonnable que 119 000 Italiens se sentent menacés par 57 000 Slovènes, mais tout était alors de l'ordre du discours et de la représentation. L'essentiel de cet apport est dû à l'industrialisation qui s'accélère dans les deux villes, encouragé par les autorités locales et centrales qui, en dépit ce que veulent faire croire les irrédentistes, ont tout intérêt à moderniser et à développer les infrastructures portuaires, industrielles et commerciales, même dans un esprit de concurrence entre elles. Comme dans la plupart des villes de l'Empire, la ville attire surtout les populations rurales qui vivent dans son immédiat environnement, or cet hinterland est souvent habité par une nationalité différente, des Slovènes dans le cas de Trieste. Ils viennent non seulement travailler dans les nouvelles entreprises grosses demandeuses de main d'œuvre, mais ils s'installent aussi dans les quartiers périphériques proches, entraînant ainsi une modification de l'équilibre national. Ce phénomène s'observe dans bien des centres urbains de la monarchie. À Fiume, ce sont les Croates de Sušak qui sont employés dans les industries situées précisément de ce côté de la ville : ils n'ont donc pas besoin de déménager

⁶ *A magyar korona országában az 1881. év elején végrehajtott népszámlálás eredményei* [Résultats du recensement effectué dans les pays de la couronne hongroise au début de l'année 1881], (Budapest, 1882), 237

⁷ *A magyar korona országában az 1891. év elején végrehajtott népszámlálás eredményei* [Résultats du recensement effectué dans les pays de la couronne hongroise au début de l'année 1891], (Budapest, 1893), 151

⁸ *Ibid.* 138

et n'apparaissent de ce fait pas dans la statistique. En proportion d'autres villes de Hongrie et de Croatie-Slavonie, Fiume est une ville industrialisée avec 5 881 ouvriers en 1910, soit autant qu'à Zagreb qui compte deux fois plus d'habitants.⁹ Hormis les installations portuaires (chantier naval, fabrique de torpilles) et celles des compagnies de navigation, Fiume dispose d'une fabrique de papier (Smith & Meynier) qui emploie plus de 300 ouvriers au début du siècle, d'une raffinerie de pétrole, d'un moulin à riz et d'une fabrique d'amidon, d'une fabrique de tabac et d'une distillerie. Il y aussi grands élévateurs à grains car la Hongrie est une grosse exportatrice de céréales.

Fiume représente un peu plus d'un tiers du volume commercial de Trieste, on est donc loin de la concurrence féroce que semblent craindre les Triestins. Ces derniers règnent sur le *Lloyd triestino* qui emploie des milliers de personnes, dont beaucoup d'ouvriers, dans son arsenal, le *stabilimento tecnico* et ses chantiers navals de S. Andrea, S. Marco et S. Rocco à Muggia. Le *stabilimento tecnico* et les chantiers navals emploient à eux seuls en 1900 plus de 4 200 personnes dont mille femmes,¹⁰ et un certain nombre d'étrangers au niveau du personnel de maîtrise.¹¹ On fait également appel à des ouvriers en provenance du *Regno*, mais l'activisme irrédentiste les rend souvent suspects et certains sont l'objet d'expulsion qui indignent les nationalistes déjà échauffés par la venue des slaves en nombre de plus en plus important sur le marché du travail. Le conflit national et culturel se double d'arguments économiques tandis que les socialistes sont accusés de trahir l'*italianità*. Ce débat est moins présent à Fiume où les ouvriers *regnicoli* sont pratiquement absents, la social-démocratie y est aussi moins forte et l'expression politique plus limitée faute d'introduction du suffrage universel, le conflit se borne aux catégories nationales opposant d'une part Croates et Hongrois, Croates et Italiens d'autre part. Les sociétés se polarisent au tournant du siècle et les groupes se ferment, même si des passerelles existent à bien des niveaux (économie, église, socialisme), la vie associative permet à la fois l'essor d'une conscience citoyenne, mais elle contribue dans le même temps à isoler ses membres dans des cercles nationaux. La polyglossie fonctionne le plus souvent en sens unique : les Italiens de Trieste et de Fiume n'apprennent pas le slovène ni le croate et voient la présence de l'allemand et du hongrois dans les établissements scolaires comme une menace et non comme une chance. Le discours se radicalise également du côté slovène à Trieste, la violence n'est pas loin et éclate à intervalles réguliers dans les deux villes.

⁹ Deák Ernő, *Das Städtewesen der Länder der ungarischen Krone (1780-1918)* (Vienne : Verlag der OEAW, 1989), vol. 2 Annexe VII.

¹⁰ Lippert Gustav; *Die Arbeitsverhältnisse im Lloydarsenale und Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino unter Zugrundelegung der von den Directionen der beiden Anstalten zur Verfügung gestellten Daten* (Vienne : Mittheilungen des arbeitstat. Amtes im k.k. Handelsministerium 2, 1902), 65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

Irrédentisme et autonomisme

L'autonomie ancienne des deux villes a contribué à développer une forte identité locale peu entamée par l'immigration. La *triestinità* n'est pas un vain mot ou une reconstruction a posteriori, elle est suffisamment documentée par les contemporains. L'usage du dialecte triestin est partagé par les Slovènes qui y introduisent leur propre apport lexical. La production de culture locale est certes moins importante à Fiume, mais elle appartient au même modèle. Il y a un évident *Stadtpatriotismus* à Trieste – de même que dans de nombreuses villes de la monarchie – renforcé toutefois par le caractère maritime, l'autonomie et la conscience des élites de l'importance capitale de la ville pour l'Empire. Le *corpus separatum* de Fiume joue le même rôle dans la construction d'un fort sentiment d'autonomie. Dans les deux cas la ville montre sa spécificité face au pouvoir central vu comme un élément étranger (allemand et hongrois) à la culture locale. Mais l'autonomie et sa préservation reposent sur un accord tacite entre la ville et le pouvoir. L'irrédentisme italien vient perturber cet équilibre car il va bien au-delà de l'autonomie en revendiquant le transfert pur et simple de territoires au royaume d'Italie.

Les deux villes vont réagir diversement au discours irrédent car elles appartiennent à deux systèmes de gouvernement différents : la Cisleithanie est décentralisée et repose sur des pouvoirs locaux forts (diètes provinciales, autonomies locales), la Transleithanie en revanche est centralisée et tout se décide à Budapest. Trieste peut donc non seulement compter sur son autonomie municipale, mais aussi sur le respect que lui accorde Vienne. Fiume bénéficie également de son autonomie locale, mais les décisions importantes la concernant sont prises à Budapest : la ville dispose d'une bien moins grande marge de manœuvre. L'autonomisme et l'irrédentisme n'ont donc pas la même signification dans les deux villes et de ce fait les stratégies sont différentes car « l'adversaire » ne joue pas avec les mêmes règles. Par sa taille plus modeste et son isolement, Fiume ne peut pas prétendre assumer un rôle identique à celui de Trieste, on le voit bien dans la publicistique contemporaine puisque le nombre de publications consacrées à l'*italianità* de Trieste dépasse de loin le volume de celles consacrées à Fiume.

Si la nature du pouvoir central est différente, il en est de même de l'attitude des slaves : Fiume-Rijeka n'est pas investie par les Croates de la même signification que Trieste pour les Slovènes. Trieste est au tournant du siècle la plus grande ville slovène. Laibach (Ljubljana) n'a que 46630 habitants en 1910 mais elle n'est pas au même niveau politique que Zagreb qui malgré les limitations imposées par le compromis hungaro-croate jouit en tant que capitale de la Croatie-Slavonie d'une situation plus enviable. Les Slovènes en revanche prennent d'assaut la diète d'Istrie où ils font alliance avec les Croates contre les Italiens qui sont victimes du sentiment de forteresse assiégée. Fiume n'est qu'une partie du littoral que les Croates revendiquent dans son ensemble jusqu'à Ragusa. L'autonomie de Fiume est instrumentalisée par tous : les Ita-

liens pour y asseoir leur pouvoir, les Hongrois dont elle assure le seul débouché maritime et les Croates pour justifier leur exigence de continuité territoriale. L'autonomisme peut donc avoir plusieurs sens contrairement à l'irrédentisme qui est parfaitement clair et ne s'embarrasse pas de demi-mesures.

Il faut bien entendu rajouter à ces éléments de définition la position de l'Italie alliée de l'Autriche-Hongrie dans le *Dreibund*, ce qui ne lui permet pas de soutenir officiellement l'irrédentisme. Or les tensions sont récurrentes entre les deux alliés au tournant du siècle (crise de Bosnie notamment) et Trieste y apparaît souvent comme un point de cristallisation. Plus que le Trentin, Trieste fait figure de symbole par son identité de grande ville, son autonomie et son importante économique et commerciale. Le soutien à l'irrédentisme passe officieusement par la publication de brochures qui sont imprimées dans le *Regno* et aux séjours des uns et des autres des deux côtés de la frontière. La censure autrichienne interdit régulièrement les journaux italiens et pratique sur place une surveillance attentive de la presse qui est fréquemment victime de confiscations. Les autorités hongroises font de même à Fiume mais elles semblent avoir été moins actives à l'égard de la presse – moins abondante qu'à Trieste – et avoir partagé la répression à parts égales entre Italiens et Croates, ces derniers étant plus suspects en raison du soutien assuré par l'hinterland. À Fiume en effet, l'irrédentisme est plus ou moins neutralisé par l'autonomisme dont les partisans tiennent tous les postes clés de la ville. Tout se passe comme si la Hongrie laissait l'Autriche se charger de l'irrédentisme, dont Trieste, le Trentin et le reste de la Dalmatie sont les cibles privilégiées. On se trouve dans une situation inversée où les Italiens soutiennent le pouvoir central dont ils attendent la sauvegarde de l'autonomie, contre les Croates qui représentent une menace pour les deux composantes de l'élite politique ; à Trieste en revanche, ce sont les Slovènes qui sont les champions du loyalisme autrichien face à un pouvoir local de plus en plus acquis à l'irrédentisme. Il y a donc ponctuellement des alliances des uns contre les autres, voire aussi des solidarités de classes sociales ou confessionnelles.

Ce dernier élément joue un rôle capital à Trieste qui est une des villes de l'Empire les plus sécularisées, ce qui peut étonner à première vue avec la présence de populations traditionnellement catholiques (Italiens, Slovènes et Croates). Dans les recensements, de plus en plus de gens se déclarent « sans religion ». En 1910, ils font presque jeu égal avec les protestants et les orthodoxes.¹² Qui sont ces athées ? La plupart sont semble-t-il des socialistes, souvent des juifs (la communauté n'augmente effectivement que très peu au regard des autres villes de la monarchie), mais aussi des catholiques dont l'irrédentisme est devenu la religion. La raison de ces désaffections réside dans l'identification que font les irrédentistes entre église catholique, Autriche et Slovènes. Les évêques

¹² *Die Ergebnisse der Volkszahlung vom 31. Dezember 1910 in den im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern* (Wien, 1912), vol. 2,

de Trieste sont systématiquement accusés de favoriser ces derniers et d'être des instruments dociles du pouvoir de Vienne. Il est vrai qu'ils sont souvent d'origine allemande ou slave, ce que les Italiens interprètent comme une hostilité de Vienne à leur égard, renforcée par le soutien qu'accorde le Vatican à ces nominations. Un exemple parmi d'autres en 1898 dans un article du *Piccolo*, qui n'est pourtant pas le journal le plus virulent : le nouvel évêque de Trieste, Andrea Sterk, donne déjà des signes inquiétants de slavophilie : « Mons. Sterk dev'essere stato ipnotizzato dai monsignori slavi della Curia ». Le journal rappelle avec satisfaction que la municipalité avait réussi à faire supprimer les offices slaves de S. Giusto et puis ceux de S. Antonio vecchio, or voici que le nouvel évêque à peine nommé les a fait rétablir dans cette dernière. On constate qu'il se laisse gagner par l'agitation anti-italienne du bas clergé slovène et que : « comincia a mettersi in aperta opposizione coi sentimenti dei cattolici di Trieste ».¹³

La bataille religieuse fait partie des éléments de l'irrédentisme triestin, mais elle est perdue d'avance : le bas clergé est très largement slovène voire croate, trilingue le plus souvent, et il se recrute dans le vaste réservoir des paysans pauvres du Karst. À cette dissociation de plus en plus évidente entre les Italiens et l'église à Trieste répond le mouvement chrétien-social dont les Slovènes sont les principaux animateurs mais qui ne parvient pas à percer à Trieste alors qu'il est très représenté en Istrie, Carniole et Carinthie : en ville, les Slovènes votent soit pour le candidat socialiste, soit pour le candidat national. Les organisations slaves sont toutefois souvent dirigées par des prêtres, telle l'association Cyrille et Méthode ainsi que les œuvres caritatives. La presse slovène de Trieste est ouvertement antisémite, ainsi le principal organe du parti national slovène, *Edinost*, accuse régulièrement les juifs de faire cause commune avec les Italiens dans la discrimination contre les Slovènes; on s'en prend tout particulièrement au conseiller municipal juif Raffaele Luzzatto qui préside le conseil scolaire de la ville.¹⁴ La presse satirique slovène est elle aussi très virulente et associe régulièrement les juifs, notamment le vice-maire Felice Venezian, aux Italiens à qui l'on reproche une attitude délibérément anti-slovène. Ainsi le journal *Škrat* qui montre dans un dessin Venezian coiffé du chapeau italien ayant partie liée avec l'église (l'évêque Nagl) et le gouvernement local (le comte Goess) contre les Slovènes. Plus tard dans un autre dessin on voit le « žid Venezian » tenant entre ses mains les marionnettes des 47 membres de la chambre de commerce.¹⁵ Cette dernière est systématiquement représentée comme une institution juive et un dessin très violent la montre sous la forme d'une vache dénommée « commerce triestin » (*tržaško občino*), traite par des juifs.¹⁶

La diffusion de ces stéréotypes négatifs fait également partie de la panoplie de l'irrédentisme et ce sont les Slovènes qui en sont les victimes. La tacti-

¹³ *Il Piccolo*, n°5838, 2 janvier 1898, « Torniamo indietro »

¹⁴ *Edinost*, n°20, 9 mars 1889, « Židovstvo v Trstu ».

¹⁵ *Škrat*, n° 15 du 18 avril 1903.

¹⁶ *Škrat*, N°12, 28 mars 1903.

que consiste à les montrer à la fois comme des sous-hommes tout en exagérant la menace que représente leur installation dans la ville. Le personnage est stéréotypé pour être immédiatement reconnaissable par le lectorat, les traits sont grossiers, à la limite du simiesque, et on présente leur ascension comme n'étant possible qu'avec l'aide de l'Autriche et de l'église. Dans les journaux satiriques italiens, la méchanceté des caricatures égale celle évoquée plus haut. On attaque les Slovènes comme alliés de l'église d'une part, du socialisme d'autre part. Par exemple dans *La coda del diavolo* : un dessin montrant deux hommes dans un estaminet, le premier dit : « Te vedi? El nostro programa socialista se basa tutto sula diferenza de un'aca. Come » ? Demande le second : « Non volemo esser *schiavi*, ma podemo benissimo farse *sciavi* ». ¹⁷ Quelques années plus tard le journal *Marameo* est sur la même ligne est appelle systématiquement le quotidien socialiste *Il Lavoratore* le « Slavizzatore ». Il est à remarquer que contrairement à ce qui se passe en Bohême-Moravie, les juifs ne sont pas stigmatisés des deux côtés et la presse italienne n'utilise pas l'antisémitisme pour « dissimiler » les juifs qui seraient de mauvais Italiens. Le syndrome de forteresse assiégée est pourtant comparable à Brünn par exemple, mais il ne se traduit pas à Trieste par un rejet des juifs qui restent dignes de représenter l'*italianità* et son corollaire irrédentiste. Les attaques antisémites des Slovènes revêtent les traits habituels : elles ciblent à la fois l'élite (Venezian) et les *Ostjuden* en caftan susceptibles d'envahir la patrie.

Ce facteur ne joue pas à Fiume et comme on l'a déjà dit la communauté juive locale n'exerce pas la même influence. La presse locale est moins abondante, il n'y a pas de journaux satiriques et il est donc plus difficile de repérer ces manifestations qui semblent avoir été absentes du débat politique local comme c'est plus généralement le cas en Hongrie et en Croatie d'ailleurs. Le conflit se concentre sur le national et l'argument antisémite n'est pas mis en avant, semble-t-il, par les Croates. L'absence de véritables irrédentistes à Fiume contribue aussi à dépassionner les choses. Il est malaisé de déterminer si cela est dû à la répression exercée par les autorités locales et centrales, ou bien si la ville a sa dynamique propre qui échappe aux batailles triestines : là aussi il y a des alliances ponctuelles entre Italiens et Hongrois contre les Croates, le conflit n'est pas absent mais il prend des dimensions qui sont forcément moins graves qu'à Trieste, de même, la tension sociale n'est pas aussi aiguë. Comme on l'a déjà dit, le suffrage censitaire ne permet pas que s'expriment à Fiume des alternatives politiques comparables à celles qui existent à Trieste. L'autonomisme reste donc la seule option pour les Italiens – et les Hongrois – afin de combattre les exigences territoriales formulées par les Croates. Les uns comme les autres savent pouvoir compter à la fois sur Vienne et sur Budapest pour empêcher la réalisation de ce projet.

¹⁷ *La coda del diavolo*, n°55, 39-30 mai 1903.

À Trieste, les autonomistes sont assimilés par les irrédentistes à des traîtres à la solde de l'Autriche : ils sont effectivement une minorité et adoptent une stratégie essentiellement basée sur des arguments économiques. Selon eux Trieste perdrait beaucoup à son intégration dans le royaume d'Italie où elle ne serait plus qu'un port parmi d'autres, loin derrière Gènes par exemple. C'est l'autonomie et le monopole garantis par l'Autriche qui ont fait la richesse de la ville, rappellent ces experts, l'unification la ruinerait. Il est aisé de dire que la suite leur a donné raison, mais ils n'étaient absolument pas écoutés en leur temps au même titre que certains spécialistes étrangers. Parmi les tenants de l'autonomisme on trouve également les socialistes et au premier rang d'entre eux Angelo Vivante qui allie arguments sociaux et économiques pour défendre la position de la ville au sein de l'empire des Habsbourg, il rejoint en cela les autres socialistes autrichiens qui prônent le fédéralisme et donc les autonomies locales.¹⁸

L'irrédentisme à Trieste se développe à la base de deux idées-forces : l'*italianità* de Trieste qui justifie son rattachement au *Regno*, la paranoïa associée au syndrome de forteresse assiégée par le pouvoir central allié aux masses slaves déferlant en ville (cette image de colonnes slaves envahissant Trieste est abondamment présente dans le dessin de presse). Ce deuxième élément est également présent à Fiume par l'intermédiaire de la commune voisine de Sušak habitée par les Croates que l'on présente comme toujours prêts à agresser les Italiens. La stratégie développée tient à la fois de la défensive et de l'offensive. La première consiste à contrecarrer toutes les tentatives des Slovènes pour marquer leur présence en ville : jusqu'au bout le conseil municipal qui est dominé par le Parti national-libéral va refuser l'ouverture dans la ville d'écoles slovènes, celles-ci sont uniquement autorisées dans le *territorio* et bien sûr dans les communes avoisinantes qui dépendent de la diète d'Istrie. Les Slovènes peuvent certes organiser des manifestations culturelles en ville, mais il est inconcevable que les théâtres affichent des œuvres en slovène. La construction en 1904 du *Narodni dom* en plein centre-ville est un affront pour les irrédentistes : le bâtiment est d'ailleurs incendié par eux le 13 juillet 1920. La presse italienne s'irrite régulièrement de l'apparition d'enseignes de magasins en slovène : en 1907 le conseil municipal est saisi de la question par les représentants slovènes, à qui le conseiller municipal Brocchi répond que personne ne comprend ces enseignes : « Per il gran pubblico una tabella slava a Trieste equivale ad una tabella cinese o turca » ; et il ajoute : « Del resto la proposta non è contro gli sloveni: noi non abbiamo preferenze. Semplicemente in casa nostra voglia-

¹⁸ A. Vivante, *Irredentismo adriatico. Contribuzione alla discussione sui rapporti austro-italiani* (Florence : Libreria della Voce, 1912). Voir aussi deux brochures publiées entre l'unification italienne et le début de l'ère constitutionnelle : *Die Autonomie der Stadt Triest. Eine Entgegnung auf die jüngsten im Turiner Parlamente gehaltenen Reden* (Vienne : Abel Luksic , 1865) et J. Pozzati, *Sollen Triest und Trient deutsch bleiben oder italienisch werden? Vortrag gehalten im Arbeiter-Bildungsverein zu Leipzig am 30. Juli 1867* (Leipzig : Vollrath 1867). Et beaucoup plus tard dans le contexte de la guerre J. Andrović, *Die Triester Frage in ihrem Verhältnis zu Österreich und Italien*, (Trieste, 1916-1917), 2 vol.

mo essere padroni noi. E come possono gli sloveni paragonare la propria alla lingua inglese e francese ben altrimenti importanti del linguaggio parlato dal piccolo popolo sloveno? Quando lo sloveno sarà divenuta la lingua dei salotti, delle conferenze, dei rapporti internazionali, allora ne riparleremo ».¹⁹

Mais c'est la bataille scolaire qui cristallise tous les ressentiments et plus exactement l'exigence italienne de voir créer une université à Trieste. C'est le combat majeur des irrédentistes et il permet de combiner tous les arguments évoqués précédemment : l'*italianità*, la supériorité de la culture et de la langue italienne, les précédents que constituent dans la monarchie les universités croate (Zagreb), tchèque (Prague) et polonaises (Cracovie et Lemberg), le potentiel d'étudiants inscrits. À cela les Slovènes répondent en demandant la même chose, ce qui relève bien entendu davantage de la surenchère nationale que d'une sincère foi dans la réalisation d'un tel projet. Les brochures sur le sujet se multiplient tandis que des incidents violents ont lieu en 1904 à Vienne et à Innsbruck entre étudiants italiens et autrichiens. Ces rixes sont montées en épingle et instrumentalisées par les irrédentistes qui présentent les étudiants italiens comme victimes d'agressions répétées. La plupart des jeunes italiens étudient effectivement dans les universités de Graz, Vienne et Innsbruck alors que certains vont chercher fortune dans le *Regno* mais leurs diplômes ne sont pas reconnus par l'Autriche, ce qui constitue une pomme de discorde supplémentaire entre les deux alliés. Les socialistes sont très embarrassés par cette question car il leur est difficile d'être contre, mais ils présentent alors les étudiants comme étant manipulés par les irrédentistes.²⁰

La vie associative est le relai de l'irrédentisme et certaines organisations en font ouvertement leur programme ce qui a pour conséquence leur dissolution par les autorités à plus ou moins long terme. La société *Pro Patria* est ainsi dissoute par décret du gouvernement local (agissant sur injonction du ministère de l'Intérieur autrichien) en 1890 pour être reconstituée un an plus tard sous le nom de *Legha nazionale* qui est elle aussi dissoute lors de l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie contre les puissances centrales en 1915.²¹ D'autres associations existent sous couvert de buts culturels et éducatifs comme la *Società del progresso* qui est en fait l'expression politique de l'irrédentisme triestin et présente sous cette étiquette des candidats aux élections : elle est dissoute quelques mois après *Pro Patria*. Les autorités utilisent fréquemment l'argument du détournement des activités énoncées dans les statuts pour dissoudre les associations dont il est clair qu'elles font de la politique. C'est le cas par exemple de la société de gymnastique qui a été dissoute à cinq reprises et a réussi à se reformer à chaque fois : elle fête le 19 décembre 1913 son cinquantenaire et rassemble alors 3 200 membres.²² En 1904 son président avait été arrêté suite

¹⁹ *Il Piccolo*, n°9402, 12 octobre 1907, « L'italiano nelle insegne pubbliche ».

²⁰ *Il Lavoratore*, n°1666, 13 avril 1908.

²¹ *Diario Triestino 1815-1915. Cent'anni di lotta nazionale*, (Milano : Ravà & cie, 1915), 17.

²² *Ibid.*, 29.

à une perquisition de la police qui avait trouvé des bombes dans les locaux de l'association. Il existe d'autres associations sportives italiennes parfaitement anodines et qui ne font pas l'objet de poursuites, mais c'est la *Lega nazionale* et son corollaire la *Lega degli insegnanti* qui deviennent véritablement les fers de lance de la croisade irrédentiste. Elles sont présentes sur tout le littoral mais c'est Trieste qui concentre l'essentiel de l'activité de propagande au travers des écoles qu'elles animent, des activités récréatives, de la production de « produits dérivés » qui vont de la brochure aux allumettes en passant par les timbres. Dans ce domaine, on est aussi très attentif à ce qui se passe à Fiume et on y organise des excursions et des actions ponctuelles. En 1911 la *Lega* fait état de 11 000 adhérents pour Trieste sur un total de 42 000.²³ La *Lega* est au premier rang de la lutte pour l'université et diffuse abondamment revues et pétitions dans ce but. Elle organise des campagnes de sensibilisation dans le *Regno* et recueille des signatures de personnalités italiennes en faveur de la création de l'université. Dans le sens inverse, la société italienne *Dante Alighieri* fondée en 1889, tente régulièrement de s'implanter à Trieste, mais les autorités veillent au grain et seules ses publications parviennent à franchir la frontière.

Les querelles scolaires sont de bien moindre ampleur à Fiume mais elles existent toutefois dans les deux sens : les Italiens tentent d'éviter une trop grande influence du hongrois dans l'enseignement – uniquement supérieur – et les Croates luttent pour l'enseignement dans leur langue, ce qui n'est finalement possible qu'au lycée de Sušak puisque celui-ci relève du gouvernement de Croatie-Slavonie qui est souverain en matière d'instruction publique. Dans cet établissement tous les élèves sont des Croates et des Slovènes, tandis qu'en ville, le lycée accueille un public plus mélangé mais en majorité italien. Les autorités hongroises tentent de magyariser le lycée mais n'y parviennent que très partiellement, leur entreprise est toutefois brocardée par la presse autonomiste locale.²⁴ L'un de ces journaux, *La giovane Fiume*, est l'émanation du parti autonomiste puis évolue vers son propre discours et crée un parti sous le nom de *Gioventù italiana di Fiume*. Ses membres sont d'inspiration mazzinienne et pas nécessairement irrédentistes.

Trieste est une des villes de l'Empire où le conflit entre nationalités, plus ou moins arbitré par le pouvoir central, a été le plus violent. La municipalité entre les mains des nationaux-libéraux doit sans cesse compter avec la surenchère nationale des deux côtés, italien et slovène, et avec la réaction potentiellement répressive de l'autorité centrale représentée par le gouverneur ; ce schéma des organes de gouvernement est identique à Fiume où se font face la municipalité et le gouverneur nommé par Budapest. Hormis l'affaire de l'attentat avorté contre François-Joseph qui crée un martyr pour la cause irréden-

²³ Ibid., 26.

²⁴ G. Bosetti, *De Trieste à Dubrovnik, une ligne de fracture de l'Europe* (Grenoble : Ellug, 2006), 151.

tiste en la personne de son instigateur Guglielmo Oberdan(k),²⁵ les attentats à la bombe sont la caractéristique des actions isolées des militants irrédentistes. Les premières bombes sont lancées à Trieste dès 1879, elles ne sont encore que des « petardi dimostrativi »,²⁶ qui visent des cibles loyalistes : avant 1920 et l'incendie du *Narodni dom* il n'y eut pas d'attentat organisé contre des institutions ou des intérêts slovènes. Les bombes sont dirigées contre des symboles ou des personnes représentant le pouvoir central ou ses délégués. À Fiume également l'attentat à la bombe fait son apparition, mais surtout au début du siècle : l'affaire la plus marquante a lieu en 1913 lorsqu'une bombe explose devant l'*Ufficio di registratura del Governo*.²⁷

Ces actions demeurent isolées, inefficaces (elles ne font jamais de victimes) et la presse satirique slovène s'en moque à bon compte comme le montre un dessin du *Škrat* intitulé « Dobra sosedinja » (la bonne voisine). Sur la première image la voisine Italie demande à l'Autriche : « Prosim, draga sosedinja, pustite da nese moja kokoš jajca na vašem dvorišču » (S'il vous plait, chère voisine, permettez que ma poule pond ces œufs dans votre basse cour), elle tient dans ses bras une poule portant l'inscription *irredenta*, sur le deuxième dessin on découvre que les œufs sont des bombes : l'Italie s'enfuit en courant et Autriche ne peut que lever les bras au ciel.²⁸ En revanche les affrontements physiques entre irrédentistes, policiers et Slovènes, sont très fréquents. La presse fourmille de nouvelles de rixes de toutes sortes provoquées par des événements parfois innocents ou bien suscités délibérément, le plus souvent par les Italiens qui se donnent ensuite des airs de persécutés. Les représentations théâtrales sont régulièrement l'occasion de manifestations patriotiques : l'opéra de Verdi, *Ernani*, reste ainsi interdit de 1888 à 1913 car le chœur « Siamo tutti una stessa famiglia » ne manque pas de déchaîner les spectateurs.²⁹ Malgré la censure, les textes et même certains ballets font l'objet de surinterprétation nationale et provoquent des incidents : on lâche des cocardes tricolores, on arbore des marguerites, on chante la *Marcia reale*, etc. Lors des bals masqués, la police n'hésite pas à arrêter des femmes costumées en allégories trop évidentes. Tout événement qui touche la famille royale italienne peut dégénérer à Trieste en démonstration irrédentiste et notamment les décès des souverains Victor Emmanuel II en 1878 et Umberto en 1900.

À Fiume enfin, l'incident le plus sérieux oppose en septembre 1907 un groupe du *Sokol* croate aux Italiens. Le quotidien loyaliste *La voce del popolo* en

²⁵ L'attentat avait été préparé à l'annonce de la visite de l'empereur pour la commémoration du 500^e anniversaire de l'appartenance de Trieste à l'Autriche en 1882. Oberdan fut arrêté et exécuté le 20 décembre 1882.

²⁶ *Diario Triestino*, 1815-1915, 13.

²⁷ *Il Piccolo*, n°11585, 4 octobre 1913

²⁸ *Škrat*, n°22, 3 juin 1905.

²⁹ A. Dugulin, « L'Irredentismo nella vita teatrale triestina 1878-1918 », in C. Szabó-Knotik, *Wien-Triest um 1900, zwei Städte, eine Kultur?* (Vienne : VWGO, 1993), 23.

fait le récit sous le titre : « I gravi disordini di domenica per l'arrivo dei ginnasti croati ». ³⁰ Les membres du *Sokol* de Sušak reviennent d'un slet qui s'est tenu à Volosca et arrivent à Fiume. On juge que les autorités pourtant prévenues n'ont pas pris les mesures nécessaires de précaution. Les *Sokolisti* débarquent côté croate alors que seule une patrouille de gendarmes est postée à Sušak, (les militaires sont en ce moment aux manœuvres). Des gens se massent sur le quai qui est bientôt bondé : tout s'orchestre pour un affrontement. Des Croates descendent de Sušak à la rencontre de leurs compatriotes en scandant « porchi italiani » et d'autres politesses. La délégation du *Sokol* débarque toutefois dans le calme et tous se dirigent vers Sušak, mais huit ou dix individus les suivent pour voir s'ils ont l'intention de redescendre en ville. Ces provocateurs sont des marins dalmates selon le journal et donc des « étrangers », ils chantent l'hymne du *Sokol* et provoquent les *Fiumani*. Les troubles commencent au café Panaschoff qui a pourtant baissé ses volets, on entend des coups de revolver qui ne blessent personne. Les autorités sont débordées, on arrête une trentaine de *Fiumani* qui sont relâchés le soir même. On fait fermer les boutiques et les militaires arrivent, enfin. L'ordre revient dans la nuit seulement car les affrontements ont continué. Le résultat est un « Piccolo stato d'assedio a Sussak », il y a quelques blessés dont des membres du *Sokol*. Le journal minimise finalement l'événement qui est pourtant répercuté dans toute la presse de la région, de Trieste à Zagreb, chacun interprétant son déroulement selon son appartenance nationale.

L'autonomisme de Fiume n'empêche donc pas le conflit dont la solution échappe aux autorités hongroises tout comme les Autrichiens sont incapables d'enrayer la mécanique irrédentiste de Trieste. Malgré les voix de la raison des autonomistes, des socialistes et de certains milieux religieux, l'irrédentisme menace à la fois la cohésion de l'État et le statut de la ville, et rend de plus en plus difficile la cohabitation avec les slaves. L'irrédentisme a finalement raison du *Dreibund* et l'Italie entre en guerre précisément pour satisfaire ses ambitions territoriales qui ne sont que partiellement atteintes : Trieste est « conquise » ainsi que le thématise la construction mémorielle de l'entre-deux-guerres qui n'a été révisée que très récemment ³¹, mais Fiume est « perdue » ainsi que le reste du littoral malgré l'action héroïque de Gabriele D'Annunzio. On valorise de nos jours dans les deux villes l'ancien statut d'autonomie et le multiculturalisme dont pourtant la plupart des représentants et des marqueurs ont disparu.

³⁰ La voce del popolo, n°6463, 3 septembre 1907.

³¹ Ce n'est qu'en 2000 qu'une plaque est apposée à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'ancien *Narodni dom* (devenu un établissement d'enseignement supérieur) pour commémorer et condamner l'incendie de 1920.

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THE WAR AIMS OF SERBIA AND ITALY (1917)*

Abstract: *This article examines the crisis in relations between Serbia and Italy brought about by the announcement of the Corfu Declaration in July 1917 which established the programme of Yugoslav union agreed on by the Serbian government-in-exile and the members of the Yugoslav Committee – a committee consisting of Yugoslav exiles from Austria-Hungary. This programme called for a union of all South Slavs in a single state and thus ran contrary to the provisions of the Pact of London of 26 April 1915 which envisaged substantial territorial concessions to Italy along the eastern coast of the Adriatic populated by South Slavs in return for Italy's entry into the war. For that reason Italian Foreign Minister, Sydney Sonnino was up in arms against the Corfu Declaration and was prepared to go a long way to prevent an agreement between the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, and the Yugoslav Committee. The Italian envoy to Serbian government, Carlo Sforza, was not as much alarmed by the Corfu Declaration or the prospect of a Yugoslav state as Sonnino. Besides, there was little or nothing he could do in order to fulfil Sonnino's somewhat extravagant instructions to split the Yugoslav Committee away from the Pašić government. Direct conversations between Pašić and Sonnino were also not helpful in breaking a deadlock in relations as the two statesmen firmly stood their ground. The crisis carried on unabated and burdened relations between Serbia and Italy for a long time to come.*

Keywords: *Corfu Declaration, Serbia, Italy, Yugoslav union, Yugoslav Committee, Sonnino, Sforza, Pašić*

The policy of Italian government towards Serbia in the summer of 1917, and particularly in the eve of, during and after the announcement of the Corfu Declaration in July 1917 has remained insufficiently explained and understood

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in Yugoslav historiography despite a few endeavours. A broader analysis of the overall stance of the Allies and Italy, negative on the whole towards Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee, has been published in the works of D. Janković and D. Šepić.¹ Their works confirm the hostile attitude of the Italian government and public towards the decisions made in Corfu. Despite their efforts to explain the causes and consequences of such policy, many details of the Italian attitude have remained unexplained, and its entirety not sketched enough. The unavailability of Italian archival material has accounted for such situation. Now that state of affairs is changed. The access to Italian sources enables us to fulfil the existing lacunae and form a more complete picture of the Italian policy towards Serbia and the Yugoslav question in the summer of 1917. That is the purpose of this paper.

I

The shaping of Serbia's war goals during 1917 which were contained in the Corfu Declaration presented a determined step of the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee taken for the purpose of defending the Yugoslav ethnic space from the influence and presence of other countries. Such step took place in the summer of 1917 and met with neither support nor understanding of the Great Powers' governments or their general public. Moreover, certain governments had an extremely negative attitude towards such programme. The most determined opponent of the so-shaped war goals of Serbia was Italy who saw them as an overt threat to her own imperialist war goals. Hence the conflict between the two countries became inevitable. It also proved to be a permanent one dragging on far beyond the end of the world war.

The shaping of Serbia's war goals in summer 1917 was of crucial importance for their attainment. Faced with the events in Russia, the USA's entry into the war, the efforts to conclude a separate peace with Austria-Hungary, the May declaration², Italy's intransigence and other developments, the Serbian government decided to confirm to the belligerent parties its determination to persist in the programme of Yugoslav union which had already been announced. In doing so, it also confirmed the unanimity of views with the Yugoslav Committee as its partner and the representative of Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary. Joining of their efforts provided better prospects for the ultimate success of this endeavour. With this in view, and given certain internal difficulties, Italy's resistance was unavoidable. Her reaction was extraor-

¹ D. Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje i Krfska deklaracija 1917. godine* (Belgrade: Savremena administracija, 1967); D. Šepić, *Italija, Saveznici i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1914-1918. godine* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970).

² The Declaration of Yugoslav club in the Emperors council of Austria-Hungary, issued on 30 May of 1917. The Declaration called for a creation of a Yugoslav territorial entity inside Habsburg Monarchy.

dinary. As opposed to the other Allies, the Italian government expressed its dissatisfaction in an extremely sharp manner.

It can be said without exaggeration that the Corfu Declaration brought about the peak of a crisis in what had already been unsatisfactory relations between the Kingdom of Serbia and Italy during the First World War. The declaration was accepted by the Serbian government and members of the Yugoslav Committee on 20 July 1917 after having considered for a month all the questions pertaining to Yugoslav union. The declaration called for the creation of a Yugoslav state on the territories inhabited by Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.³ Such a creation, if it became reality, would put in question the territorial expansion promised to Italy by the terms of the Treaty of London of 1915. In other words, the crisis began and developed to a boiling point because of the contrary objectives and pretensions on the part of Serbia and Italy. Italy expected territorial compensations at the expense of Austria-Hungary and the granting of her territorial pretensions in the Balkans in such manner as to enable her complete domination in the Adriatic Sea and over its shores. Together with other Allies, Italy was resisting any policy leading to the demise of the Habsburg Empire. Serbia, on the other hand, with the support of the Yugoslav Committee, strove for the creation of the united state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. That assumed a radical solution of the question of Austria-Hungary. Creation of the united state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the Balkans also presupposed a union of the Kingdom of Montenegro and Serbia. Italy was decidedly against it. Besides, the question of Albania caused no fewer problems between the two governments.

Basing its policy on the principle of territorial compensations in the Balkans at the expense of Austria-Hungary, and that part of it inhabited by the Yugoslav nations, the Italian government had been opposing the programme of a union since the start of the war.⁴ It silently ignored the programme revealed in the Niš Declaration of National Assembly of Serbia on 7 December 1914 which had underscored that Serbia's war goal was a union of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in a single state. An initial reluctance gradually turned into a more determined opposition. That remained the basic characteristic of Italian policy during the war and afterwards.

The Italian government shaped its programme of war goals in the Treaty of London of April 1915 by means of which the Entente Powers secured Italian participation in the war against the Central Powers. The London Treaty stipulated passing of the Istra peninsula, the Quarnaro islands, most of Dalmatia (up to the Planka cape) and the Middle-Adriatic islands to Italy as well as the neutralisation of certain section of the shore. The Serbian government and the

³ Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje*, 288-294.

⁴ S. Sonnino, *Diario 1914-1916* (Bari: Laterza 1972), 53-54; S. Sonnino, *Carteggio 1914-1916* (Bari: Laterza, 1974), 80-86, 88-91, 91-94, 106-108, explains the Italian policy towards Serbia at the end of 1914.

Yugoslav Committee stood up for the defence of these territories which made the conflict between Serbia and Italy more acute and intransigent. The conflict between the two countries had a lot of negative consequences during the war (the pressure on Serbia to cede some parts of Serbian Macedonia to Bulgaria, insufficient cooperation in providing assistance for the salvation and transport of the remnants of the Serbian Army from Albania, a negative attitude towards the Salonica front etc.). There were other pressures as well.

Both sides, Serbia and Italy, persisted in the realisation of their programmes. Sidney Sonnino, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, tirelessly defended the terms of the Treaty of London and Italian policy in the Balkans as a whole. On the other hand, the Serbian government duly demonstrated persistence and inflexibility in the defence of a Yugoslav programme. Mutual intransigence and persistence made the rapprochement between the two countries impossible. Their principles were complete opposites: Italy was in favour of the application of strategic-defence principle whereas the Serbian government stressed the nationality principle. Sonnino rejected the nationality principle as a basis for the solution of these questions. The Serbian government took a more elastic position. It accepted Italian entrenchment at certain points on the shore (Istra, Middle-Adriatic islands, Valona) considering them sufficient for a military-naval domination over the Adriatic.



Territorial promises to Italy Serbia and Montenegro according to Treaty of London of 1915

The realisation of the Yugoslav union programme was not the only matter of dispute. There were other questions, more or less related to that problem, which made the relations between the two countries even more complicated. Those questions came to the fore in 1917 and made the situation practically unsolvable. One of them was the problem of Albania and the influence that one or the other country would exert there. The entry of Italian troops in Valona in December 1914 caused a conspicuous nervousness in Serbian political and military circles. The break-through of Serbian troops in parts of Albania in the spring of 1915, as well as their presence on the Albanian coast at the end of that year, after having been retreated from Serbia and Montenegro, caused sharp reactions from Italian political and military circles and general public. Their urgent evacuation was being demanded, and they were forbidden from entering the parts of Albania held by Italian forces. Under Italy's pressure, Serbian troops had to abandon the Albanian coast and move to Corfu.⁵

Much more bitter dispute arose at the beginning of June 1917 at the eve of the Corfu meeting. It had to do with the Italian government's decision to proclaim the independence of Albania under Italian protectorate. Sonnino explained this measure as a necessity for Italy to respond to the proclamation of the autonomous Albanian state in the town of Koritza.⁶ In fact, it was all about Italy's wish to strengthen her territorial and political pretensions in that part of the Balkans.⁷ Sonnino also justified the Italian decision on account of military reasons, an anxiety not to alienate Albanian population and the necessity to stay in Albania "which has now become necessary for our (Italian) security in the Adriatic". As far as the borders of the future Albanian state were concerned, they would be determined at a peace conference after the war.⁸

Italy's proclamation caused bitterness in Serbian political circles. Mihajlo Ristić, the Minister in Rome, asseverated that Italy had long been preparing "something" in Albania, but that her intentions could not have been ascertained earlier because of her stance towards the Allies and the situation at the battlefield. Her step had been taken independently of the Allies and it 'should be viewed more as a manifestation of her pretensions in the future'.⁹ On the same day, the Serbian government considered the text of the proclama-

⁵ Sonnino, *Diario 1914-1916*, 281 and onwards.

⁶ P. Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera Italiana 1914-1920* (Napoli: Jovene, 1970), 37-61 explains Sonnino's demeanour and goals.

⁷ J. R. Tanenbaum, *General Maurice Sarrail 1856-1929. The French Army and Left-Wing Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina press, 1976), 162-164 explains the history of Italian protectorate in Albania.

⁸ Sonnino, *Diario 1916-1922*, 146; Pastorelli, *Albania*, 51.

⁹ Ristić to Pašić, Rome, 22 May/4 June 1917 [the first date is given according to the Julian calendar which was officially used in Serbia until 1919 and the second one according to the Gregorian calendar], confidential no. 2185, Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Political Department 1917 [hereafter MID PO 1917], fascicle II, It/a, Archives of the Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs [hereafter SSIP Archives], Belgrade.

tion and decided to ask the Allied governments for an official statement as to whether that had been done with their knowledge and whether they were in agreement with the proclamation.¹⁰ Two days later, on 6 June, Carlo Sforza, Italian Minister in Corfu, had conversation with Nikola Pašić, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, about various matters, but none of them mentioned the Italian proclamation. Sforza misjudged Pašić's silence reporting that the news "was received with the utter indifference".¹¹

It was an easily said and apparent self-deception. Next day, on 7 June, the Serbian government decided to lodge a protest with the Allies on account of the Italian proclamation. A memorandum of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs revealed that it "created a painful impression in Serbian circles". A note addressed to the Allied governments pointed out that the Serbian government wanted to maintain friendly relations with Italy.¹² In reply to Serbia's protest, the Allies (France, Great Britain) took a view that the Italian step in Albania did not prejudice the solution of the Albanian question. A day later, on 9 June, the Serbian Minister at the Montenegrin court, Tihomir Popović, paid a visit to King Nikola and proposed that both the Serbian and Montenegrin governments make a joint protest to Italy due to her action in regard of Albania. King Nikola refused this proposal but he took advantage of it in order to procure from the Italian government a promise relating to its support for Montenegro. King Nikola said to Romano Avezana, the Italian Minister in Neuilly, where the Montenegrin government in exile was, that he could not break away from Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee as he did not know the Italian attitude towards restoration of Montenegro and granting of the Albanian town of Skadar to his country. In an effort to prevent a joint action of the Serbian and Montenegrin governments, both interested in the fate of Albania, Sonnino informed Avezana a day later that the Italian attitude towards Montenegro and its demands was well-known. "King Nikola", Sonnino wrote, "can consider that the attitude of the [Italian] government is that Montenegro must come out of the war territorially enlarged to become stronger; the Royal government will constantly work with other governments at the moment of peace".¹³ This was not a difficult promise

¹⁰ D. Janković and B. Hrabak eds., *Zapisi sednica ministarskog saveta Srbije, 1915-1918* [Minutes of the Serbian government 1915-1918] (Beograd: Arhiv Srbije, 1976), 22 May/4 June 1917, 422. A few days later, news came from Paris that the protectorate had been announced without the consent of the Allies. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1917, 423-424; Tanenbaum, *General Sarraill*, 166 claims that the French government lodged a protest with the Italian government.

¹¹ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 6 June 1917, Gab., 67, The Papers of Sidney Sonnino, microfilm reel 17, Montespertoli, Italy; Pastorelli, *L'Albania*, 53.

¹² Memorandum: The proclamation of Italy's protectorate over Albania, June 1917, MID PO 1917, fasc. II, It/b, SSIP Archives.

¹³ Avezana to Sonnino, Paris, 8 June 1917, Gab., 12; Sonnino to Avezana, Sforza and Ambassadors, Rome, 9 June 1917, Gab., 902, Archives of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Serbia 1915-1918, [hereafter valjalo bi staviti skracenicu od italijanskog originala, a pre toga i pun naziv na italijanskom] box 179, fasc. 5.

for Sonnino to make. Italy had already committed herself to supporting the Montenegrin government in its struggle for restoration of that country. At the same time, cooperation between Serbia and Montenegro in a question in which both sides had common interests and aspirations was prevented.

Meanwhile, Sforza realised that the Serbs did not take the proclamation of protectorate with serenity. In his conversation with Pašić and Regent Alexander, on 9 June, the question of Albania was touched upon. It was brought up by Sforza but without much success. The Regent and Pašić were restrained on the subject, although the Serbian government had taken steps to have the Allies intervene. Sforza knew that Pašić had discussed the matter with the Allied Ministers and concluded that the Italian decision in connexion with the protectorate “naturally cannot be pleasing to the Serbian government which have never lost hope that Albania, having lost any major significance, will become spoils to be shared between the Balkan states”.¹⁴ Two days later, on 11 June, Sforza learned the extent of Serbian government’s sharp reaction in a conversation with Pašić. On that occasion Pašić told him that the Serbian government had prepared a note of protest to Italy and stressed a great importance that Albania had for Serbia. He warned that Serbia was isolated from the rest of the world because she did not have an outlet to sea. “It might happen that the only way to get an outlet to sea leads over Albanian territory and, alas, Albania is again turned against Serbia and reconstructed by a Great Power”. Sforza tried to calm Pašić with a statement that he judged the political mentality of the Italians from a point of view of Serbia which could provoke unfavourable reactions in Italy. Pašić then expressed his true hopes and disappointment that his expectations of a rapprochement with Italy had not come to pass. “I regret that I hoped in vain that you (Sforza) have been accredited here in order to exchange thoughts on how we should come to an agreement”, Pašić said. In these words he showed his disappointment with the policy of Italian government. Sforza replied that it served no purpose to talk about a rapprochement until the victory had been achieved.¹⁵ Pašić wanted an agreement and not conflict with Italy. Sforza still approved of Sonnino’s policy of intransigence, although he would later realise and admit its uselessness.¹⁶

Sforza’s advice contributed to Sonnino’s decisiveness to continue his uncompromising policy towards Serbia and her war goals. When Ristić handed a protest note to Sonnino regarding the Italian proclamation on Albania on 30 June, Sonnino remained inflexible. In a circular cable to Italian Ambassadors

¹⁴ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 9 June 1917, Gab., 89, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

¹⁵ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 11 June 1917, Gab., 71, Sonnino Papers, reel 17; Sonnino, *Carteggio 1916-1922*, 243-245.

¹⁶ On that point Sforza wrote: ‘Serbian stubbornness will never give up intriguing against Italy in Albania. For that reason our protests will have no practical results whatever.’ See Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 16 June 1917, Gab., 79, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

and Sforza he pointed out he had no intention to reply to the Serbian note.¹⁷ As far as Sonnino was concerned, the question of Albania was settled.

Montenegro and its future presented another stumbling block in relations between Serbia and Italy. Crisis reached its peak in the spring and summer of 1917 when the Montenegrin Committee for national union (with Serbia) headed by Andrija Radović was created. The Italian government persistently refused any contact with the Montenegrin Committee and Radović seeing them as agents of Serbia and enemies of King Nikola and an independent Montenegrin state.¹⁸ On the other hand, Italian policy towards Montenegro during the war was not sincere. Sonnino and other Italian politicians often doubted the sincerity of King Nikola and his policy, accused him of the alleged cooperation with Austria-Hungary, condemned him for the incursion of Montenegrin troops in Northern Albania and Scutari in 1915 and ceased providing financial and material help to Montenegro. In January 1916, following the capitulation of Montenegro, both sides uttered many incisive words at the expense of each other. King Nikola was adamant that "Italy betrayed" him, and Italian government took a very reserved attitude towards the King of Montenegro and his government at Neuilly.

When the Montenegrin Committee for national union was formed in March 1917 Italy's attitude started to change. The Montenegrin Committee's programme – a union of that country with Serbia and other Yugoslav nations – caused concern in Rome and Neuilly. Sonnino thought that a union between Serbia and Montenegro would endanger Italian position in the Adriatic and strengthen a movement for the Yugoslav union. Having received frequent requests for help from Neuilly, Sonnino decided to provide support, if somewhat reluctant, to King Nikola's efforts to resist pressure from Serbia and the Montenegrin Committee. After the resignation of Milo Matanović's Cabinet, the Italian government facilitated the choice of Evgenije Popović, Montenegrin General-Consul in Rome and Italian subject, for a new Prime Minister of the Montenegrin Cabinet. Nevertheless, when King Nikola expressed his wish to move to Italy, Sonnino replied that "coming of King Nikola in Italy is deemed undesirable". Duplicitous stance towards King Nikola and Montenegro remained a characteristic of Italian policy until the end of the war.

Faced with the Montenegrin Committee's programme and the possibility of a Serbo-Montenegrin cooperation in the Albanian affairs, Sonnino promised King Nikola that Italy would work for a restoration and territorial expansion of Montenegro. He confirmed that in a speech devoted to Italy's war goals, held on 20 June 1917, in the Italian parliament. On that occasion he openly defended the independence of Montenegro and opposed the programme of a

¹⁷ Sonnino to Sforza, Rome, 2 July 1917, Gab., 1089, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

¹⁸ D. Živojinović, "Prilog proučavanju delovanja Crnogorskog odbora za narodno ujedinjenje 1917-1918. godine", *Glasnik Cetinjskih Muzeja*, XIV, 1981, 113-146.

union between Serbia and that country.¹⁹ The programme of war goals, upheld at the moment of the Corfu conference, unequivocally reaffirmed the existence of essential differences between the Serbian and Montenegrin governments and clearly indicated that a Serbo-Montenegrin union was unacceptable for Italy. In Sonnino's view, a restoration of Montenegro and Serbia, the independence of Albania and a solution of the Adriatic question in conformity with Italian demands should secure Italian domination in the Adriatic, and afterwards in the Balkans.

There were also other matters which disturbed and aggravated relations between Serbia and Italy in the spring and summer of 1917. When, for example, a member of Serbian government, Stojan Protić, travelled to Switzerland in early May to have conversations with the members of the Yugoslav Committee, rumours spread to the effect that Serbian government intended to prepare the ground for an agreement with Austria-Hungary. Although he did not believe it himself, Sforza admonished that the despondence was observable in Corfu due to the events in Russia; Pašić's reputation was on the descendent since he was "a man of Russia and the Emperor" in the eyes of Serbs.²⁰

Sforza also reported on the dissatisfaction prevailing in Corfu because of the circumstances at the Salonica front and the decision of the Allies to withdraw some divisions from that battlefield. He observed a lessening of moral among Serbian Army which he ascribed to the failure of the offensive around the town of Bitolj and the trial of Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis and his associates before the military court in Salonica. In conversations with Sforza, the Regent Alexander and Pašić vented their concern because of the reducing the number of troops at the Salonica front on several occasions.²¹

Indeed, the downfall of Czarism in Russia created a painful impression in Corfu, and consequently imposed a necessity of a reappraisal of Serbia's policy, given the changed circumstances. The USA's entry into the war, the current military and political situation, the attempts to initiate peace negotiations between the belligerents, an uncertain fate of the Salonica front, the difficulties of Serbian government relating to gathering volunteers, the civil and military opposition and other questions demanded a reappraisal of the current and the shaping of a new policy of Serbian government.²²

Some of the above-mentioned factors were favourable to the political goals of Serbian government and the achievement of a programme of Yugoslav union. The statement of the provisional government in Russia of 24 March 1917 confirming the need for the creation of a Yugoslav state, the core of which

¹⁹ S. Sonnino, *Discorsi Parlamentari I-III* (Roma: Della Camera Dei Deputati, 1925), III, 564-568.

²⁰ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 5 June 1917, Gab., 48, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

²¹ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 25 and 31 May 1917, 9 June 1917, Gab., 58, 62, 68, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

²² Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje*, 33-53, 63-112.

would be Serbia, finally dissipated the remaining opposition and doubts in the Russian position. The USA's entrance into the war in April 1917 – though that country did not declare war on Austria-Hungary – presented a moral support to the principle of national self-determination and its application. On the other hand, the attempts at secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary with a view to pulling her out of the war and the disengagement of some Allied (British) divisions from the Salonica front raised the question of the Serbia's war programme.

In such situation the Serbian government made effort to secure a cooperation of and support from the Yugoslav Committee in order to protect the Yugoslav programme and bring it before the Allied governments for consideration. The Yugoslav Committee which was divided itself and without support inside Austria-Hungary, despondent and mostly isolated from the major events, was riddled with many fears and problems. Its president, Ante Trumbić, faced with many a threat to the Committee and its work, tried to reach an agreement with the Serbian government about the foundations of a future state. Trumbić was visibly fearful of Italy and the London Treaty as well as of a potential agreement between Serbia and Italy. The acceptance of the May declaration (30 May 1917) by members of the Yugoslav Club in the Viennese Parliament was another setback for the Committee's prestige and its president.²³ Hence, the willingness of Trumbić and his friends to accept the invitation of Serbian government and go to Corfu.

On the other hand, the events which took place during the early months of 1917 put in question the basic assumptions of Italian policy and imperilled its foundation – the Treaty of London. Most of all, Sonnino was perturbed by the future policy of USA. As long as that policy provided hope to Serbia, Sonnino saw it as a threat to Italy. He reminded the Italian Ambassador in Washington that Italy had concluded a few agreements with the Allies and that for that reason there could not be any further discussion among them pertaining to the Adriatic question. He asked him to explain to the Americans that Italy had justified aspirations in the Adriatic and point out it was “necessary for Italy to have a strategic dominance over the Adriatic for reasons of security”. For that end, he considered a restoration of Montenegro and Albania necessary. He averred that the Yugoslavs had their outlet to sea secured and that Italy sacrificed for that purpose some of her own ethnic groups along the coast. Sonnino concluded with a warning that “domination over the Adriatic is a question of life and death for Italy”.²⁴ Here lay the roots of a future conflict between Italy and President Woodrow Wilson.

²³ D. Živojinović, *Vatikan, Srbija i stvaranje jugoslovenske države 1914-1920*. (Beograd: Nolit, 1980), 201-212.

²⁴ Sonnino to Di Celere, Rome, 16 April 1917, Gab. Seg. 652, Sonnino Papers, reel 41; A. Tamborra, 'L'idea di nazionalita e la Guerra 1914-1918', in *Atti del XLI Congresso di Storia del Risorgimento Italiano*, Trento, 9-13 ottobre 1963 (Roma 1965), 264.

Quite like the Serbian government, the Italian government also saw a danger for herself and her objectives in the attempts to start secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary. Sonnino took a line that it was unthinkable for Italy to be deprived of her territorial gains promised at the expense of Austria-Hungary. In this sense, he gave a warning several times to both Italian and Allied Ambassadors. In mid-April 1917, he warned it be inexpedient to embark on the negotiations with Austria-Hungary for that would be “dangerous and [would] bring about the weakening of the alliance which is more necessary than ever”.²⁵ In mid-May, when the British government asked for Italy’s consent to starting negotiations for the conclusion of a separate peace with Austria-Hungary, Sonnino was on the guard that such action would “demand humiliating concessions regarding the Treaty of London”. As far as he was concerned, even conditional concessions would be “extremely dangerous”. At the end of May he contended that Italy would not consent to changes of “the agreement contained in the Treaty of London”. This stance was reaffirmed on several occasions during the month of June.²⁶

Sonnino’s unfaltering defence of the Treaty of London and his unwillingness to make any concessions placed the Italian government in a difficult position as far as relations with the Allies and USA were concerned. Words uttered to Russian Ambassador M. de Giers were reaction to support which the Provisional Government had given to the creation of a Yugoslav state. With this in view, and faced with the summoning of the Corfu conference and its resolutions, Sonnino’s decision to firmly decline a possibility of negotiations with the protagonists of that conference was not surprising. He was even less prepared to accept the resolutions of the conference. Those undoubtedly represented to Sonnino a new threat to the London Treaty and Italian dominance in the Adriatic, the attainment of which were so close to his heart. Such conviction induced him to undertake some unprecedented measures for the purpose of preventing an agreement between Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee. These measures were unusual indeed.

II

At the beginning of May 1917 Pašić invited Trumbić to come to Corfu along with the other members of the Yugoslav Committee “in order to reach an agreement on all questions”. The invitation was accepted.²⁷ At about the same time there was much talk about the moving of Serbian government from Cor-

²⁵ Sonnino to Ambassadors, Rome, 20 April 1917, Gab. Seg. 595, Sonnino Papers, reel 41.

²⁶ Sonnino to Ambassadors, Rome, 16 and 28 May 1917, 10 and 15 June 1917, Gab. 718, 787, 923, 962, 1079, Sonnino Papers, reel 41. In a conversation with Renel Rod, British Ambassador, Sonnino said that Italy was not “prepared to make concessions in relation to London Treaty”, and similarly confirmed to Ambassador Girs Italian resolve to “firmly stand behind the terms of London Treaty”.

²⁷ Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje*, 189-201.

fu to Macedonia so that it could meet with Regent Alexander. That intention was not realised since the Regent came to Corfu.²⁸ In mid-May, the consultations were underway among the government as to the nature of the forthcoming negotiations with the Yugoslav Committee members. Minutes from the Cabinet session held on 17 May 1917 disclosed that a matter for discussion was "Cabinet's standpoint in respect of merging of the Yugoslav nations in a single state". At the meeting held on 21 May Pašić dwelled on the international situation, spoke of difficulties which caused the aggravation of Serbia's position, the prospects for the future and other matters. Next day, on 22 May, the meeting carried on, and it was concluded that the situation was very unfavourable and bristling with "the greatest political and military perils for us (Serbia)". Finally, on 23 May, the Cabinet defined its attitude concerning a union of the South Slavs and particularly a union of Serbia and Montenegro.²⁹ The particulars of this attitude have remained unknown.

An analysis of the Serbian government's decisions demonstrates that it was, despite difficulties and uncertainties, determined to proceed with its Yugoslav policy. Both Serbia and Italy stood behind their war goals. There were, however, substantial differences between them as to the tactics employed. Sonnino took a negative and hostile attitude towards revision of the London Treaty which he considered a corner stone of his policy. On the other hand, Pašić and his Cabinet, faced with the current situation, took a more constructive position. They outlined the Yugoslav programme, put it before the Allied governments and public for consideration and supported it wholeheartedly. The Serbian government endeavoured to mobilise the Yugoslav Committee to contribute to that end more than previously.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 14 June which was presided by Regent Alexander, Pašić let it be known that the impending conference with the Yugoslav Committee members would discuss international problems. As for the internal organisation of the future state, that would not be decided upon since it was "our internal affair that could be considered by the appropriate constitutional factors alone". Pašić warned that the final solution of a Yugoslav union would depend on the outcome of the war which was uncertain at the moment. The extent of the Allied victory would determine whether the programme of Serbia's war goals was to be attained. Pašić envisaged three possible scenarios: 1) the preservation of Serbia; 2) the preservation of all Serbian lands; 3) the preservation of all Yugoslav lands. Pašić added that the Serbian government had invited the Yugoslav Committee members "in order to make them official

²⁸ At the beginning of May Pašić informed Sforza about the Serbian government's intention to move its residence from Corfu to Macedonia, south of the town of Florin. Sforza agreed with this intention. See Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 8, 10 and 14 May 1917, Gab. 49, 50, 51, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

²⁹ *Zapisnici sednica ministarskog saveta Srbije*, 411, 413, 413-414, 416; Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje*, 190.

so that it will be seen that those are the people with whom the Serbian government keep in touch”³⁰

Aware of the international situation and the Allied, and mostly Italian, opposition to its programme, the Serbian government took a flexible approach. Pašić made allowance for different solutions – ranging from an exclusively Serbian solution to a Yugoslav one. His elasticity was in a marked dissonance with Trumbić’s advocacy for a radical solution of the Yugoslav question and Sonnino’s persistence in the defence of the Treaty of London. During the conversations with the Yugoslav Committee members in Corfu, however, Pašić reneged on certain points in the Cabinet conclusions of 14 June. In this respect, the Corfu Declaration presented a triumph of Trumbić’s conceptions.

During the month of May, up to the point when the Yugoslav Committee members had arrived in Corfu, Pašić kept Sforza in the dark as to the plans for the conference. Sforza had an inkling that something important was going on (the Regent’s presence in Corfu, the frequent Cabinet meetings) so he constantly enquired of Pašić about the work of government. In early June, the latter replied to the former that the Regent’s stay in Corfu was unrelated to any particular issue and that undue importance should not be attached to it.³¹ With these manoeuvres Pašić tried to avert Italian pressure on the Serbian government.

It also accounted for a complete surprise with which Sforza met the arrival of the Committee’s members, Bogumil Vošnjak, Franko Potočnjak, Dinko Trinajstić, Dušan Vasiljević and Hinko Hinković at Corfu. They arrived on 14 June, the same day when the Serbian government accepted a programme for the conference with the Yugoslav Committee. The Corfu conference thus came as a completely unexpected event to Sforza.³² He later complained that “the Serbs failed to let me know about it (the arrival of the Committee members)”. In conversation with Pašić on 21 June, Sforza sought for explanations regarding the nature of talks between the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee. The former replied vaguely putting forward that “the Committee members have news of the imposition of a very harsh regime in Croatia to be carried out by Ban Rauh”. Apparently, that was not true. On his part, Sforza made connection between the arrival of the Yugoslav Committee members in Corfu and the possibility of the conclusion of a separate peace agreement between Serbia and Central Powers, although the French Minister in Corfu assured him that none of the Committee members would take part in such

³⁰ *Zapisnici sednica ministarskog saveta Srbije*, 1/14 June 1917, 430. Milorad Drašković was in favour of reaching an agreement with them.

³¹ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 5 June 1917, Gab. 65, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

³² Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje*, 204 points out the difficulties suffered by the Committee members during their transit through Italy. On the same day, Sforza reported that Trumbić, Hinković and others had arrived in Corfu. See Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 14 June 1917, Gab. 77, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

matter. On that occasion Sforza repeated his earlier accusations against the Serbian government. He claimed that there was a prevailing opinion in Corfu about the necessity for aligning with Germany, even in case Serbia came out of the war with considerable territorial gains. He admitted, however, that such opinion was not an important factor in the current situation.³³

Faced with the complete uncertainty, lacking information on the nature of conversations between the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee and hostile to anything that might threaten his policy and goals, Sonnino decided to take an unusual action. The information provided by Avezzana served as an incentive. Avezzana reported that King Nikola had requested from him to pass on information that “the main leaders of the Yugoslav movement, Hinković, Trumbić, Radić (*sic*) and Supilo (*sic*) were willing to abandon the Serbian government and to indirectly come to terms with Italy through the intermediary of him [King Nikola]”. King Nikola underlined that this was a realistic proposition if the Committee members were to receive financial means so that they could do without the support from the Serbian government.³⁴ The suggestion seems to have been very appealing to Sonnino.

Despite the apparent lack of credibility and seriousness of King Nikola's suggestion, all the more so as it came from a person with a reputation for being an intriguer, Sonnino took it at its face value. This demonstrates the extent of his eagerness to pre-empt the closer collaboration between the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee. As soon as the next day, 31 May, he instructed Avezzana to sound out “without letting it be assumed that we accept the proposal, what amount of money was in question”.³⁵ In response to that request, Avezzana reported on Trumbić and Hinković's leaving for Corfu to confer with the Serbian government. Nevertheless, King Nikola assured Avezzana that a rift between the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee would not be smoothed away and that the latter's members were prepared for rapprochement with the Montenegrin sovereign. Each of them should be paid 3,000 lira. Avezzana was of opinion that the Committee could not be attached to Italy but it should be possible to “detach [it] from the Serbs and collaborate with it through King Nikola”. In all this, King Nikola appears to have had his own special agenda, but it is impossible to find out what it was.

Having been informed of the exact sum of money and conditions, Sonnino made his mind up and accepted King Nikola's proposal. He instructed Sforza to investigate whether there was a dispute between Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee, and whether Italian suggestion for a financial support would

³³ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 22 June 1917, Gab. 82, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

³⁴ Avezzana to Sonnino, Paris, 30 May 1917, Gab. 6, Archives of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Serbia 1915-1918, box 179, fasc. 5. King Nikola expressed his hope that the Italian government would accept his proposal and entrust funding to a reliable person.

³⁵ Sonnino to Avezzana, Rome, 31 May 1917, Gab. 830, Archives of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Serbia 1915-1918, box 179, fasc. 5.

be welcomed. "If that was the case, I authorise you to start cautious negotiations with the said Yugoslav leaders", wrote Sonnino.³⁶ Sonnino's initiative was without doubt an overt attempt to sow dissension between the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee. The fact that the suggestion originated with King Nikola, who did not have the confidence of or keep in close contact with the Committee members, pointed to its groundlessness. Sonnino was obviously awaiting for the final document of the Corfu Conference with a feeling of apprehension.

Although fearful of the threatening development in Corfu, Sonnino remained intransigent and unwilling to come to terms with the Yugoslavs. In late May 1917, the Italian Ambassador in London, Guglielmo Imperiali, reported to Sonnino on the contents of conversation between Frano Supilo, a ex-member of the Yugoslav Committee at the time, and an Italian journalist. On that occasion, according to Imperiali, Supilo professed his views on the political situation and suggestion as to how to resolve Italo-Yugoslav conflict. Supilo was worried because of the Russian defeat and the increasingly obvious efforts in France, England and USA to preserve Austria-Hungary. That led him to a conclusion that the preservation of Austria-Hungary would prevent the liberation and union of the Yugoslavs who would be abandoned by Great Powers after the war. Supilo feared Magyarisation of Croatia.

Supilo considered that the only way to avoid such development was "a truly sincere agreement between the Yugoslavs and Italy". A basis for this agreement would be a public recognition that some parts of Dalmatia belonged to Italy as envisaged by the treaties concluded prior to Italy's entering the war. In return, Italian government and general public would be committed to "recognising a programme of union and federation of Yugoslav nations, after having seceded from Austria". Supilo added that such a solution suited Italy who would have a friend and ally in a Yugoslav state; otherwise, her neighbour would be powerful Austria-Hungary. He suggested he should expound his proposal to Imperiali, who, in turn, wanted to have Sonnino's opinion and instructions.³⁷

The proposal could have had a far-reaching importance. Although it could not have committed the Yugoslav Committee, Supilo's reputation still stood high in European capitals. The proposal presented an acceptance of Italian demands along the Eastern coast of the Adriatic and revealed a rupture in the ranks of Yugoslav emigration. But Sonnino was not prepared to accept it for it would signify the acceptance of a future Yugoslav state. In a cable to Sforza, instructing him to make contact with the representatives of the Yugoslav Committee in Corfu, Sonnino also cautioned the Minister to "be very

³⁶ Sonnino to Sforza, Rome, 23 June 1917, Gab. 1021, Sonnino Papers, reel ??; Sonnino, *Carteggio 1916-1922*, 246-248.

³⁷ Imperiali to Sonnino, London, 24 May 1917, Gab. 238, Rismo, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

restrained towards this proposal of Supilo".³⁸ This amounted to a rejection. The fear of a future Yugoslav state was obviously something of an obsession to Sonnino.

Both proposals – the splitting of the Yugoslav Committee from Serbia by bribing its members and Supilo's suggestion – were unrealistic. Sforza soon satisfied himself as to the unfeasibility of the first proposal, and Sonnino refused the second one. In early July, Sforza reported to Sonnino on the difficulties of his endeavours to make contact with the Committee members. The confinement to a small island and the surveillance exercised by Serbian authorities made it nearly impossible. Besides, Sforza thought that Sonnino's instructions of 23 May were extremely "sensitive". He promised to do his best to make contact with the Committee members in order to be able "to sound their frame of mind". Still, Sforza did not have high hopes in a successful outcome of his efforts. "All my enquiries, direct or indirect", Sforza wrote, "exclude any thought that they intend to break away from the Serbian government". Their decision to accept Pašić's invitation and come to Corfu as well as daily meetings with the members of Serbian government went a long way to confirm Sforza's impression.³⁹

A few days later, Trumbić called in at the Italian Legation and had a long conversation with Sforza. On that occasion Trumbić expressed his wish and that of the Serbian government for a soon-to-be exchange of views with the Italian government and insisted on the need for reaching a complete agreement prior to the convening of a peace congress. Sforza replied that "the Serbian government can be sure of Italy's good will, but a complete agreement requires the knowledge of an extent of victory", a point of view with which Trumbić agreed. The latter spoke of the inevitability of a Yugoslav union and Europe's interest to accept it, refuted the claims about differences between the Serbs and Croats, and stated that an agreement concerning the various forms of autonomy would be made. Both men were unanimous about the detrimental effect of the exaggerated propaganda activities. Trumbić spoke of the spiritual (cultural) affinity between the population of Dalmatia and Italians, and found that any disturbance against it would be catastrophic. Sforza understood his words as an opposition to Dalmatia's being joined to Italy. He warned Sonnino that "a union with Serbia is his [Trumbić's] fundamental thought and political idea". Finally, Sforza pointed out that Trumbić's attitude showed how untenable was King Nikola's suggestion about detaching the Yugoslav Committee from the Serbian government.⁴⁰ The difference between Supilo's and Trumbić's attitude was huge and insurmountable. Supilo was prepared to make concessions which Trumbić and the Committee as a whole found unacceptable.

³⁸ The same as note 35.

³⁹ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 5 July 1917; (ovde nema punog formata kao do sada); Sonnino, *Carteggio, 1916-1922*, 259.

⁴⁰ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 10 July 1917, Gab. 95, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

Sforza's conclusion was correct. Trumbić's opinion in respect of Dalmatia and other Yugoslav lands was clearly stated during the Corfu conference. Although he was in favour of an agreement with Italy, Trumbić did not forgo the Yugoslav Committee's programme. Moreover, during the conference held on 16 July, he requested an energetic attitude towards Italy and the disclosure of all Yugoslav territorial pretensions backed with evidence and statistics. In doing so, he intended to prevent an agreement between Italy and Serbia which he feared, although for no good reason. Sonnino was against an agreement. On the other hand, Pašić insisted that the attitude towards the Allies, and Italy in particular, had to be "careful" and moderate. Despite describing Italian policy as "improvident and intemperate stance", Pašić required that the Serbian government, in writing the Declaration, adhere to the well-established forms in its international relations. "Protesting at any cost would mean to pick a quarrel with the Allies, and to do that would mean to help Italy. We cannot take that risk", he admonished.⁴¹ The dropping of Italy's name from the text of the Declaration showed, however, that Pašić gave in on this point.

Sforza had no information on the nature and course of the conference proceedings. When it was concluded on 20 July he found out about Pašić's decision to pay a visit to Paris, London and Rome.⁴² Sforza did not become familiar with the content of the Declaration before 24 July at which point Pašić and the Committee members had already departed from Corfu. This was not a coincidence as it was helpful in avoiding Sforza's protests. In his conversations with Momčilo Ninčić, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Serbia, Sforza complained that Italy was not mentioned in the preamble of the Declaration despite being one of the Allied countries. During their first conversation on 24 July Sforza told Ninčić that : "He had no comment against the Declaration and the principles on which to found a union". Sforza then asked for the Declaration to be amended by mentioning Italy as one of the Allied countries. Ninčić declined his request stating that no changes could be made without the consent of the Yugoslav Committee members.⁴³ There was no further discussion.

On the same day, 24 July, Sforza forwarded to Sonnino the content of the Declaration. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes would be an inseparable and single state under the Karadjordjević dynasty. In that country, both Cyrillic and Latin alphabets would be used, and all religions would have equal status. "The country will include all territories in which the three-named people live in a compact mass. No part of it [the country] will be able to join

⁴¹ Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje, 199; Beleške sa sednica vlade Kraljevine Srbije i predstavnika Jugoslovenskog odbora, održanih na Krfu 1917., na kojima je donesena Krfska deklaracija* (Beograd 1924), 154.

⁴² Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 20 and 21 July 1917, Gab. 98, 99, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

⁴³ Ninčić to Pašić, Corfu, 11/24 July 1917, tel. 2654; Pašić to Ninčić, Paris, 13/26 July 1917, Arhiv MID PO 1917. Ita/b, fasc. II, dos. III, SSIP Archives; Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 25 and 26 July 1917, Gab. 101, 102, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

another country without consent of the people". Sforza dwelled on the fact that Italy was excluded from the preamble of the Declaration. Since he regarded the document as official, he warned Ninčić that the dropping of Italy would cause "a bad impression on us". Sforza explained the dropping as being done out of consideration for the Croat and Slovene population "which provide volunteers against us". His request for a change in the preamble was motivated by the intention to preclude new insinuations against Italy in the future. If it failed, "the responsibility of Serbia towards us would be brought out", Sforza concluded. He attributed to the Serbian government the responsibility for the introductory part of the Declaration.⁴⁴

That was not all that Sforza had to say about the Declaration and its content. In a lengthy analysis of its value and significance, he tried to point out its weaknesses as well. As for the preamble of the Declaration, he found it to be "an innocent exercise in an average political literature", but admitted that Italy's being omitted as one of the Allied countries was painful to him. He professed that he would refrain from treating that question with the Serbian government for the time being. As for "the thirteen modern and democratic principles" which were central to the document, he stated that they had undergone several revisions to ensure they were not "offensive to us". He paid particular attention to Article 9 which stipulated that the territory of a future Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes included all the territory "in which our people live in a compact and uninterrupted mass". In Sforza's opinion, such definition "seems to make allowance for the granting to other countries of those parts in which that compactness did not exist". As for Article 3 stipulating that no part of that territory could join another country without consent of the people, Sforza interpreted it as creating a possibility for the constitution of independent states out of such pieces of territory. Overall, he thought that the Declaration should not be overestimated. Despite appearing as a perfectly logical document at first glance, the Declaration "essentially presents an uncomfortable compromise between different wishes and demands".

Sforza did not think much about the Declaration. He expounded his view that it did not present "a foundation for the South Slav union but merely an agreement on those points on which an agreement was possible". The union was spoken of as a union of "coat of arms and flags" while a solution of the mutual relations between the various nations was postponed until the convening of a Constitutional Parliament. Finally, Sforza opined that a new state, if it ever became reality, should not be viewed with fear. He felt that it would be exceedingly difficult to find a suitable formula to keep balance between different nations, inclinations and traditions. Beside, there would be other external problems to stir up fresh passions among its subjects.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 24 July 1917, Gab. 100, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

⁴⁵ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 25 July 1917, no. 419/75 Rismo, Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Serbia 1915-1918, box 178, Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Rome.

Sforza's analysis of the internal contradictions and weaknesses of the Declaration demonstrates that he was not a believer in its soundness and strength. He saw it as a consequence of incompatible goals and wishes. He tried to persuade Sonnino that the future Yugoslav state would not pose a threat to its neighbours for a long time to come due to its heterogeneity, internal differences and external perils. For the most part, Sforza's assessment proved to be accurate.

In the following days Sforza had another conversation with Ninčić about the Declaration. Sforza repeated that he had nothing against the principles laid down in the Declaration. Ninčić replied by expressing his regret for not being able to amend it by mentioning Italy. Sforza remarked that "the Italians who are fighting for Serbia in Macedonia will know of Declaration and not of kind words exchanged between two Ministers". Still, he was hopeful that this issue would not lead to renewed polemics between the two governments. In further conversation, Ninčić asked if Italy intended to respect the national self-determination principle in Dalmatia "for which reason Italy's name was dropped from the Declaration". Sforza vaguely answered that Dalmatia was in the hands of Austria-Hungary and that the liberation of the suppressed nations was one of the war goals of Italian government.⁴⁶

Over the next few weeks Sforza spent a great deal of time pondering the importance of Declaration and its ramifications for relations between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee. In this he was prodded by what was said in some Italian newspapers, particularly in the liberal Milanese daily *Corriere della Sera*.⁴⁷ That as well as the intention to avoid criticism from British and French public induced Sforza to observe that the content of Declaration represented "a proof of the diminished strength and influence of the Serbian government". For that reason, he went on, criticism at the expense of the policy of Serbia and Pašić should be toned down. He suggested Sonnino to take a sympathetic attitude towards Pašić and assure him of Italy's favourable disposition. Such attitude was necessary because Pašić was against the solutions prepared in advance. Regardless of his inviting the Yugoslavs to Corfu Pašić was, in Sforza's words, inclined to "practical deals and, if the choice was up to him, much more modest but Serbian solutions".⁴⁸ Sforza understood

⁴⁶ Ninčić to Pašić, Corfu, 14/27 July 1917, MID PO 1917, It/b, fasc. II, dos. VI; Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 28 July 1917, Gab. 103, Sonnino Papers, reel 17.

⁴⁷ The article entitled 'About the Corfu agreement' published on 3 August 1917 pointed out that the creation of Yugoslavia did not necessarily have to be aimed against Italy. Another article entitled 'Debates about the Corfu agreement' published on 14 August 1917 pleaded for cooperation with the future Yugoslav state provided Italian interests in the Adriatic were secured.

⁴⁸ Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, 16 August 1917, Gab. 108, Sonnino Papers, reel 17. This impression was confirmed in Pašić's conversation with the Ambassador Salvago-Radji in Paris on 6 August 1917. On that occasion Pašić said that '[the town of] Kotor is exclusively Serbian territory' and it could not be ceded to anyone. The same was true in Montenegro as a whole where a strong

well Pašić's policy and the moderation of his attitude towards Italy. Therefore, he made effort to have Sonnino take a similar stand.

Sonnino declined such stance and advice. This was a beginning of disension between him and Sforza.⁴⁹ His intransigence soon came to the fore. Returning from his European tour, Pašić briefly stayed in Rome where he had a lengthy conversation with Sonnino on 10 Septembar. They discussed the Corfu Declaration and the possibility of an agreement between Serbia and Italy on the Adriatic question. Sonnino agreed on the desirability of reaching an agreement in mutual interest, stated that he had been himself in favour of it and added that the Declaration with Pašić's signature attached "practically decreased, if not completely disposed of, any prospect of fruitful negotiations in a desired direction". He reproached Pašić for the Serbian government's decision to take an inflexible and principled position which precluded the possibility of an agreement and compromise. Having said that, and given the uncertain outcome of the war, Sonnino believed that the Declaration had come to pass at a very unfavourable, and even dangerous, moment for Italy. He explained it as follows: "In Italy, a lot of people had a feeling that the Declaration was an act of war sabotage which provides support to the neutralists" that is to say the opponents of the war. Given that the Declaration preceded the papal peace note, it stirred a lively agitation on the part of pacifists and socialists supported by the neutralists. The content of Declaration grew in significance due to Pašić's statement given to European press. If the content of Declaration was accepted, Italy would not have a single reason to continue her war efforts since there would be no benefits to accrue. Besides, the Declaration caused a great deal of people to resist the war, and that at the beginning of the third winter at war.

Sonnino then warned that such policy did not suit Serbia's war goals either, her restoration and expansion including the attainment of a sea outlet. He claimed that the agreements between the Allies regarding Italy's entrance into the war and the solution of the Adriatic question in case of victory were well-known. Sonnino asked of Pašić to accept that solution i.e. the Treaty of London as a basis for negotiations between the two governments, and he made allowance for discussion about some "minor details". In doing so, Serbia would reach an agreement with Italy. Sonnino obviously thought of making minor concession which he did not define more closely.

Pašić was reserved. He explained that the Declaration was necessary as a measure to prevent the acceptance of the proposal for autonomy of the Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary. Pašić did not see in the Declaration, limited to prin-

movement for a union with Serbia existed. See Salvago Radji to Sonnino, Paris, 6 August 1917, Sonnino Papers, reel 49.

⁴⁹ It should be noted that Sforza wrote nothing about this period in his diary. It was not before October 1917 that Sforza recorded how Sonnino was 'too hostile to any agreement with the Serbs'. C. Sforza, *Dalle pagine del diario. Il periodo pre-fascista*. Nuova Antologia, CII, vol. 501, fasc. 2004 (dicembre 1967), 457.

ciples alone, “an insurmountable obstacle to an agreement and concessions given the local geographical conditions”. Pašić recognised Italy’s need for a strategic dominance over the Adriatic. This could be ensured by giving her the towns of Trieste and Pola, the western half of the Istra peninsula, some islands and the port of Valona. Italian supremacy would be further enhanced through “a close friendship and agreement with the new state that was to emerge on the eastern coast [of Adriatic]”. Despite certain concessions, Pašić advocated the application of the nationality principle trying to convince Sonnino in the validity of his views.

Like Pašić, Sonnino stood his ground. He replied to the former that his solution was unacceptable and evoked the Treaty of London. Besides, the Declaration put forward certain new requests which were a threat to Italian security. Sonnino found objectionable a union of Montenegro and Serbia and consequent passing of the mountain of Lovćen to the new state’s possessions. He resolutely refused the possibility of a division of Istria but he was prepared to allow for Slovene population that was to remain within Italian borders the right of using their language, having their schools and other political and civil rights. Sonnino stressed that the Italian coast was threatened by a power which possessed the eastern coast and therefore the Treaty of London was a necessary minimum for “our security”. He concluded that further discussions would be useless if the terms of London Treaty were neglected.

The only matter on which the two men agreed was a need to cease criticism at the expense of Italy and her policy expounded in European and American press. Sonnino considered the writing against Italy as hostile. Pašić was of the same opinion and promised to do all that was in his power to mitigate European press’ writing against Italy. In the end, Pašić reiterated his belief that an agreement between the two countries was necessary and expressed hope that it would eventually be achieved. The two statesmen agreed to keep the content of their conversation secret.⁵⁰

Sonnino’s words were an overt accusation against Serbian government and Pašić. He held them responsible for the Corfu Declaration although he did not mention the dropping of Italy from the preamble of its text. In pursuing such policy the Serbian government interfered in Italian internal affairs encouraging the opponents of the war and the neutralists to pacifism. The Serbian government and Pašić thwarted Italy from receiving those territory for the acquisition of which she had entered the war. In other words, the Corfu Declaration took away the reasons for Italy to wage war. Therefore, Sonnino demanded from Pašić to accept the London Treaty and enable further participation of Italy in the war. That was too much to demand. Sonnino’s words reflected his state of mind - that of a man faced with the opposition to his policy

⁵⁰ Sonnino to Imperiali, Rome, 11 September 1917, Gab. 1511/887, Sonnino Papers, reel 41; Sonnino, *Diario 1916-1922*, 190-193.

on all sides. On the other hand, Pašić was prepared to make some concessions which could not satisfy Sonnino. Overall, Pašić defended the Yugoslav programme and smoothed away Sonnino's accusations with restrained replies.

Essentially, further negotiations had no purpose. Indeed, there were no negotiations for a long time to come. The dispute between Serbia and Italy was extremely difficult without prospects for an agreement in the near future. The Yugoslav policy of the Serbian government was a hindrance to Italian plans and pretensions. The two countries confronted because of Dalmatia, Montenegro and Albania. The stumbling block was the whole Adriatic coast rather than Dalmatia, Istria and the islands alone as often said. Serbia set her face against Italian entrenchment in these parts. Apart from a Great Power such as the USA, which put in question Italian territorial pretensions, a small country such as Serbia did the same. That was too much for Sonnino who could not tolerate a threat from that quarter. Hence his harsh words and accusations.

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ESSAD PASHA TOPTANI, SERBIA AND THE ALBANIAN QUESTION (1915–1918)

Abstract: During the Great War, Serbia found in Essad Pasha Toptani, Prince and Prime Minister of central Albania (1914–1918), her most reliable ally among the Albanians. He signed two treaties with Serbia (the 1914 Niš Treaty and the 1915 Tirana Treaty) that envisaged a real union between the two states which should have materialised if Essad Pasha had become a Prince (*mbret*) of Albania. The pro-Entente stance of Essad Pasha and his readiness to collaborate with Serbia prepared the ground for Italy's occupation of Durazzo in September 1915 and later the proclamation of Italian protectorate over certain parts of Albania. Essad Pasha, supported by French diplomacy joined the Serbian troops in Salonica and deployed his gendarmerie unit at the *Front d'Orient*. He was uncomfortable with the provisions of the Tirana treaty imposed to him at a difficult moment of his rule, but remained loyal to both Serbia and the Allies, hoping to restore his rule in Albania at the end of the war. His efforts were stopped in 1920, when he was killed by an Albanian nationalist who considered him a traitor to the pan-Albanian cause.

Keywords: *Serbia, Albania, Essad Pasha Toptani, Nikola P. Pašić, First World War, Italy, French diplomacy, Salonica Front, Balkan cooperation, Entente Powers*

Albania in Turmoil, 1914

At the beginning of the Great War, Albania remained – in spite of the mediation by the International Commission of Control (formed by the Great Powers in order to facilitate administration and financing) and the strong

presence of international military forces, deployed at the contested zones – an unstable and disorganised state, torn between various religious and political factions. On 3 September 1914, Prince Wilhelm von Wied, a monarch of Albania since February 1914, faced a widespread insurgency of rural Muslim population, which first confined him to the port of Durazzo and then forced to leave the country forever. His main opponent was Essad Pasha Toptani, an Ottoman general, formerly a commander of the town of Scutari and wealthy landlord from central Albania. Essad Pasha was likely the instigator of the rural Muslim revolt against the foreign and Christian ruler of Albania. He was ousted from the office of War Minister in the staunchly pro-Austro-Hungarian and pro-German government of Prince von Wied.¹ Contrary to the government, Essad Pasha Toptani took an open anti-Austrian stance and sought a viable political solution within regional context. His policy was to find common ground with all the neighbouring states: Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, all of them on the side of, or sympathetic to, Entente Powers, and he was willing to consider certain territorial concessions to reach such a rapprochement.²

Despite his preference for cooperation with Serbia, Essad Pasha was also maintaining friendly relations with Italy in order to keep the balance between various foreign influences that were tearing apart his homeland. As a Ghëg [a common name for northern and central Albanian clans] from the predominately Muslim and Roman Catholic north, Essad Pasha lacked any influence in southern Albania dominated by Christian Orthodox Albanians – the Tosks that kept closer cultural contacts with neighbouring Greece. Thus, to get rid of his enemies around Ismail Kemal, the exponent of Austro-Hungarian interests in Albania, who controlled southern Albania, Essad Pasha was prepared to cede the strategically important southernmost port of Valona [Vlorë], with the island of Saseno [Sazen] next to it, to Italy and to allow Greece the annexation of other areas of southern Albania, known as northern Epirus.³ During his conflict with Prince von Wied in May 1914, Essad Pasha found refuge in Brindisi, in Italy.

Italian influence in Albania, for decades strong among the Roman Catholic tribes in the north and the maritime regions, was challenged by Austria-Hungary through her cooperation with Ismail Kemal, the first Prime Minister of Albania in 1912. After proclaiming neutrality in the war on 2 August 1914, Italian Foreign Minister, Marquis di San Giuliano, regarded Albania as an un-

¹ Prince von Wied enjoyed not only the backing of Austria-Hungary but was supported by the Kosovo Albanian leaders, exiled in Albania after Serbia had recaptured the vilayet of Kosovo (Old Serbia) in 1912. Cf. important testimony on Prince von Wied's rule: Duncan Heaton-Armstrong, *Six Month Kingdom: Albania 1914* (London: I. B. Taurus 2005), 26-43, 48-72.

² D. T. Bataković, "Essad Pasha Toptani and Serbian Government", in: *Serbs and Albanians in the 20th Century*, A. Mitrović ed. Academic Conferences, vol. LXI, Department of Historical Sciences, No 20 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts 1991), 57-78.

³ G. B. Leon, "Greece and the Albanian Question at the Outbreak of the Great War", *Balkan Studies*, 1/11 (1970), 69-71.

viable state and favoured the partition of Albania between Serbia, Greece and Montenegro.⁴

With military logistics of Serbia, Essad Pasha managed to recruit additional supporters in Dibra (Debar) and re-enter Albania with his gendarmes in late September 1914. Facing little resistance, Essad Pasha took control over central Albania and established himself as a ruler in the strategically most important port of Durazzo. Under the terms of the two treaties he concluded with the Serbian government, at Niš in September 1914 and at Tirana in July 1915, Albania was to be constituted as an independent principality with Essad Pasha as its ruler, and his state was to form a real union with Serbia. The treaties also envisaged minor border modifications in the northern areas of Albania in Serbia's favour.⁵

Although accused by his political opponents of pursuing self-interest, of being a volatile ally and an unreliable friend to both Serbia and Italy, of selling out national soil and betraying his people, Essad Pasha remained consistent in his major political decisions despite tactical diplomatic vacillations. As an ally, he remained both responsible and reliable, especially in his relations with Serbia. Nevertheless, his failings, so often insisted upon in the literature of Albanian provenance, were common to all Albanian leaders regardless of their political orientation. Having risen to prominence when the Ottoman system in the Balkans was in decline, most of the leaders of the Albanian national movement were guided by their self-interest rather than common political cause and frequently opted for that foreign power which was willing to pay more for their services. Essad Pasha Toptani was no exception in this respect;

⁴ F. le Moal, *La France et l'Italie dans les Balkans 1914-1919. Le contentieux adriatique* (Paris : Harmattan, 2006), 29-31, 38-41.

⁵ On 17 September 1914, Essad Pasha signed a 15-points agreement with Serbia in Niš that envisaged the conclusion of a military and political alliance between Albania and Serbia and the construction of the so-called Adriatic railway connecting Serbia with Durazzo. In return, Serbia would support the election of Essad Pasha for a ruler of Albania. Serbia might intervene militarily if demanded by Essad Pasha in order to protect his regime. Special Serbo-Albanian commission would delineate borders between the two states. After being elected a ruler of Albania, Essad Pasha would make sure that his National Assembly of notables ratified the Niš Treaty. Serbia consented to finance Essad Pasha's gendarmerie and to provide 50.000 dinars (an equivalent in French francs) per month for military equipment of his troops.

The Tirana Treaty of 28 June 1915 was signed after 20.000-strong Serbian troops took control over the rebelled areas of Elbasan and Tirana in early June that year and saved Essad Pasha's regime in Durazzo. Under its terms, Essad Pasha consented to cede Podgradec and Has area until a post-war international commission established the permanent frontier. The treaty envisaged joint institutions in the army, foreign affairs, customs administration and a joint National Bank. Supported by Serbia, Essad Pasha would be elected prince (*mbret*) of Albania, and with the consent of his National Assembly would propose, in agreement with Serbian government, a constitutional draft and form a cabinet supportive of Serbo-Albanian unity. Serbian troops were supposed to remain in Elbasan and Tirana until the fulfilment of the treaty. In case of Italian military threat to Durazzo, Essad Pasha was obliged to call upon the Serbian troops to halt Italian occupation of his capital. (D. T. Bataković, "Essad Pasha and Serbian Government", 64-65, 68-69).

but unlike other Albanian leaders, he was not prepared to trade his allegiance and his political objectives for money alone. Essad Pasha's disposition to agree to minor rectifications of the Albanian border in favour of the Balkan neighbours (Serbia, Montenegro and Greece) seems to have resulted from typical Muslim mistrust of their Roman Catholic compatriots, who lived along the border with Montenegro and of Christian Orthodox Albanians who lived in northern Epirus. It was religious intolerance that provoked the civil war in Albania (1912–1915). Hence the independence or autonomy claims frequently put forward by the Roman Catholic Mirditës clan and the pro-Hellenic attitude among the Christian Orthodox Albanians in northern Epirus could only deepen the suspicion towards them and provide further justification for Essad Pasha's plan to create a predominantly Muslim Albanian state with the class of large landowners (beys) as its pillar. In his view, such a state, even if somewhat smaller than that established at the Conference of Ambassadors in London in 1913, would be religiously more homogeneous and politically more stable.⁶

With the outbreak of the Great War, the tumultuous political situation in Albania—above all, sharp tribal and religious divisions which had escalated into a civil war, as well as foreign interference (primarily that from the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungary) — became even more polarised: the attitude towards the Central Powers and the Triple Alliance often depended on the attitude of Albanian religious groups towards Serbia. A powerful and long-standing pro-Austrian current in Albanian political elite was strengthened by the steady inflow of Albanian leaders exiled from Serbia after the liberation of Old Serbia (the *vilayet* of Kosovo) and Slavic Macedonia. After the Ottoman Empire's entry into war on the side of the Central Powers in November 1914, they followed the instructions of the secret services of the Dual Monarchy and the Young Turks which were grounded in a revanchist policy towards Serbia.⁷ Apart from certain oscillations, especially after Italy's engagement in Albania, this policy was the driving force of a strong anti-Serbian movement until the end of the war, and after the war it served as a focal point for national rallying. Another current, well disposed to Serbia, was led by Essad Pasha. Supported by large landowners from central Albania whose interests were not conflicted with those of Serbia, and relying on many local and clan leaders with vested interest in a peaceful life in the areas bordering on Serbia, Essad Pasha was

⁶ For more see D. T. Bataković, "Esad-paša Toptani i Srbija 1915. godine", in *Srbija 1915. godine* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 1986), 299–327 (with the earlier literature). Cf. also opposite views: Sh. Rahimi, "Marrëveshjet e qeverise serbe me Esat pashë Toptanit gjate viteve 1914–1915", *Gjurimime Albanologjike*, VI, 1976, 117–143; M. Çami, *Shqipëria në marrëdhëniet ndërkombëtare (1914–1918)* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë 1987), 177–189. The Italian literature provides little information on Essad Pasha: P. Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914–1920* (Naples: Jovene 1970), 112–113, 336–341. Some information on Essad Pasha can also be found in A. Mousset, *L'Albanie devant l'Europe (1912–1929)* (Paris: Delagrave 1930).

⁷ A. Mitrović, *Serbia's Great War, 1914–1918* (West Lafayette Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2007), 128–135.

pursuing a distinctive policy. After having been disappointed with the lack of Italian support by early 1916, he definitely turned to Serbia. Through Serbia, he established ties with the powers of the Quadruple Alliance and, backed by the Serbian government, sought to secure his position in Albania against his opponents, and also against the obvious aspirations of allied Italy which was promised, under the Treaty of London (April 1915), Valona and its hinterland as well as protectorate over the rump Muslim state in central Albania.

The Serbian government abandoned its plan to obtain an access to the Adriatic at San Giovanni di Medua (Shëngjin) in northern Albania and, finding a suitable partner in Essad Pasha, set out to draw the entire Albania into its sphere of influence. A real union envisaged by the Tirana Treaty of 1915 seemed to Serbia as a strong guarantee that the anti-Serbian movement in Albania would be crushed, the influence of other foreign powers ousted, and the planned railway link with the Adriatic ports come to pass. The main weakness of Serbia's plan was that it entirely depended on Essad Pasha. All attempts to find an alternative to Essad Pasha, such as his relation Ahmed Bey Zogu, had little chances of success because the former did not tolerate any rivals.⁸

After the withdrawal of the Serbian Army across Albania and its evacuation by the Allies — during which the assistance of Essad Pasha's gendarmes to the retreating Serbian soldiers and civilians was valuable and earned him the nickname "Serbian mother" — he found himself in an unenviable situation. With Serbia no longer in a position to protect him, he was abandoned to Italy. In February 1916, the Essad Pasha, as the Prime Minister of Albania and a few hundred of his most loyal men were evacuated to the other side of the Adriatic, in Italy.⁹

Between French and Italians

Although the Italian government promised to recognise him as a ruler of Albania and hailed him as future prince of Albania, Essad Pasha soon realised that the Italians were trying to win him over for their own goals. He was profoundly upset by their proposal to accredit the Italian minister to the Albanian government who would be authorised to represent Albania before other powers. He departed for France (March-April 1916) and, as a result, he lost Italy's favour. In Paris, he was received with all honours befitting the president of a government in exile. French President Raymond Poincaré was not too impressed with him, but Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand, and General Joffre promised their support.¹⁰ Senior military officials believed he was essential figure in Albania,

⁸ More in : D. T. Bataković, "Ahmed Zogou et la Serbie: une coopération inachevée (1914-1916)", *Balkanica*, XLIII, 2012, 169-190.

⁹ Bataković, "Esad-paša Toptani i Srbija 1915. godine", 324-325.

¹⁰ Cf. more in: D.T. Bataković, "Esad Paša, Srbija i albansko pitanje 1916-1918", in *Srbija 1918. i stvaranje Jugoslovenske države* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut 1989), 345-364.

a country which could be used as a reservoir of good soldiers. In late August 1916, Essad Pasha arrived in Salonica on a French cruiser accompanied by two French diplomats, Vicomte de Fontenay, the Minister to Albania, and Leon Krajewski, a former French delegate in the International Commission of Control for Albania.¹¹

Serbian officials saw the arrival of Essad Pasha in Salonica as confirmation of his loyalty to the Allies. The Serbian Chargé d'Affaires to Albania, Tihomir Popović, never left his side in both Italy and Paris, while Panta Gavrilović was accredited as Serbia's Minister for Albania in Salonica. Given that a joint Allied front under French command had already been formed in Salonica, the Serbian government considered French diplomatic supervision over Essad Pasha as the most acceptable solution.¹² To certain extent, it was also a guarantee for Serbian interests in Albania, in the face of Italy's overt aspirations to establish protectorate over that country. For his part, Essad Pasha constantly drew attention of the Serbian government to the obstacles that the Italian military authorities and diplomatic officials put in his way.¹³

Assisted by French and Serbian diplomats, Essad Pasha formed his new cabinet in Salonica –that was the only Albanian government in exile. Due to the Serbian government 'efforts, it was granted the status of an Allied government in exile with the accredited representatives of France, Serbia and Greece. With some delay, Russia also appointed a diplomatic representative for Albania (A. Belaev), but not a diplomatic agent to Essad Pasha's cabinet in Salonica. With the outbreak of the revolution in Russia, the issue of her diplomatic representative lost importance, but the Serbian government tried to ensure that the Bolshevik authorities also appointed their representative to Essad Pasha's government.¹⁴

Essad Pasha had troops deployed on the Salonica Front consisting of more than 1,000 gendarmes, soldiers and some volunteers organised into the

¹¹ *Histoire de l'Albanie des origines à nos jours*, St. Pollo et A. Puto (dir.) ; avec la collaboration de K. Frasheri et S. Anamali ; préface de M. Baumont (Roanne: Horvath 1974), 195–196. Cf. also *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, A. Buda et alii (Prishtine: *Enti i Teksteve dhe i Mjeteve Mësimore i Krahinës Socialiste Autonome të Kosovës* 1969), 430–436.

¹² The Italian officials considered Essad Pasha as an instrument of Serbian politics, under French auspices (F. le Moal, *La France et Italie dans les Balkans 1914-1919. Le contentieux adriatique*, 204-209).

¹³ Arhiv Srbije, Ministarstvo inostranih dela, Albanski odsek [Archives of Serbia, Foreign Ministry, Albanian Section; hereafter: AS, MID, AO], f[ascicle]-V, Essad Pasha to Nikola Pašić, Salonica, 9/22 [two dates correspond to the Julian and Gregorian calendar respectively – the former was in official use in Serbia until 1919] January 1917.

¹⁴ Russian diplomacy was reluctant to appoint a representative to Essad Pasha's government, cf. AS, MID, AO, f-V, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 4/17 January 1917, conf. A[lbania], no. 33; N. B. Popović, *Odnosi Srbije i Rusije u Prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1977), 276. Pašić suggested that Russia should appoint her diplomatic representative to Essad Pasha to support the interests of Serbia in Albania, see. S. Draškić, "Albansko pitanje na Konferenciji mira u Parizu 1919. godine", *Ideje* 5-6, 1987, 22.

so-called Essad Pasha's encampment under the command of Albanian officers. Although Essad Pasha's position as the president of an Allied state was strengthened, the intervening events challenged his status. Essad Pasha's greatest concern was Italy, but it was French military commanders that put him in a difficult situation. Under French protection, an autonomous Albanian republic was proclaimed in Koritza (Korçë) on 10 December 1916, mostly for strategic military reasons. In the administration of the Republic of Koritza, entrusted to local Albanian "liberals", there was no room for Essad Pasha and his followers.¹⁵ His agents, sent to Koritza to appraise the situation, were turned back with no explanation. Political misunderstandings led to the obstruction of Essad Pasha's activities by the French military circles, and there were further troubles surrounding the organisation and command of his troops. One of Essad Pasha's frequent complaints to the French minister was commented by Serbian Vice-Consul, N. Jovanović, as follows: "[...] by acting like this, and helping the Italians in this matter, France is inadvertently creating, behind our back, a hostile Albania, such as that created by Austria and Germany which attacked us while we were at war with Austria [Albanian incursions into Serbia]. Such Albania was created directly against Serbia, and it was run by the men whom the Italians and the French are using today, and who are our archenemies."¹⁶

After the creation of the Republic of Koritza, and of another similar autonomous entity proclaimed in late January 1917 in the areas held by Austria-Hungary, Italy's plans for Albania became more visible. Essad Pasha was upset

¹⁵ *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, vol. II 436–440; Çami, *Shqipëria në marrëdhëniet ndërkombëtare (1914–1918)*, 229–245; Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914–1920*, 37 ff.

¹⁶ AS, MID, AO, N. Jovanović to N. Pašić, Corfu, 14/27 January 1917, conf. A, no. 14. Enclosed in this letter was Essad Pasha's letter to Pašić, dated 9/22 January, where he wrote: "I have tried to work, but I have not only been left without any assistance or aid, but I have also met with acts and pressures which are diametrically opposed to the spirit of the agreement and alliance [the 1915 Tirana treaty between Serbia and Albania]. Suspicion is being cast on my integrity, my work and my troops." Complaining about the actions of the French command, Essad Pasha stressed that the "French government, for some incomprehensible reasons and political combinations, which I am absolutely unable to comprehend, lets Wilhelm von Wied's banner be hoisted in Koritza; [it] drives my officials out of Koritza; [it] chooses as its trusted men and advisors people like Themistocles (Gërmenji) and others, who have no repute whatsoever in Albania, whose names and ancestry are perhaps even unknown in Albania! [...] The only possible reason is to gratify some unworthy persons and fulfil their wishes, the persons who are archenemies of the agreement and men loyal to Austria who now, out of necessity, pose as friends and who will show their true colours at the first opportunity." Summing up the whole situation, he emphasised: 1) instead of providing aid and assistance the French command causes him nothing but troubles and difficulties; 2) from the Italians comes nothing but "intrigues, badgering and influences"; 3) Russia and Britain have not sent diplomatic representatives as it was agreed. In conclusion, Essad Pasha reiterated his profound commitment to Serbia: "Essad Pasha's loyalty to the Serbian people and the royal [Serbian] government remains unchanged and categorical. He has tied his fate to Serbia and, despite various hindrances, is resolved to proceed along the path Serbia will designate for him. There is no force in the world that could shake his resolve."

and feared an assassination attempt as his agents informed him that it was being prepared by the Italians at Gjirokastra.¹⁷ Italy's deep involvement in the Albanian question was indicated in a brochure published in Naples in late 1916 – probably with the approval of the Italian government – and sent directly to Essad Pasha. This booklet, written by an Albanian of Italian origin, Gerardo Conforti, elaborated the old idea of a Greater Albania which, in addition to the two former Ottoman *vilayets* (Scutari and Janina) would encompass the areas that had formed part of the Ottoman *vilayets* of Kosovo, and Monastir (Old Serbia and Slavic Macedonia). Similarly to booklets and newspaper articles published under the patronage of the Austro-Hungarian or Young-Turk government, this Italian booklet, markedly anti-Serbian in tone and replete with heavy accusations against Serbia as the main culprit for the partitioning of the Albanian lands, advocated the creation of Albania under Italian protection within the borders stretching from Bar to Arta, from Kumanovo to Durazzo, and from Skopje and Monastir to Scutari and Janina.¹⁸

According to information from the Serbian Legation in Rome, Italy was making serious preparations to occupy northern Albania once Austro-Hungarian troops had been withdrawn. Mufid Bey, a former representative of Prince William of Wied's government to Italy, was appointed governor of Southern Albania at Argirocastro (Gjirokastra), an area under Italian occupation, while Maicastoldi, formerly advisor of the deposed Prince von Wied, and Alexander Ghika (an Epirote Albanian, who was an editor of an Albanian paper in Bari) were sent to organise administration in the areas occupied by Italy. The Albanians in Italy spread rumours to the effect that a future Albania would be considerably larger than that created in 1912 and that envisaged by the Treaty of London in 1915. At that time, Prenk Bib Doda, the leader of the Roman Catholic tribe of Mirditës, served in the Italian army with the rank of captain.¹⁹

Essad Pasha's fears that the Italians would undertake further action in Albania soon proved justified. The commander of the Italian troops in Corfu, General Marro, summoned all local Albanians and read them a cable from the Italian government stating that Italy, side by side with her allies, was fighting for the principle of nationality and that she would liberate the Albanian people. Apart from an appeal to all Albanians to contribute to this goal, the assembled Albanians also heard the proclamation of independence of Albania issued in Argirocastro on 3 June by the commander of the 16th Italian Corps, General Giacinto Ferrero. The proclamation read:

¹⁷ AS, MID, AO, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 3/17 January 1917, conf. A, no. 32.

¹⁸ G. Conforti (Italo-Albanese), *Problema Albanese* (Naples 1916), 3–15; see also AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica 15/18 January 1917, conf. A, no. 34.

¹⁹ In a way, Prenk Bib Doda was an Italian prisoner. He asked for Italian permission to travel to France, but he was not granted one. AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, M. Ristić to N. Pašić, cable, Rome. 6/19 February 1917, conf. A, no. 40.

“To the whole people of Albania, may this be a happy day, 3 June 1917, the day of celebrating constitutional liberties. We, General Giacinto Ferrero, the Commander of the 16th Army Corps, at the order of Victor Emmanuel III, proclaim the unity and independence of the entire Albania under the patronage and protection of the Kingdom of Italy. Albanians, by this act, you have free institutions, militia, courts and schools ran by Albanian citizens; you shall be able to dispose of your own property and to enjoy the fruits of your labour to your own benefit and to the ever greater benefit of your country.

Albanians, wherever you are, whether already free in your lands, scattered around the world as exiles, or still under foreign rule, which is generous with promises but in fact violent and usurpatory; you, the descendants of the most ancient and noble tribe, you who have centuries-old memories and traditions tying you to the civilisations of Rome and Byzantium; you, who are aware of the community of interests at the sea that at once separates and connects us — unite and be men of good will and have faith in the future of your beloved homeland; hurry all under the Italian and Albanian flags and swear eternal allegiance to what is proclaimed today on behalf of the Italian government and for Independent Albania in friendship with and under the protection of Italy.”²⁰

Essad Pasha promptly lodged an official protest with the Italian government. Unable to intervene personally in the issue of the Republic of Koritza and the Italian proclamation of Albania’s independence, he decided to visit Switzerland and France, purportedly for medical reasons but actually in order to strengthen his position and try to persuade the French to entrust the administration of the Republic of Koritza to him. He also planned to get in touch with Albanian committees in Geneva and gain their support, and to obtain guarantees from the French government that Great Britain would recognise his Allied status and appoint her representative to his government. To this end, he was ready to visit London too. His trip was replete with inconveniences. Since neither the French nor the Greeks could secure a place for him on their ships, he had to sail off on an Italian vessel. As a result, his first destination had to be Rome, where he had to meet the representatives of the Italian government although it had not established diplomatic relations with his government. After consultations with Premier Pašić and Prince-Regent Alexander, both of whom expressed their full confidence in him, Essad Pasha set sail. According to the Russian minister at Athens, Essad Pasha informed the Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, of his intention to proclaim himself King of Albania.²¹

²⁰ AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, N. Marković to N. Pašić, Corfu, 23 May/5 June 1917, conf. A, no. 147; (with the text of the proclamation enclosed). Cf. also Pastorelli, *L’Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914–1920*, 37–61. For the view held by Albanian historiography, see *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, vol. II, 441–444.

²¹ AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, Čohadžić’s cable, Athens, 10/23 August 1917, conf. A, no 297; the correspondence pertaining to Essad Pasha’s trip: conf. A, nos. 296, 303, 310, 311 and 312.

The reports from Corfu, where Essad Pasha briefly stayed on his way to Italy, showed that he had met many Albanian exiles, including those who were considered to be his bitter enemies (Ekrem Bey, former aide-de-camp to the Prince of Wied, the Libohova brothers, Avni Bey, Elias Bey etc.). The Serbians saw these contacts as Essad Pasha's attempt to win them over, but also as a prelude to his renewed rapprochement with the Italians.²²

The Serbian Legation at Rome feared that Essad Pasha would start "intriguing" in Rome and that certain circles would try again to win him over to Italy. Given that both Regent Alexander and Prime Minister Pašić fully trusted Essad Pasha and that he was accompanied by the French diplomat Krajewski, Essad Pasha's trip to Rome seems not to have caused any particular concern among the leading Serbian politicians. After a short stay in Italian capital, where the press did not bid him welcome, Essad Pasha left for Paris.²³

Meanwhile, the situation in the Albanian areas under French and Italian military control had somewhat changed – the Serbs saw it as an opportunity to include Essad Pasha's supporters into the administration of the Republic of Koritza. The growing discontent of the local Albanian population with French administration was further fuelled by rumours about an impending Italo-French agreement which would cede Koritza to the Italians and create a single political entity under Italian protectorate.²⁴ The president of the Albanian Club "Progress" said to the Serbian minister at Koritza:

"We are fond of Serbia, we want an agreement and we are asking her for help. After the war, all we need is a good gendarmerie to ensure security for us; we do not need an army for Albania will be neutral like Switzerland. With Serbia, a trade agreement will do for us."²⁵

²² AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, N. Marković to Foreign Ministry, Corfu, 7/20 September 1917, conf. A, no. 365. Before his departure for France, Essad Pasha dismissed Shahin Bey—his closest associate, Interior Minister and acting foreign minister, who was very influential among the Albanians in Greece, especially among their leaders residing in Salonica and Corfu—after having accused him of being an Italian spy. At his request, Shahin Bey was interned at the island of Mytelene by the French. Neither the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires to Essad Pasha's government, Panta Gavrilović, nor any other Serbian official well-versed in Albanian affairs was aware of what lay behind this conflict. They kept gathering information about the controversial dismissal of Shahin Bey which was believed to have considerably weakened Essad Pasha's position. It also gave rise to the assumption that Essad Pasha was trying to win over some other influential figure in Corfu to replace Shahin Bey. (Cf. AS, MID, AO, 1917, f-V, P. Gavrilović's cable, Salonica, 27 August/9 September 1917, conf. A, no. 264; P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, Salonica, 26 August/8 September 1917; N. Marković to J. T. Marković, Corfu, 31 August/13 September 1917, conf. A, no. 345).

²³ According to the Serbian Minister at Rome (AS, MID, AO, Ristić to Foreign Ministry, cable, Rome, 22 August/5 September 1917, conf. A, no. 323), Essad Pasha was not given a friendly welcome. He was harshly attacked by the press, especially by the *Giornale d'Italia*, the mouthpiece of Foreign Minister Sonnino. Announcing his arrival, the newspaper stressed that Essad Pasha, having intrigued against Italian interests and being a favourite of Serbia and Greece, would have to explain his suspicious behaviour.

²⁴ AS, MID, AO, N. Marković to Foreign Ministry, Corfu, 7/20 September 1917, conf. A, no. 367.

²⁵ AS, MID, AO, N. Jovanović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Koritza, 15/29 July 1917, conf. A, no. 254.

Not much later, the Serbian consul at Koritza was informed by the head of the Intelligence Department, De Trousseau, of the French military administration's wish to have in Koritza both Essad Pasha and Serbian troops, because the French were embittered by the behaviour of local Albanians and had no intention to deal with them any further.²⁶ Indeed, the French minister and Tefik Bey, an Albanian cabinet minister, arrived in Koritza in order to establish Essad Pasha's authority in the newly-seized Podgradec. Pašić asked General Sarrail to add two Serbian battalions to Essad Pasha's unit so that further advance beyond Podgradec could be prepared and the Italians prevented from taking Elbasan, and perhaps even Durazzo. Pašić also thought about creating a mixed Serbo-Albanian unit that would advance towards Elbasan.²⁷ However, the French command forbade any other administration at Podgradec except a military one, and Pašić promptly cabled Essad Pasha to cut short his medical treatment and urgently proceed to Salonica in order to arrange coordination between Serbian and his own troops in Albania.²⁸

The latter's prolonged stay in France—where he was coldly received—and Switzerland—where his attempts to win over mostly pro-Austrian or Austrian-sponsored Albanian exiles failed—gave rise to various speculations about his actual position in the Allied camp.²⁹ Serbian senior officials were alarmed by the news that Essad Pasha was reluctant to return to Salonica and that he was negotiating with the Italians about his transportation. Prime Minister Pašić arrived in Paris for an Inter-Allied conference and met with Essad Pasha. The Albanian asked for a more substantial financial aid from Serbia and, once the war was over, for the administration of the entire Albanian territory as stipulated under the terms of the London Conference of 1913 (without the regions of Podgradec, Dibra and Ljuma which he had pledged to Serbia

²⁶ AS, MID, AO, Jovanović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Leskovik, 24 July/6 August 1917, conf. A, no. 262.

²⁷ AS, MID, AO, N. Pašić to P. Gavrilović, Corfu, 5/18 September 1917, conf. A, no. 355; Tefik to N. Pašić, 31 August/13 September 1917, conf. A, no. 354. Since September 1916, Essad Pasha's troops had been stationed at Buković in the Prespa area, and after the capture of Monastir, wintered at Nično Polje. In the spring of 1917, they were withdrawn to the area between Lerin and Florina and then deployed in Podgradec, cf. AS, MID, AO, Jovanović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Koritza, 4/17 September 1917, conf. A, no. 352.

²⁸ AS, MID, AO, Pašić to Essad Pasha, Corfu, 5/18 September 1917, conf. A, no. 353. Pašić instructed Gavrilović (AS, MID, AO, Pašić to Gavrilović, Corfu, 5/18 September, conf. A, no. 353) to press, in agreement with Essad Pasha's cabinet ministers, for the restoration of the pre-occupation administration in the liberated parts of Albania. Since there were not enough officials, Pašić suggested that at first Serbian civil servants might be used, in agreement with Essad Pasha, until they could be replaced by his Albanian officials. The Serbian Supreme Command lodged a complaint with the Allied Command relating to Podgradec which, according to an agreement with Essad Pasha, had been under Serbian rule before the withdrawal of Serbian troops. Hence it demanded that Podgradec be considered as Serbian territory and that Serbian administration be installed there, cf. War Ministry to N. Pašić, 20 September/3 October 1917, conf. A, no. 411.

²⁹ AS, MID, AO, P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Salonica, 6/19 November 1917, conf. A, no. 479; T. Popović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Paris, 28 September/10 October 1917, conf. A, no. 405.

under the secret treaties of 1914 and 1915). Pašić expressed his readiness to increase financial aid provided that he was given detailed expense estimates. He also advised Essad Pasha not to raise new issues at that particular moment, but rather to confine himself to insisting on the restoration of the pre-occupation situation.³⁰

Considering that French sources have not been consulted for this paper, it may only be assumed that the wavering attitude of Essad Pasha, his new demands and indications that he would restore his ties with Italy — which was openly hostile to him after having learned of the secret treaties with Serbia and undermined his position in the Allied camp — stemmed from the insecurity aroused by the cold welcome in Paris and the fact that the Inter-Allied conference completely ignored him.³¹ Fearful that the Allied governments were losing interest in him, Essad Pasha insisted on every single formality: he refused to take a regular transport vessel to Salonica and demanded a special ship instead; he suggested that his government should declare war to the Central Powers; he weighed between alternative routes of his return from France, whether via Italy or directly from a port on the Côte d'Azur etc. His whims were all but an attempt to sound out the Allies as to their attitude towards him. Crown Prince Alexander, to whom Essad Pasha tended to turn for advice and opinion, did not attach particular importance to his manoeuvres and left it to him to choose the way and terms of his return to Salonica.³²

On his way back via Italy, Essad Pasha met with Lieutenant-Colonel Castoldi in Rome, a senior officer well-versed in Albanian affairs. Castoldi pointed out to him that he was pursuing an utterly wrong policy, because Italy was doing nothing vis-à-vis Albania without Great Britain's consent; that France, now that Russia was gone, would remain alone if she tried to protect his interests when the time came for deciding the destiny of Albania; that Essad Pasha's official protest against the Italian declaration of Albania's independence had been a fatal political mistake, because Italy alone decided on all issues concerning Albania.³³

³⁰ AS, MID, AO, N. Pašić to Foreign Ministry, cable, Paris, 16/29 November 1917, conf. A, no. 491.

³¹ AS, MID, AO, Essad Pasha's protest notes to G. Clemenceau for not being invited to the Allied Conference, Paris, 30 November 1917, conf. A, no. 535. For his attempts to get in touch with Italian diplomacy through Count Aliotti see AS, MID, AO, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 21 October/2 November 1917, conf. A, no. 452, and A. Ilić to N. Pašić, Koritza, 2/15 November 1917, conf. A, no. 539.

³² AS, MID, AO, Ž. Balugdžić to Foreign Ministry, cable, Salonica, 20 December 1917/2 January 1918, conf. A, no. 550; Serbian Legation in Paris to Foreign Ministry, cable, 21 December 1917/3 January 1918, conf. A, no. 533; Serbian Legation in Rome to Foreign Ministry, cable, 21 December 1917/3 January 1918, conf. A, no. 554; cf. also no. 546.

³³ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 20 January/2 February 1918, conf. A, no. 50.

On the Shaky Grounds

Upon his return to Salonica in early 1918, Essad Pasha asked for an audience with Serbian Prince-Regent Alexander. He complained about the cold reception in Paris, where he had been told that the final decision as to whether Albanian territories would be handed over to him after the war had not yet been made. Essad Pasha claimed that the French attitude had to do with his 1915 agreement with Serbia, and believed that, should Serbia insist upon the fulfilment of its terms, he would have no other solution than to retire to Switzerland or Spain. He also interpreted French reluctance to appoint a new representative to his government in Salonica following the departure of Vicomte de Fontenay as another sign of distrust of him.³⁴ On the occasion of another audience with the Regent, he described his position as unbearable. Observing that Italy was successfully discrediting him in Paris and London, he pleaded with the Regent not to insist upon the fulfilment of their agreement of 1915; he had no intention of breaching it, but he needed assistance to strengthen his authority among the Albanians which could be done by obtaining French permission to establish his administration at Podgradec. The Prince-Regent wanted to consult Pašić and made no tangible promises. The latter concluded that Essad Pasha “shows the intention not to honour the agreement to the letter,” and remarked that circumstances could change but the goal should remain the same.³⁵

Essad Pasha later also complained to Serbian junior diplomatic officials that his political work was constrained by his agreements with Serbia. For instance, he stated to the Chargé d’Affaires in Koritza and Janina, N. Jovanović: “But you know that the second agreement is something of an addendum to the first one and that it has no importance. (He might allude to that provision of the second [1915 Tirana] treaty according to which some borders are no longer in force — remark by N. J.). Moreover, this agreement cannot be implemented until all its terms are fulfilled, i.e. until I become what is said in the agreement. At this point, however, I am still in the womb [complete uncertainty]. You are asking me to state my position to the Allies now. I cannot do that because I would be discredited in their eyes and we would not be able to achieve a desired goal. They would hamper my work. The French have already rebuked me for having handed over to the Serbs a map regarding Albania’s borders, by which I am ceding some lands, and for having made some agreement between us. They ask me what kind of agreement that is? I reply that it is our business with the Serbs, I honour my *first word* and, if you will, I will stamp the agreement with nine more seals. I have never given you any reason to suspect that I

³⁴ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Salonica, 14/27 January 1918, conf. A, no. 28, as well as cable from Salonica, 28 January/10 February 1918, conf. A, no. 58.

³⁵ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, Salonica, 18/31 January 1918, conf. A, no. 29, with Pašić’s handwritten note of 23 January/5 February 1918 on the backside.

am in cahoots with anyone else.”³⁶ Jovanović added that Essad Pasha had told him a long ago at Durazzo that “we were able to fast-talk him into the second agreement because of the situation in which he was at the time, but that he will seize an opportune moment, when we should find ourselves in a bad position, to renounce the agreement”³⁷

Essad Pasha's statements clearly revealed his concern for his status as the sole representative of the Albanians in the Allied camp. His complaints about the constraints that the agreement with Serbia placed on him were attempts to solidify his status rather than detach himself from the Serbian government. His grumbling comment that the second treaty with Serbia, the 1915 Tirana Treaty, had been imposed on him at a difficult moment, was a reflection of his assessment of the existing political situation: in view of the attitude of the French government and the rival Albanian leaders, that agreement must have seemed to him as a burden rather than an asset.

Essad Pasha's fears were additionally fuelled by the French military authorities, especially the newly-appointed commander of the French forces, General Guillaumat, who declined his requests to visit his troops on the front and in Podgradec. His soldiers' lack of discipline and occasionally inappropriate conduct towards the local population tarnished his reputation in the eyes of Allied commanders and kindled their mistrust. Although the French strategists acknowledged Essad Pasha's role in the Allied plans, they pointed out to Serbian officials his disagreements with Italy as an obstacle to the joint war effort against the Central Powers.³⁸

In early 1918, Essad Pasha was somewhat encouraged by Lloyd George's and Woodrow Wilson's statements concerning the war aims, and particularly the restoration of autonomous Albania. He immediately sent them telegrams expressing his gratitude. At the same time, at the audience with the King of Greece, who commended Essad Pasha's policy of Balkan unity and cooperation with Albania's neighbours, Greece and Serbia, he was given assurance of more substantial aid from Athens.³⁹

Serbian diplomacy kept an eye on Essad Pasha's rapprochement with the Greek government and the increasingly conspicuous expressions of mutual appreciation. Due to Greek-Albanian rivalry over Koritza, the relations between Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and Essad Pasha mark-

³⁶ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, N. Jovanović to N. Pašić, Koritza, 2/15 April 1918, conf. A, no. 226.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 21 January/23 February 1918, conf. A, no. 51. The villagers from the Shkumbin valley and the environs of Podgradec complained about the conduct of Essad Pasha's soldiers and requested that Serbian administration be established in their area. Pašić's agent in Koritza suggested that Serbian officers should be appointed to impose stricter discipline on these soldiers (AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, A. Ilić to Foreign Ministry, Koritza, 4/17 February 1918, conf. A, no. 82).

³⁹ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Essad Pasha's telegrams to Lloyd George and W. Wilson, conf. A, no. 75; P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 29 January/11 February 1918, conf. A, no. 77.

edly deteriorated, especially when the latter demanded from the French to be granted control over this town. Their relations thawed after Italian troops had reached the town of Janina. The Greek government promptly appointed its representative to Essad Pasha hoping that he would be able to influence the Epirote Muslims to resist Italian propaganda. Serbia saw Essad Pasha's reliance on Greece as understandable because, in his unenviable situation, "any additional support is a significant gain".⁴⁰

Due to the mediating efforts of Serbian officials, French military authorities granted Essad Pasha the permission to visit his now 1,500-strong troops in the environs of Podgradec. Essad Pasha also requested that Serbia back his demand for his own administration in the French-controlled zone, which would serve him as a base for establishing closer contacts with his followers in the interior of Albania. He justified this request by his fear that the Italians might expand their control over the Koritza and continue their agitation among the Albanians which was entirely directed against him.⁴¹

Essad Pasha's efforts to take over the administration of the Republic of Koritza proved futile. In February 1918, French military authorities abolished the Republic. From an autonomous province under French military protection, the Koritza area reverted to being an area under French military control.⁴²

The situation in Essad Pasha's encampment, despite sporadic successful military operations, was different from what his government and Serbian officials hoped for. The encampment — which grew to 1,800 to 1,900 men due to the influx of new volunteers — held the 34km-long front line between Podgradec and the Shukumbin River. However, morale was badly affected by internal bickering, the lack of money and rumours about the pending reorganisation. Essad Pasha's visit to the front-line troops was supposed to boost the morale, and especially to refute the allegations that he had been arrested and interned somewhere in France, and then transferred and held in custody in Salonica. Essad Pasha used his visit to organise the infiltration of his men across the border and stir up agitation in the areas held by Austria-Hungary. His trusted men were assigned the task to neutralise propaganda coming from Constantinople, which urged the Muslim Albanians to join the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian army.⁴³

⁴⁰ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 20 April/3 May 1918, conf. A, no. 260. Enclosed in it are translations of three articles from Greek newspapers on Essad Pasha, written in a markedly friendly tone (*Elenikos*, Athens, 16 February/2 March 1918; "Albania and the Balkans", *Sirea*, Salonica 1/14 March 1918; "Albanians", *To Fos*, Salonica, 1/14 March 1918).

⁴¹ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, Salonica, 25 February/10 March 1918, conf. A, no. 120 (with the enclosed report of the French Headquarters on Essad Pasha's encampment); P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, Salonica, 28 February/13 March 1918, conf. A, no. 119. Cf. *Histoire de l'Albanie*, 189.

⁴² Çami, *Shqipëria në marrëdhëniet ndërkombëtare (1914–1918)*, 245–249.

⁴³ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, N. Jovanović to N. Pašić, Koritza, 2/15 April 1918, conf. A, no. 226; Security Service to Foreign Ministry, 30 March/12 April 1918; P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica 7/20 March 1918, conf. A, no. 170.

Despite support from the Serbian and Greek governments, Essad Pasha did not succeed in asserting himself as the only legitimate representative of the Albanians in the Allied camp. At first, French military authorities declined the Serbian Supreme Command's request to permit reinforcements to the contingent of his troops and the appointment of Serbian officers to his encampment. Since French military authorities and Italian forces blocked all Essad Pasha's attempts to influence the course of Allied operations in Albania, he "has grown very fearful that he will be tricked politically and prevented, if the circumstances changed, from starting any action in Albania with any chance of success".⁴⁴

General Guillaumat eventually suggested to Essad Pasha the formation of an Albanian volunteer unit under French command (*Armée française d'Orient*) which would diminish its status as a national military force. After Essad Pasha's strong protests and further intervention by Serbian diplomacy, his encampment was not disbanded, but it was placed under the direct command of French officers.⁴⁵

The change in the Albanian theatre of war, especially the Italian successful offensive, opened the possibility for further engagement of Essad Pasha's troops. Essad Pasha proposed his plan for a joint Allied attack on Elbasan and an advance towards Durazzo to the newly-appointed Commander of the French Eastern Army, General Franchet d'Espèrey. The General commended the plan and stated that both the French and the British agreed to it, but that the Italians were resolutely against it. Essad Pasha complained about Italy's blocking major military undertakings out of her self-interest. As he was about to visit Paris again, Franchet d'Espèrey suggested him to meet with the American Ambassador to France and inform him about Italian obstruction of joint Allied operations on the Albanian front, because it was only through American mediation that the French and British attitude towards the Italian government could be influenced. Essad Pasha consulted with the Serbian representative to his government and they agreed to approach the American Ambassador through Serbian Minister at Paris, Milenko R. Vesnić.⁴⁶ After Italian forces took Berat, Essad Pasha's troops, were, at the request of the Serbian government, engaged in the French offensive towards Elbasan.⁴⁷

The developments on the front led the Greek government to energetically support Essad Pasha's interests before the Allies and push for the recognition of his administration of the Italian and French occupation zones.⁴⁸ Before

⁴⁴ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 20 April 1918, conf. A, no. 286.

⁴⁵ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 16/29 May 1918, conf. A, no. 320.

⁴⁶ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 19 June/2 July 1918, conf. A, no. 386.

⁴⁷ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Jovanović to Foreign Ministry, cable, Koritza, 3/16 August 1918, conf. A, no. 390.

⁴⁸ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Security Service report to N. Pašić, Corfu, 6/19 August 1918, conf. A, no. 399.

leaving for Paris, Essad Pasha met with Greek Interior Minister Politis and the American Ambassador to Greece. They spoke about the Albanian question, and the Greek Minister suggested that a post-war administration in Albania should be modelled on the Swiss example, which Essad Pasha rejected resolutely. In a letter to the Serbian Minister, he described this suggestion as Greece's attempt to exploit American involvement in European affairs to obtain the Italian-occupied southern Albania ("Tosqualik"). He considered the idea of introducing the Swiss federal system illogical: it would only suit Italy, because in that case the Albanians would rather opt for her protectorate.⁴⁹

In mid-August 1918, Essad Pasha left for France, his spirits high after receiving a cable from Clemenceau expressing his satisfaction that Essad Pasha's troops had been engaged in the offensive in Albania.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Essad Pasha was aware that the future of Albania would be decided neither by Serbia nor Greece, but by an agreement among the Entente Powers, i.e. with Italy's agreement. Nevertheless, his efforts to find support for his plans among the Allies were short-breathed and ineffective.

The Serbian government sought, within its limits, to back Essad Pasha as the sole legitimate representative of Albanian people. On the whole, its policy towards Albania amounted to forestalling foreign protectorates and restoring the regime that had been in place before the retreat of the Serbian army. Therefore, it lodged more than one protest against Italy's fortifying her position in Albania and promoted Essad Pasha in order to pave the way for his return to power. Essad Pasha was aware that Serbia was his last resort and that without her assistance in his dealing with the Allies he did not stand a chance to return to Albania. Consequently, his letters to American President, Woodrow Wilson, written in the summer of 1918, referred to Wilson's Fourteen Points and advocated the formation of the Yugoslav state around Serbia, which, in turn, would guarantee the integrity and independence of his nation.⁵¹

On the other hand, Pašić did not rule out the partition of the Albanian lands if the Allies turned to such a solution. The preservation of Albania's autonomy remained the preferred outcome for the Serbian government because of the South-Slav question and its relations with Italy, but the issue of Albanian borders was still open. For that reason, the Memorandum of March 1918 on Serbia's national claims did not precisely define the borders with Albania, with the exception of Valona and the island of Saseno which were recognised as Italy's possessions.⁵²

⁴⁹ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to N. Pašić, Salonica, 1/14 August 1918, conf. A, no. 456 (with Essad Pasha's letter to Gavrilović enclosed).

⁵⁰ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Čohadžić to Foreign Ministry, cable, Athens, 4/17 August 1918, conf. A, no. 401.

⁵¹ P. Opačić, *Solunska ofanziva 1918* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga 1980), 51–52.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 52.

Soon after the breach of the Salonica Front in mid-September 1918 followed by the spectacular victories of French-led Serbian forces, Pašić formulated Serbia's Albanian policy as follows: "Our policy in Albania is to restore, if possible, the situation as it was before the evacuation, when Essad Pasha was President of the Albanian government and to occupy the territory up to the Mati river, and, in agreement with tribal chieftains, to restore local administration that would operate under instructions from our authorities."⁵³

France — especially after General Franchet d'Espèrey, who supported Serbia's interests without instructions from Paris, was appointed commander-in-chief of the *Armée d'Orient* — approved of Serbia's policy on Albania. Accordingly, she supported Essad Pasha, but only to the extent compatible with her Inter-Allied obligations. Moreover, to avoid spoiling relations with Italy, Clemenceau halted the advance of French troops in Albania more than once.⁵⁴

The Salonica Break-through

The course of events was hardly propitious to Essad Pasha's aspiration to restore his position in Albania. In Paris, an inter-Allied agreement on spheres of influence left Albania to Italy.⁵⁵ Shortly before the Salonica offensive in September 1918, Essad Pasha sought support from the Entente Powers, especially the United States, but only managed to arouse a fleeting interest of American journalists in Paris.⁵⁶ After the breach of the Salonica Front, the Serbian government called upon Essad Pasha to return from Paris as the military success had opened the road to Elbasan. Anticipating Italy's opposition to Essad Pasha's return to power, it endeavoured to have Albania occupied by joint Allied forces. Pašić offered a military unit composed of Serbian officers and ethnic Albanian soldiers from Serbia. He stressed that Essad Pasha was due to arrive in Salonica and that full collaboration with him should be established.⁵⁷

⁵³ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, N. Pašić to Foreign Ministry, Paris, 19 October/2 November 1918, conf. A, no. 544.

⁵⁴ Opačić, *Solunska ofanziva 1918*, 61–62. On French commandement: G. Fassy, *Le commandement français en Orient (octobre 1915-novembre 1918). Etude historique d'un commandement opérationnel français à la tête d'une force militaire alliée* (Paris: Institut de stratégie comparée & Economica, 2003), 410–429.

⁵⁵ Opačić, *Solunska ofanziva 1918*, 359–360. Hence the Serbian Minister at London cabled to the Foreign Ministry that "the English government is not in favour of Essad Pasha's presence in Albania. The reason seems to lie partially in Italy's position on the issue of Albania and Montenegro". (AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Jovanović to Foreign Ministry, London, 13/26 October 1918, conf. A, no. 535)

⁵⁶ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, Paris Legation to Foreign Ministry, Paris, 21 August/2 September 1918, conf. A, no. 503. Enclosed with it was Essad Pasha's interview to *New York Herald* of 30 August 1918: the Serbian Chargé-d'Affaires drew attention to Essad Pasha's statement that his troops, had the Allies given him a free hand, would have already taken Scutari and the plains of Kosovo. He understood it as a territorial claim to Kosovo.

⁵⁷ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Gavrilović to Foreign Ministry, Salonica, 16/29 September 1918, conf. A, no. 494; Opačić, *Solunska ofanziva 1918*, 358.

On 12 October, however, the French military command disbanded Essad Pasha's encampment. Five hundred officers and soldiers went home, along with the recruits enlisted in 1917, without waiting for Essad Pasha to return. Meanwhile, French and Serbian forces had been advancing towards the interior of Albania. The Serbian Ohrid Detachment took Tirana, but had to withdraw four days later at the request of Italian General Ferrero on the grounds of the Inter-Allied Supreme War Council's decision that Italian troops would control Albanian territory up to the Mati River. Franchet d'Espèrey ordered the Detachment to withdraw to Prizren.⁵⁸

Having returned from France, Essad Pasha managed to reach the town of Djakovica from Salonica and waited there to see the outcome of operations. He returned to Salonica, leaving behind his representatives to campaign for him in the borderland between Serbia and Albania. Essad Pasha advised his followers, great landowners and rich Albanian merchants in Tirana and Scutari, to show solidarity with the Serbian troops in Scutari and to collaborate with the Serbian commander. But the Malissori tribe revolt in northern Albania against the retreating Austro-Hungarian troops and, in particular, Italy's support to every anti-Serbian movement among Albanians not just in Albania, but also in Macedonia and Kosovo, undermined the efforts of Essad Pasha's agents to organise a movement for his return to power.⁵⁹

Given that the Italians supported an anti-Serbian movement among the north-Albanian Catholic tribes, Essad Pasha expected Muslim Albanians to take his side. However, the Italian-backed Albanian movement against the Serbs and the Serbian army grew stronger and attracted Muslim Albanians as well. The Italians also constantly complained to French commanders about the campaigning of Essad Pasha's agents which, they claimed, caused them unnecessary difficulties. Essad Pasha feared that the French might intern him on account of these complaints and thus requested the Serbian government to provide him a place of residence – and even gave Pašić a free hand to disband his government if necessary.⁶⁰

The Serbian Prime Minister did not, however, rule out the possibility that Essad Pasha might reach Albania with his followers and consolidate his position in the areas north of the Mati River, which Serbia considered her sphere of influence. Pašić did not give up hope that Essad Pasha would play a role in political combinations in Albania despite the Italian demand that the latter be interned in France. The Serbian government proposed that its protégé be transferred to Serbia.⁶¹

⁵⁸ AS, MID, AO, 1918, f-VI, P. Čohadžić to Foreign Ministry, cable, Salonica, 12/25 October 1918, conf. A, no. 534; Bogumil Hrabak, "Reokupacija oblasti srpske i crnogorske države s arbanaskom većinom u jesen 1918. godine i držanje Arbanasa prema uspostavljenoj vlasti", *Gjurmime albanologike* 1 (Prishtine 1969), 256.

⁵⁹ Hrabak, "Reokupacija", 263.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 262, 264–265.

Essad Pasha was still in Salonica while his agents in Lower Dibra, Peshkopia and the surrounding villages were trying to suppress Italian propaganda against the Serbian army and to recruit gendarmes among local Albanians. This action, however, produced little result due to the fickleness of his agents and Italy's widespread influence on the Albanian population. On the other hand, an Italian-backed movement for an autonomous Albania under Italian protection—which was to include the regions of Serbia partially inhabited by ethnic Albanians (western Macedonia with Skoplje, Kosovo, Metohija and the surrounding areas) — was gaining momentum. Scutari, from which Serbian troops had withdrawn in early December, became a hub of anti-Serbian propaganda under the auspices of the Italian military authorities. With the assistance of the Italian Consulate in Scutari, Albanian leaders began to set up committees to decide on the fate of Albania. These committees were set up even beyond Albania's borders, inside Serbia, in Skoplje, Djakovica, Peć, Priština, Kačanik, Vučitrn and Debar [Dibra]. The organisation of their large gathering was overseen by the Mirditë chieftain, Prenk Bib Doda.⁶²

In early December 1918, Essad Pasha rose from the lethargy that he had sunk into after the official recall of the French representative to his government, and engaged in political affairs with more enthusiasm. His supporters in Albania reported that the time for action was running out and that there still were many districts lacking any governing authority. The Serbian government advised him to move his base from Salonica to the Serbian town of Niš and refrain from conflict with the Mirditë and Mati tribes, but rather to focus on the predominantly Muslim areas southwards. Serbian military authorities supported his agents' in their struggle to take control over Mati region, but deemed that his chances for taking power in central Albania were rather slim.⁶³

In the meantime, in Salonica, the Epirotes, pro-Greek ethnic Albanians from southern Albania, formed the "Albanian Epirote Committee" backed by Athens; it advocated the creation of a state under Essad Pasha's rule which would include the counties of Debar, Prizren and Scutari. Whereas his supporters in Greece, owing to the strength of Epirotes, were increasing in number, the situation of his supporters in Albania grew weaker. In late December, for instance, the local chieftains in Lower Debar requested that Essad Pasha's officials with no real authority be replaced by Serbian administration.⁶⁴

In November 1918, a secret Franco-Italian military agreement was concluded permitting Italy to occupy the whole of Albania except Scutari, Koritza and Podgradec. On 25 December 1918, the Italians summoned fifty Albanian leaders from all parts of the country to Durazzo to elect a pro-Italian government. The delegates constituted a National Assembly and elected the provi-

⁶² *Ibid.*, 285.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 287–288.

sional government headed by Turkhan Pasha Permeti. The Italian-controlled Permeti's government sent a delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris, but it was not granted the official status it requested.⁶⁵

Essad Pasha Toptani remained reliable partner to Serbia even after the Great War ended. The newly-created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, proclaimed in Belgrade on 1 December 1918, provided him the support he expected. In April 1919, he arrived at the Paris Peace Conference as a leader of another unofficial Albanian delegation. Essad Pasha claimed to have been the only legitimate representative of Albania and reminded the Allies on his government's declaration of war to Central Powers and its status as an Allied government in exile in Salonica.⁶⁶ His struggle to return to power in Albania was ended by an assassin, Avni Rustemi. Perceiving Essad Pasha as a traitor for his close cooperation with Serbia, the young Albanian nationalist shot him dead in Paris, in front of Hotel Continental, on 13 June 1920.

⁶⁵ For more details see D. Todorović, *Jugoslavija i balkanske države 1918–1923* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga 1979), 23–26.

⁶⁶ [Essad-pasha], *Mémoire sur l'Albanie* (Paris : s. n. 1919). For his political activity in 1919–20 see Todorović, *Jugoslavija i balkanske države 1918–1923*, 51–59.

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LA RELIGION ET LE CONFLIT FRANCO-ITALIEN EN MACÉDOINE, 1918-1940. LE CAS DU PÈRE BRUNETTI.

Résumé: Dès la fin de la Grande Guerre, l'Italie et la France, entrèrent dans un conflit d'intérêts politiques, économiques et culturels dans le nouveau et incertain Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, future Yougoslavie. Dans la région de Macédoine, avec sa population culturellement, linguistiquement et religieusement hétérogène, le conflit s'élargit au domaine religieux et idéologique impliquant le gouvernement royal de Belgrade. Ce texte montre comment les différents acteurs officiels et privés impliqués dans le domaine religieux agissaient, comment leurs stratégies étaient formulés et appliqués, par quels moyens et dans quelles perspectives.

Mots-clés : *France, Italie, Serbie, Yougoslavie, histoire des relations internationales, diplomatie culturelle.*

À la fin de la Grande Guerre, les « sœurs latines », la France et l'Italie, se retrouvèrent à la fois alliées dans la victoire et concurrentes dans l'Europe nouvelle fondée sur les solutions adoptées par la Conférence de la paix. L'Italie était un vainqueur frustré aux aspirations territoriales non réalisées, une puissance en quête d'une zone d'influence propre, notamment dans les Balkans et en Europe Centrale. Les vecteurs de cette influence n'étaient pas seulement politiques et économiques. Outre la culture, la religion pouvait jouer un rôle important dans ces régions de l'ancien Empire ottoman où la concurrence des puissances pour la protection des minorités religieuses avait constitué un enjeu dans le passé récent. En Macédoine, devenue serbe à l'issue des guerres balkaniques, l'Italie rencontrait la présence économique et culturelle de la France, protectrice du nouveau Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes. La tension

entre les deux pays se focalisa sur le père Brunetti, un prêtre d'origine italienne qui avait été l'aumônier des troupes italiennes sur le front de Salonique avant de devenir le supérieur de l'ordre français des Lazaristes à Bitolj.

Le soutien que la diplomatie italienne a apporté à ce prêtre éclaire sa politique en Macédoine : tandis que la France cherchait à consolider dans toutes les populations une influence qui, jusqu'à la Première Guerre mondiale, avait été limitée aux Serbes et devait désormais contribuer à la création d'un Etat-Nation yougoslave, l'Italie s'appuyait sur les albanophones non orthodoxes en mettant en cause le protectorat de la France sur les catholiques de l'ex-Empire ottoman. Dans cette entreprise, elle entendait mobiliser certains religieux comme le père Brunetti. En 1927, celui-ci se retrouva au cœur d'un conflit entre l'Italie et le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes. Pour éviter un tête-à-tête avec Rome qui risquait de dégénérer, Belgrade impliqua Paris. Des années de tension contrôlée entre les trois diplomaties française, italienne et yougoslave s'ensuivirent. Tous les acteurs se focalisèrent sur les origines italiennes du père Brunetti, Rome pour en faire un agent de son influence, les Français et les autorités du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes puis de la Yougoslavie pour déplorer ses agissements « anti-yougoslaves » auprès des élèves. La réalité de ces agissements est en fait difficile à mesurer. Le fond de l'affaire est idéologique, dans une période où le régime fasciste italien affirmait sa singularité et ses ambitions en matière de politique extérieure. France et Italie restaient néanmoins alliées et leurs diplomaties se gardèrent constamment d'exagérer leurs différends.

Les fondements de la politique italienne en Macédoine

La Macédoine était une région à la population linguistiquement et religieusement hétérogène, sans aucune élite réellement établie, ni bourgeoisie urbaine forte. Comme au temps des Ottomans, la religion y était souvent la seule expression de l'identité. De l'héritage ottoman, elle avait aussi conservé, dans l'entre-deux guerres, la présence d'ordres missionnaires étrangers qui dirigeaient des écoles privées. Les missionnaires d'origine française, soutenus par la diplomatie française, étaient les plus nombreux : à Bitolj (Monastir), ils avaient repris après la guerre deux écoles religieuses : l'école de garçons des frères Maristes, dirigée par les pères Lazaristes, et une école de filles tenue par les Filles de la Charité. Bitolj abritait en outre l'école de la communauté israélite locale soutenue par l'Alliance israélite universelle. Les Français disposaient encore d'une école laïque à Skoplje (Uskub), de sociétés d'amitié franco-serbe et de succursales de la Banque franco-serbe à Skoplje et Bitolj. Les deux écoles religieuses françaises accueillaient des élèves de plusieurs nationalités et religions. Elles étaient tolérées par le gouvernement royal dans la mesure où leurs activités ne lui paraissaient pas aller contre les intérêts du nouvel Etat des Slaves du Sud. Les autorités exerçaient sur elles une vigilance constante. En octobre 1925, l'école des pères Lazaristes dut ainsi momentanément fermer parce

qu'elle était fréquentée « exclusivement par les enfants des familles hostiles au nouveau régime ». ¹ Elle ne fut autorisée à rouvrir qu'à la condition d'enseigner « les matières nationales », à savoir l'histoire, la géographie et la langue serbo-croate.

Dès la fin de la guerre, la diplomatie française s'inquiéta des menées italiennes dans la région. Elle craignait généralement que la question religieuse ne devînt l'enjeu dont profiterait l'Italie à des fins politiques. Rien de surprenant à cela. Le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes ne faisait que s'inscrire ici dans la continuité de la concurrence franco-italienne dans les Balkans et en Méditerranée avant et pendant la Grande Guerre. ² Pour la pénétration italienne dans les Balkans, le point de départ était l'Albanie. ³ L'Italie avait déjà préparé la « conquête morale » de l'Albanie avant 1914, en soutenant le développement d'un réseau d'institutions scolaires et religieuses sous sa domination. Dans le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, elle comptait sur une population albanophone, majoritairement musulmane, qui peuplait en partie les régions du Kosovo et de la Macédoine et dont la minorité catholique disposait d'un clergé généralement bienveillant envers l'Italie. En Macédoine, elle voulait aussi se rallier la population slave orthodoxe philo-bulgare qui n'était pas satisfaite de sa nouvelle patrie yougoslave.

En septembre 1918, alors que les troupes alliées se préparaient à la percée du front de Salonique, l'ambassadeur de France à Rome, Camille Barrère, exprima sa peur que l'Italie ne bénéficie de l'influence spirituelle du Saint-Siège dans les Balkans. ⁴ Dès l'armistice de Villa Giusti, le gouvernement italien chercha en effet les moyens de s'assurer de bonnes relations avec le clergé catholique d'Albanie et de Macédoine. En témoigne un télégramme adressé en novembre 1918 par le ministre des Affaires étrangères Sidney Sonnino au commandant supérieur des forces italiennes dans les Balkans : ce dernier devait ordonner aux troupes italiennes, lors de leur entrée à Scutari, d'assurer l'évêque catholique romain de la ville Mgr Sereggi, « qui dans le passé avait prouvé la qualité de ses sentiments envers nous », que son gouvernement soutiendrait, dans la mesure du possible, le culte catholique. ⁵ En Macédoine, c'était le consulat italien à Skoplje (Uskub), qui servait d'intermédiaire dans la correspondance du

¹ Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes (dorénavant CADN), Service des Œuvres, vol. 185, Grenard à Briand, Belgrade, le 22 novembre 1926.

² F. Le Moal, *La France et l'Italie dans les Balkans, 1914-1919* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2006) ; E. Decleva et P. Milza, eds., *La Francia e l'Italia negli anni venti : tra politica e cultura* (Milano : ISPI, 1996) ; Vojislav Pavlović, « Le conflit franco-italien dans les Balkans, 1915-1935. Le rôle de la Yougoslavie », *Balkanica XXXVI* (Belgrade 2006), 163-201.

³ P. Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914-1920* (Napoli : Jovene, 1970). M. Borgogni, *Tra continuità e incertezza. Italia e Albania 1914-1939* (Milano : FrancoAngeli, 2007), 67.

⁴ Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, La Courneuve (dorénavant AMAE), série Z-Europe 1918-1940, Albanie vol. 50, Barrère à Pichon, Rome, le 10 septembre 1918.

⁵ Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (dorénavant DDI), série 6, vol. I, doc. n° 32, Sonnino à Piacentini, Rome, le 6 novembre 1918.

Saint-Siège avec Mgr Lazzaro Miedia, Albanais, archevêque catholique de la ville.⁶

Analysant la politique de l'Italie et du Saint-Siège en Albanie, une note anonyme interne au Quai d'Orsay à Paris et datée du 28 mars 1920 peut éclairer certains aspects du rôle de l'Italie dans les affaires religieuses des Balkans.⁷ Pour l'auteur de ladite note, le Saint-Siège et l'Italie avaient en Albanie des intérêts communs. L'Italie fondait de grands espoirs sur ce pays pour sa politique balkanique. Le protectorat albanais, qu'elle revendiquait au nom du traité de Londres de 1915, l'aiderait à tenir en respect, d'un côté, le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes que l'auteur du texte appelait la Yougoslavie, de l'autre, la Grèce, et à rétablir l'antique *via Egnatia*, en se frayant un chemin vers l'Orient grâce à l'amitié de la Bulgarie et de Salonique érigée en ville libre « juive » et en port franc. Le diplomate français était convaincu que l'Italie travaillait à la création d'une Grande Albanie comprenant au sud Janina, au nord Bar (Antivari) et Ulcinj (Dulcigno), à l'est Skoplje (Uskub), Prizren et peut-être Ohrid et Bitolj (Monastir), ainsi qu'une partie de la région du Kosovo et de Salonique. L'Italie se serait ainsi préparée, « avec une habileté à laquelle il faut rendre hommage », à intervenir efficacement dans la vie des chrétiens d'Orient et à substituer son protectorat non seulement à celui des Habsbourg en Albanie, mais, si les circonstances s'y prêtaient, à celui de la France dans l'Empire ottoman.

L'arrivée de Benito Mussolini au pouvoir en Italie renforça l'activité italienne dans le domaine de la culture et de la religion dans les Balkans. A partir de ce moment, s'appuyant sur le corps diplomatique hérité de l'époque pré-fasciste, le gouvernement fasciste mena une politique culturelle « d'ouverture » en Europe Centrale et dans les Balkans.⁸ Dans la deuxième moitié des années 1920, la diplomatie italienne se tourna vers le « révisionnisme », qui consistait à soutenir les efforts de regroupement des pays « insatisfaits » des solutions adoptées à la Conférence de la paix à Paris. La culture et la religion devinrent des instruments placés entre les mains du dictateur italien pour briser les relations établies dans la région. Cette politique était exercée par un groupe de religieux, fervents soutiens de l'idéologie fasciste.

Lorsque, fin 1925-début 1926, Mussolini se prévalut de son « droit de regard » sur l'Albanie, ce qui provoqua la détérioration des relations italo-yougoslaves,⁹ le Quai d'Orsay prit la mesure de l'effort considérable que faisait

⁶ Ministero degli Affari Esteri (dorénavant MAE), Archivio Storico Diplomatico Roma (dorénavant ASDR), AP 1919-1930, Jugoslavia 1303, Consulat italien (Uskub) à MAE (Rome), Uskub, le 19 décembre 1918.

⁷ AMAE, série Z-Europe, 18-40, Albanie vol. 50, analyse « Italie et Saint-Siège en Albanie », sans signature, Paris, le 28 mars 1920.

⁸ S. Santoro, *L'Italia et l'Europa orientale. Diplomazia culturale e propaganda, 1918-1943* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2005), 68.

⁹ J. H. Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Inter-War period, 1918-1940* (London: Westport, 1997).

l'Italie « pour se créer une influence prépondérante dans les Balkans ». ¹⁰ En Serbie du Sud (Macédoine), cette influence était véhiculée par les établissements religieux étrangers qui comprenaient dans leurs rangs des pères de nationalité italienne, et elle s'exerçait tout particulièrement parmi les populations albanaises. L'objectif était d'affaiblir le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, contrairement à la France qui, par le biais des religieux catholiques, voulait le renforcer. Au sein de l'ordre français des Lazaristes, il y avait déjà eu avant 1918 un prêtre italien originaire de Turin dont l'activité avait fini par lui valoir l'accusation de prosélytisme et l'expulsion de la part des autorités du nouveau royaume, en même temps qu'un prêtre uniats bulgare.

La vision qu'avaient les Italiens de la Macédoine peut être étudiée à partir des observations du consul-régent italien à Skoplje, Antonio Luca. A partir de novembre 1925, ce dernier se mit à déplorer le renforcement de la propagande « slave » anti-italienne, organisée en Serbie méridionale par les autorités gouvernementales ainsi que par la « minorité serbe et, particulièrement, le petit nombre de Slovènes et de Croates établis ici ». ¹¹ Il appelait « propagande slave » l'effort du gouvernement royal pour installer des fonctionnaires et des religieux slovènes et croates dans les régions à majorité albanaise : son but était d'utiliser le facteur religieux pour rallier les Albanais catholiques et musulmans, soutenus par les Italiens, qui s'opposaient au nouvel Etat. Le consul-régent définissait la Serbie méridionale comme une région englobant le Kosovo et la Serbie du Sud (Macédoine), et peuplée par « une grande majorité de Macédoniens et d'Albanais » dépourvus de sentiments anti-italiens. ¹² Il était fort sensible à la diversité nationale et confessionnelle de la région et énumérait, aux côtés des musulmans (50%) et orthodoxes (47%) majoritaires, les catholiques albanais (au nombre de 25 000), les israélites (12 000), les uniats (700) et trois « sectes » ne comptant que quelques centaines de fidèles. ¹³ Il insistait sur les difficultés que les non-orthodoxes rencontraient dans leurs rapports avec le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, et sur les persécutions que subissaient « les musulmans et les catholiques » du Kosovo, à Prizren, Djakovica et Peć, sans dire pour autant que, parmi eux, il y avait des extrémistes albanais qui luttaient militairement contre l'Etat des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes avec l'appui de l'Italie.

Le diplomate italien déplorait, en outre, que l'activité de la mission française des Lazaristes en Serbie du Sud (Macédoine) ait changé de but après la

¹⁰ AMAE, série Z-Europe, 18-40, Yougoslavie vol. 53, Note de Ch. Corbin (sous-directeur d'Europe), Paris, le 2 février 1926.

¹¹ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1318, Antonio Luca au ministre Bodrero (Belgrade), Skoplje, le 2 novembre 1925, très confidentiel. Document transmis par Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 9 décembre 1925.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1323, Antonio Luca au MAE (Rome) et à la légation italienne (Belgrade), Skoplje, le 23 avril 1926. Ce document fut transmis à plusieurs départements du Palazzo Chigi et aux représentants italiens à Sofia, Durazzo et Athènes.

guerre. Il rappelait que la mission française des Lazaristes établie en Macédoine à l'époque ottomane avait œuvré jusqu'à la fin de la guerre pour ramener les orthodoxes dans le giron de Rome, et qu'elle l'avait fait sous l'égide du père uniate bulgare et du père lazarisite italien dont il regrettait l'expulsion par les autorités serbes. C'est l'augmentation de la « propagande française » en Serbie méridionale qui gênait désormais l'Italien. En mai 1926, il rapportait l'activité propagandiste de plusieurs établissements français installés dans la région : l'école laïque franco-serbe de Skoplje, les cercles d'amitié franco-serbe de Skoplje, Bitolj, Veles, Tetovo et Prizren et l'école rouverte des Lazaristes de Bitolj.¹⁴ Le consul-régent italien craignait l'influence de l'école des pères Lazaristes à Bitolj, établissement « très fréquenté », rouvert conformément à la loi en vigueur, c'est-à-dire avec l'obligation d'enseigner la langue, l'histoire et la géographie serbes. Pour lui, cette disposition montrait que les populations albanaise et macédonienne slave philo-bulgare n'étaient pas bien intégrées dans la société du Royaume et que l'Italie devait en profiter à ses propres fins politiques. La crainte majeure du diplomate était que les populations albanaise et macédonienne ne fussent « acquises » au Royaume par le biais de la culture française, qu'il concevait comme un facteur d'intégration au service du centralisme serbe. Ce qui nourrissait cette crainte était le succès de l'enseignement français qu'il observait parmi les populations israélites, turques et koutzo-valaques qui étaient bien intégrées dans la société de la Serbie méridionale. De telles observations ne pouvaient qu'amener le consul-régent italien à aborder le problème de l'irrédentisme albanais dans les districts à majorité albanaise, ce qu'il fit en juin 1926, dans un compte rendu détaillé sur les minorités nationales en Serbie méridionale.¹⁵ Il estimait que l'irrédentisme des Albanais deviendrait « deux fois plus fort » si ceux-ci, considérés par lui comme des « musulmans fanatiques », réussissaient à s'organiser autour de l'idée à la fois religieuse et nationale. L'observateur italien blâmait de façon tendancieuse la réponse de l'Etat des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes à l'irrédentisme albanais et macédonien pro-bulgare, en en exagérant la violence et les dimensions.¹⁶

Entre diplomatie religieuse et propagande : le cas du père Francesco Tommaso Brunetti à Bitolj

Les rapports d'Antonio Luca rendent compte de l'exaspération des relations franco-italiennes dans les Balkans dans la deuxième moitié des années 1920. L'Italie contestait plus vigoureusement le rôle traditionnel de la France dans la protection du catholicisme en Orient. Un premier incident direct entre les deux

¹⁴ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1323, Antonio Luca à MAE (Rome) et à la légation italienne (Belgrade), Skoplje, le 7 mai 1926. Le document fut transmis à l'ambassade italienne à Paris.

¹⁵ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1327, Antonio Luca à MAE (Rome) et à la légation italienne (Belgrade), Skoplje, le 30 juin 1926.

¹⁶ Ibid., 4.

pays éclata en septembre 1926 en Bulgarie, lors de l'affaire dite des « honneurs liturgiques » : l'enjeu en était la position privilégiée du clergé français par rapport à celui italien pendant les célébrations de l'Église catholique romaine.¹⁷ Dans le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, en Macédoine, la concurrence italo-française se porta sur l'école des pères Lazaristes à Bitolj. Celle-ci devint un enjeu à partir du moment, précisément, où la vigilance des autorités du Royaume entraîna sa fermeture temporaire à l'automne 1925. Brunetti rechignait quelque peu à appliquer la loi l'obligeant à aménager le contenu de l'enseignement. Pourtant, un an après la réouverture de l'établissement, il se rendit à Belgrade chez le ministre plénipotentiaire français Joseph Grenard,¹⁸ en se plaignant de ne pouvoir ni recruter « aucun élève serbe » ni organiser l'enseignement de la langue et de l'histoire serbes sans engager de professeurs spéciaux. Pour éviter une nouvelle fermeture de l'école, il demanda à ce que la subvention du Quai d'Orsay passe de 7 000 à 20 000 francs par an, ce que Grenard appuya avec l'argument qu'il s'agissait d'un foyer d'influence « très précieux ».¹⁹

Vers la fin de 1926, le père Brunetti commença à être soupçonné de véritable activité « anti-yougoslave » par les autorités. Le contexte était à la détérioration des relations entre l'Italie et le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, provoquée par la signature du traité italo-albanais de Tirana en novembre.²⁰ Accroissant son influence parmi la population albanaise de Serbie méridionale, l'Italie demanda, début 1927, l'ouverture d'un consulat à Bitolj, ce que refusa le gouvernement royal qui n'estimait pas la présence italienne « utile ». Le nouveau délégué apostolique en Albanie, le père Giovanni della Pietra, directeur d'un orphelinat à Scutari, qui avait vécu pendant seize ans parmi les Albanais catholiques au nord du pays, à la frontière yougoslave, promit alors au Palazzo Chigi, en échange d'une aide financière, qu'il informerait le gouvernement italien de « tout ce qui pourrait intéresser la politique italienne en Albanie ».²¹ Le sous-secrétaire au Palazzo Chigi, Dino Grandi, avec qui le père avait eu une longue conversation, exprima ses craintes que le clergé albanais au nord du pays ne devînt un « instrument de la Yougoslavie » dans la politique intérieure albanaise par le soutien matériel qu'il obtiendrait de Belgrade et demanda une action pour que celui-ci adhérât à « ce qui (était) le point de vue italien ».²²

Brunetti fut donc mis en cause dans ces circonstances. Sous la pression du gouvernement du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes en mai 1927, le Quai d'Orsay demanda à la légation à Belgrade si elle ne voyait pas d'objection à son expulsion. Une nouvelle affaire italo-royale impliquant la France com-

¹⁷ Santoro, *L'Italia*, 127-128.

¹⁸ CADN, Service des Œuvres, 185, Grenard à Briand, Belgrade, le 22 novembre 1926.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ M. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia (1922-1939)* (Bari: B. A. Gaphis, 2006), 46.

²¹ DDI, série VII, vol. 5, Mémoire du sous-secrétaire des Affaires étrangères Dino Grandi, Rome, le 9 mars 1927.

²² *Ibid.*

mençait. En juin, la légation de France envoya Paul Masset, lecteur de français à l'université de Belgrade depuis 1924, en mission à Bitolj pour se procurer des informations alors que se déroulaient les épreuves du certificat d'études dans les deux écoles religieuses françaises. Il profita de l'occasion pour examiner la situation matérielle et morale de ces établissements et fit part de ses observations au nouveau ministre français à Belgrade Emile Dard, lequel informa le Service des Œuvres.²³ Le ministre français constatait la prospérité des écoles religieuses qui avaient réussi à se concilier les autorités serbes. Les Lazaristes et les Filles de Charité, qui entretenaient des contacts réguliers avec la légation de France, avaient accepté les nouvelles lois et travaillaient « avec efficacité à la fusion des divers éléments ethniques ».²⁴ Mais, pour Dard, la présence du supérieur des Lazaristes le père Brunetti, constituait un désavantage pour l'avenir des écoles. Celui-ci aurait oublié sa mission pédagogique et religieuse et se serait transformé en « agent politique italien », provoquant des tensions avec le gouvernement du Royaume. Dard conseillait donc le remplacement de Brunetti et présumait qu'avec un supérieur français, la situation ne pourrait que s'améliorer. Il craignait néanmoins que toute cette tension ne profitât à l'évêque catholique de Prizren, le Slovène Mgr Franjo Gnidovec, dont dépendait Bitolj au point de vue ecclésiastique, et que celui-ci ne mît la main sur les écoles françaises. Juridiquement, certes, il ne le pouvait pas parce que les immeubles des écoles n'appartenaient pas au Vatican, à la *Propaganda Fide*, où l'évêque slovène avait des appuis. Mais, il pouvait obtenir que « la rue du Bac » à Paris, où se trouvait la maison-mère des pères Lazaristes et des Filles de la Charité, envoie à Bitolj des sœurs et des frères slovènes des mêmes congrégations. Cette combinaison pouvait d'autant plus réussir qu'elle présentait l'avantage apparent de remplacer des religieux de nationalité étrangère par des nationaux du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes. Dard s'inquiétait de l'effet « cheval de Troie ». Un différend survenu d'abord entre l'Église catholique et l'État des Slaves du Sud puis devenu problème italo-yougoslave, via les religieux slovènes toujours soupçonnés d'être les porteurs de l'influence allemande, pouvait se retourner contre la France. Dard craignait pour l'influence française et pour sa capacité à contribuer au renforcement interne du Royaume. Il estimait que l'arrivée des religieux slovènes « entretiendrait tout d'abord la ruine de notre influence, la perte du caractère français et rendrait inutiles tous les sacrifices consentis par nous jusqu'à ce jour. De plus, perdant son caractère français, l'école deviendrait uniquement catholique et slovène, ce qui lui ferait perdre la clientèle grecque, musulmane et orthodoxe qui la fréquente encore actuellement ».²⁵ Dard demandait au Service des Œuvres de mettre la maison-mère au courant de la « situation réelle », de la prévenir contre les manœuvres et de lui

²³ CADN, Service des Œuvres, 185, Dard à Briand, Belgrade, 1^{er} juillet 1927.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 2.

« faire comprendre que l'appui financier qui lui a été, et lui est encore généreusement donné, implique de sa part des engagements formels pour l'avenir ». La présence de Brunetti irritait à tel point le gouvernement royal qu'il était prêt à l'expulser. Dard préférait éviter cette mesure afin de ne pas provoquer un incident diplomatique italo-yougoslave où la France serait accusée de soutenir les Serbes. C'est pourquoi il demandait au Quai d'Orsay de contribuer au remplacement discret de Brunetti et suggérait l'envoi d'un père Lazariste français.

A Paris, les fonctionnaires du Service des Œuvres se mirent d'accord pour agir selon la demande du ministre Dard à Belgrade.²⁶ Au cours d'une visite faite à ce sujet au Quai d'Orsay vingt jours après l'échange avec Dard, Masset reprit les accusations contre Brunetti en faisant état de conversations qu'il avait eues avec diverses personnes : le préfet de Bitolj, le professeur de français de cette ville Marcel de Vos, l'ingénieur Maurice Vignerot et une religieuse.²⁷ Malgré les services incontestables qu'il avait rendus aux deux écoles, Masset disait de Brunetti : « Mais il est italianissime, au point de déclarer tout spontanément au professeur de français de Bitolj qu'il faudra bien que la France se décide à restituer Nice et la Corse ; de dire à M. Vignerot que les œuvres françaises ne l'intéressaient pas parce qu'il était Italien ».²⁸ Les Français avaient découvert qu'il avait des attaches directes avec Mussolini et qu'un courrier diplomatique italien passait par Bitolj pour emporter « les plis » de Brunetti à Rome. En juillet 1927, le père Brunetti fut rappelé à Paris, ce que déplora la diplomatie italienne qui, dans le même temps, obtint pourtant des autorités yougoslaves la permission d'ouvrir un consulat à Bitolj.²⁹ Le ministre plénipotentiaire italien à Belgrade, le général Alessandro Bodrero, accusa les Français d'avoir agi à la demande du gouvernement royal et le gouvernement royal de vouloir « isoler » le nouveau consul à Bitolj en le privant de l'appui du père Brunetti, informateur précieux de la diplomatie italienne.³⁰

La diplomatie française ne réussit que partiellement dans l'affaire Brunetti. Elle obtint la fin de ses ingérences dans les écoles françaises de Bitolj, mais pas son éloignement définitif de la ville. Après un séjour temporaire à Rome et en attendant sa mutation, Brunetti revint en effet à Bitolj en tant que prêtre de l'Eglise locale, sans attache avec les écoles françaises. Le gouvernement italien avait profité de son absence temporaire pour établir un consulat dans cette ville en « compensation » de son départ, et y nommer Quinto Mazzolini, ancien officier d'Etat-Major italien, au grand dam du ministre Dard.³¹ Ce der-

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ CADN, Service des Œuvres, 185, MAE, Note pour le sous-directeur d'Europe, Paris, le 20 juillet 1927.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1337, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Bled, le 13 juillet 1927. Le document fut transmis à l'ambassade italienne à Paris.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ CADN, Ambassade à Rome Saint-Siège, 1072, Dard à MAE, Belgrade, le 3 août 1927.

nier voyait dans le consul un probable agent des services de renseignements italien, ce qui rendait « d'autant plus désirable que notre école ne contienne aucun religieux de cette origine ». Selon Dino Grandi, le père Brunetti était ici « victime d'un jeu obscur et bien fait » des pères Lazaristes, du ministre Dard et du gouvernement royal, et il lui conseilla de leur répondre par le « même jeu ». Pour concurrencer l'influence française, Grandi demanda à son ministre à Belgrade d'établir un lien secret Mazzolini-Brunetti à Bitolj.³² Bodrero de son côté demeurait plus prudent que le consul italien à Bitolj pour lequel l'affaire Brunetti avait pris un motif « générique et habituel : la lutte française contre tout ce qui est italien ». Il ne préconisait pas une action diplomatique auprès des autorités françaises concernant l'affaire Brunetti, mais pensait y intéresser « opportunément » le nonce apostolique à Belgrade.³³ Le ministre italien était persuadé qu'une fois le père Brunetti privé de la direction de l'école des Lazaristes à Bitolj, aucune nouvelle « manœuvre » ne s'organiserait contre lui du « côté français ».

Quant au gouvernement royal, il attendait que l'incident se règle entre les deux grandes puissances et comptait sur les bons offices de la diplomatie française. Le ministre royal des Affaires étrangères, Vojislav Marinković, avec lequel Dard était en contact permanent, temporisait. Il ne paraissait décidé ni à donner l'agrément ni à demander le départ du consul Mazzolini et il accepta le retour du père Brunetti à une fonction moins élevée qu'auparavant.

La question de l'expulsion du père Brunetti fut posée par le gouvernement royal pour la deuxième fois à la fin du mois d'octobre 1927. De nouveau, le Quai d'Orsay sollicita l'avis de Dard. Dans sa réponse sèche et amère, le ministre français déclara ne s'occuper que des intérêts directs français et se détacher du soutien au gouvernement royal. Il soulignait que le père Brunetti étant italien et n'ayant plus aucun rapport avec les écoles françaises, la légation se désintéressait « de la mesure qui pourrait être prise contre lui ». Il expliquait son point de vue en lançant une accusation contre les dirigeants des Lazaristes : « Le Supérieur des Lazaristes n'ayant pas voulu rappeler discrètement le père Brunetti quand il le pouvait encore et celui-ci ayant fait grand bruit à Rome des attaques dont il serait l'objet du côté français, il faut malheureusement s'attendre à ce que l'incident soit exploité contre nous par les Italiens ».³⁴

Pour renforcer l'action culturelle et économique de son gouvernement en Macédoine, Dard demanda l'ouverture de consulats français à Skoplje et à Bitolj,³⁵ avec des arguments formulés dans l'optique de contrer l'influence ita-

³² MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1337, Grandi à Bodrero, Rome, le 23 août 1927, très réservé.

³³ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia. 1337, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 17 septembre 1927, très réservé.

³⁴ CADN, Ambassade à Rome Saint-Siège, 1072, Dard à MAE, Belgrade, le 31 octobre 1927, télégramme.

³⁵ AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-1940, Yougoslavie 1, Dard à Briand, Belgrade, le 7 novembre 1927.

lienne : « C'est de Skoplje que les efforts du gouvernement italien pour agiter la Macédoine contre Belgrade et pour rallier à la cause albano-italienne les 3 ou 400.000 Albanais, sujets serbes, peuvent être le plus utilement suivis et éclairés ».³⁶ Non sans jalousie, Dard exprimait son regret que l'Italie ait réussi à ouvrir deux consulats l'un à Skoplje, l'autre à Bitolj, reliés directement par une valise régulière avec Belgrade et avec Rome. Les propositions de Dard furent prises en compte au Quai d'Orsay : au cours de l'année 1928, un nouveau consul français arriva à Skoplje, tandis qu'à Bitolj fut nommé comme agent consulaire Marcel de Vos, le professeur de français déjà évoqué, un ennemi personnel du père Brunetti.

Malgré les assertions de Dard, l'activité de père Brunetti continuait en effet à intéresser les affaires françaises. Les pères français de l'école de garçons, indépendants du père Brunetti depuis 1927 du point de vue de la direction de l'école, dépendaient toujours de lui du point de vue religieux étant donné sa position de prêtre local. Dans une lettre au consul Mazzolini, Brunetti se plaignit que, tout au long de l'année 1928, la légation de France à Belgrade ne cessât de demander son départ de Bitolj et raconta avoir déjà informé de cette question Mgr Pelegrinetti, nonce apostolique à Belgrade.³⁷ Le nouveau ministre italien à Belgrade, Carlo Galli, soutint les plaintes du père Brunetti auprès du nonce apostolique et demanda une action de son ministère auprès de Supérieur des Lazaristes à Paris.³⁸ Cette demande fut transmise à l'ambassadeur italien à Paris avec la spécification que le père Brunetti favorisait en Macédoine « une affirmation non négligeable de l'italianité ».³⁹

L'action de la diplomatie italienne eut du succès auprès du Saint-Siège. En février 1930, le Visiteur général des Lazaristes et le Visiteur adjoint de la province de Constantinople, venus à Bitolj pour enquêter au sujet de Brunetti, avouèrent au consul de France que la mission des Lazaristes était très mal vue du Saint-Siège : celui-ci les accusait « d'être trop Français » et d'avoir perdu, depuis la guerre, les deux sièges de délégués apostoliques en Perse et en Chine qui leur étaient traditionnellement réservés.⁴⁰ Par égard pour le Saint-Siège, les Visiteurs voulaient « mettre des formes » au déplacement de Brunetti à Zeitinlik, près de Salonique, qu'ils avaient décidé. Pour soutenir les affaires françaises en Macédoine, Dard se préparait à entreprendre un voyage de six jours à Skoplje et à Bitolj à partir du 16 mai 1930.⁴¹ Après son passage à Bitolj, il soupçonna le gouvernement royal de jouer double jeu : les représentants du gouvernement

³⁶ Ibid., 2.

³⁷ MAE, ADSR, AP 1919-1930, Jugoslavia 1368, Brunetti à Mazzolini, Bitolj, le 2 mars 1929.

³⁸ MAE, ADSR, AP 1919-1930, Jugoslavia 1368, Galli à Ministère des Affaires étrangères (Rome), Belgrade, le 19 mars 1929.

³⁹ MAE, ADSR, AP 1919-1930, Jugoslavia 1368, Grandi à l'Ambassade d'Italie (Paris), Rome, le 29 avril 1929, réservé.

⁴⁰ CADN, Service des Œuvres, 186, M. Guys à Dard, Skoplje, le 27 février 1930.

⁴¹ AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-1940, Yougoslavie 192, Dard à Briand, Belgrade, le 15 mai 1930.

royal lui demandaient une fois de plus si la France n'avait pas d'objection à l'expulsion du père Brunetti, alors qu'ils ne faisaient rien de peur de se créer des difficultés avec le gouvernement italien et dans l'espoir que le gouvernement français fit le premier pas.⁴² Dard craignait en outre que le gouvernement italien n'intervînt auprès du Saint-Siège afin d'obliger le supérieur des Lazaristes, à Paris, à maintenir « son agent de renseignement » à Bitolj.

L'affaire Brunetti continuant à peser dans les relations entre la France, l'Italie et le gouvernement royal, l'école de garçons fut fermée en septembre 1930. La décision en revint au Provincial des frères Maristes en résidence à Athènes qui étaient impliqués dans la gestion de l'école.⁴³ Dard accusa les missions religieuses de ne pas agir selon la volonté de la légation dans l'affaire Brunetti et déplora la disparition d'un établissement que la diplomatie française soutenait financièrement et dans lequel elle voyait le vecteur de l'influence culturelle française. Le gouvernement royal s'impliqua désormais plus directement dans les écoles religieuses françaises à Bitolj, en exigeant qu'elles ouvrent et agissent strictement en conformité avec la législation du Royaume.⁴⁴

Le conflit politico-idéologique italo-français en Macédoine

Si l'affaire Brunetti traîna autant, c'est qu'elle s'inscrivait dans un conflit politico-idéologique entre l'Italie et la France à l'étranger, un conflit que la France prenait grand soin à ne pas envenimer. A partir de 1925-26, les diplomates italiens dans le Royaume des Serbes Croates et Slovènes virent ce pays comme un terrain de lutte idéologique entre les fascistes italiens et les socialistes français.⁴⁵ Le ministre Bodrero attribuait lui-même la politique du gouvernement royal contre l'irrédentisme albanais au « développement de la propagande maçonnique dans ce pays » sous l'égide du Grand Orient de France.⁴⁶ Il s'émut notamment du séjour dans le Royaume, entre le 4 et le 7 juin 1926, d'une délégation de 300 Français des Sociétés chorales de Lyon et de Grenoble, dirigée par trois députés et quatre sénateurs dont Joseph Vallier, Joseph Brenier, Paul Mistral et Louis Chazette - tous hommes de gauche proches d'Edouard Herriot, alors président de la Chambre des députés. Les Français furent accueillis en grande pompe à Belgrade. On se remémora le séjour des élèves serbes en France pendant la guerre et les deux chorales de Lyon et de Grenoble donnèrent de magnifiques concerts. Bodrero était persuadé que les parlementaires

⁴² CADN, Service des Œuvres, 186, Dard à Briand, Belgrade, le 23 mai 1930, secret.

⁴³ CADN, Service des Œuvres, 186, Dard à Briand, Belgrade, le 10 septembre 1930.

⁴⁴ Arhiv Jugoslavije (dorénavant AJ), Fond d'archives no. 66 (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale), Fascicule no. 7, Ministère des Affaires étrangères à Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, Belgrade, le 5 mars 1931, confidentiel.

⁴⁵ Stanislav Sretenović, « Le poids grandissant de l'Italie dans les relations entre la France et le Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, 1924-1927 », *Istorija XX veka (Histoire du XX siècle)*, 2 (Belgrade 2007), 9-36.

⁴⁶ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavie. 1323, Bodrero à MAE, Belgrade, le 7 juin 1926, très secret.

français apportaient là « un message spécial » d'Herriot au « peuple serbe ». Ce message aurait été rédigé dans un sens anti-italien et aurait eu pour but d'inciter le Parlement royal à ne pas ratifier les conventions italo-yougoslaves de Nettuno signées en 1925. Bodrero en arrivait à la conclusion que la « lutte contre les traités et les conventions italo-yougoslaves était conduite et accélérée par la maçonnerie » de la France et du Royaume.⁴⁷

Qu'en était-il côté français ? La visite des Grenoblois et des Lyonnais était conçue comme une mission de propagande après que le traité d'amitié franco-yougoslave eut été paraphé à Paris en mars 1926. Le gouvernement français n'avait pas signé ce traité par égard pour l'Italie. On craignit alors en France que les Serbes déçus ne se jettent « dans les bras » de l'Allemagne. C'est pourquoi le Parlement français, où les Serbes avaient traditionnellement des appuis, organisa une visite symbolique de l'amitié franco-serbe. L'absence du ministre Grenard pendant le séjour des hôtes français montre cependant la prudence du Quai d'Orsay dans cette affaire et son souci de ne pas provoquer les Italiens. La presse française ne donna pas non plus d'écho à la visite qui fut suivie, en septembre 1926, par un congrès maçonnique à Belgrade sous la présidence de l'ancien député socialiste Arthur Groussier.

L'attentisme et la prudence du Quai d'Orsay peuvent s'expliquer par sa politique générale de ne pas prendre parti dans la tension italo-yougoslave, et par la conjoncture des relations franco-italiennes du moment. Il garda la même réserve lorsque le comte Connestabile della Staffa fut expulsé du Royaume des Serbes Croates et Slovènes le 1^{er} juillet 1927. Cette affaire minime, qui coïncide chronologiquement avec l'affaire Brunetti, se transforma en grand incident diplomatique impliquant la France. Ledit comte était venu à Belgrade en 1921 pour représenter la compagnie italienne de chemins de fer de Virpazar à Bar ainsi que l'ancienne compagnie qui avait le monopole des tabacs du Monténégro avant 1914, et régler en leur nom des questions d'indemnités de guerre avec le gouvernement royal. Soutenu par la légation d'Italie et son ministre à Belgrade, le général Bodrero, Connestabile della Staffa avait réussi à s'introduire dans les milieux fréquentés par le personnel des légations, par les membres importants de la colonie française et par les Français en visite officielle dans le Royaume. Son activité ayant attiré l'attention du service royal de renseignement, celui-ci avait découvert qu'il avait organisé dans tout le pays un réseau d'espionnage dirigé contre « les Serbes Croates et Slovènes et contre la France ».⁴⁸ Les renseignements avaient été confirmés par l'Etat-major royal et par le chef de poste français à Belgrade - au nom italien -, le capitaine Cervoni, adjoint de l'attaché militaire, qui avait mené une enquête de son côté. Il était ainsi apparu que Connestabile avait « entouré » la légation de France d'un réseau d'agents, parmi lesquels une des dactylographes de l'attaché commercial

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁸ AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-40, Yougoslavie, 230, Sans auteur, Belgrade, 1^{er} juillet 1927, très secret.

Alphonse Muzet, et qu'il soufflait à la presse hongroise et à la presse italienne des articles hostiles à l'attaché militaire, le colonel Raymond Deltel, et à son adjoint.⁴⁹ Après une bagarre dans une rue de Belgrade entre Connestabile et Cervoni, le colonel Deltel se rendit auprès du ministre royal de la Guerre pour lui demander l'expulsion immédiate de Connestabile. A la suite des démarches faites par Deltel et « officieusement mais très énergiquement appuyées » par le ministre Dard, un arrêté d'expulsion fut donc pris contre Connestabile qui partit le 1^{er} juillet 1927 pour l'Italie.

L'affaire prit cependant une tournure fâcheuse au Quai d'Orsay. L'administration centrale se détacha, semble-t-il, des actions de son ministre à Belgrade et du colonel Deltel. Une note préparée le 5 août pour le directeur des Affaires politiques et commerciales, Maurice Beaumarchais, futur ambassadeur à Rome, accusait ainsi la diplomatie royale de mauvaise foi : « Les Yougoslaves ne font nullement état, vis-à-vis de l'Italie, des agissements de Connestabile, et se contentent de soutenir que son expulsion a été décidée à la suite de l'incident survenu entre lui et le capitaine Cervoni, et, d'autre part, M. Marinkovitch se contente de répondre aux démarches italiennes en disant qu'il ne peut passer outre aux instances de notre légation. L'affaire risque donc de devenir un incident franco-italien et les Yougoslaves n'en sont certainement pas fâchés ». ⁵⁰ L'affaire Connestabile fit l'objet de pourparlers personnels directs entre le Quai d'Orsay et le service des renseignements de l'Etat-major français. Les diplomates étaient prêts à accepter le retour de Connestabile à Belgrade, tandis que les militaires optaient pour le contraire, arguant que si on laissait revenir le comte italien, les Français donneraient « les apparences d'avoir eu le dessous dans cette affaire ». Un compromis était à trouver et le colonel Deltel dut revenir à Paris pour s'entretenir directement avec Beaumarchais. L'ambassade italienne à Paris, pendant ce temps, lança une offensive diplomatique et fit pression sur le Quai d'Orsay en demandant des explications. Tout en regrettant qu'une question d'importance limitée pût « diviser sérieusement les deux gouvernements », la diplomatie italienne expliquait qu'elle était obligée d'agir, du fait de l'attitude de Vojislav Marinković, ministre royal des Affaires étrangères et de la pression exercée à Rome par « les importantes Compagnies que représentait Connestabile ». Le Quai d'Orsay se mit sur la défensive et reporta l'explication. Ne pouvant compter sur son protecteur français, la diplomatie royale ne put se défendre contre les pressions de la grande puissance limitrophe et Connestabile revint à Belgrade.

Les incidents Brunetti et Connestabile furent immédiatement suivis d'un autre qui mit une fois de plus le Quai d'Orsay dans l'embarras. Par le biais des réseaux universitaires franco-serbes constitués avant et pendant la guerre, Georges Blondel, professeur à l'Ecole libre des sciences politiques et au Collège

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-40, Yougoslavie 230, Sans auteur, Paris, le 5 août 1927.

de France, fut invité à donner une série de conférences dans le Royaume, à Skoplje, Zagreb, Ljubljana et Maribor. Sa mission, organisée après la signature du traité commercial germano-yougoslave (le 6 octobre 1927), avait une perspective essentiellement anti-allemande. A Skoplje, la conférence – qui traitait d'un sujet économique – fut organisée par le cercle d'amitié franco-serbe à l'école laïque française et le consul italien fut invité. Mais Blondel, faisant de la politique, se prononça ouvertement contre le fascisme en Italie : « Mussolini qui a supprimé violemment la démocratie, la liberté de presse et la liberté individuelle refuse de reconnaître les minorités slaves de Trieste et de la Dalmatie en les déportant sur les îles ». ⁵¹ Un incident se produisit dans la salle entre le consul italien et les auditeurs. Le journal de Belgrade *Politika* en rendit compte dans un article intitulé « Le consul italien à Skoplje contre la liberté de la parole dans notre pays » ⁵² où la Yougoslavie était élevée au même rang que la France pour la liberté de la parole. La réaction de Dard fut beaucoup plus nuancée. Répondant aux protestations de Bodrero, il suivit la ligne constante de la diplomatie française qui était de ne pas prendre parti dans la tension italo-yougoslave. Il informa son homologue italien que Blondel se préparait à donner bientôt une conférence à Milan et souligna que la conférence à Skoplje était organisée dans une institution privée franco-serbe – passant sur le fait que cette institution était subventionnée par le Quai d'Orsay. A titre personnel et pour paraître neutre, Dard affirma en outre qu'il déplorait le « langage de Blondel » et rappela que le conférencier avait aussi critiqué « plutôt vivement les institutions et les coutumes politiques yougoslaves » provoquant un certain remous dans les cercles officiels royaux. ⁵³ Trois jours plus tard, Blondel se rendit à la légation italienne pour exprimer son « profond regret » de l'incident de Skoplje, au cours duquel – dit-il – il n'avait pas trouvé l'occasion d'expliquer son point de vue. ⁵⁴ Bodrero lui répondit qu'il ne pouvait trouver de « meilleur exemple de minorités opprimées que celui des Macédoniens au milieu desquels il se trouvait ». ⁵⁵ Après une nouvelle conversation avec Dard qui souligna la « déférence » avec laquelle les Italiens avaient été traités, Bodrero considéra que l'incident était clos. Mussolini demanda cependant à son ministre à Paris de protester auprès du Quai d'Orsay contre les « cercles yougoslaves irresponsables ». Il voulait obtenir de la diplomatie française qu'elle « déplore » l'incident Blondel, ce qui pourrait être éventuellement évoqué dans d'autres occasions

⁵¹ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavie 1329, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 31 octobre 1927, télégramme.

⁵² Texte de *Politika* du 31 octobre 1927 dans MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 4 novembre 1927, télégramme. Le document fut vu et signé par Mussolini.

⁵³ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 31 octobre 1927, télégramme, 2.

⁵⁴ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, Bodrero à MAE (Rome), Belgrade, le 4 novembre 1927, télégramme.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

à venir.⁵⁶ Il informa le ministère de l'Intérieur de l'incident à Skoplje dans la perspective d'une conférence « prochaine » de Blondel à Milan.⁵⁷ Au Palais Chigi, on avait décidé de permettre à Blondel de se rendre en Italie, mais de l'empêcher de donner à Milan la conférence envisagée.⁵⁸

Le professeur Blondel resta encore dans le Royaume des Serbes Croates et Slovènes, en Slovénie et en Croatie, après la signature du traité d'amitié franco-yougoslave (le 11 novembre 1927). A Zagreb, le consul italien releva l'augmentation de la propagande anti-italienne dans la presse, ce qu'il expliquait par le renforcement de l'activité des loges maçonniques de Croatie liées aux banques croates et au gouvernement central.⁵⁹ Les Serbes, en effet, utilisaient à titre privé leurs vieux réseaux universitaires et maçonniques pour s'opposer à la pression italienne en Macédoine et pour « apprivoiser » les Croates. De ces derniers, ils soutinrent le nationalisme à outrance face à l'Italie, augmentant l'embarras la diplomatie française dans ses rapports avec cette dernière.

A la fin des années 1920 et dans la première moitié des années 1930, les relations italo-yougoslaves restèrent lourdes d'une tension qui culmina avec l'implication de Mussolini dans l'assassinat du roi Alexandre en octobre 1934 sur le sol français. A partir des années 1930, la propagande culturelle italienne à l'étranger ne comptait que sur les communautés italiennes regroupées « dans les faisceaux étroitement liés ». ⁶⁰ Dans le royaume de Yougoslavie, la propagande par la religion fut dirigée vers les régions catholiques ex-austro-hongroises de l'ouest du pays. En Macédoine, elle disparut complètement ou, du moins, fut menée à l'ombre des actions de renseignement, principalement militaires, des consulats italiens de Skoplje et de Bitolj.

A partir de 1935, année caractérisée par la signature de l'accord Laval-Mussolini en janvier et par l'arrivée au pouvoir à Belgrade de Milan Stojadinović en juillet, les relations italo-serbes commencèrent à s'améliorer. L'Italie soutint le pacte d'amitié bulgare-yougoslave signé en janvier 1937. Selon les observations du ministre de France à Sofia, elle se livrait alors depuis plusieurs années, à côté de pas concrets vers un rapprochement avec la Yougoslavie, la Turquie et la Grèce, à une propagande culturelle en Bulgarie pour se ménager l'ave-

⁵⁶ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, Mussolini à G. Manzoni, Rome, le 4 novembre 1927, secret.

⁵⁷ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, Mussolini à ministre de l'Intérieur (direction de la Sécurité publique), Rome, le 4 novembre 1927, télégramme.

⁵⁸ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, D. Grandi à G. Manzoni, Rome, le 9 novembre 1927, télégramme, secret.

⁵⁹ MAE, ASDR, AP 19-30, Jugoslavia 1329, le consul à Zagreb (Rochira) à la légation (Belgrade) et à MAE (Rome), Zagreb, le 5 novembre 1927, télégramme réservé.

⁶⁰ Voir le compte rendu du consul de France à Salonique sur la visite de Piero Parini, ministre plénipotentiaire, regroupant les fonctions de directeur général des écoles italiennes à l'étranger, directeur général des colonies italiennes à l'étranger et secrétaire général des faisceaux à l'étranger. (AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-1940, Italie vol. 345, Consul de France à PC, MAE, Salonique, le 9 janvier 1933).

nir et préparer un changement du gouvernement.⁶¹ L'apogée des relations entre les gouvernements italien et yougoslave fut la signature d'un traité d'amitié en mars 1937 à Belgrade, suivi d'un projet d'accord de coopération culturelle entre les deux pays. Le traité d'amitié ouvrait la possibilité d'études en Italie pour les citoyens yougoslaves mais, d'après un compte rendu rédigé pour le ministère yougoslave de l'Éducation, seuls en profitèrent les Albanais de Kosovo : ceux-ci obtenaient des bourses italiennes pour s'inscrire dans les écoles militaires en Albanie et en Italie où ils étaient exposés à la propagande contre leur pays d'origine.⁶²

Les diplomates français n'en continuèrent pas moins à observer l'activité italienne dans le domaine culturel en Macédoine. Elle se traduisait par la diffusion de l'idéologie fasciste et de la langue italienne, avec des moyens et des résultats toutefois très limités. Début 1938, le consulat italien à Skoplje fonda l'hebdomadaire *La voce italiana di Skoplje* dont le tirage était seulement d'une trentaine d'exemplaires. Il cessa de paraître au bout de deux mois, à cause du faible nombre de lecteurs et des protestations de la presse du Royaume contre la forte propagande fasciste à laquelle il se livrait. Il n'y avait à l'époque dans toute la Macédoine que sept Italiens, tous fonctionnaires des deux consulats, tandis que les italophones se limitaient à deux trois israélites originaires de Salonique.⁶³

C'est par le biais du gouvernement central à Belgrade que la propagande culturelle italienne se développa désormais, en conséquence du traité d'amitié. En octobre 1939, fut fondé l'Institut culturel italien à Belgrade sous la direction du slaviste Giovanni Maver, tandis que le gouvernement de Rome travaillait à la fondation d'une société Dante Alighieri à Belgrade. Après la capitulation de la France en juin 1940, l'Italie augmenta son influence culturelle dans le Royaume d'en haut, par décision du gouvernement : en août, le ministre yougoslave de l'éducation, le Slovène Anton Korošec, introduisit par décret l'apprentissage de l'italien à la place du français dans les écoles, non sans se heurter immédiatement au manque d'enseignants de cette langue.

L'effort de l'Italie pour pénétrer en Macédoine par la religion était partie intégrante d'une politique plus vaste visant à étendre son influence dans les Balkans afin de contester, voire changer, les solutions territoriales adoptés à la Conférence de la paix. Le Royaume SCS/Yougoslavie dans l'orbite française était le plus grand obstacle à cette politique. L'Italie cherchait à utiliser la religion pour substituer sa présence à celle traditionnellement établie de la France

⁶¹ AMAE, série E- Levant, Turquie vol. 617, Ministre de France à MAE, Sofia, le 18 janvier 1937. Le compte rendu fut transmis aux représentants diplomatiques français à Rome, Belgrade, Budapest et Londres ainsi qu'à la direction d'Afrique au Quai d'Orsay.

⁶² AJ, 66, 7, Compte rendu intitulé « La politique d'éducation de la propagande albanaise », Belgrade, le 14 décembre 1937, signé.

⁶³ AMAE, série Z-Europe 1918-1940, Italie vol. 345, R. Brugère à Y. Delbos, Belgrade, le 2 mars 1938.

en Macédoine. Le pouvoir fasciste continua la politique des gouvernements libéraux, non sans faire de la religion un moyen de propager son idéologie alors qu'elle était auparavant le simple vecteur d'une « diplomatie souple », qui avait eu un certain succès dans les Balkans. Dans la mesure où la Macédoine appartenait à sa zone d'influence traditionnelle, la France pouvait cependant réagir à la concurrence italienne avec plus d'efficacité que dans les régions ex-austro-hongroises du Royaume des Slaves du Sud où sa présence était réduite à néant. Dans toute l'entre-deux-guerres, elle resta pour sa « sœur latine » une source de frustrations, qui furent accentuées par la rhétorique et la propagande fascistes et les moyens limités dont disposait l'Italie.

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THE CIANO-STOJADINOVIĆ AGREEMENT AND THE TURNING POINT IN THE ITALIAN CULTURAL POLICY IN YUGOSLAVIA (1937-1941)

Abstract: The paper analyses the evolution of the Italian cultural policy in Yugoslavia after the conclusion of the Ciano-Stojadinović agreement in 1937. Since that year, the fascist regime launched a determined political-propagandist action in Yugoslavia with a view to making the Italian language and culture protagonists of the Yugoslav cultural scene. Strong Italian cultural presence was considered in Rome necessary in the light of the increased fascist political influence in the Yugoslav Kingdom. Despite making great efforts, the results were disappointing overall.

Keywords: *fascism, Italian cultural policy, Ciano-Stojadinović agreement, Italian expansion in the Balkans.*

In recent years, Italian historiography has dedicated new energy to the study of a fairly interesting aspect of the foreign policy of fascist Italy, an aspect that is tied to the propaganda and cultural policy conducted by the regime abroad. It was directed to attracting the support of the resident Italian communities living abroad, but it also aimed at providing an image of the new Fascist Italy to foreign public opinion: that of a modern country, 'revolutionary', dynamic in international relations and the true heir and the authentic bearer of the highest cultural traditions inherited from the thousand years of Italian history.¹ Considering the directing principles of the program of political ex-

¹ For obvious reasons it is impossible to provide here precise bibliographic information on this field of study. For a good summary see the first chapter of L. Medici's, *Dalla propaganda alla cooperazione. La diplomazia culturale italiana nel secondo dopoguerra (1944-1950)* (Padova: CE-

pansion envisaged by fascism, Central-Eastern Europe was, from the start, one of the objectives favoured by the cultural policy and the Italian propaganda abroad.² In this context, the Italian efforts aimed at bringing a high-profile cultural, propagandistic and scholastic policy for the countries of Balkan Europe seem to have been particularly important.³ At least until the watershed year of 1933 in the international affairs of Southeast Europe, the results obtained by the Italian cultural policy in the Balkans and Danubian Europe were of interest even if they differed notably from one country to another in terms of the goals that had been set and the effects that had been achieved.⁴ In the case of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, we can say that until the mid-thirties, in spite of the considerable ambitions cultivated by the fascist regime to take over the cultural institutions and the cultural and political elites and to obtain a position of prestige, the Italian expectations, over the course of a few years, would be disappointed. The political relationship between Italy and Yugoslavia remained fundamentally strained for most part of the 1920s and 1930s. It was characterised by mutual violent press campaigns, reciprocal accusations, moments of tension at the border, if not the outright hostility. These tensions had the inevitable negative repercussions on the civil and cultural rights of the respective minorities living in the territories of Italy and Yugoslavia.⁵ Naturally such unfavourable political situation (especially in the wake of the assassination of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević in Marseille in October 1934), made it exceedingly difficult for Italy to pursue an active cultural policy. By the end of the 1920s, when the friendship pact between Italy and Yugoslavia concluded in 1924 was not renewed, the objectives of the Fascist cultural policy gradually ceased to be directed at an ever less probable amplification of the space for consensus of Italian cultural and language among the Yugoslav institutions and public opinion. The objectives shifted towards the nurturing of the scholastic and cultural institutions of the Italian communities in the Yugoslav

DAM, 2009), 1-71. About the mechanisms of the unstoppable Fascistization of the cultural institutions in charge of the cultural action abroad (The Dante Alighieri Society above all) and the use of propaganda in this sense (cinema, art, schools, etc) see also F. Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie dello spirito. Il fascismo e la propaganda culturale all'estero* (Roma: Carocci, 2010), *passim*.

² See S. Santoro, *L'Italia e l'Europa orientale. Diplomazia culturale e propaganda 1918-1943* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005), *passim*.

³ Cfr. A. Basciani, "La politica culturale italiana nei Balcani da Mussolini a Hitler. 1922-1933", in A. Basciani, A. Tarantino eds., *L'Europa d'oltremare. Contributi italiani al IX Congresso dell'Association Internationale d'Études du Sud – Est Européen*, Tirana, 30 agosto – 3 settembre, 2004, *România Orientale* XVII, 2004, 101-122.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Due to the space constrains it is not possible to review the history of the complex relations between Italy and Yugoslavia in the years between the two world wars, or that of the problems faced during that period by their respective national minorities. For the first question see: M. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia (1922-1939)* (Bari: Edizioni B.A. Graphis, 2006) while for the ethnic problem see the interesting interpretation of R. Wörsdörfer, *Il confine orientale. Italia e Jugoslavia dal 1915 al 1955* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009), 65-106.

kingdom, primarily in Dalmatia in order to exclusively involve them with the motherland.⁶

The situation slowly started to change halfway through 1935. In June, at the end of a long and complex political crisis, the Serbian economist, Milan Stojadinović, became the new Prime Minister. There was a long way to go to improve Italo-Yugoslav relations, and the spiny international situation in the focus of which was the Ethiopian question, having arisen shortly before, was not helpful. But as Massimo Bucarelli has reminded us, Stojadinović expressed his willingness to work towards a rapprochement with the frightening Adriatic neighbor a day after he had been offered premiership.⁷ The work to be done was certainly enormous. If the political differences between the two countries were substantial, the distances dividing Italy and Yugoslavia in terms of cultural policy seemed even more difficult to overcome. In a message sent to Rome from the Italian Legation in Belgrade in April 1935 asking for the urgent shipment of Italian literature it was stressed that:

“[...] Yugoslav students found themselves deprived of books and works of literature necessary for studying our language. It seems to me that the history of Italian literature is actually studied from a small volume written in French. This fact can be attributed, above all else, to the total lack of Italian books in the bookstores of this capital city [...]”⁸

Other fields of study appeared to be in no better condition. A telegram sent from the Italian Consulate in Zagreb in November 1936 deplored the fact that in Zagreb:

“[...] for many years they have not shown Italian films. The majority of the cinematographers have given preference to German and American films; after the expulsion of many Jews from Germany, German film was much less represented and its place was taken by French film [...]”⁹

Halfway through the 1930s, the position of Italian culture in Yugoslavia was fairly weak. That weakness was exemplified by the scant presence of the Italian studies in the universities and, more generally, by the little attention paid to the literary and artistic products coming from Italy among intellectual circles both in the capital and other great cities of the Kingdom of the Karadjordjević. The lack of interest shown by the Yugoslav intellectual scene towards Italian culture seemed, in the view of the Fascist observers, structural, explaining the difficulties of penetration of the language, the literature, the art and therefore the propaganda policy of the regime. An extensive report sent at the end of

⁶ See Basciani, “La politica culturale”, 108-112.

⁷ Cfr. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia*, 316.

⁸ Central State Archives (henceforth ACS), Fondo Ministero della Cultura Popolare (henceforth MinCulPop) – Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Jugoslavia, Envelope 139, Dispatch sent from the Italian Legation in Belgrade to the Undersecretary of Press and Propaganda, 2 April 1935.

⁹ Ivi, Jugoslavia Envelope 140, Italian Consulate in Zagreb to the Minister of Press and Propaganda, 28 November 1936.

1936 from the Legation of Italy in Belgrade to the Ministry for Press and Propaganda, highlighted the necessity to improve the Italian positions not only in regard of the attitude of the local press towards the Fascist regime and Italy in general but above all in terms of relations with the Yugoslav intellectual world. According to that report, it was necessary to vigorously promote a:

“long-term propaganda. For the rest, [...] the Yugoslav intellectuals are quite impressed by the Germans, much more than by the French or by the British [...] their admiration for German culture, for German order, for German strength, has been turned to the political regime of Berlin [...] given the affinity of the political movements, Rome-Berlin, it provides us with an extremely favorable moment for gathering from the Yugoslav intellectuals the fruits of propaganda that until now has only be undertaken by the Germans [...]”¹⁰

In this respect, according to the writer of the report, it was absolutely necessary for the Italian institutions to assure the participation of some of the most prominent Italian intellectuals in the cycles of conferences to Yugoslav groups, universities and clubs. Tourism should not be ignored as well because “[...] besides being a good source of earning it represents an excellent source of propaganda, one could say the best one, since everyone who comes back home from Italy is convinced of the solidity of our political system”.¹¹ A few soccer matches between Italian and Yugoslav representatives could also be considered bearing in mind that they had played against each other in some competitions in 1935-36, which in the majority of the cases went off without incidents between the players or intemperance on the part of the public. A more forward initiative took place in Zagreb where, since the summer of 1936, the local Italian Consulate committed itself to a monthly payment of 150 lira to the Italian seminary of the University of Zagreb. This initiative aimed beyond the immediate cultural objective, and tended both to contrast with the presence of France (ever stronger and more worrisome for Italian ambitions) in Croatia and especially in Dalmatia, and reinforce the role of the “Italian Studies Seminar” in Zagreb, the activities of which “[...] are still not favoured by the authorities in general except the Italian immigrants of Venezia Giulia who have succeeded in obtaining posts and offices of notable importance in this city”.¹²

Overall, Italian cultural action consisted of isolated and improvised initiatives of individual bureaucrats rather than comprehensive projects. The true turning point in cultural relations between Italy and Yugoslavia was the signing of the treaty of friendship in March 1937 followed by a cultural agreement that re-launched the exchanges in this sector between the two countries. On

¹⁰ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop – Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 140, Director of the press service of the Italian Legation in Belgrade, to Ministry of Popular Culture (the end of December 1936).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ivi, Italian Consulate in Zagreb to MAE and the Italian Legation in Belgrade, 3 July 1936.

the basis of this agreement, Italy was supposed to open a Cultural Institute in Belgrade, and both countries undertook to introduce faculty positions for the Italian and Serbo-Croatian language in their universities.¹³

It was precisely the organisation of the major cultural event, the exposition of “Italian Portraits Through the Centuries” in March 1938 in Belgrade that sanctioned, a year after the conclusion of the Ciano-Stojadinović agreement, the renewed political climate in the Adriatic and the decisive relenting of Italian cultural action in Yugoslavia. Based on what is currently known, one can affirm that the organisation of this event was surely one of the most important cultural manifestations promoted by the Fascist regime, not only in Central-Eastern Europe but really on the whole European continent. Judging by the artistic importance of the works of art on display, the number of visitors, and political-propagandistic expectations of the regime it was comparable to the other two major art exhibitions promoted by Fascism in Europe: the exposition in Paris in the spring and summer of 1935 and that in the fall of 1937 organised in Berlin.¹⁴

The Belgrade exposition was strongly desired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Galeazzo Ciano,¹⁵ as the principal architect of the Pact of Belgrade which was to cement the predominant role of Italy on the entire Balkan chessboard. As a demonstration of the events’ importance, Ciano entrusted Count Giuseppe Volpi of Misurata, one of the most influential personalities in the Italian political and financial circles,¹⁶ who was at the same time a Senator of the Kingdom, the President of Confindustria (with specific interests in the Balkan area) and the Venice Biennale,¹⁷ with the duty of organising the exposi-

¹³ Ivi, Cultural Agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia attached to MAE to the Italian Legation in Belgrade, 20 August 1937.

¹⁴ The great Italian art exhibition in Paris was presented in two sections, “Classical Art” and “Exhibition of the 19th and 20th Centuries” that accommodated, respectively, 650,000 and 120,000 spectators respectively. 490 paintings, 110 sculptures and hundreds of drawings, prints and objet d’art were displayed including the works of Cimabue, Giotto, “The Nuptials of the Virgin” of Raphael, “The Birth Of Venus” of Botticelli, etc. Much different both in terms of the number of spectators and the political goals was the contemporary Italian art show opened in November 1937 in Berlin. The Berlin exposition accommodated 22,000 spectators, including Hitler; nevertheless, the enthusiastic official tones did not completely hide a certain annoyance on the part of the Nazi authorities (Führer, Goebbels and Göring included) due to the display of Futurist artists’ works which were accused of being proponents of a degenerate art by the official canons of Nazi art. Cfr. B. Garzarelli, “Parleremo al mondo intero”. *La propaganda del fascismo all'estero*, (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2004), 113-125, 209-223.

¹⁵ Along with Cabinet members, Bottai and Alfieri, Ciano assumed the patronage of the exhibition, on the side Yugoslav, the patronage was assumed by the premier Stojadinović, Mehmed Spaho and for minister of National Education Dimitrje Magarašević. The prince regent of Yugoslavia, Paul, offered his high patronage also.

¹⁶ For more information about Count Misurata see S. Romano, *Giuseppe Volpi. Industria e finanza tra Giolitti e Mussolini* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2011²).

¹⁷ A day later Antonio Maraini (1927) became the Secretary of the Biennale and Count Volpi became its president (1930), the Venetian entity, by now national, became ever more decidedly the

tion. The material assignment to prepare the exposition was submitted instead from Volpi to Nino Barbantini (1884-1952), a preeminent art historian, who had already prepared two exhibitions acclaimed both by the public and critics. The expositions of Titian's (1935) and Tintoretto's (1938) works quickly became the very model of a grand exposition.¹⁸ The time for preparation was very short so in early January 1938 the organisational machine had been set in motion financed with a gift of 400,000 lira (in the end the expenses turned out to be significantly higher); consequently, the Commissary General of the exhibition, Barbantini, could communicate on 8 March that:

“[...] following the orders emanating from the Fascist Government, all the works of art from the State Galleries and the Municipal Collections of Italy requested for the exhibition in Belgrade have been granted and the specially-guided, delicate process of packing them has started [...]”¹⁹

In fact, by 10 March Barbantini was able to announce that almost all the works of art for the exposition had arrived in Belgrade. As mentioned above, the initiative was strongly supported by Ciano but it also had the full backing of the Yugoslav authorities in spite of the bureaucratic and organisational mishaps. In a dispatch sent to the Minister of Popular Culture, Indelli, the Minister in Belgrade, noted how Prince Paul had agreed with Count Volpe of Misurata to grant his High Patronage (the site of the show was, significantly, the Museum of Prince Paul²⁰). Stojadinović made great effort to provide the active cooperation of Yugoslav authorities in matters such as the transportation of the paintings, the armed escort of transports, publicising the event in the media, giving it the proper attention through the printing of special stamps, flyers and preparatory conferences.²¹ Examining the copious documentation relating to the event, one becomes aware of the enormous importance attributed by the Italian authorities to the success of the cultural event. For the Minister of Propaganda, the success of the show was the key to the success of the entire Italian cultural and propagandistic policy in Yugoslavia in the years to come.

organization that promoted Italian art in the world. By 1932 Maraini curated the “Italian Week in Athens”, a cultural-propagandistic event that had notable success. Cfr. Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie dello spirito*, 186.

¹⁸ For Professor Barbantini's intense scholarly and cultural activity developed over the years on account of which he was nominated the first president of the Fondazione Cini after the war (1951-52) see G. Damerini, *Barbantini Nino (Eugenio)*, Italian Bibliographic Dictionary *on line* at [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nino-barbantini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nino-barbantini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (last accessed April 18, 2011).

¹⁹ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop – Propaganda presso Stati Esteri, Yugoslavia Envelope 141, message from the Commissary General of the exposition, Nino Barbantini, 8 March 1938.

²⁰ The Museum of Prince Paul was formed in 1936 as an institution inspired by the most modern conservative and artistic concepts.

²¹ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop – Propaganda presso Stati Esteri, Yugoslavia Envelope 141, Dispatches and telegrams sent to MAE from the Italian Legation in Belgrade on 20 January 1938, 7 January 1938 and 7 March 1938.

For that reason, the event was advertised in the whole country rather than just in Belgrade. The effort was made to inform all the provinces and more important cities of it and have them involved as much as possible. For this purpose a range of different means was utilised: from newspaper articles and radio programs to distribution of the illustrated postcards with the images of the most prestigious paintings about to be displayed in Belgrade on them. Given the list of the works displayed in Belgrade there is no doubt that the show was intended to perform a service which went beyond a mere artistic exhibition. On one hand, it was supposed to prove the efficiency of the Fascist regime and, on the other, the unquestionable superiority of the Italian genius and culture. Some of the most prestigious state museums of the peninsula contributed their pieces as well as important private collections. No objections of any sort were allowed except in a few special cases that required the safekeeping of the selected work. The selection process having been completed by Barbantini and his staff, all the selected works of art were dispatched to Belgrade. The Uffizi of Florence sent, among other masterpieces: Portrait of an Old Man by Filippo Lippi, the Portraits of Federico di Montefeltro and Battista Sforza by Piero della Francesca (requested personally by Prince Paul), Jacopo Sansovino by Tintoretto, Julius II by Raphael, and L'Aretino by Titian. The Museum of Bargello, located also in Florence, sent the portrait of Giovanni Antonio da Narni by Donato; the Museum of the Cloister of Saint Apollonia lent the portrait of Pippo Spano by Andrea del Castagno; the Gallery of Brera sent the Portrait of a Gentleman by Lorenzo Lotto and that of Ugo Foscolo by Andrea Appiani; the National Museum of Naples sent the busts of Julius Caesar, Scipio the African, and the bronze of Dante.²² This small sample of the exhibited works of the inestimable value sent to Belgrade clearly indicates the political significance of an endeavour to offer to Yugoslav public "the best of the history of a nation and its destiny"²³ The magnificent opening took place on 28 March in the presence of the highest Yugoslav civil and church officials (from the Italian side, Minister Alfieri and the Director General of Propaganda, Geisser Celesia di Vegliasco, attended). The exposition (Nino Barbantini himself edited a very prestigious catalogue which quickly sold out²⁴) closed after 43 days on 9 May just in time for the works to be returned in Italy for Hitler's visit. The event was followed with great attention by Yugoslav newspapers and radio; there was a great deal of commentary articles, ad hoc conferences and a

²² Ivi, A list of the works and the museums they came from attached to a message Count Volpi sent to Ciano and Bottai on 8 January 1938.

²³ Cfr. L. Carletti, C. Giometti, "Un altro sfallo del 1938: la Mostra del Ritratto italiano nei secoli a Belgrado", *Atti dell' Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti*, CLXVIII, (2009-2010) - Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti, 259.

²⁴ Nino Barbantini ed., *La mostra del ritratto italiano nei secoli: organizzata dal ministero italiano della Cultura Popolare d'intesa col ministero degli Affari Esteri e con quello dell'Educazione Popolare: Belgrado – Museo del Principe Paolo 1938* (Venezia: Officine Grafiche Ferrari, 1938).

notable publicity coverage.²⁵ On 16 April, a dispatch from the Italian Legation in Belgrade confirmed that by that time about 25,000 people had visited the exposition. Moreover, “such a numerous and varied public, from university professors to peasants from the south of Serbia, who on this occasion are visiting Belgrade for the first time, continues to throng the rooms of the exhibition of the Italian Portrait”.²⁶ The public success was unquestionable; in less than a month and a half more than 82,000 visitors crowded the Museum of Prince Régent Paul with an average of around two thousand visitors a day, which occasionally caused some problems for the security. A lot of visitors arrived from other parts of Yugoslavia as well; it was without doubt a grand cultural event crowned with such complete success that for a moment the moving of the show to Zagreb was contemplated. The Plenipotentiary Minister Indelli emphasised to the Ministry of Popular Culture that:

“[...] 12,000 illustrated and bound catalogues were sold at the price of thirty dinars, and many more would have been sold [...] if the printer had been able to produce a larger number [...] naturally, many thousands of the more modest catalogues were also sold out like hotcakes [...] but another more interesting result is that [...] from the intellectuals to the most modest farmer of Sciumadjia, everyone visited the show with slow, silent, religious attention [...] people of all backgrounds, of every political tendency, of every class, wanted to see the show. And the workers and peasants made an impressive showing. The British Member of Parliament and journalist Nicholson who, having passed by here, was interviewed by *Vreme*, declared that the show was the most impressive thing in Belgrade [...]”²⁷

At the end of his report Indelli emphasised that nothing more could have been done to promote the Italian cultural program in Yugoslavia and concluded that:

“[...] the results of this exhibition, [...] which have caused great interest in Fascist Italy on this special occasion, will show themselves when our action, in the propagandist field, will not have a difficult job of continuing [...]”²⁸.

In fact, the echo of the Belgrade cultural event went beyond the Yugoslav borders; the Romanian, Greek, and Bulgarian press all wrote of it at the time, and the request arrived from Warsaw to organize an event of this type in Poland. Apart from the enthusiastic affirmations of Minister Indelli, there is no doubt that the exposition had considerable public success, but it was achieved at a

²⁵ The other plans for propaganda envisaged: wall posters in Belgrade and other places, large cartoons in the public spaces, projection slides in the movie theaters, photographic enlargements of the exhibited works for display in shops. See ACS, Fondo MinCulPop – Propaganda in Foreign Countries, Yugoslavia Envelope 141 cit., Note on the projects and the work completed and still to be completed for the Exposition of the Italian Portrait in Belgrade.

²⁶ Ivi, Italian Legation in Belgrade to MAE.

²⁷ Ivi, Dispatch sent to Rome from Italian Legation in Belgrade, 9 May 1938.

²⁸ Ibid.

high price in economic terms. In the end, the Yugoslavs did not want to shoulder the burden of the organisation of the rooms of the Museum of Prince Paul either or to pay the wages of the employees of the Museum which the Italians took on with their teeth clenched.²⁹ The actual financial loss was much greater than that – a modest one – predicted prior to the show (the last outstanding bills were not paid before May 1939); more than this, the safety of the priceless works of art was exposed to enormous risks. Despite these risks undertaken for propaganda purposes, the political benefits, as it turned out, were short-lived; neither the Yugoslav political friendship nor the substantial Italian cultural penetration were truly facilitated.³⁰

Initially, however, the considerable financial and organisational efforts sustained to ensure the success of the exposition of “Italy’s Portraits Through the Centuries” were believed in Rome to be a launching pad for the promotion of Italian cultural action in all of Yugoslavia. In the weeks after the exposition, a series of initiatives were started with the aim to improve the situation in the particularly unsatisfactory matters such as, for example, the distribution of Italian books and the awareness of the Yugoslav public of Italian literary production both the old and more recent one. Competition in this respect was rather fierce. France promoted her own literature thanks to the capillary network of the “Instituts Français” in Yugoslavia with their own libraries, reading rooms, and capacity to organise language courses at different levels. The unquestionable predominance of Germany was well established thanks to the fact that the German was the most studied language in the schools of the Kingdom. German universities were also a traditional destination for many young Yugoslavs which contributed to massive distribution of books in German. In order not to be inferior to others, the Italian authorities tried to involve Arnoldo Mondadori, one of the major, if not *the* major, publishing house in Italy, in distribution Italian books in Yugoslavia. The managers of the Milan publishing house sought for a partner in one of the most important Croatian publishers, Kugli of Zagreb which was interested in publishing a series of modern authors’ works on the condition that the Italian government commit to purchasing 500 copies (at the price of 30 dinars) of each work to be distributed free of charge to the public and school libraries in Yugoslavia.³¹ In short, it was a fairly wasteful program and did not seem to offer all the necessary guarantees of success. It seemed that despite the enthusiasm aroused by the still recent success of the painting exhibition in Belgrade, there was no clear strategy both on the part of the Ministry of Popular Culture and those who had to operate in Yugoslavia. Unlike, for example, in Albania, they appear not to have been fully aware of what real political objectives that should be achieved in Yugoslavia.

²⁹ Cfr. Carletti – Giometti, «*Un altro sfallo del 1938*», 281.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 280–283.

³¹ ACS, Found MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 142, Missive sent from Milan to the Minister of Propaganda Alfieri, 28 June 1938.

Germany, on the other hand, had an increasingly prominent position due to her overwhelming economic leverage. Since 1937, Yugoslavia became, for the Nazis, a sort of laboratory *par excellence* where they experimented with different techniques and defined the interests of the future Nazi order in this part of the continent.³²

The Italians instead preferred to use techniques capable of producing a certain effect on the local public opinion but without potential to create a solid base for conducting an effective cultural policy. This was the case, for example, with the publication of the special issue of the *Vreme* newspapers dedicated entirely to Italy (for the occasion of the first anniversary of the Ciano-Stojadinović Accords). The expenditure of 80,000 lira was granted by the Ministry of Popular Culture.³³ This was another instance which revealed the difficulties of cultural influence and of Italian propaganda in Yugoslavia. The Belgrade Legation complained on 21 December 1938:

“I am proud to report [...] the increasing difficulties to publish propaganda articles in the local press which are, for that purpose, sent to this Royal Legation. [...] Overwhelmed by the deluge of the French, English, and German press agencies engaged in the coverage of domestic politics and controversies, even the periodic half-hearted articles written by friendly papers are not written by prestigious people and those whose noteworthy signatures could stir the imagination of readers.”³⁴

Another tactic that was stubbornly tried was that of obtaining a direct promotion from the Fascist regime and its fulfilment through the recourse, ever more heavy-handed, to trips to Italy by groups of students, but also of workers, journalists, other types of workers, and delegations of parliamentarians. The Minister of Propaganda Alfieri himself considered the problem and thought about the opening in Belgrade of a special Italian tourist office in order to facilitate the flow of travellers toward Italy. Such an office would be provided with “[...] an Italian books section and display-selling of artisan products”.³⁵

Since 1938 the number of travellers constantly increased due to the reductions of railroad fares and hotel costs for certain groups of tourists. Besides impressing the visitors with the beauty of the country, the aim was to show them the efficient and modern achievements of the regime so that they would,

³² Cfr. W.S. Grenzbach jr., *Germany's Informal Empire in East-Central Europe. Germany Economic Policy toward Yugoslavia and Rumania 1933-1939* (Stuttgart- Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988), 131; P. N. Hehn, *A Low Dishonest Decade. The Great Powers, Eastern Europe, and the Origins of World War II, 1930-1941* (New York – London: Continuum, 2005), 225-306.

³³ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 142 cit., coming from March 1938 from MinCulPop for the publication of the only issue on Italy from “*Vreme*”.

³⁴ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 143, telegram sent by the Italian Legation in Belgrade to Rome on 21 December 1938.

³⁵ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 144, Alfieri to Ciano, 6 August 1938.

on their return home, share their impressions with their families, co-workers and friends, and, in doing so, make an impact on the public opinion of the neighbouring country. On 21 September 1938, the Belgrade Legation recorded the coverage of a voyage across the peninsula of a group (about one hundred people) of Yugoslav manual labourers:

“[...] All the major newspapers in the capital and in the country continue to publish the daily news of the visit of Yugoslav workers to Italy and with great relief [...] the *Vreme* describes the visit of Yugoslav workers to the Agro Pontino and recounts a brief history of the reclamation of land and construction of the new cities [...] all the newspapers underline Count Ciano's reception of the workers [...]”³⁶

While the scholarly trips were usually organised on the part of the Yugoslav institutes and only facilitated by the Italian authorities, the visits of the labourers, journalists, and other groups were often decided at a high level in Italy. For example, the trip of the hundred Yugoslav workers mentioned above was a result of the visit to Yugoslavia of the powerful Tullio Cianetti, the president of the Fascist Federation of Workers of Industry and his conversations with Stojadinović in Bled on 23 September 1938. In Cianetti's view, which dissented from Indelli's scepticism, such initiatives were opportune not just for the sake of strengthening contacts with Yugoslavia but also with a view to reinforcing Italian standing in that country and, above all, countering the predominance of Nazi culture and propaganda. According to Cianetti, the Yugoslavs observed with the growing interest the social model introduced by Fascism which seemed to them as the most congenial to ensure “[...] beyond the regional movements, a national-wide solidarity on the grounds of common and concrete interests [...]”³⁷ Cianetti's opinion was shared by the Minister of Culture and Propaganda, Dino Alfieri, and facilitated by accelerating the project of the so-called “Italy's Office”, a sort of Italian tourist agency furnished with a specific section for the distribution of Italian books. This initiative led to the opening of a few Italian bookstores in Belgrade as a first step, according to the plan of the Belgrade Legation, towards the further strengthening of Italian cultural policy in Belgrade, and then the rest of the country. Therefore, it can be said that 1938 was the year of an important change in the Italian cultural presence in Yugoslavia. If the success of the “The Italian Portrait Through the Centuries' exhibition” was the most eye-catching aspect of it, other initiatives were equally important for the prestige of the Fascist regime. An effort was made to increase the circulation of books in Italian through the organisation of a special book fair in Belgrade. On that occasion 25 scholarships were granted to

³⁶ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 145, Dispatch sent from the Italian Legation in Belgrade to Rome on 21 September 1938. A message sent from Tullio Cianetti to Dino Alfieri on 3 September 1938 contained the exact itinerary of the Yugoslav workers. Ivi.

³⁷ Ivi, redacted memoir of Tullio Cianetti of his own stay in Yugoslavia

Yugoslav students to attend courses at Italian universities during the academic year 1938-39. Seven copies of the prestigious Italian encyclopaedia Treccani were donated to the major Yugoslav libraries and cultural institutions. The attempt was made to increase the distribution of films, magazines, and Italian propaganda material in general throughout the country.³⁸ In order to demonstrate that the interest for Yugoslavia was not completely artificial the Third Congress of Slavic Philology was planned to be held in Belgrade in October 1939. The Foreign Affairs Minister was willing to finance the participation of an equal number of Italian Slavists at that prestigious conference “[...] also for reasons of practical nature, to seek to intensify the cultural ties between Italy and Yugoslavia, besides showing knowledge of Slavic studies [...]”³⁹ Ciano also wanted to make sure that the number of scholarships offered to Yugoslav students would increase regardless of the conclusion of a cultural treaty between the two countries.⁴⁰

The foundation of the Italian Institute of Culture in Belgrade in September 1939 was the most conspicuous effect of the Italian endeavours in the field of culture. It was preceded by the opening of a section of the Dante Alighieri Society which was, however, quickly closed in order to clear the ground for the Institute of Culture headed by the Slavist Giovanni Maver (1891-1970). This Institute was opened on 14 February 1940 by the National Minister of Education, Bottai,⁴¹ as had already been the case in almost all the other capitals of Central-Eastern Europe. In the wake of this event, another institute was opened in Zagreb, and finally a third one in Ljubljana.⁴² In the light of Fascist Italy's policy of power and prestige, Yugoslavia had great importance and the three Institutes were intended to facilitate the consolidation of Italy's political standing. They promoted not just “a profound Italian cultural penetration”,⁴³ but also a propaganda efforts aimed at magnifying the achievements of the regime, contrasting in a more or less open manner both the cultural action and the Eastern powers conducted by the Third Reich. With the start of World War II and the unlikely alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union,

³⁸ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 144 cit., Ministry of Popular Culture's note on the “Italy's Office” in Belgrade and the “practical principles regarding Yugoslavia”, document redacted on 18 November 1939.

³⁹ Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (henceforth ASDMAE), Affari Politici 1931-1940 – Yugoslavia Envelope 99, Telegram del MAE of 20 July 1938.

⁴⁰ Ivi, MAE to the Italian Legation in Belgrade, 29 March 1938.

⁴¹ In this connexion, the telegram sent on 19 January 1939 from the MAE to the Italian Legation in Belgrade and the various Italian consulates in the surrounding region stated that “[...] it is the desire of this ministry that all the cultural activities already existing in Yugoslavia and all the initiatives that could be taken in this field should be at the top of the priorities for the Presidency of the Institutes of Culture.” Ivi. Archivio Scuole, Pacco 166.

⁴² In addition two sections of the Institutes in Belgrade and Zagreb were opened in Skopje and Sarajevo respectively. Ivi, Ciano to Bottai, 21 September 1939.

⁴³ ACS, Fondo MinCulPop, Propaganda presso Stati Esteri – Yugoslavia Envelope 144, A note stamped by Giovanni Maver for Minister Koch, 30 March 1940.

Yugoslavia became even more significant “element of balance in the Balkans and in the Eastern Mediterranean, and so being a guarantee for the safety of those states. The Italian attitude is, therefore, given the above considerations, evaluated in an anti-German sense, besides, and perhaps even more so, in an anti-Russian sense [...]”⁴⁴

Notwithstanding the considerable efforts, it was primarily the international political situation and the outbreak of World War II that permitted a further advancement of Italian culture and propaganda in Yugoslavia. Following the defeat of France, and with England in a serious difficulty, Yugoslavia was forced into a more compliant political attitude towards the Axis. Over the course of a few months, the number of Yugoslav students of Italian language increased by several hundred and it was necessary to send new teachers from Italy.⁴⁵ The prospects were encouraging, and the growing political tensions did not seem to have negative repercussions on the ascent of Italian culture in Yugoslavia. Various institutions kept teaching new courses in cities like Novi Sad which had previously been little or not affected at all by Italian cultural influence. The cooperation with Yugoslav universities, and particularly that in Zagreb, also appears to have been strengthened.⁴⁶ The occupation of the country by the Axis forces in April 1941 brought about a further important development of the Italian cultural presence in the former Yugoslav territory.

With the military victory and the increase of Italian influence in the vast areas of Yugoslavia, some of which were directly annexed to Italy, the dream of *delenda Jugoslavia* nurtured by Italian politicians and nationalists since the end of the First World War seemed to have been realised. It also seemed that there were excellent prospects for a new Italianisation in those areas that had always remained the objective of Italian nationalism (Dalmatia in particular). However, it was not long before the tide of the war and the intrinsic weakness of Fascist occupation demonstrated the evident limits of that policy and the artificial position of strength (notwithstanding the triumphal tones of the dispatches sent to Rome⁴⁷) acquired in the last few years by the Italian language and culture in the various territories of the shattered Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

⁴⁴ Ivi, Koch to Ciano, 15 April 1940.

⁴⁵ ASDMAE, Archivio Scuole, Pacco 166, note from December 19, 1940 sent from Giovanni Maver to the Italian Minister in Belgrade, Francesco Giorgio Mameli.

⁴⁶ Ivi, Giovanni Maver to MAE, 2 January 1941.

⁴⁷ Ivi, Relation sent from the Italian Institute of Culture in Belgrade on the Italian (and those of other countries) cultural activities in Yugoslavia during 1940. Relation signed by professor Edgardo Giorgio Alberti, 31 December 1940.

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THE OCCUPATION OF ALBANIA OF 1939 IN THE LIGHT OF ANGLO-ITALIAN RELATIONS

Abstract: The occupation of Albania by the Italians was preceded by a series of events of European significance. The occupation of Czechoslovakia carried out without the knowledge of Mussolini finally put an end to his ambitions to exert some influence in Central Europe. For that reason he and his Foreign Minister (and son-in-law), Count Galeazzo Ciano, were resolved to restore the shaken Italian prestige. The two men saw the occupation of Albania as the first appropriate opportunity for compensation. In the context of its overall policy of appeasement, the British government headed by Chamberlain took a thoroughly wrong and shortsighted line of conduct towards Mussolini's aggressiveness stemming from the conviction that Italy could come off the Reich's orbit through ostentatious benevolence and concessions. For that reason the British government turned a blind eye to the flagrant offense against the international law. Eventually, it formally recognised the occupation and annexation of Albania discarding all moral and juridical principles.

Keywords: *Albania, Italia, Greta Britain, occupation, annexation, appeasement, recognition.*

Italy's special interest regarding Albania was neither a secret for nor contested by the British. Their policy towards this small Balkan state on the very eve of the war was secondary and derived from that towards Italy which was of prime importance. The bilateral agreement of 16 April 1938 (the so called Easter agreement), which was directly related to Albania, was the foundation of Anglo-Italian relations until the very day of Italy's entry into World War II. Through this agreement London strove to avoid friction with the Italians in the Mediterranean and the Middle East by agreeing to acknowledge the Italian

conquest of Ethiopia and undertaking to exert its influence to convince other states to do the same. In turn, Italy was obliged to withdraw her troops from Spain after the end of the Civil War and to abstain from propaganda in the Middle East. The agreement came into force on 16 November 1938, although the war in Spain had not ended.

The occupation of Albania by the Italians was preceded by a series of events of European significance. On 15 March 1939, the Nazi army entered Prague, thereby putting an end to Czechoslovakia's agony. This event had a sobering effect on the British government which was forced to reconsider its foreign policy and to step up military preparations for the country's defense. On 21 March, Germany occupied the Memel territory, thereby gaining a new front for an attack against Poland. Slovakia became a German protectorate on the same day and a Romanian-German trade agreement was concluded two days later. Obsessed with the idea of complete hegemony in Europe, Hitler was, however, not agreeable to dividing the continent into spheres of influence. The occupation of Czechoslovakia carried out without the knowledge of Mussolini finally put an end to his ambitions to exert some influence in Central Europe. For that reason he and his Foreign Minister (and son-in-law), Count Galeazzo Ciano, were resolved to restore the shaken Italian prestige. The two statesmen saw the occupation of Albania as the first appropriate opportunity for compensation. They expected that the operation would pass off without any international complications.

As early as 17 March, the Foreign Office received information that Mussolini, emulating Hitler, was planning some drastic step in the near future, most probably on 21 or 23 March. He was expected to put forward claims to France in the form of an ultimatum or undertake the immediate occupation of Albania. In connection with that Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, sent a personal message to the Italian dictator. In his letter dated 20 March, he expressed his concern for peace in Europe and appealed to the Duce to abide by his promised policy of peace, to help reduce the amassed tension and restore the shaken confidence.¹

On 23 March, Ciano recorded in his diary that Mussolini would answer only after the occupation of Albania and that Chamberlain's letter strengthened his resolve to act because he saw it as yet another proof of the inertia of democracies.² On 28 March, he informed the German ambassador in Rome about the answer which, in his words, "would confirm our desire to preserve peace while also underscoring an effective and essential recognition of Italian rights".³ On the same day the Civil War in Spain ended with the victory of Gen-

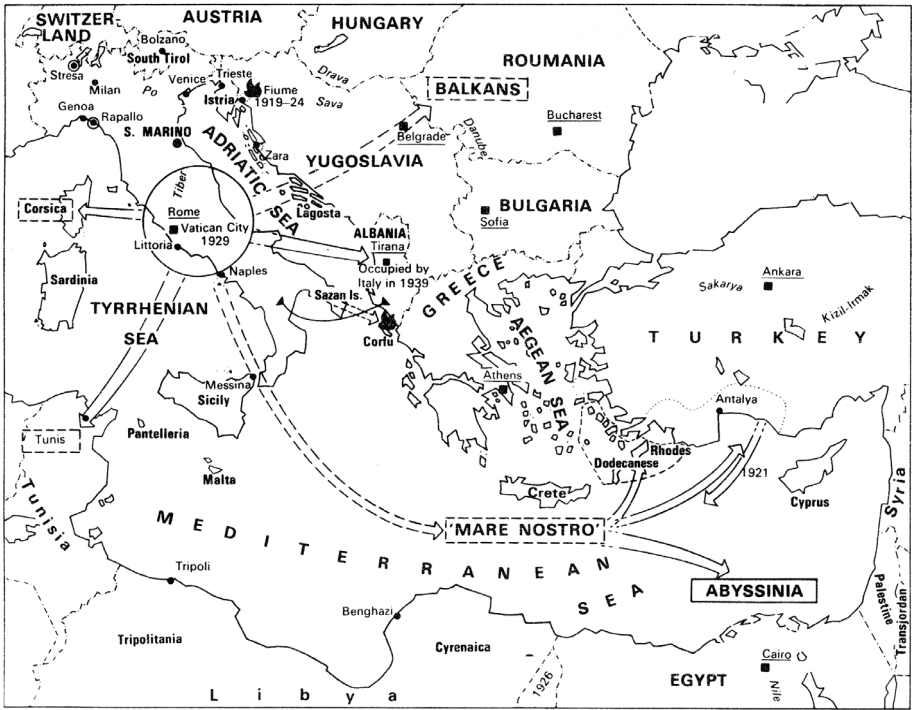
¹ *I documenti diplomatici italiani. Ottava serie: 1935-1939. Volume XI (1° gennaio – 22 maggio 1939)* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2007), doc. 355, 425-426. (hereafter DDI)

² Граф Г. Чано, *Политически дневник, 1939-1943*. (София: Български художник, 1992), 48. See also Mussolini's answer in: DDI, doc.429, 525-565.

³ Чано, *Политически*, 50.

eral Franco's nationalist forces which allowed Mussolini and Ciano to focus on the occupation of Albania.

Intelligence information about the impending attack that reached London, however, was neither analysed nor taken into account. The Foreign Office also received information through diplomatic channels – from the Rome Embassy and the Durres legation (in Albania) headed respectively by Lord Perth and Sir Andrew Ryan.



Italian imperialism 1922-1943

On 4 April, Lord Perth met with Ciano and drew his attention to the fact that aggression against Albania would be detrimental to Anglo-Italian relations. A change of the status of that country, which was a member of the League of Nations, would definitely represent a violation of the Easter agreement of 1938. In response to the expressed concern, Ciano gave his own version of the events divorced from reality putting the whole blame on the Albanian king Zogu. He had himself requested Italian troops to be sent to Albania on 8 March and intended to use them to attack Yugoslavia and annex Kosovo. It was in Italy's interest, however, to preserve her good relations with Yugoslavia. Therefore King adopted a hostile attitude to Italy and did not accept the Italian plan for strengthening the alliance in response to his

demand of 8 March. Because of the fact that Italy had invested a lot of money and her interests in Albania were threatened she was obliged to intervene. Finally, Ciano advised the British ambassador not to take the resulting situation so seriously.⁴ Ciano's version of the events was accepted as the official one and on the same day it was distributed to certain embassies and legations, including that in London. Additionally, Ciano instructed the *chargé d'affaires* there, Guido Crolla to underline that the Italo-Albanian dispute is an internal Italian issue.⁵

On 5 April, the Italians presented Zogu with a ultimatum impossible to accept demanding a reply within twenty-four hours. On the next day Perth was instructed by the Foreign Secretary to request a new meeting with Ciano and inform him that His Majesty's government took special Italian interests into account, but he was also to be reminded that the two governments had acknowledged the independence and borders of Albania and that the Anglo-Italian agreement vouched for respect of the *status quo* concerning the national sovereignty of the Mediterranean states.⁶ Meanwhile, Sir Andrew Ryan's reports from Durazzo did not reach the Foreign Office because Ciano issued an order to hinder the sending of cryptograms.⁷

Again on 6 April, the last day of independent Albania, Chamberlain, in his speech at the House of Commons, declared that His Majesty's government did not have direct interest in Albania but rather a general interest in the preservation of peace in the world. He added that the ambassador in Rome would draw the attention of the Italian government to the fact that a change of the *status quo* in Albania ran counter to the Easter agreement of 1938.⁸

On 7 April (which was the day of aggression) Mussolini sent a message to the Prime Minister with formal assurances that the settlement of the Italo-Albanian issue would take place in a form that would not cause a crisis in bilateral relations or in the international situation as a whole.⁹ In the meantime, the military operation in Albania went off without major problems notwithstanding the sporadic resistance in Durres. Zogu with his family left the country to seek salvation in Greece.

When Mussolini's message was relayed by Crolla, the Foreign Secretary, Viscount Halifax, noted the fact that the Albanian government was offering resistance - something that would prevent Mussolini from keeping his promise,

⁴ *Documents on British Foreign Policy*. Third Series, Vol. V (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1952), doc. 72, 120-121. Hereafter only *DBFP*. See also: Чано, *Политически*, 54.

⁵ DDI, doc. 449, 548; Ciano also noted the positive tone of the British press. See: DDI, doc. 469, 563.

⁶ DGFP, doc. 77, 125.

⁷ Чано, *Политически*, 55.

⁸ *The National Archives* (hereinafter TNA), *Public Record Office* (hereinafter PRO), *Foreign Office records* (hereinafter FO), 371/23712, R 2438/1335/90, April 7, 1939.

⁹ DBFP, doc. 83, 129.

and expressed concern that the situation could raise in a severe form the entire issue of *status quo* in the Mediterranean which constituted such an important element of the Anglo-Italian agreement.¹⁰

At the same time, in Rome, Perth met with the Italian Foreign Minister, who had just returned from a flight over Albania, and handed him an *aide-mémoire* which, according to Ciano's ironic remark, "could have been written in one of our own offices".¹¹ Once again, the latter presented to Perth a completely distorted picture of the events and declared that the Italian government intended to abide by the independence and integrity of Albania and the *status quo* in the Mediterranean. As for the Italian intervention, it was brought about by the Albanian revolt against Zogu's regime since Italy had been forced to intervene to restore order.¹²

In spite of all the gathered information, Italy's occupation of Albania found the British government unprepared and confused without a clear strategy of reaction. Chamberlain had to cut his vacation in Scotland short because of the occupation and he took Mussolini's action quite personally. Nevertheless, he maintained the adopted line of conduct towards the Italian dictator. The Anglo-Italian agreement remained in force; there was not even the slightest condemnation for the unilateral violation on the part of Italy.¹³ The government's intention to abstain from sharper reaction was also visible from the Foreign Office cables sent to the Ministers in Belgrade and Athens, instructing them not to leave the governments to which they were accredited with the impression that His Majesty's government would undertake to participate actively in the development of the situation in Albania.¹⁴ The desperate appeal for help made by the Albanian ambassador in London Lek Kurti a day after the aggression was also left without answer.¹⁵

The government's policy regarding the Italian invasion was discussed at a cabinet meeting on 8 April. Halifax suggested it be restricted to inquiries and eventually recommended not to fight for Albania but to try to gain time for improving Britain's positions. He said the aggression was a demonstration of dictatorial ambition and had caused wide reverberations in public opinion admitting that "we use brave words, but our action was less heroic". According to Halifax, it would not be reasonable to send the fleet to the Adriatic or give Mussolini an ultimatum and unleash a new European war. It was decided to take diplomatic steps to provide guarantees to Greece and Turkey, keep British

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, doc. 81, 127-128. See also Crolla's report to Ciano: *DDI*, doc. 496, 588.

¹¹ Чано, *Политически*, 57.

¹² *DBFP*, doc. 82, 128-129.

¹³ B.J. Fischer, *Albania at War, 1939-1945* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1999), 30.

¹⁴ *DBFP*, doc.87, 132.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, doc.94, 139-140.

ships out of Italian ports and have them steam to Malta and step up the measures for strengthening Britain's defensive capacity.¹⁶

In conformity with these decisions, Halifax sent instructions to Perth to request a new meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister. The Ambassador was supposed to ask for additional explanations regarding the reasons that led to the invasion of Albania in the light of the new facts which belied the Italian version, and to enquire about the future Italian intentions.¹⁷ In the course of the meeting, Ciano alleviated British concerns and compared the status of Albania to that of Egypt where British troops were stationed. According to Perth, the Italians intended to conclude with Albania precisely the type of agreement that Britain had with Egypt.¹⁸

At the same time Halifax received Crolla twice. During the first meeting, the Italian *chargé d'affaires* passed on a verbal message from Mussolini that the occupation had been conducted in a peaceful manner and was well-received by the population, while the future status of the country would follow the juridical traditions of Rome. Following the exchange of diplomatic pleasantries Halifax again declared Britain's abidance by the agreement of 1938.¹⁹

At the afternoon meeting Crolla brought yet another verbal assurance from Mussolini that he would withdraw his troops from Spain and did not intend to attack Greece. Halifax said that the sooner the Italians declared the new status of Albania in abidance with the authority of world public opinion the better. In addition, he asked Crolla whether the government could refer, if necessary, to Mussolini's promises regarding Albania, Corfu and Spain during the session of Parliament next week. Crolla was personally confident that the answer would be positive but he preferred to make some inquiries in Rome. In turn, he privately sounded the British position regarding Albania expressing the hope that the British government would not create problems with the recognition of that country's new status. Understandably, Halifax did not go that far and shrank from undertaking such a commitment. He rather slipped away with the diplomatic formula that the future of Albania had to be determined in accordance with the previous Italian assurances of her independence.²⁰

The Italian explanations given in London on 9 April obviously proved sufficient for British diplomacy. The Italian fascist leadership had no doubt that the British had reconciled themselves to the occupation of Albania and did not intend to react in a more determined way. This gave Ciano a reason

¹⁶ TNA, PRO FO 371/23712, R 2564/1335/90, April 11, 1939.

¹⁷ TNA, PRO FO 371/23712, R 2471/1335/90, April 9, 1939.

¹⁸ TNA, PRO FO 371/23712, R 2489/1335/90, April 10, 1939. See also: Чано, *Политически*, 58.

¹⁹ DBFP, doc. 109, 153-155. See also Mussolini's instructions to Crolla and Crolla's report to Ciano: *DDI*, doc. 503, 596-598.

²⁰ DBFP, doc. 110, 155-157. See Crolla's report on the second meeting in: *DDI*, doc. 508, 601-602.

to conclude on the next day that “reaction abroad begins to lessen. It is clear above all that the British protests are more for domestic consumption than anything else”.²¹

Such half-hearted reaction was quite predictable to Rome and encouraged the fascist government to undertake new aggressive adventures. However, it perfectly understood that the pliant attitude adopted by British was designed to split Italy away from Germany. It was indicative in this respect that, on the eve of the attack on Albania, Ciano sent a secret cable to the embassies in London and Paris with instructions to spread through third parties rumours to the effect that the occupation aimed to block the way of future German expansion in the Balkans.²²

On 12 April, Halifax ordered Perth to let Ciano know that in his speech next day before the House of Commons the Prime Minister would refer to the Italian assurances as regards Albania’s independence and integrity - given by Crolla - and the abidance by the Anglo-Italian agreement (that is to say the *status quo* in the Mediterranean). The speech was also expected to include some critical comments on Italian policy, but these were to be expressed in as little provocative form as possible.²³

On the next day, 13 April, Chamberlain announced before the House of Commons the government’s intention to extend unilateral guarantees to Greece and Romania.²⁴ In addition, justifying his foreign policy, he again declared his confidence in the validity of the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1938, which would not be denounced.

Generally speaking, the occupation of a small and defenceless Balkan state was not an event of sufficient importance to induce changes in British policy towards Mussolini’s Italy in the same way that the prior Czechoslovakia’s occupation had introduced the change in the attitude towards Nazi Germany.

The plans of the Italian leadership regarding the fate of Albania were quite different from what was presented before the British government. The “legalization” of the annexation was personally handled by Ciano. On 12 April, a hastily convened Constitutional Assembly divested Zogu’s dynasty of its rights, suspended the Constitution and expressed a desire to have the King of Italy crowned as a sovereign of Albania. A puppet government was also set up headed by the largest landowner in Albania, Shefqet Verlaci. On 15 April, the delegation led by him arrived in Rome to present the crown of Skanderbeg to King Victor Emmanuel III whose full title was consequently changed to “King of Italy and Albania, Emperor of Ethiopia”. Under Italian pressure and with the complete indifference of the international community Albania was denied her

²¹ Чано, *Политически*, 58.

²² Н.Д. Смирнова, *Балканская политика фашистской Италии, 1936-1941. Очерк дипломатической истории* (Москва: Наука, 1969), 99.

²³ DBFP, 181-182.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, note to Chapters I and II, 197. ???

membership in the League of Nation. Although it was blatantly clear to anyone that Albania's sovereignty was brutally violated, the international organization demonstrated a complete impotence to protect a member-country. On the grounds of formal procedure the League's Secretary General, Joseph Avenol, refused to put the liquidation of Albania's independence up for debate.²⁵

On 19 April, Ciano had a meeting with Perth about which he wrote the following in his diary: "The British raise certain problems related to the title of King of Albania. Several animated discussions with Perth in which I maintained that the change in dynasty is an internal issue in which he does not have the right to intervene".²⁶ In order to spare the British from too much embarrassment, Ciano and Mussolini decided to accept the credentials of Perth's successor (Perth's term was expiring) without their being addressed to the "King of Albania". It was done so on account of the credentials being submitted before the latest developments.²⁷ The same problem with credentials, however, was yet to be resolved in connexion with the appointment of a successor to Ryan who was soon to leave his post in Albania.

The expectation that Mussolini and Hitler would grow apart were proven ungrounded. Quite the contrary, their involvement increased with the so-called Pact of Steel concluded by the two totalitarian states on 22 May 1939. This pact, however, did not change British policy towards Italy in the slightest, or consequently that towards Albania. On 27 May, Mussolini gave a very cold reception to the newly-appointed British ambassador in Rome, Sir Percy Lorain, and accused Britain of pursuing a policy of "encirclement". In an attempt to rebut the accusation, the latter pointed out the British attitude to the Albanian crisis.²⁸ After the audience Ciano noted: "In my opinion, the Anglo-Italian agreement is dead and maybe Chamberlain may die with it".²⁹ Meanwhile, Chamberlain sent a message to Mussolini through Sir Percy Lorain acting under the conviction that the agreement remained fully valid and with the hope that it could even be developed further.³⁰

On 3 June, the Albanian Foreign Ministry was liquidated, which meant that Albanian affairs were entirely taken over by Rome. The Foreign Office was faced with a delicate question of how to proceed in the new situation. The legation in Durres had to be demoted to Consulate General and Ryan himself – to the rank of Consul General. Moreover, he had to apply for an exequatur (permission to exercise consular activities) from the "King of Italy and Albania", which practically meant the *de facto* recognition of the occupation of

²⁵ B.J. Fischer, *King Zog and the Struggle for Stability in Albania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 288.

²⁶ Чано, *Политически*, 61.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62. See also: DDI, doc. 586, 679-680.

²⁸ DGFP, doc. 652, 704-706.

²⁹ Чано, *Политически*, 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Albania and the new regime.³¹ In fact, the Italians did not insist on the prompt transformation of the Legation into a Consulate General thereby sparing the Foreign Office from being placed in an awkward position.

The British government tried to play down the act of liquidation of the Albanian Foreign Ministry and the imminent change of the British diplomatic representation. On 12 June, the Prime Minister stated before the House of Commons that the Albanian Foreign Ministry had been “unified” with the Italian one and that it could still retain certain independence.³² Thus, the British government turned a blind eye to the destruction of that institution which symbolised Albanian sovereignty.

Immediately after the outbreak of World War II on 1 September, Italy officially declared non-interference in the conflict – an attitude that became known as the “*non-belligeranza*” policy. In such conditions, on 18 September, the Foreign Office compiled a detailed minutes commissioned by the Foreign Secretary on the policy that was to be adopted towards Albania. One of the recorded opinions in this document ran as follows: “On wider political grounds, it is of great importance that Italy should not join Germany in the war; our recognition of the new status of Albania will not be a deciding factor, but it’s something we can give the Italians at no cost to ourselves”.³³

Although the Foreign Office still hoped to receive something in return, it was decided in the final analysis that the moment was not opportune to bargain with the Italians. On 30 October, Sir Percy Lorrain applied at the Italian Foreign Ministry for a Consul General *exequatur* to be granted to Ryan. A day later, Chamberlain announced it officially in the Parliament in the form of an answer to a parliamentary question prepared in advance in the Foreign Office.³⁴

This way the occupation of Albania, and her new status were officially recognized by His Majesty’s government. Such an act lacked any practical value and was no more than a gesture of goodwill to Fascist Italy. It could be said without exaggeration that Albania was simultaneously a victim of the Italian aggression and Britain’s tolerance towards it. In the long run, the short-sighted policy of appeasing Mussolini ended in a complete fiasco on 10 June 1940 when the Italian Foreign Minister informed the British ambassador that Italy was at war with Britain.

³¹ TNA, PRO FO 371/23716, R 4676/2066/90, June 19, 1939.

³² TNA, PRO FO 371/23716, R 4856/2066/90, June 14, 1939.

³³ TNA, PRO FO 371/23717, R 8149/2066/90, September 29, 1939.

³⁴ TNA, PRO FO 371/23717, R 9586/2066/90, November 2, 1939.

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THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION OF GREECE: STRATEGY AND PRACTICE (1941-1943)

Abstract: This paper intends to attempt the construction of a methodological approach to the history of the Italian occupation of Greece, based on the documentation found in Greece and Italy. After a brief introduction, the phenomenon of famine in the winter of 1941-1942 and the international negotiations for the realization of a project of humanitarian aid to Greece are described. Lastly, the gap between the strategic targets and the practice of the Italian occupation authorities in Greece is presented.

Keywords: *Greece, famine, Italian occupation, strategy, practice*

The Italian campaign in Ethiopia in 1935 was not welcomed by the Greek political elite. It was a further step in Italy's territorial expansion, which as far as Greece was concerned, was primarily focused on Dodecanese islands in the Aegean Archipelago, that from 1936 became a base for Italian military aggressive projects.¹ The Italian Empire was proclaimed by Benito Mussolini on 9 May 1936. Only few months later (4 August 1936) Ioannis Metaxas announced his dictatorship in Greece. Metaxas' dictatorship was a traditional right-wing regime, while King George II remained the head of the Greek state. Greece kept a neutral stance towards the emerging conflict in Europe, although it maintained close ties with of Britain while being opposed to fascist policy of revisionism in Africa, Mediterranean, Middle East and, of course, in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, as well. The almost bloodless occupation of Albania and the creation of an Italian protectorate across the Greek

¹ F. Minitti, *Fino alla Guerra. Strategie e conflitto nella politica di potenza di Mussolini 1923-1940* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2000), 141-144.

western frontier, on 7 April 1939, profoundly changed the orientation of the Greek defences. Since, the threat of a Bulgarian invasion in Western Thrace and Macedonia was long-lasting one, at the threshold of a new European war, the Greek army had to face a possible attack on two fronts, which it was completely unprepared for.²

After the breakup of war in Poland, Greece opted for a policy of strict neutrality. The entry of Italy in the war, as the most important ally of the Third Reich, made Greek strategy ineffective.³ The Greek-Italian war in the winter of 1940-1941 was Mussolini's brainchild. Neither the fascist hierarchy nor Victor Emmanuel III, "*Re d' Italia e di Albania, Imperatore d' Etiopia*" firmly opposed his intentions. The military invasion on Greece began on 28 October 1940, the 18th anniversary of the fascist march on Rome.⁴ Italian entered the war with a political agenda in mind, while the diplomatic personnel on the terrain in Greece, namely in the mountains of Epirus, deplored the ongoing geopolitical and humanitarian disaster created by the war. On 5 November 1940, Pietro Parini, sent a telegram to the Undersecretary Minister of Interior, Guido Buffarini Guidi, arguing that, as the "executive of the civil authorities of the occupied territories", he needed a vice-prefect and at least four counsellors of the prefecture. He also informed Buffarini about the war against Greece: "Everything proceeds well. Alalà".⁵

On the contrary, Luca Pietromarchi, President of the Cabinet Foundation for Armistice-Peace (GABAP) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since June 1940, described his anxiety over the developments in the invasion of Greece. In his diary, he wrote that on 29 October 1940 the Italian navy did not undertake the occupation of Corfu due to very bad weather conditions. Later, the landing was suspended. On 4 November, he reconsidered the situation believing that the invasion was a complete failure as Greek military forces entered into the Albanian territory. Seven Italian divisions battled against ten divisions of the Greek army. The Greek military resistance against the fascist invasion was astonishing. On 10 November, twenty five divisions were on their way to Albania since Koritza (Korçë) was in danger. On 17-18 November, 7.000 soldiers were transported by air to Koritza in order to defend this strategically important city, the centre of Albanian nationalism in the recent past. On 19-20 November, four battalions were transported in 48 hours. On 21 November, the transported troops by air amounted almost to one regiment, while additional troops reached Albania by sea. The crisis in Albania became so severe that Pi-

² K. Svolopoulos, *H Elliniki Exoteriki Politiki, 1900-1945* (Athens, Estia, 2003), 246-267 and D. Conti, *L'occupazione italiana dei Balcani. Crimini di guerra e mito della "brava gente"* (Roma: Odradek, 2008), 151.

³ G. Seferis, *Politiko Imerologio, tomos A, 1935-1944*, (Athens, Ikaros, 1979), 16-18.

⁴ M. Cervi, *Storia della Guerra di Grecia, Ottobre 1940-Aprile 1941* (Milano: BUR, 2005), 17-55.

⁵ Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Telegrammi Ufficio Cifra (TUC), volume 42 (1940), telegram 41456, Parini to Buffarini, 5/11/1940, Tirana.

etromarchi doubted the possibility of Italian troops remaining in Albania. On 22 November, the Greek army entered the city of Koritza. On 28 November, ten divisions of the Italian army had to confront almost twenty divisions of the Greek army. The military failure diminished the prestige of the fascist regime in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. On 21 December, many Italians expected the final disaster in Albania.⁶

During the same period, Italian aircrafts bombarded all the major Greek cities from an altitude of 6-7,000 meters which made it almost impossible to hit military targets. But Thessaloniki, Piraeus, Corfu, Patrai, Corinth, Iraklion, Preveza, Ioannina and Larissa underwent extreme sufferings as Italian bombs fell in the residential areas. The Italian headquarters were informed about the total failure of the bombardments from the German diplomatic personnel in Greece. The latter had an extended intelligence network in that country.⁷ Furthermore, from 25 January to 5 February 1941, German aircrafts carried out 763 flights from and to the airport of Foggia. They transported 5,795 soldiers to Albania and 2,282 sick and injured soldiers from Albania to the hospitals in Italy. In addition, 1,157 tons of military materiel was air-transported to Albania to meet the needs of the Italian army⁸.

Mussolini publically expressed his views on the Greek-Italian war in the *Foglio d' Ordini*, the newspapers of the National Fascist Party (PNF) on 18 November 1940, 23 February and 10 June 1941.⁹ His aggressive policy towards Greece was something of a political vendetta. He ordered an unprepared military campaign. He also planned the occupation of the Greek state and the modification of its frontiers. The Greek army managed to resist against a numerically stronger enemy, and stood its ground even during the first days of German attack in April 1941.¹⁰ Despite the valiant defence of the Greek Army, Mussolini never gave up his idea to achieve it's the unconditional capitulation of the Greek army which enable the Axis forces to expulse the British expeditionary troops from Greek soil.¹¹ Since the Italian Army did not make many

⁶ R. Nattermann, *I diari e le agende di Luca Pietromarchi (1938-1940). Politica estera del fascismo e vita quotidiana di un diplomatico romano del '900* (Roma: Viella, 2009), 499, 501-503, 505-507, 513-514, 516-519, 523-524.

⁷ Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell' Aeronautica (USSMA), dossier B5-3, CR 23, the Captain of the Military Aeronautics to the Comando Forze Armate Isole Italiane, Egeo, telegram, number of protocol (n. Pr.) A-1219, 8/3/1941, Rome and "reliable source" to Servizio Informazioni Aeronautica, telegram, n. Pr. 03.03879, 23/11/1940.

⁸ ACS, TUC, volumes 4, 5 (1941), telegrams 3152, 3282, 3326, 3404, 3567, 3685, 3813, 3971, 4058, 4201, 4276, 4400, 4560, the Chief of Police of Foggia to the Chief of Police of Rome, 25/1-5/2/1941, Foggia.

⁹ M. Cervi, *Storia della Guerra di Grecia*, 306-307, 320-321, 329-335 and ACS, dossier of "Foglio d' Ordini", n. 1 bis.

¹⁰ G. Seferis, *Politiko Imerologio A*, 33-34, 41.

¹¹ USSMA, dossier G. R. , C. 12, Guzzoni to von Rintellen forwarded to the Comando Supremo dello Stato Maggiore dell' Aeronautica, 18/4/1941.

prisoners, an important number of Greek soldiers were able to escape and to join the British units in other theatres of war.

The Greek-German war was a brief affair. In April 1941, the impact of war, the casualties of civil population, the bombardments and the destruction of communication network (ports, roads, bridges, railways, ships) far exceeded those during the six-month Greek-Italian war. In fact, the German military advance caused chaos. The Greek military supreme command never capitulated, but the armies stationed in Epirus, Macedonia and Western Thrace did so, since they were about to be dissolved or annihilated. Thus, Greece entered a new era incorporated in the “*Neuordnung*”, “*Spazio Vitale*” and “*Mare Nostrum*” on 23 April 1941.¹²

Famine and social effects

The famine in the occupied Greece during the winter of 1941-1942 was an unprecedented phenomenon and a major humanitarian crisis in the 20th century Europe.¹³ After the conquest of the Greek territory by the German army, the ensuing partition damaged the social structures of the Greek nation-state. The occupation armies divided Greece in three zones of occupation, Italian, German, and Bulgarian. The Italian-controlled territory was isolated from the rich farming regions of Western Thrace, Eastern and Central Macedonia and the olive-oil producing islands of Crete, Lesbos, Chios and Lemnos. Seeing that unemployment was as high as 50%, hundreds of thousands of villagers fled to the cities seeking refuge. All the social strata of population had already been in peril of shortage of food and starvation in the summer of 1941. In the second half of 1941, the daily ration of bread had been reduced from more than 300 grams (June 1941) to less than 100 grams (November 1941). In addition, the quality of bread fell short of the pre-war standard.¹⁴

The attitude of Italian occupational authorities deserves particular attention.¹⁵ The state of disorganisation of the Italian administration in

¹² Lidia Santarelli, *Guerra e occupazione italiana in Grecia, 1940-1943* (unpublished thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2005), 203-205.

¹³ V. Hionidou, “Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences” in R. Colg ed., *Bearing Gifts to Greeks. Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s* (London: Palgrave MacMillan Editions, 2008), 32.

¹⁴ M. Mazower, *Stin Ellada tou Hitler. I empiria tis Katochis* (Athens, Alexandria, 1994), 46, 54, 62.

¹⁵ In the *Archivio Storico della Croce Rossa* in Rome (CRI), there are three dossiers with documents pertaining to the correspondence between the headquarters of the CRI in Rome with its consul in Geneva, Guido Vinci, and its delegate in Athens, Guglielmo Arno. This archive collection also contains an interesting correspondence between the CRI and the Cabinet Foundation for Armistice-Peace of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (GABAP). The abbreviations used for the national branches of the Red Cross (in Italian): the Greek Red Cross (CRE), the Italian (CRI), the German (CRT), the American (CRA), the Swedish (CRS) and the abbreviation “CICR” for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Greece is well illustrated by the case of a ship bringing humanitarian aid of the American Red Cross (CRA) to the people of Greece. Due to bad weather, the ship could not reach a Greek port in May 1941. The captain was forced to head towards a nearer and safer destination in Egypt. The CRA then made a deal with the Italian Red Cross (CRI): the initial destination of the humanitarian aid was to be changed, and a part of the ship's cargo - 100 tons of milk - was to be sent to the Italian inhabitants of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia (*Africa Orientale Italiana*-A.O.I.). The arrangement stipulated that the CRI, would, on behalf of the CRA provide the Greek population with an equal amount of milk. This arrangement was supposed to be the first case of Italian aid sent to Greece. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Duce himself approved this agreement. The CRI had previously failed to provide milk for the Italians in A.O.I., and the arrangement seemed to have resolved the problem.¹⁶

The CRI had to secure the milk in question from the Italian national food stocks. Thirty three tons of condensed milk was sent to Greece on 17 July 1941. Four wagons started their journey from Lido¹⁷, near Venice, and after two days reached the northern frontiers of the German puppet state of Independent State of Croatia.¹⁸ Due to the difficulties in translating from English into Italian the CRI sent condensed milk instead of powder-milk originally sent from the USA, knowing that the condensed milk was more expensive.¹⁹ The CRI's Consul in Geneva was aware that the amount of milk was not sufficient for Greece, but both CRI and himself tried to avoid sending an additional quantity of milk on account of high cost of its production (more than twice as expensive the American product it was supposed to replace).²⁰

By August 1941,²¹ the four wagons had been lost somewhere in the Balkans. The Italian military authorities were clueless as to their whereabouts. The Royal Legations of Italy²² in Zagreb and Athens were ordered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to trace the four wagons.²³ The CRI did not yet appoint a representative in Athens supposed to organise the receipt and disposition of this particular cargo.²⁴ This extreme delay was probably caused by fact that the CRI did not provide for the transport fees. Military transports alone were

¹⁶ Archivio Storico della Croce Rossa Italiana (ASCRI), dossier C896, President of the CRI (Mormino) to Ministry of Finances (direzione generale delle dogane), telegram, n. Pr. 5531/G., 4/7/1941, Rome.

¹⁷ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to Mormino, telegram, n. Pr. 5730/G, 18/7/1941, Geneva.

¹⁸ ASCRI, dossier C896, Mormino to Vinci, telegram, n. Pr. 6227/ G, 11/9/1941, Rome.

¹⁹ On the other hand, the Italian product could have been mixed with water in 1 to 10 or 11 ratio, while the American product could not have tolerated more than 1 to 3 ratio.

²⁰ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to Mormino, telegram, n. Pr. 2406/P, 18/7/1941, Geneva.

²¹ They finally arrived in Athens on 7 September 1941.

²² Diplomatic representations of Italy with vast authorization. ???

²³ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vitetti (GABAP) to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 8/05725, 28/10/1941, Rome.

²⁴ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 2933/1, 14/11/1941, Geneva.

relieved of any surcharge. Seeing that the distribution of milk by the CRA had already been carried out in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, The International Committee of the Red Cross (CICR) informed its Italian branch that it was necessary to send the counterpart shipment? to Greece (63 tons).²⁵

The Italian government supplied Greece with small quantities of food and medicines apart from the activity of the CRI.²⁶ However, the CRI distributed the humanitarian aid in accordance with objectives and interests of the Italian government. The International and the Greek Red Cross (CRE) collaborated with CRI and the Italian government in terms of intensification of their involvement in humanitarian activities in Greece.²⁷ In the end, the four wagons reached Athens in September 1941, after their wandering in the Balkans had demonstrated the complete lack of organization in providing humanitarian aid. Greek population suffered from food shortages, and even the cases of death due to famine were registered, namely when the fruits and vegetables of the season seasonable were gradually consumed and the winter was fast-approaching. The 88 year-old President of the CRE, Ioannis Athanasakis, reached the conclusion that only ships from neutral countries could bring to Greece enough food supplies and medicines for the patients in hospitals, children and the entire civil population.²⁸

Robert Brunel, the delegate of the CICR in Greece, left Athens after having appointed Albert Gredinger as his representative.²⁹ He travelled to Rome where he met the officials of the Italian government and CRI. He strongly believed that the CRI had to send its delegate to Athens and authorize him to collaborate with the CRE and, especially, with the civil and military occupation authorities. Furthermore, the Italian delegate would study the Greek case and make his suggestions. The CRE also made contact with the German Red Cross (CRT). In its telegram CRT spoke about the treatment of the unprotected poor majority of the population, but also about the unresolved problem of transport across Greece. The CRT had no qualms about replying to the CRI that it was the Italian ally's duty to provide the Greek population with all the necessities. After all, the Greek territory was almost entirely occupied by the Italian army.

²⁵ ASCRI, dossier 896, Odier (Agence centrale des prisonniers de guerre) to Vinci, n. Pr. 630, 9/7/1941, Geneva.

²⁶ ASCRI, dossier Z31, "Soccorsi alle popolazioni greche. Riunione al Ministero degli Esteri dell' 14 Ottobre".

²⁷ ASCRI, dossier C378, Commission Mixte de Secours to Mormino, n. Pr. No JFL/Md Mixt. 12, 29/7/1941, Athens.

²⁸ ASCRI, dossier C896, Ambrogio Clerici (President of the Italian Office of Prisoners of War) to Mormino, telegram, n. Pr. 9896/14, 26/8/1941 and A. Zannas "Ce que j' ai vu dans la Grèce d' aujourd' hui: Alexandros D. Zannas and the Greek Red Cross" in *Bearing gifts to Greeks. Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, 116.

²⁹ ASCRI, dossier C896, Ambrogio Clerici (President of the Italian Office of Prisoners of War) to Mormino, telegram, n. Pr. 7159/14, 8/7/1941, Geneva.

On the other hand, the responsible of CRT made inquiries about the CRI's initiative in Greece.³⁰

As a consequence of the exchange of telegrams between the Italian and German Red Cross organisations, both their delegates were established in Athens. On 12-15 October, the German representative of the RC arrived in Athens, who and chose Djobek as the delegate of the CRT in Greece.³¹ The Italian delegate arrived in Athens on 20 October. Arno, the Italian delegate, immediately took over his duties and established working communications with the Italian Legation in Athens. He stayed in a hotel, and the delegation of the CRI did not have a neither offices nor the necessary staff. Despite these deficiencies, the urgency of a humanitarian crisis compelled Arno to take action without delay. On 21 October 1941, Brunel, Hartmann, Djobek, Arno, Ozkaya³², Athanasakis and Zannas had a meeting and discussed the CICR's goals and actions in Greece. On 4 and 21 November, the CICR resumed discussions. Arno also had separate meetings with each of his interlocutors. His personal belief was that the primary task was to provide help for the children. Otherwise, the reproduction of the Greek population would be at stake. The infant mortality rate had reached the tragic 40% in Athens and Piraeus. Besides, the Italian government could politically benefit on account of a humanitarian aid to Greece.³³

The delegate of the CRI in Athens was in an extremely awkward position. Arno foresaw political repercussions; so did Pietromarchi and Ciano.³⁴ During the first forty days of his stay in Athens, the CRI did not supply humanitarian aid. The infant mortality due to the famine remained its chief preoccupation.³⁵ The CRI consigned to Arno another twenty three tons of milk (1 ton and 16 tons on 20 and 21 October respectively, 6 tons on 3-4 November 1941). The difficulties of procuring these quantities were great due to the war. In fact, the CRI sent milk to the Greeks three times during the first year of occupation: 33 tons on 17 July 1941 by train, 23 tons in late October and early-November 1941 by sea (from Venice and Ravenna) and 13 tons on 12-13 May 1942.³⁶ The cargo ship *Arezzo* sailed out from Italy on 23 October 1941 carrying 16 tons of milk. There was a delay since food supplies for humanitarian purposes were not available. A month-long suspension of the maritime communications be-

³⁰ ASCRI, dossier C896, Italian translation of Hartmann's letter (Chef des Amtes Auslandsdienst) to the CRI, 21/8/1941.

³¹ ASCRI, dossier C896, Mormino to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, telegram, n. Pr. 6408/G., 30/9/1941, Rome and A. Zannas "Ce que j' ai vu dans la Grèce d' aujourd' hui: Alexandros D. Zannas and the Greek Red Cross", 118.

³² Inayetullah Kemal Ozkaya was the General Consul of the Republic of Turkey in Greece.

³³ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Arno to CRI, report, n. Pr. 6984/G., 24/11/1941, Athens.

³⁴ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Pietromarchi (GABAP) to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 05956, 5/11/1941, Rome and Ciano to GABAP, telegram, n. Pr. 05956, 5/11/1941, Rome.

³⁵ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno to Minnucci, letter, n. Pr. 6776/G., 1/12/1941, Athens.

³⁶ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to Ministry of A.O.I., "the report on the transport of food, various types of medicine by CRI as humanitarian aid to Greece", n. Pr. 8426/G., 1/6/1942, Rome.

tween Italy and Greece was also a great impediment. On 16 December 1941, 16 tons of milk were unloaded by an Italian company in Piraeus and stored in the stockyard. These 16 tons of milk were found there four months later when another cargo of milk arrived in Piraeus. It remained there as Arno did not always sign the receipt personally. The unfortunate consequences for the children in the Greek capital were obvious.³⁷

The war at sea imposed special routes for Italian ships. The transportations by train were faster, better organized and safer, and therefore preferred.³⁸ The Italian government also followed the example of Berlin (since 11 January 1942) and Sofia by allowing the transport of humanitarian aid free of charge (there was 30% discount for maritime transport).³⁹

As far as bureaucracy was concerned, five ministries were in charge of the organization and dispatch of the humanitarian aid to Greece. Most important was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its GABAP bureau which closely collaborated with the CRI. The Ministry of Finance approved the cost of purchase of goods. The General Direction of Provisioning of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests also had to consent to the provision of food supplies to Greece. Finally, the Ministries of Marine and Communications had to approve transportation of humanitarian aid by sea or train.⁴⁰

It seems that October 1941 have been a decisive period for the Italian occupation policy towards Greece. Carlo Geloso, the head of the *Comando Supremo delle Forze Armate* (11th Army) wrote his famous “*Relazione sulla situazione militare e politica in Grecia al termine del 5° mese di occupazione*”.⁴¹ On 4 October 1941, Nikolaos Depastas from Sifnos, the 59 year-old director of the Commercial Greek Bank in Athens, distributed olive oil, olives, soap and potatoes to his employees. Enforcing the food regulations the police arrested Depastas and confiscated the goods. Depastas had to be taken to the Italian court-martial of Athens for the committed crime. The Prime Minister of the Greek collaborationist government, Georgios Tsolakoglou, informed Ghigi, the Italian Minister to Greece, about the incident. After all, the ministries, banks and companies could distribute supplies to their employees in order to overcome the provisioning difficulties. Because of the fact that the Greek Commercial Bank was responsible for the provisioning of hundreds of its employees with food, textiles and medicines, the Carabinieri were ordered

³⁷ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 262, 16/5/1942, Athens.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ ASCRI, dossier C378, Carl Burckhardt (Commission Mixte de Secours de la Croix Rouge Internationale – kao i ovo !) to Mormino, report, n. Pr. JFL/cg Mixt. 12, 10/4/1942, Geneva and Mormino to GABAP, telegram, n. Pr. 8068/G., 13/4/1942, Rome.

⁴⁰ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to Società Esportazione Polenghi Lombardo, telegram, n. Pr. 8753/G., 21/7/1942, Rome and Pietromarchi (GABAP) to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 8843, 5/2/1942, Rome and Mormino to Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (Direzione Generale dell' Alimentazione), report, n. Pr. 6740/G., 8/11/1941, Rome.

⁴¹ AUSSME, carte Geloso, dossier 106, 1 November 1941.

to return the supplies to the Greek employees (22 November 1941).⁴² The famine was the core of the Greek problem according to Angiolo Cassinis, Minister of the CRI.⁴³ He approved of the actions of the CRI's delegate in Greece Arno.

On 14 October 1941, an important meeting took place at the Pietromarchi's office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. He met with Doctor Minnucci of the CRI, the Commissionaire Quaglia of the Ministry of A.O.I., the Minister in Athens, Ghigi, and the delegate of the CRI, Arno. The representative of the General Direction of Provisioning of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests was also invited to the meeting, but he was absent. The CRA had already sent 3,200 tons of humanitarian aid to A.O.I; therefore the Italians had to respond to the American initiative by sending food supplies, medicine and textiles to Greece too. According to Pietromarchi, Italy was adverse to accepting any "charity" (*elemosine*) from the CRA, therefore it was supposed to send 3,000 tons of humanitarian aid to Greece (apart from milk). The Italian military could not afford to lose such amount of commodities at once. It would take 8-10 months for distribution in collaboration with the General Direction of Provisioning. Indeed, since November 1941, certain amount of aid was sent to Greece every month.⁴⁴ The cost of this action was not negligible: 26 millions of Italian liras.⁴⁵ The CRI could not send the first shipment to Greece in November 1941 because the General Direction of Provisioning did not assign any quantity of goods to Greece. Consequently, the organization of a new project required substantial organisational changes in order to meet deadlines. The famine in Greece became more acute.⁴⁶ On 11 January 1942, the General Direction of Provisioning made clear that 205 tons of humanitarian aid were available to be delivered in Athens.⁴⁷ This was not what the CRI intended as it expected a delivery of 600 tons of supplies per month over five months.

During the Greek-Italian war, the CRI offered five million drachmas to the CRE for the purpose of taking care of 20,000 Italian prisoners of war in the concentration camps in Greece.⁴⁸ The CRE used this capital and a balance

⁴² ACS, Tribunali Militari della Seconda Guerra Mondiale, fascicoli processuali, dossier 18, file 1065.

⁴³ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno's letter to Cassinis forwarded as memorandum to Minnucci, n. Pr. 23612/14, 16/4/1942, Rome.

⁴⁴ ASCRI, dossier Z31, "Soccorsi alle popolazioni greche. Riunione al Ministero degli Esteri dell' 14 Ottobre".

⁴⁵ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to Ministry of A.O.I. (direzione generale affari politici - direzione I), telegram, n. Pr. 8901/G., 4/8/1942, Rome.

⁴⁶ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Pietromarchi (GABAP) to CRI, urgent telegram, n. Pr. 7013/G., 7/12/1941, Rome.

⁴⁷ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Pietromarchi (GABAP) to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 7246/G., 15/1/1942, Rome.

⁴⁸ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to Central Agency of Prisoners of War, report, n. Pr. 0121/6, 26/1/1942, Geneva.

of 1.669.000 drachmas had remained after the end of the war their liberation. These funds were allotted to CRE and considered a counterpart to the efforts of the CRA.⁴⁹ However, inflation reduced the value of drachma. According to the official exchange rate, 1 Italian lira was worth 8 Greek drachmas; in reality, exchange rate was 1:76.⁵⁰ For this amount of money no more than 1 ton of vegetables could have been purchased.⁵¹

In the winter of 1941-1942, a more efficient way of distributing humanitarian aid was envisaged through the agency of the Turkish Red Crescent. The Greek people had provided financial aid to Turkey after the catastrophic earthquake in Erzincan on 27 December 1939. Turkish press underscored the willingness of the Turkish people to return favour to the Greeks.⁵² In fact, the action of the Turkish Red Crescent was the first sign of the re-examination of the British policy of maritime blockade. The British blockade in the Mediterranean Sea was successful but ethically controversial as the Greek population was being starved. The Greek Diaspora responded to the appeal of Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of America, Athenagoras, for the formation of a pro-Greek lobby in the USA - the Greek War Relief Association (GWRA).⁵³ This organisation, honorary national chairman of which was Harold S. Vanderbilt, put at the disposal of the Turkish government 1,400.000 dollars for the purchase and distribution of 17,000 tons of food supplies. The lack of wheat and the consumption of Turkish population were the major obstacles for Ankara in realising the initial delivery of 50,000 tons of humanitarian aid to the occupied Greece.⁵⁴ On 15 October 1941, the Turkish ship *Kurtuluş*⁵⁵ sailed into Piraeus. It was the first sign of relief effort coming from abroad.⁵⁶ For the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CRI, *Kurtuluş* was chartered by the "Comitato Vanderbilt". Its contribution was so important that on 3 December 1941 Pietromarchi counted on *Kurtuluş* and the "Comitato Vanderbilt" for transport of 6-7,000 tons of cereals per month from Turkey to Greece.⁵⁷ Pietromarchi was not informed about the lack of wheat in the Turkish market and the British ban on cereal imports to Turkey which was actually aimed at

⁴⁹ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 0326/6, 16/2/1942, Geneva.

⁵⁰ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 606, 29/5/1942, Rome.

⁵¹ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 31/03655, 19/2/1942, Rome.

⁵² E. Macar, "The Turkish Contribution to Famine Relief in Greece during the Second World War" in *Bearing gifts to Greeks. Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, 87.

⁵³ A. Kyrou, "The Greek-American Community and Famine in Axis-Occupied Greece" in *Bearing gifts to Greeks. Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s*, 61, 65-66.

⁵⁴ Macar, "The Turkish Contribution to Famine Relief in Greece during the Second World War", 93.

⁵⁵ *Kurtuluş* (Liberty) was built in Britain in 1882. Its first name was *Euripides*. It was bought by a Turkish firm in 1930. *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁶ G. Margaritis, *Apo tin itta stin exegersi. Ellada: anoixi 1941-fthinoporo 1942* (Politis, 1993), 137-138.

⁵⁷ ASCRI, dossier C896, Pietromarchi to Arno, telegram, n. Pr. 8/06814, 2/12/1941, Rome.

preventing re-export to the occupied countries, Greece included.⁵⁸ *Kurtuluş* made four trips from Istanbul to Piraeus over three months. The ship transported 6,735 tons of food to the poor of the Greek capital. On 21 January 1942, it sank in the Sea of Marmara.⁵⁹ *Dumlupınar* replaced *Kurtuluş* and sailed to Greece six times. It should be noted that by August 1942, the CRI had transported to Greece only the 1/3⁶⁰ of 26 million liras worth of humanitarian aid.⁶¹

On 16 January 1942, Baron Beck-Friis, the Swedish ambassador in Rome, visited the President of the CRI Mormino. Beck-Friis brought a message from the President of the Swedish Red Cross (CRS), Prince Carl. The Swedish government and CRS proposed to their Italian counterparts a new humanitarian aid project for Greece.⁶² According to the Royal Legation of Italy in Greece, the formation of an international relief organization could diminish the Italian contribution to supplying the Greek population.⁶³ Finally, Pietromarchi and the Italian government agreed to the Swedish suggestion on 25 January 1942. In the meantime, as we have seen, *Kurtuluş* was sunk, and the distribution of bread was again suspended in Athens on 27 January. Indeed, none of the Italian cargos sent in January 1942 had been delivered to Greece due to either lack of fuel for transport or the British maritime embargo. The Minister of Communications, Giovanni Host-Venturi, could not provide ships for the transportation of 48,000 tons of wheat which the Germans were willing to procure for the Greek population.⁶⁴

The Duce was in favour of the aid delivered by the neutral countries. Ciano concurred on 7 March.⁶⁵ Since August 1942, 15,000 tons of precious wheat were monthly transported to Greece.⁶⁶ The Italians were aware of the Greek Diaspora's promoting of an international relief effort.⁶⁷ The Italian

⁵⁸ G. Kazamias "Turks, Swedes and Famished Greeks: Some Aspects of Famine Relief in Occupied Greece, 1941-1944", *Balkan Studies*. 33, 2 (1992), 298.

⁵⁹ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Brunel to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 072/073, 27/1/42, Rome.

⁶⁰ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to Ministry of A.O.I. (direzione generale affari politici - direzione I), telegram, n. Pr. 8901/G., 4/8/1942, Rome.

⁶¹ Ten shipments supplied the urban zone of Athens-Piraeus with 17,000 tons of food until August 1942. See Macar, "The Turkish Contribution to Famine Relief in Greece during the Second World War", 92.

⁶² ASCRI, dossier Z31, Morminoto to? GABAP, very urgent telegram, n. Pr. 7352/G., 18/1/1942, Rome.

⁶³ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vitetti (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 31/27409/e, 12/12/1941, Rome.

⁶⁴ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to GABAP, very urgent telegram, n. Pr. 7614/G., 13/2/1942, Rome.

⁶⁵ ASCRI, dossier C378, Ciano to CRI, "Assistenza della Croce Rossa Internazionale alla Grecia", n. Pr. 8/09738, 7/3/1942, Rome; Ciano termed the lack of wheat "stretta".?

⁶⁶ V. Hionidou, "Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences", 19.

⁶⁷ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to GABAP, very urgent telegram, n. Pr. 7614/G., 13/2/1942, Rome.

government also knew that the wheat came from Canada.⁶⁸ The Swedish Red Cross wanted the Italians to cover the expenses of chartering neutral Swedish ships. Or, the Italian government suggested to the CICR that the expenses be paid by the Greeks (making use of their stock of precious metals?).⁶⁹ The CRI and GABAP preferred not too conspicuous presence of the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross in Greece.⁷⁰ After all, the Swedish have put at disposal of the relief project for Greece only their tonnage.⁷¹ The Italian authorities did not want The Greeks to think that the Italian occupational authorities were less committed to providing humanitarian aid than others?. Von Ribbentrop, on the other hand, indicated that humanitarian aid must be directed to the hinterland, Peloponnese and Crete.⁷² The small islands, being relatively insignificant from the military point of view, were thus not to benefit from the humanitarian aid. The CRI could not provide Swedish ships with food supplies and, therefore, Swedish ships would not sail into Italian.⁷³ Finally, on 8 May 1942, the neutral countries, the Allied and Axis Powers came to an agreement about the goals of the Joint Relief Commission of the CICR.⁷⁴ This agreement secured necessary supplies for Greece for the rest of the occupation period. It remained to be seen how this arrangement would be carried out.

“In Grecia si difende l’Italia⁷⁵”

Three Italian-occupied zones were created in the Greek territory; politically, economically and geographically they were separated: the islands of the Aegean Sea, the continental Greece and the islands of the Ionian Sea.⁷⁶

The Ionian Islands or Eptanisa were occupied by the Acqui division of the *Comando Superiore d’ Albania* (it was later incorporated in the XXVI

⁶⁸ ASCRI, dossier C378, Mormino to Vinci, report, 8592/G., 27/6/1942, Rome.

⁶⁹ ASCRI, dossier Z31, d’ Ajeta (GABAP) to Ministry of Communications (Direzione Generale Marina Mercantile), telegram, n. Pr. 09365/8, 22/2/1942, Rome and Mormino to Vinci, telegram, n. Pr. 7828/G., 10/3/1942, Rome.

⁷⁰ ASCRI, dossier C896, Arno to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 606, 29/5/1942, Athens.

⁷¹ ASCRI, dossier C896, Vinci to Mormino, reserved letter, n. Pr. 0624/1, 16/2/1943, Geneva.

⁷² ASCRI, dossier C378, Von Ribbentrop’s note to Swedish Embassy in Berlin, n. Pr. 8607, 2/4/1942, Berlin. During the first year of the Italian occupation, 6,569 people died of starvation. See S. Lecoœur, *Mussolini’s Greek Island. Fascism and the Italian Occupation of Syros in World War II* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009), 85.

⁷³ ASCRI, dossier Z31, Mormino to CRS, telegram, 15/2/1942, Rome and Mormino to GABAP, telegram, n. Pr. 7702/G., 21/2/1942, Rome.

⁷⁴ ASCRI, dossier C378, GABAP to CRI, telegram, n. Pr. 8/12898, 25/6/1942, Rome.

⁷⁵ AUSSME, N I-II, dossier 1071, file Allegati, An order of the general/commander? of the III Corps of Army (Angelo Rossi), n. Pr. 01/258, 7/1/1943.

⁷⁶ See D. Rodogno, *Il Nuovo Ordine Mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell’ Italia fascista in Europa (1940-1943)*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003), 101-115, 136-141, 159-161, 252-260 and F. Cappellano, “L’ occupazione italiana della Grecia (1941-43)”, *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, XXI, 4 19-46.

Army Corps). The Eptanisa could have supplied the continental Greece with olive oil, but its Governor of Civil Affairs, Pietro Parini, favoured political and economic break away from the mainland. The islands had their own currency, the Ionian Drachma. The official language was Italian and in the schools the language of the occupation army was taught to the young generation of Greeks.⁷⁷

Three corps of the Italian army were stationed in Greece. In Peloponnese, the VIII Corps consisted of two divisions. The Piedmont division occupied the regions of Achaia and Elide with the city of Patras and the towns of Pyrgos, Aigion and Kalavryta. The Cagliari division in the southern Peloponnese exercised its authority on a largely agricultural area where the urban zones were insignificant (except Tripolis and Kalamata).

The XXVI Corps occupied Western Greece, Epirus, Etolo-Akarnania and Focide. The Modena division was stationed in Epirus and the cities of Ioannina and Metzovo, an extremely sensitive zone. The Greek National Resistance movement flourished in the mountains of Pindus. Since Pindus had become the most important route of communications between the eastern and western Greece (and not Metzovo), the control of the Greek mainland could have become impossible due to the Resistance action in the area.

The III Corps of army was composed of three divisions of the Italian army - Brennero, Forlì and Pinerolo divisions. The Modena division controlled the frontiers with Albania. The Pinerolo (Larissa) division was in charge of the frontier line with Bulgaria (including the territory the later acquired from the former Yugoslavia) and the demarcation line with the German-occupied central Macedonia. In Pinerolo's zone, there was the largest cereal-planted valley of in the Balkans. During the Italian occupation of Greece, the boldest and most numerous actions of the Resistance Movement took place in the Pinerolo's zone. Railroads, bridges, roads, collaborationists and Italian units were targeted. In Western Macedonia and Thessaly, the partisans appropriated the entire agricultural production and resisted both against the occupation armies and the Athens collaborationist government. Forlì division did not have such an important role in its zone of action, since it was based in the outskirts of Athens. Finally, Brennero division occupied Eastern Attica and built fortifications on its coasts in order to prevent the Allies from landing there. After September 1943, the Germans unified the areas of Eastern Attica and Cyclades in a single occupation zone for the sake of reducing the weakness of their military presence in Central Aegean.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ The policy of Italianization started in Dodecanese earlier than in the other Aegean islands.

⁷⁸ C. Freytag, "Der Zweite Weltkrieg auf Amorgos", *Amorgiana* 5 (1998), 108-113.

Destination and rank	officers	petty officers	soldiers	quadrupeds
Date: 1 August 1941				
Greece	6,504	7,658	148.078	22.667
Aegean	1,709	2,256	37.436	2.117
Date: 1 January 1942				
Greece	5,694	8,201	138.691	20.601
Aegean	2,201	3,126	51.164	3.832
Date: 1 March 1942				
Greece	5,890	7,356	133.158	19.433
Aegean	2,197	3,183	50.360	3.028
Date: 30 April 1942				
Greece	5,814	7,258	125.990	17.578
Aegean (1 April 1942)	2,169	3,156	49.034	3.254
Date: 1 August 1942				
Greece	6,304	7,706	130.572	-
Aegean	2,316	3,402	50.449	56.167
Date: 31 August 1942				
Greece	6,326	7,986	135.702	17.555
Aegean	2,380	3,516	52.514	58.410
Date: 30 November 1942				
Greece	7,454	9,433	155.275	-
Aegean	2,657	3,848	57.475	-
Date: 31 January 1943				
Greece	7,937	10,175	171.889	-
Aegean	1,936	2,886	42.311	-
Date: 31 March 1943				
Greece	8,527	10,961	185.038	-
Aegean (28 February 1943)	1,850	2,738	38.103	-
Date: 8 September 1943				
Greece	7,824	177,551		-
Aegean	over 30,000			-

The numerical strength of the Italian Army in Greece (Comando Superiore delle Forze Armate in Grecia) and the islands of the Aegean Sea (Comando Superiore dell'Egeo)⁷⁹

⁷⁹ AUSSME, N I-II, dossier 1509B, file Dati statistici della Forza.

The *Comando Superiore delle Forze Armate* of Greece (11th Army) had its headquarters in Athens. It was formed on 1 July 1941. Carlo Geloso was the commander of the 11th Army. He was responsible for the maintenance of order in the continental Greece under Italian occupation. His instructions came from the *Comando Supremo dello Stato Maggiore Generale* in Rome. The Supreme Command forwarded the instructions for the occupation project of Greece after the end of the hostilities with the Greek army. First of all, it was intended to station the Italian units from Albania in the major urban zones in the Greek territory. Secondly, the Italian army had to secure the Greek mainland from naval and air strikes. Also, the public order had to be maintained. Certain sectors of the Greek national economy were supposed to revive their activities and facilitate the Axis military effort. The military cabinet was authorized to look after military questions, while a secretary of civil affairs was in charge of the public administration, health care, agriculture, communications, public works and the provisioning of the Greek population with food supplies, medicines and textiles. Light-infantrymen, grenadiers and alpinist units were ordered to collaborate with the larger military formations. The Italian military presence was limited to 200.000 soldiers. Average number of Italian forces, due to fatigue and casualties, actually was 50 000 soldiers less. The Army guarded fuel deposits, industrial plants and concentration camps. The aerial defence of Greece was shouldered by the German ally.⁸⁰

Thus, the disposition of the Italian units in the occupied Greece demonstrated their strategic goals. For example, the *Carabinieri* had to be located in the most significant Greek cities as to allow for surveillance and control of the local Greek gendarmerie. The regions intended for the annexation to Albania (Thesprotia or Ciamuria) and Italy (Eptanisa) were exempted from these considerations. Indeed, because of the prospective annexation of Ciamuria to Albania, the presence of the *Carabinieri* would be important, while the number of local gendarmeries would be reduced to minimum. In Eptanisa, Greek gendarmerie was replaced by Italians in accordance with the denationalization policy in the islands.⁸¹ The *Carabinieri* were entrusted with the imposition of martial law and public order, while the *Guardia di Finanza* was instrumental to controlling contraband.⁸²

In April-May 1941, the Axis powers occupied a nation which had already had many financial, political and social problems. Soon after the partisan organizations were created and were followed by acts of sabotage and

⁸⁰ USSMA, dossier G. R., C. 12, Chief of the Stato Maggiore Generale to Stato Maggiore dell' Aeronautica, secret telegram, n. Pr. 50234/Op., 6/3/1943, Rome.

⁸¹ Ufficio Storico dell' Arma dei Carabinieri, Seconda Guerra Mondiale (Grecia, Albania), dossier 81.4, Vice-Comander of Carabinieri of Albania (Agostinucci) to the Carabinieri Command of the 11th Army, secret report, 15/5/1941, Tirana.

⁸² USSMA, dossier G. R., C. 12, Chief of the Stato Maggiore Generale to Stato Maggiore dell' Aeronautica, secret telegram, n. Pr. 50234/Op., 6/3/1943, Rome.

guerrilla warfare against the occupation authorities, especially in the mainland and in Crete. From January 1942, Geloso believed that the Allies could threaten Greece by sea alone.⁸³ Unchallenged by the Allies, the Axis troops, committed atrocities time and again in the Greek villages, towns and urban zones throughout 1941-1944.⁸⁴ On 2 June 1943, 150 civilians were killed in the region of Lamia because a train carrying Italian troops had been shot at. This train was transporting approximately 150 Italian officers, 60 prisoners and 30 Carabinieri from Athens to Larissa. According to Italian records, a mine exploded when the train entered a tunnel and the passengers were trapped in it. 60 Italian officers, 60 prisoners and 30 Carabinieri lost their lives in a fire.⁸⁵ On 6 June, the Italian military authorities took 100 prisoners from the concentration camp in Larissa, transported them 80 km away to the above-mentioned tunnel in Kurnovo and executed them there.⁸⁶

Malaria was endemic at the time. The Greek collaborationist government tried to take some countermeasures. They consulted the Royal Legation of Italy in Greece and after having negotiated with Italian exporters, a considerable quantity of anti-malarial medicines was arranged to arrive in Greece. Apart from the General Direction of Provision's opposition to this arrangement, there was also a legal obstruction. A German firm had the right to distribute similar anti-malarial medicines in Greece; on the other hand, it could not supply the Greek market with these medicines. The GABAP approved the provision of the Greek population with a smaller quantity of

⁸³ USSMA, dossier G. R., C. 12, Memorandum of the general of the Comando Superiore delle Forze Armate dell' Esercito (Carlo Geloso) to Comando Supremo, 1° Reparto, Ufficio Operazioni, Sezione Aeronautica, n. Pr. 02966, 19/1/1942.

⁸⁴ Istoriko kai Diplomatiko Arxeio Ipourgeiou Exoterikon-Kentriki Ipiesia, Government-in-Exile (Cairo), dossier 8.2, Tsouderos to Greek Embassies in Pretoria, Lisbon, Ottawa and Stockholm, Report on the fires in Thessaly and Lamia, n. Pr. 1678, 17/2/1944, Cairo.

⁸⁵ As far as the war crimes of the Italian army in Greece are concerned, there is a collection of records in the *Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell' Esercito* in Rome. The H-8 collection refers to the war crimes in Yugoslavia and Greece. It consists of 104 dossiers. It is not classified collection, and its filing since 2004 has not finished yet, therefore it cannot be consulted at all. See an article in the Italian newspapers *Corriere della Sera*: http://archivistorico.corriere.it/2009/ottobre/02/Sbloccate_fondo_sui_crimini_guerra_co_9_091002087.shtml; Research into Servizio Informazioni Militari could contribute to our knowledge of World War II. The archives of the Italian occupation authorities in Greece were purposely eradicated. For example, the archives of the liaison office for the Italian 11th army and the German 12th army were destroyed by the chief of that office on 8 September 1943, N I-II, dossier 2128B (various), Colonel Prospero Ricci to USSME, "Relazione richiesta sulla attività spiegata dai comandi tedeschi in Balcania", n. Pr. 3968, 25/5/1948, Rome.

⁸⁶ ACS, Comando Nord dei Carabinieri, case 10, file 47-1-12, Copy of General Mazzerelli's memorandum, n. Pr. 230/3 Seg., 4/6/1943 and Ioannis Papakyriakopoulos, *Boulgari kai Italoi egklimatiai polemou en Makedonia. Isaggeliki agoreusis kata tin protin dikin egklimation polemou en Elladi axiomatikon Ravalli (Italou) kai Kaltsef (Boulgarou)*, (Aetos 1946), 89 and Akadimia Athinon, Collection of Italian Military Records 1933-1944, National Archives and Records Service Administration Washington 1964, ISR/T, Roll. 129.

medicines in exchange for the American Red Cross humanitarian aid provided to A.O.I.⁸⁷

The strategy and practice of the Italian occupation forces in Greece, as demonstrated above, were a living proof of general lack of organisation in Italian occupation zone. The Italian army occupied 2/3 of the Greek territory. Judging by the actions of its staff, it was obvious that the Italian authorities could not control the situation. The Italian factor was also responsible for the deterioration of social tensions in Greece. In the beginning, the Italian occupation authorities failed to provide the Greek population with food and medicines. At the end of the short fascist occupation, they did not succeed in overcoming the occasional difficulties of administrating the Greek territory. Since January 1943, the Italian Supreme Command was convinced that the Allied invasion of Greece was very likely. Defence of the Greek mainland and the island was considered as the first line of defence of the Italian peninsula.⁸⁸ The adopted defensive policy failed not only because of the Allied invasion of Sicily, but also because of German were far from convinced of efficiency and the will to fight of the Italian army in the Balkans. Around 620.000 people died in Greece during World War II, half of them died because of famine and the other half due to the military operations, retaliations and persecutions.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ ASCRI, dossier Z31, D'Ajeta (GABAP) to CRI - Comitato Centrale, urgent telegram, n. Pr. 8160/G., 23/4/1942, Rome.

⁸⁸ AUSSME, N I-II, dossier 1071, order of the general of the III Corps of Army, n. Pr. 01/258, 7/1/1943.

⁸⁹ D. Conti, *L'occupazione italiana*, 189.

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MONSEIGNEUR FRANCESCO GALLONI ET L'OPERA ITALIANA PRO ORIENTE EN BULGARIE (1944-1948)

Résumé: Contrairement à l'opinion établie dans l'historiographie bulgare, le régime communiste en Bulgarie s'est montré initialement tolérant à l'endroit des représentants de l'Église catholique. Le destin du chef de la Délégation Apostolique à Sofia, Monseigneur Francesco Galloni en est la preuve. A compter de 1922, en sa qualité de fondateur et de chef de l'institution culturelle religieuse l'Opera Italiana pro Oriente, il s'affirme comme le leader de la propagande italienne en Italie, étroitement lié aux personnalités et aux institutions politiques du fascisme italien. En dépit de cette évidence, poursuivant des fins politiques tactiques, ayant trait à la réglementation de la situation internationale de la Bulgarie, le gouvernement dominé par les communistes lui assure un statut diplomatique et une liberté relative d'action, au moment où l'Église orthodoxe fait l'objet de persécutions enragées. Après la signature du Traité de paix de Paris (le 10 février 1947), la carte catholique n'étant plus actuelle, la représentation apostolique à Sofia est fermée et F. Galloni n'a plus le droit de revenir en Bulgarie. L'Opera Italiana pro Oriente est liquidée et les catholiques bulgares sont soumis à toutes sortes de répressions.

Mots clés : *L'Italie, la Bulgarie, le Vatican, la propagande, les catholiques, les répressions*

La personnalité et l'activité de Francesco Galloni, fondateur et directeur de l'institution culturelle *Opera Italiana pro Oriente* à Sofia, ne sont pas ignorées par la science historique. Bien que nous ne disposions pas de biographie complète de ce prêtre italien, ayant vécu et travaillé pendant 30 ans en Bulgarie, certains épisodes de sa vie ont été mis en lumière dans nombre d'études, qui portent surtout leur attention sur son activité pendant la période de l'en-

tre-deux-guerres.¹ Nous nous proposons, dans le présent article, de compléter la future biographie de Galloni par des renseignements relatifs à la dernière étape de son séjour en Bulgarie, de 1944 à 1948, lorsqu'il se voit confier la fonction de chef de la Délégation Apostolique du Vatican à Sofia. A cette fin, nous avons utilisé des documents (inaccessibles encore récemment) des Archives Nationales de Sofia, du Ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la Sûreté nationale à Sofia.

Passons en revue les faits les plus importants de la vie de Francesco Galloni (1890-1976) : il est né à Rovatto, petite ville aux environs de Brescia, le 8 février 1890. Après avoir terminé le Séminaire de Brescia, il est ordonné prêtre le 5 juillet 1914. Pendant la Première Guerre mondiale il sert dans l'armée comme chapelain, surtout sur le front de Pasubio. Au lendemain de la guerre, il se met à la recherche des dépouilles de soldats italiens ; c'est précisément cette mission qui le conduit en Bulgarie, en 1921. C'est pendant qu'il œuvre à l'accomplissement de sa tâche, que lui vient l'idée d'organiser sur une plus vaste échelle la propagande culturelle, politique et religieuse italienne. Déjà, à la fin de 1922, le projet de la future institution, qui sera connue sous le nom d'*Opera Italiana pro Oriente*, commence à prendre corps, grâce aux initiatives consistant à créer des bibliothèques de littérature italienne, à traduire des auteurs italiens, à ouvrir des écoles italiennes, à financer les institutions italiennes existantes dans le pays, d'assister les étudiants bulgares en Italie, etc. Décrite dans le vocabulaire du chapelain militaire, qui garde toujours le souvenir des tranchées du Front alpin, la future institution est présentée comme « un observatoire de première classe » et un « avant-poste » de la mission historique italienne au cœur même des Balkans.²

Les projets de don Francesco Galloni reçoivent l'approbation de Renato Piacetini, ministre plénipotentiaire d'Italie à Sofia, de l'archevêque Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, à ce moment délégué apostolique en Bulgarie (le futur pape Jean XXIII), ainsi que des organes de propagande du fascisme italien, dont il est lui-même le représentant officiel dans le pays. Il est hors de doute que le soutien politique et financier du fascisme et ses relations personnelles avec Mussolini ont joué un rôle décisif pour l'aboutissement de ses projets.³

En 1928, don Galloni achète un imposant immeuble de cinq étages au centre de Sofia, dans lequel il fait installer son *Opera Italiana pro Oriente* :

¹ G. Eldarov, « Monsignor Francesco Galloni (1890 – 1976) in Bulgaria », *Archivio cattolico bulgaro di Roma*, N 3. Roma, 1989; S. Santoro. *L'Italia e l'Europa orientale. Diplomazia culturale e propaganda 1918 – 1943* (Milano: F. Angeli, 2005). Dans son étude Gueorgui Eldarov, délégué apostolique au nom des catholiques bulgares à l'étranger et chef de la section de la Radio Vatican dans les années 1966-1990, accorde la priorité à l'aspect religieux de l'activité de Galloni en Bulgarie, alors que le chercheur italien Stefano Santoro, ayant présenté sa monographie comme thèse de doctorat à l'Université de Trieste, examine en détails, de nombreux documents à l'appui, ses relations avec le fascisme italien.

² G. Eldarov, *Monsignor Francesco Galloni*, 19-20.

³ S. Santoro, *Monsignor Francesco Galloni*, 122-135.

institut culturel multifonctionnel, chargé d'organiser des cours de langue et de civilisation italiennes, appelés en outre à populariser l'histoire, la culture et la politique italiennes, d'entretenir une bibliothèque, d'ouvrir une librairie italienne et d'éditer une revue *Horizons nouveaux* (Нови хоризонти), d'octroyer des bourses à des étudiants bulgares désireux de faire leurs études en Italie. Un autre acte important à son actif est la fondation de la congrégation religieuse « Les Filles de Marie de l'Annonciation » (S. Maria Annunciata), qui lui permet de s'inscrire avec plus d'éclat dans la vie de l'Église catholique en Bulgarie.⁴

D'une manière générale, pendant la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, don Francesco Galloni s'affirme comme le principal protagoniste de la propagande italienne en Bulgarie et en tant que tel, il figure dans les dossiers du Département de la Sûreté nationale de la Direction de la police. Aussi, les archives du Département B, chargé de l'espionnage et de la propagande étrangers dans le pays, mentionnent-elles souvent le nom de don Galloni. Dans les documents des services secrets, il apparaît comme le chef et l'organisateur principal de la propagande italienne en Bulgarie. Or, les renseignements à son sujet sont laconiques et routiniers et ne dépassent en rien l'information que contient le rapport d'activité concernant 1939, présenté par le directeur du Groupe 3 du Département B.

« La propagande italienne dans le pays a été dirigée dans le passé et aussi pendant la période examinée principalement par le prêtre don Francesco Galloni, directeur de l'Institut « *Opera Italiana pro Oriente* » qui se trouve au numéro 5 de la rue Oborichte. A cette fin sont organisés des cours de langue et de civilisation italienne, des expositions caritatives, des conférences et des rencontres. Au près de l'Institut est ouverte une pension réservée aux étudiants bulgares ou aux élèves du Lycée italien. Le gouvernement italien affecte de grosses sommes à l'entretien de l'Institut. Don Galloni a obtenu que soit accordé un régime de faveur aux Bulgares désirant étudier dans les Hautes écoles italiennes, aussi bien en Bulgarie, qu'en Italie, consistant en l'octroi de bourses annuelles ».

A cette époque, les services secrets du Royaume de Bulgarie ne considèrent pas encore don Galloni comme un éventuel espion italien. A cet égard, ils ont en vue un autre personnage, d'origine macédonienne, fonctionnaire à la Légation d'Italie et gendre d'un éminent homme politique et public bulgare. C'est lui qu'on soupçonne d'être le principal agent de l'attaché militaire italien Giacomo Sicardi.⁵

Le 9 septembre 1944, à la suite d'un coup d'État militaire, en Bulgarie est instauré le pouvoir du Front de la Patrie, dominé par le Parti communiste bulgare et le pays est occupé par l'armée soviétique. Trois jours plus tard, un ar-

⁴ G. Eldarov, *Monsignor Francesco Galloni*, 10-18.

⁵ S. Eldarov. « Дон Франческо Галони и българските тайни служби », *Abagar*, Sofia, № 8, août 2000.

rété du Conseil des Ministres ordonnant l'arrestation de toutes les personnes, liées sous une forme ou une autre, à l'ancien régime, donne le signal du départ de la terreur de masse. Au début du mois d'octobre est institué l'ainsi nommé « Tribunal du peuple », chargé de juger les représentants de l'ancien régime à tous les niveaux : depuis les régents et les ministres jusqu'aux simples policiers et fonctionnaires. Avec ou sans jugement, en 1944-1945 sont tuées environ 30 000 personnes, d'autres sont jetées en prison ou internées dans des camps de travail. De même que dans d'autres pays d'Europe de l'Est, parmi les victimes se retrouvent aussi les représentants de la religion et de l'Église : le haut clergé, les prêtres, voire les fidèles orthodoxes ou catholiques.

Dans la science historique est enracinée l'opinion qu'aussitôt après l'instauration du régime communiste en Bulgarie l'Église catholique est soumise à toutes sortes de restrictions et de répressions, alors que la situation de l'Église orthodoxe s'améliore considérablement. Or, c'est exactement le contraire qui se produit. En sa qualité de confession dominante et tolérée par l'État aux termes de la Constitution, l'Église orthodoxe bulgare focalise sur elle toute la colère athée et anticléricale du nouveau pouvoir. Aussitôt après le 9 septembre 1944, commence une véritable chasse aux prêtres de l'église orthodoxe. Devant le Tribunal du peuple comparaissent cent-cinquante deux prêtres orthodoxes, dont treize sont condamnés à mort et exécutés, treize autres sont condamnés à perpétuité, alors que les autres reçoivent des peines plus légères. Parmi les prêtres arrêtés figurent deux des plus éminents évêques, qui sont détenus jusqu'au printemps de 1945. L'un d'entre eux deviendra plus tard patriarche de l'Église orthodoxe bulgare : le métropolite de Plovdiv, Cyrille.⁶

Dans les premières années qui suivent le coup d'État du 9 septembre 1944, à l'exception de quelques cas isolés de répressions contre des catholiques, l'Église catholique n'a pas de motifs sérieux de se plaindre du nouveau régime. Cet état de choses a son explication, aussi bien dans le passé que dans le présent. La discrimination des catholiques, les campagnes dirigées contre l'Église catholique et l'esprit général de xénophobie, que les anciens gouvernements, surtout après le coup d'État militaire de 1934, dans l'esprit de l'État autoritaire et du nationalisme, alimentent consciemment, acquièrent dans les nouvelles conditions, la valeur d'une dot généreuse. A cause de leur position sociale et politique marginalisée dans le passé, les catholiques entretiennent des relations traditionnelles solides avec certains partis du Front de la Patrie, en premier lieu, avec l'Union agrarienne populaire bulgare. Les meilleures conditions d'activité dont bénéficie l'Église catholique peuvent s'expliquer aussi par ses contacts anciens et nouveaux dans les hautes sphères du pouvoir, dans le premier gouvernement du Front de la Patrie, avec à sa tête Kimon Gueorguiev appartenant au cercle politique « Zveno » (9 septembre 1944 – 31 mars 1946).

⁶ D. Kalkandzieva, *Българската православна църква и държавата 1944 – 1953* (Sofia: Albatros, 1997)

A cette époque le ministre des Affaires étrangères Petko Stainov partage l'orientation politique du premier ministre Kimon Gueorguiev. Le Directeur des Cultes, ayant en plus le rang de ministre plénipotentiaire, c'est toujours Constantin Sarafov, qui a occupé ce poste bien avant le coup d'État communiste et qui parvient à garder son équipe. Pendant cette période, les fonctionnaires de la Direction des Cultes auprès du Ministère des Affaires étrangères se conduisent mieux à l'égard de l'Église catholique que sous l'ancien régime, du fait qu'il n'existe plus de confession dominante et que tous les cultes sont égaux devant la loi. Par ailleurs, l'Église catholique a des liens encore plus sûrs avec d'autres représentants du pouvoir exécutif, à savoir : Gueorgui Dragnev, ministre des Travaux publics, ancien élève du Lycée catholique bulgare des pères résurrectionnistes à Edirne, qui entretient des contacts étroits avec l'évêque Jean Garoufalov, le chef spirituel des catholiques bulgares uniates. C'est la même position sociale qu'occupe alors Vladimir Koutikov, représentant en vue des catholiques de Sofia, ancien secrétaire de la Régence et professeur de Droit à l'université de Sofia. Les différentes institutions publiques centrales ou locales, emploient à tous les niveaux, des fonctionnaires catholiques, où liés à la communauté catholique sous une forme ou une autre.⁷ Même parmi les leaders du parti communiste, l'Église catholique a son « lobby », comme par exemple Vassil Kolarov, le deuxième dans la hiérarchie du parti, après Georges Dimitrov. Sous l'ancien régime, en sa qualité d'avocat, il a assumé la défense de catholiques à certains procès et, au besoin, il bénéficie lui-même du soutien d'évêques et de prêtres catholiques. Dans une interview qu'il a donnée en 1945 à Moscou, pour le journal « Vérité », V. Kolarov décrit en termes élogieux les qualités personnelles et politiques des catholiques bulgares.⁸

Il est surprenant de constater que Francesco Galloni parvient à s'adapter avec succès aux conditions du nouveau régime en Bulgarie, malgré ses engagements passés à l'endroit du fascisme, ses rapports personnels avec Mussolini et sa gloire de leader de la propagande italienne dans le pays. Cela est dû en quelque sorte au hasard, ou plutôt à la vacance inattendue du poste de chef de la Délégation Apostolique à Sofia.

Au moment du coup d'État du 9 septembre, ce poste est occupé par l'archevêque Giuseppe Mazzoli. Dépourvu du charme de son prédécesseur, l'archevêque Angelo Roncalli, qui a séjourné à Sofia de 1925 à 1934, il ne parvient pas à se faire de relations parmi les hommes politiques et les intellectuels bulgares, ni à devenir populaire au sein du clergé catholique. Le 8 décembre 1945, après une brève maladie, l'archevêque Giuseppe Mazzoli meurt. Les cérémonies funèbres qui s'ensuivent sont une marque d'estime non pas tellement envers la personnalité du défunt, mais plutôt envers l'autorité de la représentation pontificale et de l'Église catholique en Bulgarie. A la cérémonie qui se

⁷ S. Eldarov, *Католиците в България 1878 – 1989* (Sofia: Le centre International pour les problèmes des minorités, 200)2, 562-573.

⁸ Journal « Vérité », Sofia, No 1049, 15 décembre 1945.

déroule dans le salon de la Délégation apostolique, assiste le ministre des Affaires étrangères Petko Stainov en personne, qui déclare : « Je suis là pour rendre hommage à la mémoire d'un des grands amis de la Bulgarie, qui a été aussi mon ami ». Le Directeur des Cultes K. Sarafov y est également présent, aux côtés des représentants des Légations de France, d'Italie et de Suisse à Sofia. Petko Stainov, Constantin Sarafov et leur collègue Gueorgui Dragnev, en compagnie cette fois de la reine Joanna, assistent à la liturgie et à l'oraison funèbre à l'église catholique Saint Joseph (ou plutôt, dans le temple, restitué temporairement dans les décombres de l'ancienne église, détruite à la suite des bombardements anglo-américains au début de 1944 de la capitale bulgare).

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères organise le transport de la dépouille mortelle de l'archevêque Giuseppe Mazzoli jusqu'à l'église catholique de Plovdiv, où il est enterré. Aux obsèques assiste une fois de plus le directeur des Cultes K. Sarafov, qui a payé les billets des personnalités officielles. Toutes ces marques d'estime et d'attention à l'égard de l'Église catholique, sont dues non seulement aux traditions du protocole diplomatique, mais aussi aux espoirs des forces politiques non communistes, faisant partie du gouvernement provisoire du Front de la Patrie, relatifs à l'apparition d'une alternative démocratique en Bulgarie, susceptible de maintenir l'équilibre entre l'Union soviétique et l'Occident.⁹

Le jour où la cérémonie funèbre à Plovdiv prend fin, le secrétaire d'État adjoint du Vatican Giovanni Batista Montini informe par radiogramme, par l'intermédiaire de la Radio Suisse, le ministre des Affaires étrangères et des cultes P. Stainov, que Francesco Galloni a été nommé chef par intérim de la Délégation apostolique du Vatican à Sofia. Sur la version originale du radiogramme, P. Stainov a apposé la résolution suivante : « Faire savoir à don Galloni que le gouvernement bulgare est d'accord avec sa nomination ». Le 13 décembre le ministère des Affaires étrangères se charge de le lui faire savoir par une note verbale, conçue en ces termes : « Le gouvernement bulgare a le plaisir d'approuver cette nomination ». Ainsi Francesco Galloni entre officiellement en fonction comme chef par intérim de la Délégation apostolique à Sofia, ce qui lui donne droit au titre de Monseigneur.¹⁰

Grâce à son tempérament ouvert et au don qu'il a de communiquer avec les autres, Monseigneur Galloni parvient à consolider ses anciennes relations et à en créer de nouvelles avec le pouvoir et la société. Il a d'ailleurs d'autres relations haut placées qui contribueront à sa carrière diplomatique, dont la plus importante est l'archevêque Angelo Roncalli, qui est à cette époque nonce apostolique à Paris. Ils s'entendent très bien à la suite de leur séjour de dix ans et de leurs activités communes en Bulgarie. Le ministère des Affaires étrangères considère d'un œil favorable les relations de Galloni avec le secrétaire

⁹ S. Eldarov, *Католиците в България 1878 – 1989*. 562-573.

¹⁰ Archives Centrales de l'État bulgare (dorénavant ACEB), fonds 146 B (Georges Dimitrov), inventaire 4, unité d'archive (u. a.) 819, feuillet 11, 22-28.

d'État adjoint du Vatican Giovanni Batista Montini (le futur pape Paul VI). Ils sont originaires du même village et se connaissent du temps de la première charge ecclésiastique de Galloni comme curé de paroisse dans le village natal de Montini.

Monseigneur Galloni profite habilement de ses relations personnelles et des circonstances politiques pour défendre les intérêts, les droits et le prestige de l'Église catholique en Bulgarie. D'un autre côté, la situation internationale non régularisée après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, incite le gouvernement du Front de la Patrie à la prudence et à la réserve à l'égard des catholiques bulgares. Sans compter qu'en prévision des prochaines négociations de la Conférence de paix de Paris, le ministère des Affaires étrangères place pas mal d'espoirs sur la carte catholique.

Le 26 janvier 1946, le ministre des Affaires étrangères P. Stainov remet à Galloni un pro-mémoire adressé au Saint Siège, par lequel il demande une aide diplomatique en faveur de la cause bulgare à la Conférence de Paris. En février, par l'intermédiaire de Galloni, deux autres pro-mémoires sont adressés au Vatican : le premier expose l'impossibilité pour la Bulgarie de payer les lourdes réparations dont elle se trouve accablée et le deuxième déplore le manque de fondement des prétentions territoriales de la Grèce. Le Vatican accueille favorablement les requêtes du gouvernement bulgare et ordonne à ses représentants diplomatiques à Washington, à Londres et à Paris de soutenir les intérêts bulgares.¹¹

L'archevêque Roncalli accorde un soutien effectif à la délégation bulgare en prévision des pourparlers à la Conférence de Paris. À l'automne de 1946, il reçoit à la nonciature Kimon Gueorguiev et Vassil Kolarov, tout en profitant au maximum de ses relations et de son influence internationale, pour neutraliser la propagande anti-bulgare et les prétentions territoriales de la délégation grecque. Cet appui est officiellement reconnu par l'État bulgare et trouve une résonance dans la presse bulgare.¹²

Francesco Galloni ne manque pas d'exploiter sa contribution à la diplomatie secrète en faveur de la cause de l'Église catholique. De cette manière, il réussit à faire restituer une partie de son patrimoine exproprié et de rétablir des institutions catholiques qui semblaient condamnées. Le plus important succès de Galloni dans ce sens est la restitution de l'immeuble qui abritait l'*Opera Italiana pro Oriente*, réquisitionnée par les troupes soviétiques d'occupation en Bulgarie. La restitution de l'immeuble se fait aux termes d'une décision spéciale du Conseil des Ministres du 5 juin 1947.¹³ Deux ans auparavant, Galloni avait réussi à immatriculer officiellement sa congrégation religieuse des Filles de Santa Maria Annunciata. Son prestige et son influence augmentent toujours

¹¹ Archives de Ministère des Affaires étrangères (dorénavant AMAE), inv. 10 (Comité chargé des questions de l'Église Orthodoxe bulgare et des cultes religieux), u. a. 751, ff. 5-9.

¹² *Vérité*, Sofia, 1085, 20 octobre 1946.

¹³ ACEB, fonds 165 (Direction des Cultes), inv. 3, u. a. 376, ff. 4-5.

davantage et on peut affirmer que durant cette période, il est devenu un des piliers de l'Église catholique en Bulgarie, qui rallie les évêques, les prêtres, les fidèles, de même que des anciens disciples de l'*Opera pro Oriente* et des universités italiennes. Jamais dans la passé Galloni n'avait eu une telle influence, et il n'en aura jamais plus à l'avenir.

Le traité de paix de Paris est signé le 10 février 1947. Entre-temps, au printemps de 1946, est formé un nouveau cabinet du Front de la Patrie, qui sera à l'origine de sérieux remaniements de personnel au ministère des Affaires étrangères et à la Direction des Cultes, sans compter qu'à l'automne de la même année ont lieu des élections, à la suite desquelles tout le pouvoir passe entre les mains du Parti communiste bulgare. Par conséquent, la carte catholique devient inutile et le régime communiste tourne la page pour écrire un nouveau chapitre dans ses rapports avec l'Église catholique. Le chemin qui mène de la tolérance à la discrimination est franchi en un éclair, et de là à la terreur non dissimulée il ne reste qu'un pas.

Le 17 novembre 1947, le nouveau directeur des Cultes Dimitar Iliev présente au ministère des Affaires étrangères un rapport détaillé, traçant les axes prioritaires de ses activités futures :

« Le département chargé des confessions étrangères a la tâche hautement importante d'aider l'opinion publique bulgare à lutter contre les tentatives du pape Pie XII et de l'Église catholique romaine de renforcer leur influence religieuse et sociale dans le pays et, toujours sur le plan international, de chercher à attirer notre peuple, notre pays, en vertu de la convention entre le président Truman et le pape Pie XII, dans le camp impérialiste et antidémocratique dirigé par les USA. Il est donc évident que le délégué apostolique Francesco Galloni à Sofia et les trois évêques catholiques à Plovdiv, à Roussé et à Sofia, sans compter tout le clergé catholique en Bulgarie, y compris les religieuses, qui de toute évidence ont des rapports avec la politique extérieure du Vatican et qui entretiennent des relations avec le Ministère des Affaires étrangères et des Cultes par l'intermédiaire de la Direction des Cultes, seront exposés à la résistance du Département des confessions étrangères de la Direction. Il est évident aussi que les relations entre la République populaire de Bulgarie et le Vatican et le camp impérialiste dont il fait partie dépendront dans une grande mesure de la réalisation, par le biais de ce département de la Direction des Cultes, de la politique étrangère adoptée par le gouvernement.¹⁴

Le nouvel esprit de la Direction des Cultes et le différent lexique de son nouveau directeur ne présagent rien de bon pour Galloni. Depuis le début de 1948, le modèle soviétique de la structure étatique et sociopolitique, imposé dans le pays, s'acharne de toutes ses forces contre l'Église catholique. Après avoir réglé sa situation internationale et triomphé de ses adversaires politiques dans le pays, le régime communiste a besoin de se créer de nouveaux ennemis,

¹⁴ AMAE, fonds 10, inv. 9, u. a. 376, ff. 4-5.

afin de tenir toujours en éveil son appareil répressif. Ainsi, Galloni, d'un ami de la Bulgarie, se transforme en une des cibles les plus convoitées de la Sûreté nationale en Bulgarie. A l'instar des autres représentants diplomatiques, il intéresse le contre-espionnage, plus concrètement le deuxième département, groupe E, secteur la « Légation du Vatican à Sofia ». Voici l'activité de Galloni à travers le regard de la Sûreté au printemps 1948 :

« Un certain nombre de faits, obtenus par l'intermédiaire du réseau d'espionnage, concernant le travail, le comportement et les relations de Galloni, donnent lieu de conclure qu'il se sert de cet énorme appareil catholique à ses propres fins, notamment à rallier les catholiques bulgares au Vatican, à rallier de nouveaux adeptes du catholicisme, à informer le Vatican sur la vie politique et sociale du pays. Cela se trouve confirmé par le fait que Galloni réunit des matériaux relatifs au projet de Constitution de la Bulgarie et au Deuxième Congrès du Front de la Patrie, qui lui sont nécessaires pour son rapport destiné au Vatican. L'activité religieuse à laquelle il se livre est censée inculquer chez les fidèles une obéissance aveugle. Cette dernière allégation est confirmée par les faits suivants :

- a) Quand Galloni doit se rendre dans quelque village catholique, la journée devient une fête, les cloches sonnent et tous les villageois s'en vont à la rencontre de Galloni, qu'ils prennent dans leurs bras et l'emmènent à l'église, en chantant des cantiques
- b) Les résultats des élections pour le référendum et l'Assemblée Nationale constituante dans les villages catholiques, qui ont voté pour l'opposition et contre notre pouvoir ».¹⁵

Les agents du groupe E entrent en possession d'une description minutieuse et détaillée de l'édifice qui abrite la Délégation apostolique, la disposition des locaux, l'ameublement, les tapisseries, etc. Avec la même minutie sont « inventoriés » ses occupants. Parmi les collaborateurs les plus proches et le personnel de la Légation ont été recrutés deux « collaborateurs secrets » chargés de suivre tous les faits et gestes de Monseigneur Galloni, de fouiller ses tiroirs et sa table de travail, jusqu'à sa corbeille à papiers, et d'informer qui de droit. Les plans opérationnels de 1948, concernant la Délégation apostolique, prévoient, outre le « prélèvement des empreintes des clés des portes qui nous intéressent », la prise de renseignements sur toutes les personnes qui ont des contacts avec Galloni, en vue de leur éventuel recrutement. Ainsi, toutes les personnes, liées d'une manière ou d'une autre avec *l'Opera Italiana pro Oriente*, se retrouvent dans le champ visuel de la Sûreté d'État. Il s'agit des rédacteurs d'éditions catholiques, des anciens étudiants des universités italiennes, des religieuses de la Congrégation de Santa Maria Annunciata, du cercle des intellectuels catholi-

¹⁵ Archives du Ministère de l'Intérieur (dorénavant AMI), fonds 2 (Deuxième Direction principale de la Sûreté d'État), inv. 1, u. a. 1736, ff. 1-5.

ques, ayant gravité dans le passé autour de l'institut de Galloni. Le nombre des agents de la Sûreté d'État dans son entourage augmente rapidement.¹⁶

Le signal de l'offensive contre l'Église catholique et les catholiques en Bulgarie arrive de Moscou pendant l'été de 1948. Par exception, il n'est pas lié à la directive du parti communiste du « grand frère », mais à un événement d'ordre religieux, du moins à première vue. Du 8 au 18 juillet 1948, à Moscou se tient une Conférence orthodoxe avec la participation de toutes les églises orthodoxes du « Camp de la paix et de la démocratie ». Officiellement, la Conférence est organisée à l'occasion du 500^e Anniversaire de la proclamation de l'autocéphalie de l'Église Orthodoxe russe, mais en réalité, elle poursuit des buts politiques bien déterminés, dont l'un consiste à dénoncer l'Occident sous la forme d'attaques canoniques et dogmatiques contre le Saint Siège et l'Église catholique. Dans le rapport principal, présenté par le patriarche russe Alexis et dans les interventions des délégués, le Vatican est présenté comme « la menace la plus sérieuse pour la paix », comme un intrigant politique dangereux, comme l'instrument fidèle de l'impérialisme anglo-américain, comme le propagateur de l'athéisme, de la débauche, etc. Une commission spéciale « le Vatican et l'Église orthodoxe » est formée, présidée par le métropolite de Plovdiv Cyrille, le futur patriarche de l'Église orthodoxe bulgare. Les travaux de la commission consistent à rédiger des rapports anticatholiques et se terminent par l'élaboration d'une résolution contre le Vatican et d'un arrêté déterminant l'activité de l'Église orthodoxe face à « l'agression de la propagande catholique ». Les deux documents sont adoptés à la séance plénière finale de la Conférence orthodoxe, le 17 juillet. La résolution ratifie le verdict contre l'Église catholique présentant dans les plus grands détails les motifs depuis l'apparition du christianisme jusqu'au moment politique en question. Par l'esprit et le contenu, elle rappelle les anathèmes et les malédictions échangés entre le Patriarcat de Constantinople et l'Église romaine au XI^e siècle. De son côté, l'arrêté indique les moyens par lesquels l'orthodoxie doit s'opposer au catholicisme.¹⁷

Ce ne doit pas être le fait du hasard qu'au beau milieu de la Conférence orthodoxe, le 14 juillet 1948, le Bureau politique du Comité central du Parti communiste bulgare adopte un projet de décret pour la fermeture de toutes les écoles étrangères en Bulgarie. Le décret est adopté à l'Assemblée nationale et publié dans le Journal officiel du 3 août 1948.¹⁸ C'est bien le coup le plus grave asséné à l'Église catholique jusqu'à ce moment, car il la prive d'un moyen d'action efficace et traditionnel. Le coup porté à l'enseignement catholique en Bulgarie se termine par la suppression de toute possibilité pour l'église de former

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 5-8.

¹⁷ ACEB, fonds 1318 K (le patriarche Cyrille), inv. 1, u. a. 2300, ff. 1-5 ; u. a. 2301, ff. 1-28 ; u. a. 2315, ff. 2-4 ; u. a. 2318, ff. 1-5 ; Cyrille, Métropolite de Plovdiv, *Гости на Руската църква* (Plovdiv, La lettre fraternel, 1949), 38-69.

¹⁸ ACEB, fonds 1 Б (Comité central du Parti communiste bulgare), inv. 1, u. a. 516, f. 1 ; Journal officiel, No 180, 3 août 1948.

ses cadres à l'étranger. Ainsi, quand le 3 août 1948, par une note verbale adressée à la Direction des Cultes, Monseigneur Galloni demande que huit séminaristes des trois diocèses catholiques en Bulgarie reçoivent l'autorisation de poursuivre leurs études en théologie à Rome, sa demande est réexpédiée d'abord au Comité des sciences, de l'art et de la culture et, ensuite au ministère des Affaires étrangères. La réponse de la dernière instance est un non catégorique.¹⁹

Le coup suivant du régime communiste dans son offensive contre l'Église catholique est directement dirigé contre la Délégation apostolique à Sofia. Après la signature du Traité de paix de Paris, le gouvernement commence à considérer Monseigneur Galloni d'un œil différent. Ses sempiternelles notes verbales, ses requêtes et ses interventions en faveur de l'Église catholique finissent par énerver le ministère des Affaires étrangères et les autres institutions publiques. Le 15 juin 1948, le président de la république Georges Dimitrov exige de la Direction des Cultes un nouveau renseignement : il s'agit cette fois de l'histoire des rapports diplomatiques entre la Bulgarie et le Vatican et en particulier du statut de la Délégation apostolique. Le 1^{er} juillet D. Iliev présente un rapport détaillé à ce sujet, auquel il joint quatorze copies de différents documents.²⁰

L'exposé de D. Iliev laisse entendre qu'il n'y a jamais eu entre la Bulgarie et le Vatican de conventions, de concordats ou d'autres accords bilatéraux, malgré les entretiens à cet égard menés dans le passé. Ce qui n'a pas empêché les gouvernements bulgares de traiter toujours les délégués pontificaux dans le pays comme des représentants diplomatiques, bien qu'ils n'aient pas eu officiellement ce statut. Quant aux fonctions et au statut de Francesco Galloni, le directeur des Cultes estime que sa reconnaissance par le gouvernement bulgare comme délégué apostolique provisoire a été une erreur, puisqu'il n'avait pas le rang canonique requis pour assumer cette fonction, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'était ni évêque ni monseigneur. Cette erreur que D. Iliev attribue à l'ex-ministre des Affaires étrangères Petko Stăinov, a été commise dans la note verbale, qui confirmait la nomination de Galloni au poste de chef par intérim de la Délégation apostolique. Il y était nommé « monseigneur », sans avoir droit à un tel titre.

Monseigneur Galloni était lui-même parfaitement conscient du terrain diplomatique instable, sur lequel reposait sa présence en Bulgarie. Aussi, à plusieurs reprises, en 1948, a-t-il soulevé devant D. Iliev la question d'un concordat éventuel entre la Bulgarie et le Vatican et de l'envoi d'un représentant diplomatique bulgare auprès du Saint Siège. Le directeur des Cultes refuse de s'engager par une réponse concrète, acceptant simplement de porter la question à la connaissance de Vassil Kolarov, Premier ministre et ministre des Affaires étrangères. Dimitar Iliev ne manque pas de soulever cette question

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fonds 165, inv. 3, u. a. 133, ff. 22-28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, fonds 146 B, inv. 4, u. a. 819, ff. 9-14.

dans son exposé adressé à Georges Dimitrov, terminant en ces termes : « En tout cas, faut-il ou non accorder à l'actuelle Délégation Apostolique en Bulgarie un statut diplomatique est un problème de caractère politique, qui doit être réglé, comme cela a toujours été, conformément à nos intérêts nationaux, aux intérêts de notre politique intérieure et étrangère ». ²¹

Sentant les sombres nuages en train de s'amonceler au-dessus de la Délégation apostolique, Monseigneur Galloni cherche la possibilité de consolider ses positions en Bulgarie. A l'automne de 1948, il se rend au Vatican, où le pape Pie XII en fait son prélat domestique, ce qui lui donne droit au titre de « monseigneur ». Le 22 octobre, à son retour à Sofia, il remet au directeur du protocole auprès du ministère des Affaires étrangères une lettre, par laquelle il annonce sa décision de prendre la direction de la Délégation Apostolique. La lettre porte son nouveau titre de monseigneur. Cette action est interprétée par le Ministère des Affaires étrangères comme une tentative du Vatican de modifier le statut de Galloni de chef par intérim de la Délégation Apostolique dans le but de faire légitimer la présence de celle-ci en Bulgarie. Une nouvelle tentative malhabile de Galloni de s'imposer dans ses nouvelles fonctions peut être vue dans une publication dans le journal *Istina* (La vérité) où il est présenté comme monseigneur, voire, comme un délégué apostolique attitré. ²²

La nouvelle conjoncture politique semble donner des ailes aux organes de la Sûreté qui redoublent de zèle dans leurs activités contre la Délégation Apostolique. Encouragés par les succès obtenus, les agents du groupe E inscrivent dans leur plan pour 1949 cinq nouvelles personnes proches de Galloni, qui doivent être recrutées comme agents. Le plus important sur la liste est son secrétaire privé Placido Corsi. Dans la note qui le concerne, on demande de le « surveiller attentivement, afin de se faire une idée de son entourage », d'étudier « les dossiers de ceux qui sont en relation avec Corsi », de faire intervenir une femme afin de réunir du matériel compromettant sur Placido Corsi. La dernière démarche est un des procédés préférés des services secrets bulgares, qu'ils ont perfectionné lors de leur chasse à « l'ennemi possédant la carte du parti », c'est-à-dire, à l'opposition au sein même du parti communiste. En ce qui concerne Galloni, les services ont projeté les actions suivantes : détraquer la serrure secrète du cabinet de travail de Galloni et profiter de son absence de Sofia pour mettre la main sur sa correspondance. ²³

Toute cette activité fébrile de la Sûreté d'État autour de Galloni, qui semble empruntée à quelque mauvais roman d'espionnage, reste vaine. Il suffit d'un pas inattendu de sa part pour envoyer aux archives la multitude de projets opérationnels des services de renseignements. A la veille des fêtes de Noël, en 1948, Galloni quitte la Bulgarie pour se rendre en Italie, en alléguant

²¹ *Ibid.*, f. 12.

²² J. « Vérité », Sofia No 1180, 26 octobre 1948.

²³ AMI, fonds 2, inv. 1, u. a. 1738, ff. 26-30.

comme motifs de son départ un incendie qui aurait éclaté dans son domaine de Montanina. Or, d'après le directeur des Cultes, le départ de Galloni est lié aux « tentatives éventuelles de la Délégation apostolique à Sofia de dissimuler le patrimoine des ordres catholiques dans le pays », lequel, aux termes de la nouvelle Loi sur les Cultes, doit devenir propriété de l'État bulgare. Dans une lettre du 11 janvier 1949, adressée à Vassil Kolarov, le directeur des Cultes exprime l'opinion que l'absence de Galloni est l'occasion idéale pour en finir une fois pour toutes avec la Délégation apostolique.²⁴

C'est ce qui arrive en effet. Le 19 janvier 1949, la Légation bulgare à Rome fait savoir à Galloni qu'il n'est pas autorisé à retourner à Sofia. Lui, de son côté, s'adresse personnellement à Vassil Kolarov et à Georges Dimitrov, les priant instamment de lui permettre de retourner en Bulgarie : « Pour moi la Bulgarie est plus qu'une seconde patrie, déclare Galloni. Depuis 1921, je lui ai consacré mes forces modestes, je me suis toujours senti lié au destin de son peuple et je n'ai eu qu'une seule pensée, un seul désir : l'aimer, lui être utile, contribuer à le faire respecter, le défendre dans ses pires épreuves, même quand il était en dehors de ses frontières, voué à l'abandon et à l'oubli. Jamais personne n'a été l'ami plus fidèle du peuple bulgare. Je ne dis pas cela pour vanter mes mérites. J'ai toujours considéré comme un honneur, comme un privilège de servir la cause bulgare ». ²⁵ Or, rien ne peut amadouer les éminents fonctionnaires communistes qui avaient, deux ou trois ans plus tôt, clamé bien haut leur estime à l'égard de l'Église catholique et de lui-même.²⁶

Le 23 janvier 1949, sur la demande de Vassil Kolarov, le directeur des Cultes D. Iliev rédige un nouveau rapport concernant le statut de la Délégation apostolique. En reprenant les dispositions fondamentales de son rapport antérieur et en décrivant les derniers efforts de Galloni de légitimer sa position, D. Iliev conclut : « Il est bien évident que nous sommes libres de ne pas donner notre autorisation à son retour comme chef de la Délégation apostolique ou même comme délégué apostolique puisque nous n'avons jusqu'ici contracté aucun engagement à l'endroit du Vatican ». D'après le Directeur des Cultes, ce n'est qu'une question de « bonne volonté » de la part de l'État bulgare et cette « bonne volonté peut être retirée au moment où il le jugera utile et profitable à ses intérêts ». A la fin D. Iliev exprime l'opinion que si Galloni ne rentre pas en Bulgarie, il faut entreprendre immédiatement des mesures pour faire partir ses autres collaborateurs.

Dans l'esprit de ce rapport, le 17 février, le ministère des Affaires étrangères adresse une lettre au secrétaire d'État adjoint du Vatican le cardinal Montini, dans laquelle il lui laisse entendre que la « présence en Bulgarie d'une délégation apostolique unilatérale a toujours eu un caractère provisoire et n'a été

²⁴ ACEB, fonds 146 B, inv. 4, u. a. 825, f. 5.

²⁵ ACEB, fonds 146 B, inv. 4, u. a. 825, f. 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 1-2.

tolérée que grâce à la bonne volonté du gouvernement bulgare, sans jamais avoir de statut diplomatique. Comme l'adoption de la nouvelle constitution de la République populaire de Bulgarie garantit les droits et les libertés de toutes les confessions, tout en établissant leur statut, le gouvernement de la république populaire de Bulgarie estime que la mission de la Délégation Apostolique en Bulgarie est terminée et, par conséquent la présence de monseigneur Galloni en sa qualité de chef de la Délégation apostolique en Bulgarie se révèle superflue ». ²⁷ Le refus de l'autoriser à revenir en Bulgarie est une vraie chance pour Francesco Galloni, une chance que les catholiques bulgares n'ont pas. En 1953, sont montés une série de procès contre les évêques, les prêtres, les moines et les religieuses catholiques, dont quelques-uns se terminent par des peines de mort suivies d'exécutions et par de nombreuses condamnations à la détention. En pratique, les trois-quarts de tout le clergé catholique est en prison ou interné dans des camps de travail. La principale accusation formulée à tous ces procès, c'est l'espionnage en faveur du Vatican et du camp impérialiste, dirigé par les États-Unis. D'après l'accusation, le principal organisateur de l'espionnage catholique était Francesco Galloni, alors que l'*Opera Italiana pro Oriente* à Sofia était désignée comme le quartier général de cette activité d'espionnage et de subversion. ²⁸

Les gens qui ont connu personnellement monseigneur Francesco Galloni affirment que, malgré le comportement du régime communiste à son égard, jusqu'à sa mort, survenue le 5 juin 1976 à Montanina, il est demeuré l'ami fidèle de la Bulgarie et du peuple bulgare.

²⁷ Journal « La cause des travailleurs », Sofia, No 44, 24 février 1949.

²⁸ С. Eldarov, *Католиците в България*, 549-760; Ž. Svetkov, *Разнятието. Съдебната разправа с дейци на Католическата църква в България през 1952* (Sofia, L'académie des sciences bulgare, 1994).

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A BELATED FRIENDSHIP: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS (1947-1990)

Abstract: The Italo-Yugoslav relations in the post war period were dominated by the issue of Trieste, which took several decencies to solve in satisfactory manner for both parties. Even though the Osimo agreements put an end to the territorial dispute only in 1975, the cooperation between two countries developed more or less unhindered from 1960 onwards. The policy followed by Aldo Moro, on several occasion head of Italian Cabinet and/or Minister for Foreign Affairs, was dictated by the necessity to aid and fortify Tito's Yugoslavia which was seen as the barrier shielding Italy from the "people's democracies" and their aggressive attitude demonstrated during the crisis in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The development of economic and cultural relations between the two neighbours opened the way for the creation of the unique association, Alpe Adria, which reunited the regions with common history, disregarding their ideological differences. Thus, this kind of Italian diplomatic novelty proved out to be a first step towards EEC, not only for Yugoslav regions such as Slovenia and Croatia, but also for Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, ex "people's democracies".

Keywords: *Italy, Yugoslavia, Trieste, Osimo, Aldo Moro, cooperation, Alpe Adria.*

Italy and Yugoslavia after World War II Between National Struggles and Ideological Antagonism

After World War II, political and diplomatic relations between Italy and Yugoslavia were characterized by misunderstandings, hostility and polemics, mainly, though not exclusively, due to the Trieste question, a territorial

dispute that had divided the two Adriatic countries for decades. After Italy's defeat in the Second World War and Yugoslavia's attempt to take possession of Trieste and most of Venezia Giulia, the Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947 assigned the whole Italian territory to the east of the Tarvisio-Monfalcone line to Yugoslavia with the exception of a narrow coastal belt which included Trieste (Zone A), occupied by the Anglo-Americans, and Koper (Zone B) under Yugoslav occupation. Under the Treaty, this coastal area was envisaged as a buffer state, the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT) to be formally built through the appointment of a governor by the UN Security Council¹. However, the division of Europe into opposing political blocs, resulting from the disintegration of the anti-Fascist coalition and the ensuing confrontation between the two major powers from that coalition, the United States and the Soviet Union (which represented two antagonistic political, economic and social systems) made the constitution of FTT impossible. The Cold War and bipolar logic transformed the Trieste question from a local problem into the Adriatic version of the Iron Curtain. In the light of the containment policy adopted by the Washington government in response to the power policy of the Soviets and the expansion of the communist movement, the defense of Trieste took on a new importance: the Adriatic city became a sort of Western shield intended to contain communist infiltration into Northern Italy. The United States and Britain obstructed the birth of the FTT which was exposed to double risk of military pressure from Yugoslavia (as happened in September 1947 when Yugoslav troops crossed the border and created territorial pockets within Italian boundaries) and the active propaganda of local communists (both Italian and Slovenian) aimed at creating a sort of Soviet outpost. For that reason, London and Washington postponed the appointment of the governor of FTT by the UN and preferred to wait for an agreement between Rome and Belgrade, a hypothesis which was virtually impossible at that time.²

¹ A. Varsori, "Il trattato di pace italiano. Le iniziative politiche e diplomatiche dell'Italia", in Idem., ed., *La politica estera italiana del secondo dopoguerra, 1943-1957* (Milano: LED Edizioni universitarie, 1993), 140; L. Monzali, "La questione jugoslava nella politica estera italiana dalla prima guerra mondiale ai trattati di Osimo (1914-1975)", in F. Botta, I. Garzia ed., *Europa adriatica. Storia, relazioni, economia* (Roma - Bari: Laterza, 2004), 36; M. Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava" nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945-1991)* (Roma: Aracne, 2008), 15. As for the Trieste question, a great number of studies have been published; among them see: D. De Castro, *La questione di Trieste. Lazione politica e diplomatica italiana dal 1943 al 1954* (Trieste: Lint, 1981), 2 vol.; J.-B. Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste 1943-1954* (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1966); A. G. De Robertis, *Le grandi potenze e il confine giuliano 1941-1947* (Bari: Università degli studi di Bari, Istituto di storia moderna e contemporanea, 1983); M. de Leonardis, *La «diplomazia atlantica» e la soluzione del problema di Trieste (1952-1954)* (Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1992); B. Novak, *Trieste 1941-1954. La lotta politica, etnica e ideologica* (Milano: Mursia, 1996); D. Bogetić, *Tršćanska kriza 1945-1954. Vojno-politički aspekti* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2009).

² C. Sforza, *Cinque anni a Palazzo Chigi. La politica estera italiana dal 1947 al 1951* (Roma: Atlante, 1952), 327; J.-B. Duroselle, *Le conflit*, 258; D. De Castro, *La questione di Trieste*, 673.; R.

However, a few months after the ratification of the Peace Treaty, a new variable was added to the already complicated framework of Italo-Yugoslav relations: during 1948 a political (more than ideological) break-up occurred within the communist world. Following the Tito-Stalin split, Yugoslavia moved away from the Soviet orbit and subsequently closer to the Western bloc which from that moment became the main source of economic and military aid to Tito's regime. Yugoslavia started playing an important role in the eyes of the Americans: apart from having a great ideological and propagandistic significance because of the blow given to the Soviet hegemony in the communist countries of the Danube-Balkan region, the break-up with Moscow also represented a great strategic advantage because it eased the Soviet pressure on the southern borders of the Atlantic Alliance and turned Yugoslavia into a sort of a buffer State between the Adriatic and Balkan branches of the two blocs.³ The realignment of Yugoslav policy could not remain without consequences to the evolution of the Trieste question. Given the importance of Belgrade for the political and military strategies of Washington and London and the impossibility to breadth life into the FTT due to the unbridgeable differences between Italy and Yugoslavia, the Anglo-Americans favoured a compromise solution verified by the London *Memorandum* of 5 October 1954. By the terms of this document Italian officials replaced British and American authorities in the administration of Zone A of the FTT while in zone B Yugoslav military administration had to be replaced with a civil one. It was the *de facto* partition of the FTT which was intended to relieve the Anglo-Americans of the responsibility for the administration of Zone A and eliminate at the same time the cause of dispute which was considered harmful for the Western bloc.⁴ Italy was left with a hope that the agreement and the borderline were provisional which did not contradict the claim of Italian sovereignty over FTT and the aspiration for a future return of Zone B to Italy as promised by the Allies during the 1948

Gaja, *L'Italia nel mondo bipolare. Per una storia della politica estera italiana (1943-1991)* (Bologna: Mulino, 1995), 81-82.

³ "Central Intelligence Agency. The Trend of Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 18 November 1948"; "Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 22 August 1949; Intelligence Memorandum No. 232, Subject: Significance of Recent Intensified Soviet Action against Tito, 5 October 1949"; "Central Intelligence Agency. National Intelligence Estimate. Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951, 20 March 1951", in N. Ceh ed., *U.S. Diplomatic Records on Relations with Yugoslavia during the Early Cold War, 1948-1957* (Boulder (Co): East European Monographs, 2002), 54-60, 103-104, 116-118, 268-270. On Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the West, see: B. Heuser, *Western «Containment» Policies in the Cold War. The Yugoslav Case 1948-1953* (London-New York: Routledge, 1989); L. M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park (PA): Pennsylvania State University Press 1997); D. Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad 1952-1955. Jugoslovensko približavanje NATO-U* (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 2000); I. Laković, *Zapadna vojna pomoć Jugoslaviji 1951-1958* (Podgorica: Istorijski institut Crne Gore, 2006).

⁴ J.-B. Duroselle, *Le conflit*, cit., 406; D. De Castro, *La questione di Trieste*, II, 797; M. de Leonardis, *La «diplomazia atlantica»*, 393; P. Pastorelli, "Origine e significato del Memorandum di Londra", *Clio*, 1995, 4, 607-609.

elections. The *Memorandum*, in fact, made reference only to practical arrangements for the transfer of administration, but no transfer of sovereignty was planned.⁵ The Belgrade government, however, and despite having to renounce the Slovenian dream of conquering Trieste, considered the dispute essentially closed. Stabilisation of the Italian border allowed Tito and his communist leadership to strengthen the country (turning their attention exclusively to East and the Soviet bloc) and complete the realisation of the Yugoslav road to socialism making tighter the regime's grip on the country.⁶

Assuming that the London agreement was just a temporary settlement of the border, the Italian government decided to normalise relations with Yugoslavia with a series of successive bilateral agreements such as the Udine agreement of 1955 which regulated the flow of people and goods between the region of Trieste and the surrounding areas and the agreement on fishing in the Adriatic of 1958. Such arrangements, despite numerous polemics, were a prelude to the intense development of economic and cultural relations between the two countries in the 1960s which saw Italy taking the first place among the importing countries from Yugoslavia and the third place among the exporting countries. The striking improvement of economic relations resulted from Italy's policy of the complete separation of economic and political issues; such approach was also strongly supported by certain economic and industrial stakeholders whose primary aim was to benefit from the proximity and economic complementarity of the two Adriatic neighbours.⁷

Despite the intensification of trade, Italy and Yugoslavia failed to establish the atmosphere of cordiality and friendly collaboration essential for

⁵ *Briefing Note on Trieste's "Status" (Zone A and Zone B)*, Manlio Castronuovo's "Strictly Confidential" Memorandum, Rome 11 January 1964, attached to *Castronuovo to Giovanni Fornari*, Rome, 11 January 1964, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma (ACS), Archivio Aldo Moro (AAM), box 77, file 215/1. Also: J.-B. Duroselle, *Le conflit*, 423-424; P. Pastorelli, "Origine e significato", 609-610.

⁶ *Memorandum of Conversation between Josip Broz Tito and a Delegation of Slovenian Representatives from Zone A of the FTT, in the presence of Edvard Kardelj*, Belgrade, 8 November 1953, in Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Arhiv Predsednika Republike (APR), Fond 837 Kabinet Predsednika Republike (KPR), (I-3-A), box. 144. Also see D. Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad*, 124; N. Troha, "Yugoslav Proposal for the Solutions of the Trieste Question Following the Cominform Resolution", in J. Fischer, A. Gabrić, L. Gibianskii, E. S. Klein, R. W. Preussen eds. *Yugoslavia in the Cold War* (Ljubljana: Institut za novejšo zgodovino, University of Toronto, 2004), 161.

⁷ *Memorandum on Negotiations with Italy*, "Secret no. 1646", Belgrade, 19 September 1955; *Memorandum on Conversation between the Under-Secretary of State, Anton Vratusa, and the Italian Ambassador, Gastone Guidotti*, Belgrade, 2 July 1957, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-5-B), box 245; *Information Memorandum on Italy*, (without date, but presumably in October 1958) in AJ, APR, KPR (I-3-A), box 144; *Memorandum on Conversation between the Under-Secretary of State, Veljko Mićunović, and the Italian Ambassador, Francesco Cavalletti*, Belgrade, 11 February 1960, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-5-B), box 246; *Report on Yugoslavia*, (without date, but presumably from 1967-1968), in ACS, AAM, box 85. As for the economic relations between Italy and Yugoslavia after WWII see: M. Capriati, "Gli scambi commerciali tra Italia e Jugoslavia dal dopoguerra al 1991", in F. Botta, I. Garzia eds., *Europa adriatica*, 165-173. For overall analyses, see: R. Gaja, *L'Italia nel mondo bipolare*, 166-167; L. Monzali, "La questione jugoslava", 49-51.

a definite solution of the Trieste question. After the signing of the London *Memorandum*, the Belgrade government wanted Italy to formally recognise the extension of Yugoslav sovereignty over Zone B of the still-born FTT; that recognition was viewed by the Yugoslavs as *quid pro quo* for elimination of the Yugoslav troops in September 1947 and setting-up of the border between the two countries. Italy, however, aimed at separating the two issues, deriving the definition of the northern border from the Peace Treaty and insisting on the practical and provisional nature of the 1954 *Memorandum*, which if exceeded would give Italy the possibility to launch new negotiations *ad hoc* (from which the Italian government hoped to obtain some additional territory for Zone A and at least the acquisition of the coastal area of Zone B on the ground of the so-called “continual ethnical line”).⁸

The Rapprochement in the Late 1960s: Italy and Yugoslavia in the years of “Détente”

Both international events and internal Yugoslav affairs during the second half of the 1960s promoted the rapprochement between the two Adriatic neighbours. In August 1968, Soviet troops, along with those of the other Warsaw Pact countries (except Romania), invaded Czechoslovakia to put an end to the internal crisis which had begun in January of the same year with the appointment of Alexander Dubček as Secretary-General of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The aggression against Czechoslovakia was justified by ideological reasons. The ‘Brezhnev Doctrine’ expounded the necessity of subordinating interests of any single socialist state to the interests of the international communist movement; if necessary, this subordination could be safeguard by force of arms.⁹

Violent solution to the crisis in Czechoslovakia and the enunciation of the “Brezhnev Doctrine” alerted the Belgrade government concerned about the possible application of the same doctrine to Yugoslavia.¹⁰ In those years, the ethnic problems inside the Federation reappeared and exposed its political weakness. Political instability was also exacerbated by economic difficulties caused by the early failures of the Yugoslav socio-economic model based on the self-management and local autonomies. The Yugoslav road to socialism

⁸ *Italo-Yugoslav Talks. A General Overview*, (memorandum without date, but presumably from 1960); *Overall Considerations of Italo-Yugoslav Questions*, (memorandum without date, but presumably from 1960 as well), in ACS, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri – Ufficio del Consigliere Diplomatico (PCM – UCD), box 27; *Briefing Note on Trieste’s “Status”*, cit. ACS, AAM, box 77, file 215/1.

⁹ M. Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis and the Brezhnev Doctrine”, in C. Pink, P. Gassert, D. Junker eds., 1968: *The World Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ V. Mićunović, *Moskovske Godine 1969/1971* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska revija, 1984), 17; Lj. Dimić, “Godina 1968 – Ishodište nove jugoslovenske spoljnopolitičke orijentacije”, in R. Radić ed., 1968 – *Četrdeset godina posle* (Belgrade: Institut za Noviju Istoriju Srbije, 2008), 339.

ended up with the deepening economic and social differences and political divisions between various national groups reflected by fragmentation of the Communist Party itself which was transformed from a unitary and monolithic subject to Federal League of Communist Parties six republics and two autonomous provinces. Between 1969 and 1971, the growing dissension shook up internal cohesion of the country so much that the affirmation and development of the Yugoslav socialist regime seemed to be called into question. Tito and his closest associates feared that such unstable situation could be taken as a pretext for intervention by the troops of the Warsaw Pact with a view to absorbing Yugoslavia in the Soviet orthodoxy and replacing Yugoslav leadership by the elements favoured by Moscow.¹¹

That fear was also shared by the Italian government increasingly interested in preserving and consolidating the role of the Yugoslav Federation as a necessary territorial and ideological buffer between Italy and countries of the Warsaw Pact. Since the formation of a center-left cabinet in Italy in 1963 - a coalition consisting of Christian Democratic Party and Socialist Party - the two countries had gradually renewed their contacts in an attempt to break the deadlock reached not just in the Trieste question but also in their political collaboration on the international stage. Italy and Yugoslavia found a common political ground in criticising some aspects of the American foreign policy such as the military intervention in Southeast Asia and its definite pro-Israeli stance in the Middle East. One of the political protagonists of that new phase in relations between Italy and Yugoslavia was Aldo Moro, the Christian-Democrat leader, who was on several occasions Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister *ad interim* between 1963 and 1968. Moro was primarily concerned about strengthening the economic and cultural cooperation and fostering collaboration between the two countries on major international political issues without specifically addressing the final settlement of the status of Zones A and B of the FTT. In November 1965, Moro was the first Italian Prime Minister to pay official visit to Yugoslavia. The head of the Federal Government of Yugoslavia, Mika Špiljak, returned the visit in January 1968 to discuss the "common interests and intentions" in the fields of politics and economy - with the conspicuous exception of the Trieste question.¹²

¹¹ Leonhart to Rogers, Belgrade, 13 March 1970, in *Foreign Relations of United States* (FRUS), 1969-1976, Vol. XXIX, *Eastern Europe Eastern Mediterranean, 1969-1972* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2008), doc. 218. Also: Z. Vuković, *Od deformacija SDB do Maspoka i liberalizma. Moji stenografski zapisi 1966-1972* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1989), 11; J. Pirjevec, *Il giorno di San Vito. Jugoslavia tragica 1918-1922. Storia di una tragedia* (Torino, Nuova ERI, 1992), 363, 437; S. Bianchini, *La questione jugoslava* (Firenze: Giunti, 1996), 97; J. R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History. Twice There was a Country* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 276; F. Privitera, *Jugoslavia* (Milano: Unicopli, 2007), 96; M. Vrhunec, *Šest godina s Titom, (1967-1973)* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2001), 251.

¹² For the official visits of Moro and Špiljak see *Visit to Yugoslavia, 8-12 November 1965, Memorandum on Conversations, 8 and 9 November 1965*, in ACS, AAM, box 77, file 215/3; *Memorandum*

It was in the light of improved relations between the two countries and the vital strategic importance of the non-aligned Yugoslavia, Giuseppe Medici, the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister, communicated to Belgrade on 2 September 1969 that Italy would not attempt to take advantage of the moving of Yugoslav troops stationed along the Italian border to the eastern parts of the country.¹³ This was clear evidence that Italy did not want to see the Warsaw Pact's troops enter Yugoslav territory to apply the "Brezhnev Doctrine" and bring the iron curtain next to Gorizia and Trieste. Italian guarantees produced a real 'thaw' between the two Adriatic countries making an important contribution to the improvement of political climate and overcoming of mutual suspicions and misunderstandings. The improvement was highlighted by visits of the new Foreign Minister, Pietro Nenni, and the President of the Republic of Italy, Giuseppe Saragat, in May and October 1969 respectively. Both were convinced of the necessity to help the socialist and non-aligned Yugoslavia remain united and independent as they deemed that the true Italian eastern border was the Yugoslav border with the neighboring People's Democracies rather than that along the Isonzo River.¹⁴

The atmosphere changed so much that Rome and Belgrade could even discuss the Trieste question and their northern border. There was a new basis for such talks: the Italian side accepted the connection between the delimitation of the northern border (which had remained suspended since the conclusion of the Peace Treaty) and the final partition of Free Territory of Trieste while the Yugoslav side accepted the Italian request to include the territorial problem into broader political and economic negotiations (this request was advanced in order to obtain benefits and advantages so that Italian public opinion would not perceive an agreement as renunciation). The protagonist of the revival of negotiations on the closure of the border issue was once again Aldo Moro who returned to the Foreign Affairs Ministry in August 1969. Unlike the approach taken in the previous years, the Christian-Democrat leader decided to deal

on the Conversation between Tito and Aldo Moro, Belgrade, 9 November 1965, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-3-A), box 145, file 44/31; *Memorandum on Italo-Yugoslav Conversations (8-9 January 1968)*, in ACS, AAM, box 66, file 6. Also F. Imperato, *Aldo Moro e la pace nella sicurezza. La politica estera del centro-sinistra 1963-1968* (Bari: Progedit, 2011), 104-105, 205-208.

¹³ Prica to Tepavac, tel. no. 578, Roma, 2 September 1968, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-5-B), box 247; *Italo-Yugoslav Relations and Disputes*, Memorandum attached to *Preparatory Materials for the Italian President Saragat's Official Visit to Yugoslavia*, 2-6 October 1969, "Confidential", in ACS, AAM, box 127, file 5. Also: G. W. Maccotta, "La Jugoslavia di ieri e di oggi", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1988, 2, 231-232; G. W. Maccotta, "In ricordo di Giuseppe Medici e Giovanni Fornari", *Affari Esteri*, 2001, N°159, 185; S. Mišić, *Jugoslovensko-italijanski odnosi i čehoslovenska kriza 1968. godine*, in R. Radić, 1968 – *Četrdeset godina posle*, 293.

¹⁴ For Nenni's and Saragat's official visits to Yugoslavia see *Memorandum on Conversation between President Tito and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pietro Nenni*, Belgrade, 28 May 1969; *Stenographic Transcript of the Conversations between the Yugoslav Delegation and the Italian Delegation*, Belgrade, 3 October 1969, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-3-A), box 145, files 44/43 and 44/46. Also: P. Nenni, *I conti con la storia. Diari 1967-1971* (Milano: SugarCo, 1983), 222, 542.

with the issues still pending, particularly that of the Italo-Yugoslav territorial disputes. Moro's actions were based on both general and particular reasons. His determination no doubt reflected the international framework of the late 1960s when the process of detente between the two blocs was underway and when, for example, Federal Republic of Germany sacrificed its aspirations on some of the territories that in the past have been a part of united Germany, in the context of her *Ostpolitik*.¹⁵ The international situation favoured Moro's initiative to include the Trieste question in the framework of general efforts to improve Italy's relations with the neighboring countries, Austria and Yugoslavia, with which Italy had some pending issues since the Second World War. According to Moro, it was time to overcome patterns of power politics and set up an international community based on the values of solidarity, dialogue and peace. Italy could make her contribution to the on-going transformation of the international system by resolving her political and territorial disputes with Vienna and Belgrade, and by establishing close political collaboration.¹⁶

As for the bilateral dimension of Italo-Yugoslav relations, Moro was convinced that the territorial settlement established by the London *Memorandum* was "not possible to be modified by force" and "not possible to be modified by consent".¹⁷ For the Christian-Democrat leader, the overall situation created by the *Memorandum* had to be respected without any changes, and "territorial spheres" deriving from it (corresponding to de facto partition of the FTT) were "out of question" and "out of discussion". It was the change in legal status defined by the London agreement and the transformation of the demarcation line between zone A and zone B into a state borderline that was missing for the complete normalisation of relations between the two countries. At the same time, Moro realised that a quick and sudden solution of the Trieste question by recognising the de facto partition of FTT would cause many adverse reactions both at the local (even among the Christian-Democratic Party of Trieste itself) and the national level (among the extreme right). The Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry was anxious not to have an immediate success being turned into the aggravation of relations with Yugoslavia due to the reactions of the public opinion which was still intoxicated with the 'passionate' and 'sentimental' factors not to be neglected. It was necessary, according to Moro, not to present an

¹⁵ L. V. Ferraris ed., *Testimonianze di un negoziato Helsinki-Ginevra-Helsinki 1972-75* (Padova: Cedam, 1977); L. V. Ferraris, "On the Backstage of the Negotiations in View of a European Security Conference (1966-1969)" in C. Meneguzzi Rostagni ed., *The Helsinki Process: a Historical Reappraisal* (Padova: CEDAM, 2005), 139.

¹⁶ A. Moro, "Programma per una 'pace integrale'", *Il Popolo*, 9 October 1969. Also: R. Gaja, *L'Italia nel mondo bipolare*, 181-182; C. Meneguzzi Rostagni, *La politica estera italiana e la distensione: una proposta di lettura*, in [www.dsi.unipd.it / documenti / ProfMeneguzzi.pdf](http://www.dsi.unipd.it/documenti/ProfMeneguzzi.pdf); P. Pastorelli, "L'Italia e la Grande Distensione (1968-1975)", in P. G. Celozzi Baldelli ed., *La politica estera italiana negli anni della Grande Distensione (1968-1975)* (Roma: Aracne, 2009), 37.

¹⁷ A. Moro, *Discorsi parlamentari* (Roma: Camera dei deputati, 1996), II, 1547; G. W. Maccotta, "Osimo visto da Belgrado", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1993, 1, 65.

agreement with Yugoslavia as Italian renouncement of Zone B, since it was not possible to renounce something that had not belonged to the country since the War, but to popularise it as an acquisition of territorial (Zone A with Trieste which the Peace Treaty of 1947 had left outside the national borders), political and economic benefits gained through the revival of a friendship between Italy and Yugoslavia.¹⁸

The solution of the Trieste Question and the Revival of Italo-Yugoslav Friendship

The secret exploratory conversations conducted by the Italian Ambassador in Belgrade, Gian Luigi Milesi Ferretti, and his Yugoslav counterpart, Zvonko Perišić, were intensified in the latter half of 1969. The negotiations – as expected – turned out to be rather complex and difficult because of the gap created between Italian and Yugoslav position and the impossibility to overcome the decades of conflicts and hostility. The talks had been going on for almost two years when on 21 November 1970 the two diplomats concluded their work with a report which summarised a few points of agreement and many points of disagreement.¹⁹ The resistance offered by the political exponents of Trieste, harsh critiques in the Italian Parliament on the part of the leader of the extreme right and the subsequent hardened attitude by Yugoslavia (especially Slovenia and Croatia) all combined to prevent the arrival of Tito to Italy in December 1970 in a return official visit, after Saragat's visit to Yugoslavia the previous year.²⁰ It was not before the ground was cleared during the meeting between Aldo Moro and his Yugoslav colleague, Mirko Tepavac, held in Venice in February 1971, that Marshal Tito's visit was scheduled for March 1971. In Venice, and later during the visit of the Yugoslav president to Italy, Moro insisted on the compliance with the London *Memorandum* acknowledging that the 1954 agreement "was not provisional anymore". At the same time, however, he pointed out that the final agreement should be reached without causing disturbances in the Italian public life; and for that reason, it was necessary to find a global solution to all the issues through extensive, gradual and, above all, secret negotiations. Yugoslav leaders, on the contrary, in the need of an international success to satisfy Slovenian and Croatian public opinion pressed for a fast conclusion of negotiations or, at least, for their official nature in order to demonstrate good will on both sides for reaching a final agree-

¹⁸ *Memorandum on the Conversation between Aldo Moro and the Yugoslav Ambassador, Srdja Prica*, Rome, 12 December 1970, in ACS, AAM, box 131, file 61; *Memorandum on the Conversation between Aldo Moro and the Yugoslav Foreign Affairs Ministers, Mirko Tepavac*, "Secret", Venice, 9 February 1971, in ACS, AAM, box 147, file 14.

¹⁹ Trbalza to Gaja, Belgrade, 8 December 1970, «Top Secret » Note, in ACS, AAM, box 131, file 61. Also: M. Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava"*, 51-52.

²⁰ Trbalza to Moro, Belgrade, 8 December 1970, tel. no. 1097, «Top Secret – Very Urgent », in ACS, AAM, box 131, file 61. M. Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava"*, 52-54.

ment. In Ljubljana and Zagreb, Italian hesitations were misinterpreted and it was suspected that Italy intended to “beat around the bushes” while waiting for a possible internal Yugoslav crisis to take advantage of it. After a temporary halt in the winter of 1970-1971, Moro and Tepavac decided to re-launch the negotiations without causing embarrassment for the two governments. In order to do so, it was decided to continue with the secret exploratory conversations about territorial issues and prepare a series of well-balanced “packages” to be implemented immediately for the solution of the most urgent problems of the local population. Basically, the aim was to send a reassuring message to the Slovenians and Croats and make them understand that the situation on the Italian border would be stabilised; at the same time, the Italians were made to realise that the fate of Zone B was not presently on the agenda.²¹ Despite all the positive premises posed in Venice and during Tito's visit, the work was dragging on for many months without results. Neither an agreement on “packages” nor a global solution of the Italo-Yugoslav disputes were found.

The initiative was resumed by the second Cabinet of Andreotti (1972-1973) with Medici again in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. During their meeting in Dubrovnik in March 1973, Medici and the new Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Miloš Minić, agreed to renew the negotiations and make use of, in case the negotiations were not going well, a secret informal channel in the shape of two experts: Director-General of the Ministry of Industry, Eugenio Carbone, and the President of the Federal Committee for Economic Relations, a Slovenian Boris Šnuderl. At the official level, the negotiations soon ceased, which was followed by new polemics in the spring of 1974 fueled by the decision of Yugoslav authorities to place signs “Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” in the transit points between Zone A and Zone B. This crisis did not, however, prevent the communication through the informal channel. The Šnuderl-Carbone negotiations lasted for about a year and, despite many difficulties, resulted in the conclusion of the Italo-Yugoslav Treaty signed on 10 November 1975 in Osimo by Minić and Rumor, the Foreign Minister in the fourth Moro Cabinet. Rome and Belgrade *de jure* recognised the territorial arrangements of the London *Memorandum* permanently defining the borderline between Zone A and Zone B of the ex-FTT. On behalf of their governments, Rumor and Minić declared the willingness to improve relations with the neighboring countries through “qualitative leap in economic and cultural collaboration” and agreed – at Italy's request – to establish a tax-free zone which could facilitate a possible adherence of Yugoslavia to the European Common Market and Italy's inclusion in the economic space of Eastern Europe (a tax-free zone was never established

²¹ *Memorandum on the Conversation between Aldo Moro and the Yugoslav Foreign Affairs Minister, Mirko Tepavac*, “Secret”, cit., in ACS, AAM, box 147, file 14. For Tito's official visit to Italy in March 1971 see *Memorandum on the Conversation between President Tito and the Italian President Giuseppe Saragat*, Rome, 23 March 1971, in AJ, APR, KPR (I-2-48/1), b. 90 as well as the preparatory materials in ACS, AAM, box 133, file 74. M. Bucarelli, *La “questione jugoslava”*, 57-61.

because of the Italian resistance at the local level). The two governments, finally, tried to maintain the level of protection of national minorities granted by the special statute attached to the London *Memorandum* whose overall content, under the new agreement, nevertheless was destined to decline²²

The Osimo agreement had a positive impact on Italy's general political and economic interests and contributed to great improvement in bilateral relations between Rome and Belgrade "so that it can be pointed out as an example of relations between the countries with different regulations and belonging to different political systems". For the first time in the history of Italo-Yugoslav relations, a true friendship was attained. It was characterised by several important economic, commercial and financial agreements and underlined the fundamental role of Yugoslavia in the Balkan and Adriatic political strategy of Italy which aimed at preservation of regional settlements, both political and economic, capable of insuring national interests.²³

The creation of the "Working Community of the *Länder*, Regions and Republics of the Eastern Alps" (later named Alpe Adria Community) was undoubtedly among the earliest and most significant results of the renewed Italo-Yugoslav collaboration. Formed in Venice on 20 November 1978 at Italian initiative, Alpe Adria Community was a regional grouping the core territories of which were located in the northeastern part of the Alps at the meeting point of the Italian, Yugoslav and Austrian borders. Its goal was to encourage a development of multilateral cooperation and promote economic, social and cultural integrations between the adjacent regions belonging to different political and economic systems; those regions had been separated in the recent decades but had shared in the past a common experience in a single state and developed a common Central-European identity. After a period of disintegration, there was an obvious need to overcome ideological barriers and realize an informal and simplified collaboration in order to compensate for the delays and inflexibility of traditional diplomacy. Central to it was the idea of a "common environment" to be built through a series of actions and initiatives facilitating the flow of goods, people, capital, services, as well as information, knowledge and culture.²⁴

²² V. Škorjanec, *Osimska pogajanja* (Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, 2007), 65; M. Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava"*, 62-75.

²³ G. W. Maccotta, "La Jugoslavia", 232-233; S. Romano, *Guida alla politica estera italiana. Da Badoglio a Berlusconi* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2002), 244. A. Cavagliari, "Jugoslavia: ricordi di un'ambasciata (1977-1980)", in E. Serra ed., *Professione: diplomatico* (Milano: Angeli, 1990), 45.

²⁴ E. Vrsaj, *La cooperazione economica Alpe-Adria* (Trieste, Edizioni rivista Mladika, 1975), 375; Idem., *Il nuovo ordine economico mondiale e la sfida del 1992* (Trieste: Italo Svevo, 1988), 206; *La Comunità di Lavoro Alpe Adria* (Roma: Documenti CNEL, 1992), 13-40; L. Poropat, *Alpe-Adria e Iniziativa Centro-europea. Cooperazione nell'Alpe-Adria e nell'area danubiana*, (Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1993), 12; Idem., *The Alpe Adria Working Community 1978-1994* (Trieste, Autonomous region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1996), 5. Also: <http://www.alpeadria.org>.

The intention of Italian politicians and leaders, promoters of the initiative, was to boost Italy's role in Central and Eastern Europe, making it much more present and active all over the region. Local Italian politicians understood how important and necessary it was to build a solid friendship between Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria in order to stabilise the Central-European region and develop economic and cultural networks in the Adriatic. This was also vital for the interests of North-Eastern Italy, and Trieste in particular. Within the ruling class of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia it was considered that the future of these regions was closely connected to prospects of friendship and collaboration with the neighboring countries. In such a sensitive moment for Europe, a policy of democratic, economic and social development required peace and international collaboration with the neighboring nations and with the entire Central and Eastern Europe.²⁵

Regional collaboration established through the Alpe Adria Community permanently transformed the role of Triveneto: rather than a border zone it became an area of active interaction between various cultures and nationalities who had clashed in the past. During the first ten years, the Community was more active in political debates and cultural exchanges than economic field. It primarily represented an informal forum for cooperation between the territorial entities belonging to different political, ideological and national units but linked by geographical proximity, the same historical and cultural traditions and the common economic interests. It brought to light the complementarity of the entire region despite the existing barriers and divisions, which was the most significant contribution of the Italian initiative. That proximity and complementarity proved to have a significant role in the development of the Yugoslav crisis in the 1990s.²⁶

²⁵ S. Lusa, *Italia-Slovenia 1990/1994* (Piran: Il trillo, 2001), 31; E. Versaj, *La cooperazione economica*, 9-10; Idem., *Il nuovo ordine economico mondiale*, 206-208.

²⁶ L. Poropat, *Alpe-Adria*, 31.

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YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY, 1945 – 1947: YUGOSLAV POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN THE TRIESTE CRISIS

Abstract: The article describes relations between the Yugoslav and Italian government in the period between 1945 and 1947 in connection with the Trieste issue. The Trieste crisis erupted on 1 May 1945 between Yugoslavia and the Western Allies and went on to cause a conflict between the Great Powers. The entry of Yugoslav troops into Trieste reawakened the old territorial dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy. The trial of strength ensued in which both sides employed different tactics.

Keywords: *Yugoslavia, Italy, Trieste, Great Powers, foreign policy.*

With the Yugoslav Army's entrance into Trieste on 1 May 1945, the crisis in relations between Great Powers started. This crisis became a prism for seeking solutions for geopolitical and strategic issues. The unfulfilled goals of American and British commandants related to the dynamics of Italy's liberation and the general delay in the conduct of military operations in the fall of 1944 provided the conditions for the Yugoslav Army to liberate Trieste before the arrival of the Allied troops.¹ The Allies lost a "race for Trieste"² and thus started the first crisis among the anti-fascist coalition. The Trieste crisis began as a result of power gap created in the wake of the Nazi retreat from the northern coast

¹ E. P. Hoyt, *Backwater War. The Allied Campaign in Italy 1943 – 1945* (Westport, (Con), London: Praeger, 2002).

² G. Cox, *The Road to Trieste* (London, Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd., 1947); from the same author, *La corsa per Trieste* (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2005).

of the Adriatic Sea.³ Yugoslav territorial pretensions towards Venezia Giulia and the formation of the *Allied Military Government* were regular topics during the Allied Conferences in the period from 1943 to 1945.⁴ With the end of World War II, the differences between the American, British and Soviet governments became more obvious in relation to the territorial status of Venezia Giulia. Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, thought that the Americans and British should keep their positions in the north of Trieste at the end of the war and also warned that “in terms of *high-level policy*, we should have our stake in Northern and Southern Europe and we should not allow that everything goes to Soviet hands because that could have unforeseeable consequences”.⁵ The American President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, did not think about the formation of spheres of interests; he wanted to establish a multilateral world order instead.

From May to June 1945, the survival of the the common front of the Soviet Union, the USA and the United Kingdom was put in question. The American and British governments faced communication problems with the Soviet government and the arrangements reached on the division of spheres of interests were brought in question. In June 1945, Anglo-American and Soviet leaders exchanged letters which heralded the beginning of the Cold War.⁶ The Trieste crisis could be seen as the first Cold War crisis.⁷

Churchill considered the Yugoslav government formed on 7 March 1945 under the pressure of Great Powers to be no more than the “extended tentacle”⁸ of the Soviet Union. Neither he nor his American ally recognised that the Yugoslav army constituted a part of the Allied forces. Its participation in the occupation of Venezia Giulia was deemed as interference on the part of the Soviet Union in the sphere of interests earmarked for the Western Allies. Consequently, the military operations of the Yugoslav Army in Venezia Giulia did not fail to adversely affect relations between the Yugoslav government and Anglo-Americans.⁹ In the circumstances, the possibility of an

³ G. Valdevit, “Simetrije i pravila igre. Engleska, Sjedinjene Države, Jugoslavija i majska kriza 1945” in P. Kačavenda, D. Bogetić eds., *Balkan posle Drugog svetskog rata*, (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1996), 55-70.

⁴ J. B. Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste 1943 – 1954* (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Institut de sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1966); Miljan Milkić, “Jugoslavija, Velike sile i pitanje statusa Julijske krajine 1943 – 1945” in A. Životić ed., *Oслобођење Београда 1944* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2010), 282-296.

⁵ D. Biber ed., *Tito – Churchill strogo tajno* (Belgrade - Zagreb: Arhiv Jugoslavije, Globus, 1981), 309.

⁶ M. Stojković ed., *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi 1976 – 1996. Dvostrani i višestrani međunarodni ugovori i drugi diplomatski akti o državnim granicama, političkoj i vojnoj saradnji, verskim i etničkim manjinama*, II, (1919 – 1945) (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1998), 670 – 671.

⁷ R. G. Rabel, *Between East and West: Trieste, United States and the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 17.

⁸ *Tito – Churchill*, 532.

⁹ E. Kardelj, *Sećanja. Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944 – 1957* (Belgrade- Ljubljana: Radnička štampa, Državna založba Slovenije, 1980), 55.

armed attack against the Yugoslav Army was not out of consideration.¹⁰ The Trieste crisis temporarily abated after the conclusion of the Belgrade Agreement of 9 June 1945 between communist Yugoslavia, on the one side, and the USA and United Kingdom, on the other.¹¹ The Duino Agreement signed on 20 June 1945 contained military concessions on the part of the Belgrade Agreement.¹² Venezia Giulia was jointly occupied by the Anglo-American and Yugoslav troops. The final status of this area was to be decided at the peace conference.

This paper focuses on the policies and strategies adopted for the resolution of the Trieste crisis in the period from 1945 to 1947. The analysis is two-fold: it examines the attitude of Great Powers towards the two participants in the crisis – Italian and Yugoslav government – and the direct relations between the above-mentioned governments throughout the crisis.

The Trieste issue and Great Powers

In the early days of Yugoslav conflict with the Western Allies, the Soviet government did not take a clear attitude towards it.¹³ After the signature of the Belgrade and Duino Agreements, Stalin drew attention of his Allies to situation in Trieste. In letters addressed to Harry S. Truman and Churchill and dated 21 June 1945 Stalin expressed his expectation that Yugoslav interests would be protected in Trieste.¹⁴ However, the messages sent from Moscow to Belgrade during May and June 1945 pointed out that a conflict with the Anglo-Americans over this issue had to be avoided. The restraint of the Soviet Ambassador in Ankara during his conversation with the Yugoslav colleague was instructive in this respect. When the Yugoslav expressed his gratitude for the support provided by the Soviet Union in connection with the Belgrade Agreement, the Soviet Ambassador made a point to exclude the possibility of any conflict between his country and the Western Allies on that issue.¹⁵ Despite occasional misunderstandings with the Soviet government, the Yugoslavs continued to conform their foreign policy to that of USSR until June 1948. Besides relying on the Soviets, the Yugoslav government had to keep an eye on the current relations among Great Powers and carefully watch Italy's reactions and intentions.

International circumstances were not favourable for Yugoslavia. The initiative for solving the Trieste issue following the signature of the Belgrade

¹⁰ V. G. Pavlović, *Od monarhije do republike. SAD i Jugoslavija 1941 – 1945* (Beograd: Clio, 1998), 462.

¹¹ *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi*, II, 666 – 667.

¹² *Ibid.*, 669 – 670.

¹³ Kardelj, *Sećanja*, 54.

¹⁴ *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi*, II, 670 – 671.

¹⁵ Diplomatic archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, Political archive, 1945, box 30, No. 2583. (hereinafter: DA, MFA, RS, PA)

and Duino Agreements came from Churchill and Truman.¹⁶ The status of Venezia Giulia was under consideration at the Potsdam conference during proceedings from 17 to 25 July and again from 28 July to 2 August 1945. Before the conference, it was believed in Belgrade that Trieste might become an internationally-governed territory.¹⁷ The government received diplomatic reports to the effect that the Foreign Office and State Department regarded the merging of Trieste and Yugoslavia as means of the cession of that town to the Soviet Union. During the Potsdam Conference it was decided that the whole issue be transferred to the Council of Foreign Ministers of Five Great Powers (the USA, the Soviet Union, the UK, France and China).¹⁸ The Council of Ministers, however, was divided in this matter. Anglo-Americans were against the passing of Trieste to Yugoslavia; the Chinese and French government were indecisive; the Soviets alone supported Belgrade.¹⁹

During the preparations for the Council of Foreign Ministers' conference which started on 18 September 1945 in London, the Yugoslav government demanded the entire territory of Venezia Giulia.²⁰ Trieste would fall under Yugoslav sovereignty but with the autonomous city administration. The arguments for Yugoslav sovereignty over Venezia Giulia were published in a memorandum on 17 September 1945 in London.²¹ Edvard Kardelj, the Deputy-Prime Minister, and the Italian Foreign Minister, Alcide de Gasperi, expounded the views of their governments on the first day of the conference.²² De Gasperi explained his position in territorial issues in conformity with current policy of Western countries, and warned about the dangerous Soviet influence. Security reasons were of a paramount importance. De Gasperi argued for the necessity of "providing the minimum systematic defence".²³ From 17 to 23 September, Edvard Kardelj and the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, sought for a compromise acceptable to American and British government. They agreed that the Yugoslav delegation should prepare a proposal for the internationalization of the Trieste administration.²⁴ At the end of London Conference an announcement, which contained proposal for the Yugoslav – Italian delimitation to be carried out along the ethnic boundaries, was made. Finally, the Council of Foreign Ministers decided on 19 September

¹⁶ J. Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje po Drugi svetovni vojni. Tri faze diplomatskega boja* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1961), 130 – 132. Pavlović, *Od monarhije*, 475.

¹⁷ Archives of Jugoslavija (hereinafter: AJ), 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/27.

¹⁸ Pavlović, *Od monarhije*, 478.

¹⁹ AJ, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/27.

²⁰ Dj. Vasiljević ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1984), 208 – 209.

²¹ AJ, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/24. *Dokumenti*, 1945, 230 – 245.

²² *Dokumenti*, 1945, 245 – 251.

²³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 35, 8529.

²⁴ AJ, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/27.

1945 to dispatch a commission of experts in Venezia Giulia for the purpose of studying the borders issue.²⁵

Both Yugoslav and Italian government continued their diplomatic activities in order to prepare the ground for the Council of Foreign Ministers Conference scheduled for 25 April 1946 in Paris. While the Commission of Experts was staying in Venezia Giulia the Yugoslav government encouraged local population to taking to the streets and manifesting their pro-Yugoslav feelings.²⁶ On 8 February 1946, an Aide-Memoire concerning the future activities of Yugoslav diplomacy in regard of the Commission for Delimitation in Venezia Giulia was compiled in the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁷ Before the Commission completed its work both sides handed over their proposals for the internationalization of the port of Trieste.²⁸ It was a solution that both governments were willing to accept. A letter was sent from Belgrade to each of the four Foreign Ministers on 27 April stating the vital importance for Yugoslavia of the boundary issue in Venezia Giulia.²⁹ Ethnic, security and economical reasons were put forward. The representatives of Great Powers were often reminded of the Italian fascist past and aggression. These facts sometimes constituted the basic arguments.

Having returned from Venezia Giulia the Commission of Experts suggested four alternative solutions to the Council of Ministers on 29 April.³⁰ Discussion about the proposals then began.³¹ On 3 May, both Kardelj and De Gasperi took part in a discussion.³² Both men continued to support the earlier stance of their respective governments. During the conference in Paris, on 7 May, Soviet diplomats organized a meeting between Kardelj and De Gasperi. In a report to the Foreign Ministry Kardelj claimed that he did not talk about Venezia Giulia with De Gasperi.³³ In his *Memoirs* he did not even mention this meeting with De Gasperi.³⁴

During its second session in Paris from June 15 to July 15, the Council presented a solution for the Venezia Giulia dispute and formed a commission to work out details for the status of what became known as Free Territory of Trieste.³⁵ The integrity of Free Territory of Trieste was guaranteed by the United Nations Security Council.³⁶ The plenary session of Peace Conference was held

²⁵ Pavlović, *Od monarhije*, 480.

²⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 37, 2691.

²⁷ AJ, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/36.

²⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 38, 3854.

²⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 35, 5784.

³⁰ Pavlović, *Od monarhije*, 481 – 482.

³¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 35, 5611.

³² Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje*, 150.

³³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 35, 5330.

³⁴ Kardelj, *Sećanja*, 86.

³⁵ Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje*, 155.

³⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 35, 9066. Pavlović, *Od monarhije*, 483, 484.

from 29 July to 15 October 1946 in Paris.³⁷ The Italian and Yugoslav delegation endeavoured to provide all kind of historical, ethnical, geographic and economic reasons for their standpoints. Throughout Yugoslavia mass rallies were organised in support of the delegation.³⁸ The delegates were well prepared and had a strong case, but their arguments made little difference.³⁹ The Conference of Ministers was convened in New York (4 November – 12 December 1946) with a view to preparing the final text of peace treaties with Italy and *Axis satellite*-countries. The Paris Peace Treaty with Italy was signed by twenty countries on 10 February 1947 and it entered into force on 15 September 1947.⁴⁰ On the same occasion was created Free Territory of Trieste within Venezia Giulia, thus regulating its legal status. However, the political problem remained because neither Yugoslavia nor Italy was satisfied. Nevertheless, this “peace without tears”⁴¹ was imposed by Great Powers.

On path to a bilateral agreement

The entry of Yugoslav troops into Trieste sparked off the old dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy left over from World War I.⁴² At the end of the war the Yugoslav government was forced to accept an unfavourable delimitation in that quarter. During WWII, one of the major foreign policy aims, espoused by both the London - based Royal Yugoslav government in exile and Yugoslav communists in the occupied Yugoslavia, was a revision of the north-west borders (towards Italy and Austria).⁴³ In the changed circumstances in the wake of WWII when Yugoslavia was on the winning side and Italy defeated, the struggle over the territory of Venezia Giulia continued. In this struggle the Italian government was backed by Anglo-Americans whereas Yugoslav diplomacy had the support – although not unqualified - of the Soviet government.

In the period between 1945 and 1947 Rome and Belgrade were engaged in a diplomatic trial of strength over the Trieste issue. As far as relations be-

³⁷ V. Dedijer, *Pariska mirovna konferencija* (Belgrade: Biblioteka “Trideset dana”, 1947); Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje*, 158 – 175.

³⁸ B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije. Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945 – 1988*, III (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 172.

³⁹ Kardelj, *Sećanja*, 84.

⁴⁰ M. Stojković ed., *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi 1976 – 1996, Dvostrani i višestrani međunarodni ugovori i drugi diplomatski akti o državnim granicama, političkoj i vojnoj saradnji, verskim i etničkim manjinama*, III (1946 – 1996) (Beograd: Službeni list SRJ, 1999), 59 – 87.

⁴¹ Sergio Romano, *Giuda alla politica estera italiana. Da Badoglio a Berlusconi*. (Milano: Bur, 2004), 40 – 45.

⁴² *Rapalski ugovor i sporazumi i konvencije između Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca i Kraljevine Italije* (Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1923); N. Grga, *Italija prema stvaranju Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Hrvatski štamparski zavod, 1925); Lj. Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje Jugoslavije 1914 - 1920* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, Srpska književna zadruga, 1986).

⁴³ Milkić, “Jugoslavija, Velike sile”, 282 – 296.

tween the two countries were concerned, it could be said, in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's words, that "every conflict, even if limited in scope, and without the use of force of arms, represents a competitive behaviour".⁴⁴ The Italian government made several attempts to establish diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia, but, at the same time, refused informal negotiations concerning the Trieste issue. It took a view that any negotiations with the Yugoslav government inevitably led to a compromise solution. A compromise was not desirable because Rome refused to consent to nothing short of the major part of Venezia Giulia and the city of Trieste passing to Italian sovereignty. For the realization of such solution the Italian government counted on the support of the USA, Great Britain and France. Rome firmly declined to recognise the pro-Allied credentials of the Yugoslav army. Requests were made for Belgrade to hand over the former Italian territories liberated by the Yugoslav army.⁴⁵ The Yugoslav government insisted on postponing the establishment of diplomatic relations with Italy until a decision on the border dispute had been made at the Paris Peace Conference. It believed that their territorial demands were justified and undertook wide-ranging diplomatic activities to achieve its goals. In doing so, the Yugoslav leaders made the maximum territorial demands, which they knew from the start to be impossible to achieve. They were aware that Trieste had been lost from the onset of the crisis.⁴⁶

The Yugoslav communist government obtained the most valuable information on Italian policy and the plans regarding the Trieste issue from their delegation at the Advisory Commission in Rome and from diplomatic representatives and various delegations in Paris, London, Washington and Moscow. Since there was a Yugoslav delegation in Rome, the Yugoslav government had a certain advantage over the Italian government. This delegation protected Yugoslav diplomatic interests by working with the Allied military authorities in Rome and also performed consular services in Italy under the supervision of the Allied Control Commission for Italy. Josip Smodlaka, Yugoslav Deputy-Delegate at the Advisory Commission, was particularly engaged in gathering information and promoting Yugoslav interests.

The Yugoslav delegation was in a good position to perform intelligence and propaganda operations in Rome and exert influence on "Yugoslav friends". Not surprisingly, the best Yugoslav friends were the ideologically like-minded members of the Italian Communist Party. In this connexion, the nature of relations between the communist parties and their subservient position in relation to the Soviet Union should be noted.⁴⁷ For that reason, the relations between

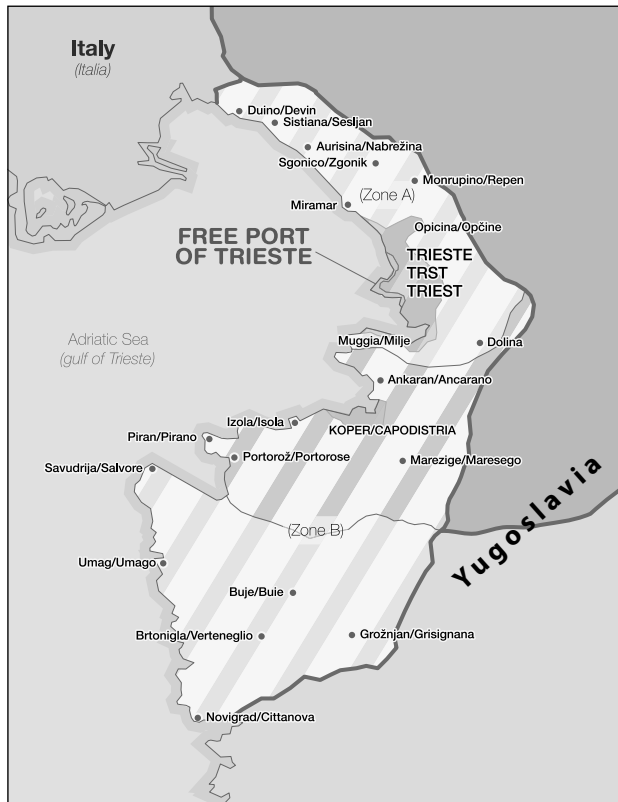
⁴⁴ Duroselle, *Le conflit*, 461.

⁴⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1945, 13, 1326.

⁴⁶ J. C. Campbell ed., *Successful Negotiation: Trieste 1954. An appraisal by the five participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101; M. Šušar, *Vladimir Velebit, svjedok historije* (Zagreb: Razlog d.o.o, 2001), 151.

⁴⁷ S. Pons, "Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 2, 2001, 3 – 27.

the Yugoslav and Italian communists cannot be considered separately from the Soviet policy regarding the status of Venezia Giulia and Trieste. Of all the Italian politicians, the leader of Italian communists, Palmiro Togliatti, was the strongest advocate of the cooperation between the Italian and Yugoslav government.⁴⁸ Togliatti entered the Italian Cabinet for the first time on 22 April 1944 as Minister without portfolio. He held the same position in the next two governments. In the Cabinet formed on 21 June 1945 he was appointed Minister of Justice. He remained the head of that Ministry until 1 July 1946.



Free Territory of Trieste

In connection with the Yugoslav communists' ambition to annex the Slovenian Littoral and Trieste Togliatti was of opinion as early as September 1943 that the best solution was "postponing border disputes till the moment when the people would have an opportunity to vote upon it absolutely freely".⁴⁹ He

⁴⁸ S. Pons, "L'Unione Sovietica nella politica estera di Togliatti (1944 - 1949)", *Studi Storici*, 2/3 (Rome 1992), 438, 439, 440.

⁴⁹ A. Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti. A Biography* (London, New York: I. B. Taurus Publishers, 2008), 166.

called upon the Soviet government to exert influence on the Yugoslav communists so that the latter's territorial claims at the expense of Italy lay dormant.⁵⁰ However, the headquarters of all communist parties in Moscow did not take a clear stand on this issue at the time.⁵¹ According to the reliable information which Josip Broz (alias Tito) received from Italy, in mid-August 1944 Togliatti backed the views of other Ministers in terms of the maximum Italian demands in respect of the Yugoslav border.⁵² With regard to Venezia Giulia, Minister Togliatti found himself in a difficult position when on 17 October 1944 he met Edvard Kardelj in Bari. After that meeting, in a conversation with his fellow-communist Vincenzo Bianco, Togliatti spoke affirmatively of the liberation of Venezia Giulia by Yugoslav partisans. Togliatti gave instructions to the Italian Communist Party to "cooperate with Yugoslav comrades as closely as possible on organizing people's forces in all liberated territories".⁵³ At that point Togliatti advocated a full autonomy allowing even the possibility of declaring Venezia Giulia an independent state.⁵⁴ In response to Togliatti's concerns and his request for a clear Soviet declaration on Trieste's status, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum to Foreign Minister Molotov on 1 March 1945 beginning with the following sentence: The "Trieste issue has not been discussed yet".⁵⁵ In mid-May 1945, Togliatti sent a telegram to Stalin in which he criticised Tito's intention to denounce Italian foreign policy as imperialist.⁵⁶ According to the report sent by Yugoslav ambassador in Moscow, Vladimir Popović, Stalin did not endorse the views of Togliatti.⁵⁷

Togliatti was central to the mission undertaken in Rome in early October 1945 by Yugoslav Minister without portfolio, Josip Smodlaka. Smodlaka expected that confidential and private talks with the representatives of Italian government would be conducive to initiating direct negotiations between the two governments about the Trieste issue.⁵⁸ In the course of his mission Smodlaka expected Togliatti to support Yugoslav claim and consent to passing of Trieste to Yugoslavia. Tito gave his permission to Smodlaka's visit to Rome as well as some additional instructions.⁵⁹ He pointed out that the Yugoslav government did not consent to the internationalisation of the status of Trieste. Belgrade's maximum offer was to make the city of Trieste one of

⁵⁰ L. Gibianskii, "The Trieste Issue and the Soviet Union in 1940s", in J. Pirjevec, G. Bajc, B. Klabjan eds., *Vojna in mir na Primorskem: Od kapitulacije Italije leta 1943 do Londonskega memoranduma leta 1954* (Koper: Založba Annales, 2005), 362.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 362 – 363.

⁵² AJ, 836, (KMJ), I -3-d /4.

⁵³ Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 166.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Gibianskii, "The Trieste", 368.

⁵⁶ Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*, 166.

⁵⁷ AJ, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, I-3-d/29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Yugoslav federal units and internationalise the port of Trieste. On 16 October 1945, Josip Smodlaka wrote to Broz from Rome that there was no prospect that the Italian government would agree to constituting Trieste as the seventh federal unit of Yugoslavia.⁶⁰ Smodlaka thought that the Italians might accept a solution whereby Trieste would become a free city under the sovereignty of Yugoslavia and in customs union with Yugoslavia. One of the options mentioned by Smodlaka was to proclaim Trieste an independent state on the basis of an agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia. In a dispatch dated 23 October 1945 Josip Broz instructed Smodlaka to propose to Rome that Trieste become a free city under the sovereignty of Yugoslavia.⁶¹ In late November, however, while Smodlaka was still in Rome, the Yugoslav government refused another proposal of the Italian government to establish diplomatic relations.⁶² This gesture confirmed once again that the Yugoslav policy aimed at starting direct negotiations but without establishing diplomatic relations. On 2 November 1945, Smodlaka informed Tito that he had not opened talks as yet; he waited for Togliatti's return to Rome for it was him that he wanted to talk to first.⁶³ Josip Smodlaka's mission in Rome failed. The Italian government was not prepared to conduct direct negotiations with Yugoslavia.⁶⁴

In the meantime, Togliatti continued with his efforts to initiate Italo-Yugoslav negotiations. On November 3 1945, he gave a speech in Torino on which occasion he said that the Italian government should defend the Italian character of Trieste, but also maintained that it was necessary to reach an amicable agreement with Yugoslavia.⁶⁵ On 26 March 1946, Togliatti called for "a brotherly agreement with neighbours".⁶⁶ He contended that such an agreement was the best way to defend the Italian character of Trieste as well as Italian borders.

In a telegram dated 20 October 1946 the new Italian Foreign Minister and the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Pietro Nenni, assured his Yugoslav counterpart, Stanoje Simić, that it would be possible to reach a direct agreement.⁶⁷ The telegram was well received by the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁸ On 4 November 1946, Deputy-Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Vladimir Velebit, sent a telegram to Nenni in which he confirmed Yugoslav willingness to accept "any sincere effort aimed at reaching an agreement".⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Josip Smodlaka, *Partizanski dnevnik* (Beograd: Nolit, 1972), 292.

⁶⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1945, 14, 5926.

⁶⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 38, 3738.

⁶⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 33, 12669.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The conversations held between 3 and 5 November 1946 in Belgrade between Togliatti and Josip Broz Tito received a lot of attention in diplomatic circles.⁷⁰ On that occasion Broz proposed that Yugoslavia recognise Italian sovereignty over Trieste in return for having Gorizia to herself. During Togliatti's negotiations with Broz, on 7 November, the Italian government published a communique about the private talks that were underway in Belgrade.⁷¹ It was not prepared to cede Gorizia to Yugoslavia and thus repeated that borders should follow ethnic lines of division.

On his return from Belgrade Togliatti pressed the Italian government to accept Josip Broz's proposal.⁷² The Italian Communist Party lobbied the other parties for an agreement with the Yugoslav government.⁷³ On 8 November 1946, Togliatti cancelled an official visit to Napoli in order to persuade the Foreign Minister, Pietro Nenni, to accept direct negotiations between the two governments during his talks with Smodlaka.⁷⁴ On the same day, Nenni asked Smodlaka for an official invitation from Yugoslavia in order to start negotiations which would be followed by the immediate dispatch of an Italian delegation.⁷⁵ The Italian Communists' request for an agreement with Yugoslavia was considered in Rome.⁷⁶ On 9 and 12 November, Togliatti spoke to Nenni. On 13 November, the Soviet ambassador informed Smodlaka that Nenni was getting closer to a decision to conclude an agreement and was even prepared to accompany Togliatti to Belgrade and personally enter into negotiations.⁷⁷ According to the information Smodlaka relayed to the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 November, Count Carlo Sforza (he was Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs from February 1947) declared himself in favour of an agreement with the Yugoslav government.⁷⁸ Sforza showed a great ambition and a desire to play the leading role during negotiations.

The Italians were concerned about the American and British government's response to the attempts to start direct negotiations. As soon as Togliatti had returned from Belgrade, Nenni sent the Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, Ivan Matteo Lombardo, to London to provide the necessary information to the members of the British government.⁷⁹ On 8 November 1946, the Italian ambassador in Washington, Alberto Tarchiani, informed the American Secretary of State, James Byrnes, how Togliatti's visit to Belgrade was viewed in

⁷⁰ Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje*, 181.

⁷¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 33, 13605.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 13428.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13462.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 13429.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 13427.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 13577.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 13461.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 14163.

Rome.⁸⁰ During his conversation with Smodlaka on 8 November 1946 Nenni professed that the Italian government was not at liberty to initiate any negotiations without an approval from the Allies. Otherwise the Allies might think that the Italians were breaking away.⁸¹ For that reason, Nenni wanted the initiative to come from the Yugoslav side. Therefore, the official invitation had to be issued by the Yugoslav delegation in New York.

On 14 November, the Commission for Foreign Affairs had a meeting at the request of Communist Ministers. The Finance Minister, and a member of the Communist Party, Mauro Scoccimarro, took issue with the government statement of 7 November and demanded an immediate start of negotiations with the Yugoslav government.⁸² He proposed a declaration to be issued, along the lines of the decision of the Four powers, which Nenni accepted. At the same session of the Commission for Foreign Affairs a representative of the Christian Democratic Party proposed a declaration denouncing Togliatti's activities in connection with Yugoslavia, but his proposal was refused. A declaration was adopted stating the Commission for Foreign Affairs' willingness to consider the possibility of a direct agreement with Yugoslavia in respect of the Trieste issue. On 16 November 1946, Smodlaka reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that minister Nenni, as a private citizen, communicated to Smodlaka his personal desire that the Yugoslav government reiterate in official terms, the proposition it made to Togliatti, thus enabling the start of the direct negotiations between the two delegations at the Council of Foreign Ministers conference in New York.⁸³

The leader of the Christian Democratic Party, Alcide de Gasperi, was adamant in his opposition to direct negotiations between the two governments. He deplored the suggestions of Great Powers for resolving the Trieste crisis. On the other hand, he deemed any kind of negotiations with the Yugoslav government impossible.⁸⁴ In addition, he suspected that Togliatti wanted to give away Italian territories to Yugoslavia.⁸⁵

The conference in New York presented a great opportunity for the Yugoslav and Italian representatives to make contact and intensify their efforts to bring about the start of negotiations. Since the representatives of Great Powers had already agreed on the final terms of a peace agreement, the Yugoslav and Italian delegates were in a position to consider all aspects of the future bilateral relations. The Italian delegation in New York was instructed to establish contact with the Yugoslav delegation and explore the possibility of direct ne-

⁸⁰ Dj. Vasiljević ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*, 1946, (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1985), 420.

⁸¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1946, 33, 13429.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 13613.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13814.

gotiations.⁸⁶ The Italian government let the Council of Foreign Ministers know of this step. In early December 1946, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Stanoje Simić, and the Italian representative, Quadroni, discussed about relations between their countries. On the basis of these talks and Nenni's report, the Italian government unanimously decided on 5 December to start direct negotiations with the Yugoslavs in Belgrade.⁸⁷ The former Prime Minister, Ferruccio Parri, was appointed a head of the delegation. The task of the delegation was to make a trade agreement, an agreement regarding the protection of minorities and explore the possibilities for a border agreement. However, the official talks never took place.

Yugoslav diplomats' guardedness in direct contacts and their mistrust of Italian officials continued until the official establishment of diplomatic relations. When De Gasperi was about to visit Washington in January 1947 the Yugoslav Ambassador Sava Kosanović was instructed not to attend the receptions organised on that occasion.⁸⁸ Yugoslav Deputy-Foreign Minister, Vladimir Velebit, was of opinion that the unofficial private talks were sufficient if the Italians insisted, but also warned that the instructions for such talks had not been given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁸⁹ The Italian side took a similar attitude. The Italian Ambassador Tarchiani avoided contacts with the Yugoslavs during the conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers in New York.⁹⁰ The appropriate conditions for direct negotiations were not created before the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs Simić gave instructions to all Yugoslav embassies, legations, consulates and delegations on 26 February 1947 allowing them to freely make contact with the members of Italian diplomatic and consular service.⁹¹ In the ensuing period the two governments made some efforts to solve the economic, cultural and infrastructural issues. However, direct Italo-Yugoslav negotiations about the Trieste issue were not arranged in the relevant period.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 13924.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 14542.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1530.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 15345.

⁹¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 48, 43296.

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YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY, 1945-1956¹

Abstract: The paper briefly describes the relations between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia/League of Communists of Yugoslavia (KPJ/SKJ) and the Communist Party of Italy in the period from 1945 to 1956. On the basis of accessible sources and available literature, the author attempts to analyse all the phases that the relations of the two parties underwent in the first post-war decade.

Keywords: *Yugoslavia, Palmiro Togliatti, Trieste, Tito, communism*

The relations between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (in 1952 the Party was renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia) and the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) in the period from 1945 to 1956 underwent several phases and changes. In the aftermath of World War Two the central issue was that of the city of Trieste, i.e. the delimitation of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy. Judging by the agreement made after the meeting of the Secretary General of the PCI, Palmiro Togliatti, and Edvard Kardelj in October 1944 in Bari, the leadership of Italian communists consented to the intention of the new Yugoslavia to occupy the city of Trieste and the Venezia Giulia during the final war operations and thus put it under control of Belgrade.²

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² E. Kardelj, *Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957, sećanja* (Belgrade-Ljubljana: Radnička štampa, Državna založba Slovenije, 1980), 47-49; On relations between the two parties regarding Trieste and the Venezia Giulia during World War Two and in the immedi-

When on 1 May 1945 Yugoslav communist forces entered Trieste, the PCI published a proclamation in the party journal *L'Unità* greeting this act.³ The proclamation signed by Togliatti was a lonely voice of support as all the other political parties, including socialists and liberals, supported the Italian government in its attempts to surrender the city to the administration of the Allies.⁴

To the Yugoslavs' surprise, the Italian communists soon substituted the insistence on the Italian character of Trieste for the welcome extended to the Yugoslav partisans. In fact, since February 1945, Togliatti started preparing the ground through the agency of Moscow for a solution of the Trieste issue which would be different from that agreed with the Yugoslavs in October 1944.⁵ The change of the PCI attitude towards the status of Trieste in terms of determined defence of Italian national interests was primarily brought about by reasons of internal policy. Since early May, the PCI – a part of the coalition Cabinet – underlined the Italian character of the city, but at the same time was trying to solve the problem of Trieste and Venezia Giulia in a manner which would satisfy the Yugoslav communists as well. It was hoped that a “full political and customs autonomy” for Trieste and Venezia Giulia would provide such a solution guaranteed and overseen by both the Yugoslav and Italian government. Togliatti forwarded the plan of a Yugo-Italian “condominium” to the Soviets through a trade union activist and member of the PCI Directorate, *Giuseppe Di Vittorio*, in early August 1945. The Soviets then presented the proposal to the Yugoslavs.⁶

The official Belgrade took a dim view of the Italian communists' change of attitude. As soon as the statements in favour of the Italian character of Trieste started to circulate, the Yugoslav Communist Party (hereinafter PCY) analysed them in detail, and particularly those of certain members of the Party Directorate like Mauro Scoccimarro and Eugenio Reale. It was observed that the majority of the leading cadre of the PCI presented the issue of Trieste as a

ate aftermath see P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa. Il PCI, il confine orientale e il contesto internazionale 1941-1955*, (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2010); L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste (1943-1948)” in F. Gori, S. Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L'Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)* (Roma: Carocci, 1998.); M. Galeazzi, “Togliatti fra Tito e Stalin”, in M. Galeazzi ed., *Roma-Belgrado: gli anni della guerra fredda* (Ravenna: Longo, 1995).

³ *L'Unità*, 1. maggio 1945. In the proclamation written in Rome on 30 April the party leader, Palmiro Togliatti, invited the Triestian workers to welcome Yugoslav partisans as liberators and closely cooperate with them in order to ‘crush’ the resistance of Germans and Italian fascists and liberate Trieste as soon as possible.

⁴ The Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia (hereafter AMIP), Political Archive (hereafter PA), Italy, 1945, box 12, folder 5, document No. 537, Smodlaka to Foreign Ministry, 2 May 1945.

⁵ L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste”, 99-100; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 82.

⁶ The plan envisaged that a definite solution for the Trieste issue be made after 2-3 years by a plebiscite. Di Vittorio a Stalin e Molotov, 5 agosto 1945, in F. Gori, Silvio Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L'Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)*, 242-244. For more details on the plan see L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste”, 109-110; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 98-99.

“sentimental issue” for Italian people while the Yugoslav attitude was dubbed “chauvinist”.⁷ The Secretary-General of the Party, Togliatti, belonged to this majority of officials.⁸ As opposed to them, two members of the Directorate - the Under-Secretary, Luigi Longo, and Pietro Secchia - were considered to be taking a pro-Yugoslav stand.⁹ The Slovenian communists were particularly harsh in their assessment of the PCI attitude. Thus the Prime Minister of the Slovenian Government, Boris Kidrič, thought that the attitude of the PCI representatives in the Venezia Giulia, as well as that of the entire Party, was bound to break the unity of Italian and Slovenian communists in the area.¹⁰

At first Yugoslavia refused the proposal for putting Trieste under the joint Italo-Yugoslav governance, and particularly the idea of internationalisation of the city administration with the implied interference of third parties in the final solution of the problem. However, Yugoslavia changed her attitude in the course of time. She gave up the original plan to annex Trieste and then intended to proclaim the city the seventh Yugoslav federal unit. Finally, in late 1945, it was proposed that Trieste be transformed into a free city, along with its port. However, the “supremacy” of Yugoslavia over Trieste would be preserved, most notably by establishing a customs union. The idea originated with Josip Smodlaka, an old diplomat, who was sent by Tito to Italy in order to discuss it with Togliatti. He met the PCI Secretary-General on 9 November in Rome.¹¹ Conveying his impressions from the discussion, Smodlaka informed Tito that the leader of Italian communists had listened to the Yugoslav proposal “with an evident satisfaction”, and said that all other matters would be easier to solve after the agreement on Trieste. Togliatti, however, pointed out that the successful outcome required a favourable atmosphere. Unfortunately, no step was made in that direction and, in that context, Togliatti underlined the “ad hoc raised issue of the sovereignty i.e. annexation of Trieste”. This matter provoked a nationalist reaction in Italy while the “chauvinist journalistic campaign” created a general feeling of resentment against Yugoslavia. That feeling was further exacerbated due to the persecution of Italians and their displacement from Venezia Giulia. Togliatti therefore proposed some steps to be taken towards creating a better atmosphere underlining that something could be done for the exiled and displaced Italians.¹²

⁷ The Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter AJ), collection 507/IX – The Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (hereafter: 507/IX – KMO CKSKJ), No 48-Italy, group I, document 16, Report on the PCI attitude on the Venezia Giulia.

⁸ Ibid. The PCI Directorate headed by Togliatti took such stance because of the “anxiety” that the Party would lose ground to other parties before the elections due to its pro-Yugoslav position.

⁹ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-39, a paper on the PCI political line and leaders.

¹⁰ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-10, Kidrič to Kardelj, 14 September 1945.

¹¹ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-13, Smodlaka to Tito, 12 November 1945.

¹² Ibid.

As it became more obvious that the borderline problem would not be resolved easily, the Italian communists attempted a different approach. In April 1946, Longo suggested that Yugoslavia should establish "any kind" of relations with Italy as that would help the PCI at the impending elections in June that year.¹³ At the same time, the issue of the release of Italian prisoners of war in Yugoslavia was raised again with a view to facilitating a better atmosphere in mutual relations and contributing to the increase of Communists' prestige in the Italian general public.¹⁴

The meeting between Tito and Togliatti in November 1946 in Belgrade introduced a new phase in the relations between the two parties. During the meeting a new proposal was mooted: the Italian cities of Gorizia and Monfalcone should pass to Yugoslavia which, in return, would concede the return of Trieste to Italy. Although the meeting did not bring about the solution of the disputable border issue, it nevertheless yielded certain results. The Italian prisoners of war were finally released from Yugoslavia, and Togliatti strongly advocated the commencement of direct negotiations between Yugoslavia and Italy for solution of the Trieste issue. The Yugoslav Communists believed that the meeting between Tito and Togliatti, as well as the statements given by the latter on his return from Belgrade, had a "strong echo" in the Italian public, and that the PCI now wielded "a powerful weapon in the fight against the Italian reaction". This was a contribution to the prospect of direct negotiations between the two states. According to the Yugoslav Minister in Rome, Mladen Iveković, the Tito-Togliatti meeting boosted the reputation of PCI among the Italians, and Italian communists changed "overnight" to a large extent their "negative and harmful attitude" regarding the Yugoslav territorial requirements.¹⁵ Finally, it brought about a rapprochement between the two parties.

A month later another important meeting at the party level occurred. Longo met with the Slovenian Communists' leaders Miha Marinko and Sergej Krajger in Ljubljana on 10 December.¹⁶ Branko Babič, the head of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia,¹⁷ and Giordano Pratolongo, the manager the

¹³ AMIP, PA, 1946, b. 33, f. 6, No. 3939, telegram of Slaven Smodlaka sent from Rome on 4 April 1946, confidential no. 17 (Str. pov. br. 17 – treba resiti dilemu oko dva broja dokumenta. Mislim da bi bilo dobro da ovakve reference imaju uvek isti format ako je moguće: Smodlaka to Foreign Ministry (ako je njima slao). Ja sam do sada tako ispravljao, ali ovde ne pise kome je slao, a mozda se i vi ne slazete sa mojim formatom.).

¹⁴ Ibid, No. 4021, telegram of Slaven Smodlaka sent from Rome on March 30, 1946, (Str. pov. br. 187).

¹⁵ AMIP, PA, 1947, b. 48, f. 10, No. 418030, Report of the envoy Iveković from Rome str. pov. br. 5/47 of 11 September 1947.

¹⁶ AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report of Miha Marinko on the discussion with Luigi Longo of 10 December 1946.

¹⁷ The Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia was founded on 13 August 1945 in Trieste. Since its foundation it was under the control of Slovenian communists. It was headed by Boris Krajger until he was succeeded at the position of the Secretary-General in 1946 by Branko Babič.

Information Office of the PCI in Trieste, were also present.¹⁸ In the first part of the discussion, Longo tried to resolve some organisational issues such as the formation of a „parity coordination body“ between the two parties with a task to harmonise the work of Italian and Yugoslav communists ‘in the matters of common interest’¹⁹. Although he did not explicitly define what ‘common interest’ he had in mind, the Slovenian communists were of opinion that Longo hinted at Trieste. If that was the case, the said body would be “providing guidance“ to the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia. For that reason Longo’s idea met with resistance on the part of Marinko and Krajger who countered it by the fact that two parallel communist organisation could not exist in the territory of the zone A and Trieste itself, under Allied rule, and that the local communist party should preserve its autonomy in region. They feared that such a body would “necessarily degenerate” into a separate leadership independent of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia.²⁰ Longo’s suggestion that the Venezia Giulia’s organisation should include all those who were excluded from it and have adhered to the Pratolongo’s Information Office was also met with resistance.²¹

he party organization in the Trieste area was not the only topic of discussion. Longo raised another issue, which Marinko and Krajger considered to be the main reason for his arrival in Ljubljana, namely the granting of financial assistance to the Italian Communist Party. The problem of the PCI’s financing had already been known.²² The party funds were depleted in the aftermath of the war, and the financial situation was further aggravated due to the costs of the election campaign in 1946. The Yugoslav contribution to the financing of the Italian communists had already been the topic of discussion between the two parties. France Bevc, a member of the Yugoslav mission at the Paris conference, seems to have studied this matter with certain members of the PCI and promised the assistance amounting to 100 million liras. In his conversations with Longo, Marinko confirmed Yugoslav willingness to fulfil that promise and the intention to provide the third of the required amount within a month through Branko Babič. In a letter sent to Belgrade he requested a prompt action and required the first instalment to be transferred as soon as

¹⁸ The Information Centre was formed in April 1946 for the purpose of representing the PCI’s interests in Trieste. P.Karlsen, *Frontirera rossa*, 133; Jože Pirjevec, “*Trst je naš!*” *Boj Slovencev za morje (1848-1954)* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2008) 385.

¹⁹ During August 1946, Togliatti had several discussions with the Yugoslav representatives in Paris. As a result an agreement was reached to form a four-member committee composed of two members from Yugoslav and Italian party. The envisaged ‘committee of four’ would be charged with the regulation of relations between the two parties. P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 167.

²⁰ AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report on discussions with Luigi Longo on 10 December 1946.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² For a detailed account of the PCI’s financing by the Soviet Union see V. Riva, *Oro da Mosca. I finanziamenti sovietici al PCI dalla Rivoluzione d’ottobre al crollo dell’Urss* (Milano: Mondadori, 1999).

possible.²³ The reply from Belgrade was positive so it was decided to supply the PCI with 50 million liras at the earliest opportunity.²⁴ Apart from providing her own funds, Yugoslavia soon became the intermediary through which the Soviet Union sent financial assistance to Italian communists.

The signing of the Peace Treaty in Paris in February 1947 also affected the bilateral party relations and facilitated the formation of the Free Territory of Trieste. In order to harmonise their work in the new circumstances, the PCI and PCY concluded an agreement in Belgrade signed by Milovan Djilas and Luigi Longo.²⁵ It called for the formation of a communist party in the Free Territory of Trieste. By the terms of the agreement, the PCI was obligated to dismiss all its groups there which should then join the new party. Such an arrangement implied that the Pratolongo's Information Office would be no more. The PCI consented to giving certain autonomy to the party organisations operating in the part of the Venezia Giulia which belonged to Italy. On the other hand, the PCY was allowed to take care of the Slovenian minority in that area.²⁶ The end of August saw the formation of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste. The last Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia, Branko Babič, became a head of the new party whereas Vittorio Vidali sent by the PCI cut another influential figure.

The expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948 proved to be a milestone in relations between the two parties. Like other communist parties, the PCI took part in the attacks against the PCY but without the sharpness and the relentless systematic campaign typical of other Cominform members. On the contrary, during a few weeks after the passing of the anti-Yugoslav Resolution on 28 June 1948, it seemed that there was a divided opinion among the ranks of Italian communists regarding the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Yugoslav diplomats in Italy carefully monitored the developments within the PCI and reported on the attitude taken both by the party members who were "friendly" towards Yugoslavia and those considered as the "old

²³ Because of the lack of liras to be given to the Italians Marinko proposed in a letter sent to the Central Committee of the PCY to obtain the money by dispatching to Trieste "an appropriate volume of merchandise" via the UIVOD trade cooperative (the Import-Export Institute) which did business with the zone A and Trieste. Marinko proposed the trade to be carried out by the Commander of the Military Administration in Opatija, General Vječeslav Holjevac. The latter would then personally hand in the obtained money to Babič who, in turn, would forward it to Pratolongo. AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report on the discussions held with Luigi Longo on 10 December 1946.

²⁴ Ibid. Note to the document was written by Aleksandar Ranković (comrade Marko).

²⁵ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CKSKJ, 48/I-56, The agreement between Milovan Djilas and Luigi Longo signed on 7 April 1947; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 189.

²⁶ Ibid. The Agreement envisaged the preservation of the UAIS – Unione antifascista italo-slava. Moreover, this mass organization created in May 1945, which gathered the Slovenians and Italians from the Trieste area, was supposed to expand the forms of its work and cooperate with other political groups in order to defeat the „reactionary groups and agencies of the American and English imperialists“.

enemies” of the KPJ.²⁷ Although all of them condemned certain Yugoslav actions such as the absence from the Cominform meeting in Bucharest there were some who sought for a way to resolve the dispute. A member of the PCI Politburo, Edoardo D’Onofrio, suggested to the Yugoslavs in early July to request an extraordinary session of the Cominform in order to smooth over the difficulties. In Iveković’s opinion, he made the suggestion with the approval of the Secretary-General Togliatti.²⁸ Soon, however, the PCI leadership completely accepted the stance of Cominform. Nevertheless, contacts between the two parties did not entirely cease after 1948. They took place occasionally, and even the likes of the Central Committee member, Eugenio Reale, were engaged in conversations.²⁹ These contacts notwithstanding, the relations between PCI and Yugoslavia conformed to the stand taken by Cominform. It remained so until the rapprochement in the mid-1950s.

Yugoslavia countered by disseminating printed propaganda among the members of the Italian communist party.³⁰ At the same time, the PCY was looking for an ally among the PCI’s dissidents with a view to creating an organisation supportive of Tito. Some individuals and groups of Italian communists, opponents to the official policy or ostracised from the Party, were sounded thanks to the help of certain pro-Yugoslav communists from Trieste, most notably Branko Babič and Eugenio Laurenti. Some former partisans who fought in Yugoslavia during the war and members of socialist parties and groups who disagreed with the Cominform policy towards Yugoslavia were also contacted.

Publishing of journals and magazines which propagated the PCY’s ideas was another attempt at creating a pro-Yugoslav base among the communists

²⁷ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CKSKJ, 48/I-72, Report of Rudi Janhuba from Rome “Reakcija i komentari iz redova KPI u vezi sa rezolucijom Informbiroja” 9 July 1948. Pietro Secchia was the most important person among the “friends” with whom Janhuba had a top secret discussion.

²⁸ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CK KJ, 48/I-70, Rome Embassy to Belgrade, 5 July 1948, no. 497; Ibid, I-79, Iveković to Tito and Kardelj, 25 March 1949, strictly confidential no. 28/49; M. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito. Tra identità nazionale e internazionalismo* (Roma: Carocci, 2005), 107. The PCI’s intention to play the role of a mediator in the dispute between Yugoslavia and Cominform has been the subject of disagreement among Italian researchers. For more details see M. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 101-113; M. Zuccari, “Il PCI e la ‘scomunica’ del ’48. Una questione di principio”, in F. Gori, Silvio Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L’Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)*, 175-210; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 197-220.

²⁹ The most important person to maintain contact with the CPI members was Anton Vratuša. He had been in touch with Italian communists ever since the war when he had been in Milan as an envoy of the Osvobodilna fronta under the alias „Professor Urban“. During his stay in Italy at the end of May 1949 he had long discussions with Eugenio Reale on two occasions (AJ, 507/ IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-82, letter on the discussion of Antona Vratuša with Leali (Reale) of June 1, 1949). On one of those occasions, he talked to certain Rokgo, a member of the CPI Central Committee. This person may have been Longo whose name was added in handwriting next to the name Rokgo. (Ibid, III-1, telegram No. 227 of 31 May 1949).

³⁰ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-79, Iveković to Tito and Kardelj, 25 March 1949, strictly conf. no. 28/49.

in Italy. To that end, the Yugoslavs purchased the weekly magazine *Omnibus* published in Milan and started the journal *Politica Nuova* which gathered the pro-Yugoslav communists and socialists from all over Italy.³¹

When the prominent members of the PCI and MPs Valdo Magnani and Aldo Cucchi were excluded from the Party's ranks in early 1951, it acted as an impetus for the fight against Cominform in Italy. The leadership of Italian communists viewed the two men, pejoratively named "Magnacucchi", as "Titoists", the traitors and foreign agents who were in the service of the enemies of Italian working class.³² Yugoslavia, on the other hand, welcomed them warmly. Valdo Magnani had been known to the Yugoslav side since the war when he had been the commissar of a battalion within the Garibaldi brigade and a PCY member.³³ This facilitated the renewal of contact with him in 1950. In mid-1951, Magnani and Cucchi formed the *Movimento dei lavoratori Italiani* which was transformed into the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* (USI) two years later. This movement was under the influence of Yugoslavia and received a constant financial aid from her as long as it existed.³⁴

In Trieste, the 1948 Cominform Resolution caused stir among the communists. It broke a fragile unity of Slovenian and Italian communists within the framework of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste. Italian followers of the Resolution gathered around Vittorio Vidali were the majority and supported by PCI whereas the pro-Yugoslav fraction headed by Branko Babič remained a minority. At the party congress held in 1948 the majority favourable to the Cominform line prevailed. Since then, the party led by Vidali became the striking fist of the Cominform among Italian communists. On the other hand, the "Babič's party" was still active and relied on Yugoslavia. However, in spite of the considerable funds at its disposal, it was not active and often left the initiative to Vidali. For that reason it was criticised in Yugoslavia.³⁵

³¹ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-109, Iveković to Foreign Political Committee of the KPJ, 30 October 1950, no. 566; Iveković to Foreign Political Committee, 13 December 1950, no. 642. The members of the editorial board of the *Politica Nuova* were the former members of the PCI Domenico Davide, Comunardo Morelli and Pierleoni Mazzini.

³² M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga. Togliati e il PCI nella rottura fra Stalin e Tito 1944-1957* (Milano: Mursia, 2009), 237- 260.

³³ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/XIII-55, The situation within the progressive movement of/in? Italy, April 1951; Ibid 48/I-104, Note on the discussion with the members of the Central Committee of the PCI; M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 247.

³⁴ The USI received from Yugoslavia a monthly aid of several million liras in the name of "socialist solidarity". An attempt was later made to additionally finance the USI by establishing the OPIMES firm which should do business with Yugoslav enterprises; however, the firm was not profitable. Yugoslavia lost her interest in the movement after the reconciliation with the Soviet Union and Italian communists in 1956, and pleaded for the maintenance of the USI organization in Trieste alone. For more details on relations between Yugoslavia and the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* see AJ, fund 507/IX – KMO CKSKJ, 48/III, documents 1-41.

³⁵ At the end of 1950, an investigation was carried out about the funding of the 'Babič's party' and other political organisations in Trieste which were under the Yugoslav control. The investigation revealed that more than 2 billion liras were spent from late 1946 to the end of 1950. A

The re-establishing of relations between the two parties took place in the mid-1950s following the visit of Nikita *Khrushchev* to Belgrade in 1955. The new policy of the Soviet Union towards Belgrade was accepted by the PCI leadership headed by Togliatti. The Secretary-General of the Party had most probably been familiar with the Soviet decision to improve relations with Belgrade before the arrival of the Soviet delegation in Yugoslavia.

In early 1955 in Trieste contact was made between the representatives of the pro-Yugoslav *Osvobodilna fronta* and some of the Triestian communists.³⁶ Another important step towards the renewal of relations was contact made between Anton Vratuša and Eugenio Reale in mid-1955 as well as the unofficial meetings between a group of the leading people of the PCI headed by Longo and a prominent Yugoslav journalist, Frane Barbijeri.³⁷ It was agreed during these informal talks that the PCI should send a high-level party official to Yugoslavia for an exchange of views with Yugoslav officials. This idea was realised in December the same year. The PCI Directorate member, Giancarlo Pajetta, met the President of the Committee of International Relations of the Socialist Alliance, Veljko Vlahović, on his return from Albania via Belgrade. This discussion, however, did not yield the desired results as, unexpectedly for the Yugoslav side, Pajetta did not show much understanding for the Yugoslav communists' policy; consequently, he was labelled as a "corrupt ward-heeler and Stalinist".³⁸ Nevertheless, the relations continued to improve which became apparent to the general public after the *L'Unità* had published a series of favourable articles on Yugoslavia in early 1956.³⁹

The Yugoslav diplomatic envoys in Italy, however, assessed that the policy of PCI leadership towards Yugoslavia during 1955 was marked by cautious statements. Two groups of leading members of the Central Committee differed in their outlook. The first one, gathered around Togliatti, Longo and Pajetta, took a "more realistic position" and attempted to establish, though "with marked reluctance", some sort of relations with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (hereinafter LCY). This group was opposed by the "orthodox group" of leaders headed by Velio Spano, Edoardo D'Onofrio and Girolamo Li Causi, which maintained that "Khrushchev's statement stemmed exclusively from opportunist reasons of the Soviet foreign policy in the present moment".

large portion of that money was embezzled. AJ, 507/IX, KOM CKSKJ IX, 48/II-9, Report of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Slovenia sent to Aleksandar Ranković on 23 November 1950.

³⁶ M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 293.

³⁷ AJ, 507/IX –KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-128, Note on the discussions between Eugenio Reale and Anton Vratuša led on 30 July and 3 August 1955. Ibid, 48/I-129, Note on the discussion between Frane Barbijeri and Longo, Pajetta and the comrades, led on 19 October 1955. Barbijeri remained a permanent link between the PCI and Yugoslavia until his departure from Rome in mid-1957.

³⁸ AJ, 507/IX –KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-130, Note on the discussion with Giancarlo Pajetta led in Belgrade on 3 December 1955.

³⁹ The first text published on 15 January was entitled „Il volto di Belgrado è l'immagine della Jugoslavia“; the last one published on 1 February was entitled “Dal sud a nord della Jugoslavia“.

Togliatti was reluctant due to his not being sure about the actual meaning of Khrushchev's statement and thus did not want to take a too definite attitude towards Yugoslavia.⁴⁰

Contrary to its headquarters in Rome, the pro-Cominform Communist Party in Trieste headed by Vidali was losing its ground. Due to the normalisation of Yugo-Soviet relations, the "pressure" exerted by Slovenian membership of the Communist Party which increasingly required the normalisation of relations with Yugoslavia, as well as the formation of the pro-Yugoslav federation of the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* in Trieste shook the "monopoly" of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste over the Trieste communists.⁴¹

The rapprochement between the two parties and the renewal of official relations followed the visit which Palmiro Togliatti had paid to Belgrade in the last days of May 1956. This visit was deemed to be brought about by the "mutual incentive" on the part of the two parties.⁴² The goal of Togliatti's visit was, according to the party headquarters' analysis and that published in *L'Unità* on the front page on 29 May, to make the first contact and mark the beginning of the "regular relations" with Yugoslav communists. The blame for the rupture in relations was attributed to the "wrong decisions" of the Cominform during the years 1948 and 1949.⁴³

During the meeting in Belgrade attended by the highest officials, including Tito, several important topics were discussed: relations between the PCI and SKJ, the history of these relations and further joint actions. There was also some talk about the problems related to the dissolution of the Cominform, the possibilities for the cooperation between communist parties as well as the intention of the Soviet Union to recreate an organisation similar to Cominform. The Yugoslav party saw the visit as "very beneficial" and Togliatti was said to have been "positive" towards Yugoslavia and "open-minded".⁴⁴

The rapprochement between the two parties continued during the autumn of the same year. It was agreed at the Togliatti-Tito meeting that a party delegation of Italian communists should come to Yugoslavia to have further discussions. On that occasion, a new form of cooperation was envisaged: a group of the PCI "cadres" was to come for vacation to Yugoslavia.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 36, f. 2, No. 4608, Political report for 1955 forwarded to Belgrade by the Rome Embassy on 12 January 1956.

⁴¹ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 36, f. 2, No. 41092, Report of the Consulate General in Trieste about the situation in Trieste in 1955.

⁴² AJ, 507/IX - KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-139, Prica to the heads of diplomatic offices abroad, 6 June 1956. However, the report which Togliatti submitted to the PCI Directorate stated that the invitation for meeting came from the SKJ; M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 339.

⁴³ *L'Unità*, 29 May 1956.

⁴⁴ 507/IX -KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-139, Prica to the heads of diplomatic offices abroad, 6 June 1956.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vratuša to Rome Embassy, private 30 May 1956. The arrival of the first group of leading Italian communists in Yugoslavia for vacation took place in the summer of 1956. This practice

The PCI delegation comprised of nine members and headed by the Deputy Secretary General, Luigi Longo, arrived in Belgrade on 5 October 1956. Since this was the first visit of an official delegation of a Western European communist party to Yugoslavia, much was made of it in Belgrade. The Italian communists were required to influence their government in order to have some bilateral problems solved to Yugoslavia's satisfaction. The guests were also asked to influence the official Rome to recognise the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the issues of Trieste, signed two years before, as definite and not tentative as the Italian government interpreted it. Furthermore, they were supposed to plead for the suspension of the trial of Yugoslav antifascists and their further prosecution and show interest in the situation of the Yugoslav national minority in Italy.

The PCI delegation put forward their own requirements. They asked for the Italian supporters of the Cominform to be released from prison in Yugoslavia, and some other communists to be allowed to return from Italy to the B zone. As for the former issue, Yugoslavia was willing to release the Cominform supporters. It was, however, to be done gradually rather than at once. The request for the return of certain individuals to the B zone was refused on account of the danger that such precedent might be abused later by the Italian government.⁴⁶ The visit proved to be a success, and some seven Italian supporters of the Cominform were indeed released from prison. Interestingly, some Italian officials protested against such proceeding. They argued that it was "inexplicable" that the Italian government through its diplomatic representation in Belgrade could not have managed to arrange the release of a single Italian prisoner while the request of the PCI leaders Togliatti and Longo had been met.⁴⁷ The visit of the PCI's delegation in October 1956 also marked the renewal of the official relations between the two parties.

would be continued in the years to come. It was actually a sort of economic assistance to the Communist Party of Italy and it was indulged in by all the countries/or parties? of the so-called 'people's democracy'.

⁴⁶ 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, IX 48/I-142, Some questions for the discussion with the PCI delegation.

⁴⁷ AMIP, PA, 1956, f. 37, No. 420009, Note on the discussion between I. Topolski and the Italian Ambassador Guidotti in Belgrade on 22 November 1956.

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“TRIESTE IS OURS”: WHEN THE YUGOSLAVS WERE GOING SHOPPING IN ITALY

Abstract. This paper will analyze how the image of Trieste, the city claimed by both Italy and Yugoslavia, changed in the latter country focusing on the period from 1954 (when the territorial settlement between the two countries was reached by the London Memorandum) to the mid-1960s. It will be seen that the Adriatic city overcame the troubled legacy pertaining to the territorial dispute and turned into an open window towards the Western world for the Yugoslavs as well as a filter through which the Western trends penetrated Yugoslavia.

Keywords: *Trieste, Italy, Yugoslavia, shopping,*

It is well known that after the Second World War Trieste was claimed by both Italy and Yugoslavia and thus presented a factor of instability in the Cold War environment. Since 1947 the city, included in A zone of the Free Territory of Trieste, was under Anglo-American administration. During that time the Yugoslav press used to present a dark image of Trieste ruled by reactionary forces, impoverished and subdued to the interests of Great Powers. Nevertheless, as soon as the London Memorandum (1954) confirmed the newly-established territorial settlement, relations between the two countries started improving and an increasing number of Yugoslavs was accustomed to travelling on one-day shopping tours to the Italian cities. This essay will examine the phenomenon of Yugoslav shopping in Trieste, its importance and how it contributed to shaping the local popular culture particularly during the 1954-1965 period.

It is never easy for a scholar to talk about the “Yugoslav phenomena” since one is always in doubt to what extent a certain phenomenon can be regarded as Yugoslav rather than that of a particular federal unit (one of the six Republics of which the Yugoslav Federation consisted). This dilemma is due

both to the specific structure of the Federation and the fact that the sources (archives, press) were often generated at federal units level, but it suffers from the contemporary perspective which tends to overestimate the strength of national barriers stronger than they really were at that time, among the former republics as well as the general scarcity of regional research projects. Nevertheless, such a unitary perspective can be useful especially when exploring phenomena connected with popular culture which, reflecting also international trends, were usually deprived of national undertones. Considering shopping in Trieste a key practice in the formation process of the local popular culture, I have decided to analyze this topic as a truly Yugoslav phenomenon. That is not to say there were no differences in the interaction between the various Yugoslav peoples and Trieste, but to emphasize that the phenomenon involved the entire Federation. Moreover, the major dichotomy regarding the access to Trieste had no relation with national borders within Yugoslavia but had to do with the fact that some Yugoslavs had a direct territorial contact with Italy (and sometimes even held a permit to cross the border) and others did not.

Between the second half of the 1950's and the first half of the 1960's a growing number of Yugoslav citizens obtained a passport and were allowed to travel. Being the closest city abroad, Trieste became the destination of many Yugoslavs, who crossed a border which was – until few years before – regarded as deeply hostile. At the beginning, the Yugoslavs used to buy in Italy certain goods unavailable or too expensive in their own country. When economic conditions improved, they started to purchase Western-branded clothes. Apart from its high quality, it also had a symbolic value: it allowed the buyer to feel part of a common European cultural milieu which followed the same trends and shared the same interests.

Even if tourists from the neighbouring country went to the Adriatic city to satisfy a need which could not be satisfied at home – it does not matter here if it was real or induced– Trieste was not an unfamiliar environment. Throughout the centuries a specific relationship had existed between Trieste and the South Slav peoples. At the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this Adriatic city had been a flourishing maritime port and commercial centre in which the Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian communities had always played an important role. Besides this, another element which contributed in shaping the relations between Trieste and the Yugoslav citizens was the frequency of their trips, which were repeated several times in one's own life, often periodically, once a season or once a month. This frequency made them familiar with various sites in the city, nearly all of them devoted to shopping. Due to their lack of time and money, at least in the first few years, the Yugoslavs were rarely seen going to coffee bars or restaurants. Some shops were exclusively dedicated to the "Eastern tourists" and the shop keepers tried to facilitate their clients' shopping by giving them a feeling of comfort and ease: for example, they accepted Yugoslav currency, dinars, and displayed signs in Serbo-Croatian.

The area stretching from the train station to the Ponte Rosso market was central to the Eastern tourists' shopping. The extent of trade in that area (known as the area of the *jeanseari*, "jeans sellers") during the 1970s was considerable: on average between 60,000 and 65,000 pairs of jeans were sold every week.¹ One can understand how this familiarity, together with the historical roots and the proximity, influenced the feelings of the Yugoslavs towards Trieste, which has always been characterized as something between "otherness" and "likeness", a gradual entrance into capitalist Western Europe which maintained some Eastern characteristics.

The stands around Ponte Rosso mostly sold cheap and low quality fabrics and clothes. The hawkers, coming from both the north and the south of Italy, mastered the art of bargaining; therefore, the prices of the articles could be cut down, and indeed were, especially by the experienced buyers. In such an informal and dynamic situation, the communication was really important and the hawkers even learned some words in Serbo-Croatian. Everything seemed possible in Ponte Rosso. Goods could often be paid for in dinars and barter was a perfectly acceptable way of doing business.

In that period Yugoslav economic growth was among the highest in the world and over the four years between 1957 and 1960 the national product rose by 12,7 % per annum while the private consumption rose by 10,5 % per annum. Since 1955 the Communist Party leadership paid more attention to improving the living standards of the population; this change in economic policy dramatically affected the way of life during the 1960's.²

The economic growth resulted in the formation of a new middle class, better educated than the previous generations and more in tune with the world's leading trends in fashion and material culture. As Breda Luthar has pointed out in her study about shopping in Trieste, for them the "Italianess" of products (fashionable clothes and shoes, Vespa scooters, home design and decoration) epitomized everything trendy, chic, modern, cosmopolitan and international.³ Nevertheless, shopping in Trieste can shed a light on the increasing social differences in the Yugoslav society. On one hand, there were Yugoslavs who could afford to purchase goods in boutiques where the Italians were used to shopping. On the other hand, there was the multitude which overcrowded the Ponte Rosso market during the weekends and holidays; these people could only buy cheap, low quality articles or scraped a living by re-

¹ M. Mikula, "Highways of Desire. Cross-Border Shopping in Former Yugoslavia 1960s-1980s" in H. Grandits, K. Taylor eds., *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side. A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)* (Budapest-New York: Central University Press, 2010), 218.

² D. Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 94-104.

³ B. Luthar, "Shame, Desire and Longing for the West. A Case Study of Consumption" in B. Luthar, M. Pušnik eds., *Remembering Utopia. The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2010), 347-349.

selling goods in Yugoslavia or smuggling them into the neighbouring Eastern countries.

Building on the basis of Švab's thesis,⁴ it should be stressed that consumerism existed in socialist societies and, in some respects (for example, the relation between needs and desire), was similar with that in capitalist societies – although a socialist state was usually unable to provide the required quantity and quality of goods. Yugoslav consumer society was an exception in the Eastern bloc as it most resembled Western patterns. Since the mid 1950s private cars, household appliances and holiday cottages were presented as symbols of Yugoslavia's economic blooming. The first supermarket opened in 1957 in Zagreb and as soon as 1961 there were already 160 supermarkets throughout the country. The consumerist mentality of the emerging middle class, together with the persistence of class differences, became an object of criticism during the students' protests in 1968. One of the protagonists of the movement, Vojin Kovač-Chubby, "the self-proclaimed poet laureate of the lumpenproletarian cultural revolution", referred to the image of Trieste as the promised land of Yugoslav consumerism in a verse from one of his songs: "Ideals are cheaper in Trieste".⁵

The first accounts of Yugoslavs' crossing the border for the purpose of purchasing goods in Italy can be traced back to the early years after the Second World War when the borders were still completely closed. Only the citizens who lived close to the frontier (within 200 meters) and "double owners" (the owners of land on both sides of the frontier) were allowed to cross the border; they alone had contact with the capitalist world. They made the most of their privileged position of travelling, buying in Italy those goods which were not available at home (sugar, coffee, medicines, soap) and reselling them at a higher price. This small-scale smuggling was usually based on the exchange of goods. In Italy, the most demanded ones were meat, butter, eggs and brandy.⁶

Apart from a few sporadic episodes, the Italo-Yugoslav border was not opened before 1955 when the Udine agreement was signed. It allowed the local inhabitants on both sides of the border to cross it four times a month and provided the peasants with special permits to sell a certain amount of their products in the Italian markets. The Udine agreement can be regarded as the first step towards the restoration of the regional historical relations which were artificially broken after the end of the Second World War, a long process which is

⁴ A. Švab, "Consuming Western Image of Well-Being. Shopping Tourism in Socialist Slovenia", *Cultural Studies*, 16, 1, (2002), 63-79.

⁵ G. Tomac, "A Tale of Two Subcultures. A Comparative Analysis of Hippie and Punk Subculture in Slovenia" in B. Lutharm, M. Pušnik eds., *Remembering Utopia*, 170.

⁶ B. Repe, "The Influence of Shopping Tourism on Cultural Changes and the Way of Life in Slovenia after World War II", paper presented at the conference *Culture with Frontiers: Shopping Tourism and Travelling Object in post-war Central Europe*, Budapest, 26-28 April 1998, available at the address <http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/zgodovin/wwwrepe/2oth/The%20influence%20of%20shopping.pdf> (accessed 14 June 2011).

still far from being completed. Apart from those referred to by this agreement, all other Yugoslav citizens needed a passport and visa to enter Italy. In the 1950s, the issue of a passport was a long and complicated procedure, and the request could be refused without any explanation. Nevertheless, an increasing number of people obtained their passports and were allowed to travel. In 1957, the Italian Consulate in Zagreb received 2,500 visa requests for excursions to Trieste on 29-30 November (the former day was celebrated in Yugoslavia as the Day of Republic i.e. national holiday). The Italian authorities initially suspected that there was some kind of plot to organize an irredentist protest behind these mass applications. Instead, having a day off, the applicants just wanted to go shopping in Italy.⁷ During the first six months of 1959, three million border crossings were registered in both directions.⁸

In 1960, a new law was introduced in Yugoslavia which simplified the procedure of getting a passport-which now became available to the majority of people. During the few days before the 1960 Christmas holidays, there was a long queue in front of the Italian Embassy in Belgrade. Around 400 visa were granted daily.⁹ In 1963, there were 8 million border crossings and 9 million in 1964; on 29 November 1965, 250,000 Yugoslavs visited Trieste.¹⁰ New train and bus connections were established. Since the travellers living far from the border had to spend two nights on a train or bus (the first night to get to Trieste, the other one to return home), the trip was more feasible during national holidays. The image of Yugoslav tourists spending their socialist holidays on a shopping spree in the capitalist West was very representative of the specific mixture of socialist system and consumerist mentality in Yugoslavia.

The regulations concerning custom duties changed several times throughout the period in question. For example, until 1959 the traveller was allowed to bring back into the country goods worth up to 50,000 dinars, without any restriction regarding the number of border crossings. The new law of June 1959 stipulated that travellers had to declare all the goods bought abroad and pay a customs duty on each article. Food (with the exception of products such as coffee, sugar, cacao, tea), prescribed medicines, items for agriculture, books and press were exempt. In the spring of 1959, the Yugoslavs overcrowded Ponte Rosso to buy as many goods as possible before the stricter law came into force.¹¹

⁷ Diplomatski Arhiv Belgrade, (henceforth DA), Italija, 1957, fas. 43, d. 20, 425537, 5-7.

⁸ R. Mahić, "Apostoli na buvljoj pijaci", in *Vjesnik u srijedu*, 371, (10 June 1959), 7.

⁹ "Gli jugoslavi fanno la coda per avere il visto italiano", *Il Piccolo*, (09.12.1960), 9.

¹⁰ B. Repe, "The Attitude of Slovenian Authorities and the Press towards Shopping in Austria and Italy", paper presented at the conference *Culture with Frontiers: Shopping Tourism and Travelling Object in post-war Central Europe*, Budapest, 26-28 April 1998, available at the address : <http://www.ff.unilj.si/oddelki/zgodovin/wwwrepe/20th/The%20attitude%20of%20Slovenian%20authorities.pdf> (accessed 14 June 2011)

¹¹ Mahić, "Apostoli", str. 7.

As it has been mentioned before, some of the goods purchased in Trieste were not unavailable in Yugoslavia. Sometimes the shoppers were in search of a specific brand which was of better quality than that sold in the country (such as Milka chocolate; or Nivea deodorant). The act of buying these goods made the consumer feel that he/she could choose and thus resist the principles of socialist control over needs.¹² Besides their quality, the goods bought abroad were usually associated with a sense of being in keeping with the Western trends and the shopper's personal experience of a trip abroad. Sometimes quality was not as important as the particular value attributed to goods on the basis of their provenience. In the 1970s, it was already clear that the phenomenon of shopping in Trieste was also founded on a psychological need; the article published in 1976, in the Croatian magazine *Vjesnik u srijedu* titled "Trstomanija", emphasized that "besides all the comprehensible reasons for this and that, it seems that our people live in the psychosis that anything bought abroad shines brighter".¹³ In a country where the socialist system was allegedly successfully applied and depicted to have been capable of satisfying its citizens' needs, it was difficult to explain why a multitude of citizens were willing to undertake a tiring journey to purchase certain goods. Many observers attributed this to their passion for everything coming from abroad.

The period in question was the time of the economic miracle in Italy, the symbols (TV sets, household appliances) of which had recently entered or were about to enter Italian homes. From a Yugoslav perspective, the Italian economic development appeared not so distant from the local situation as the northern European countries were being perceived as rich and faraway. The Italian standard of living represented a goal which might in the future also have been achieved by Yugoslavia. The fast Italian economic growth was followed by certain socio-economic problems, some of which were shared by Yugoslavia. Both the countries struggled with considerable disparities among the northern and southern regions; the latter suffering from backwardness and unemployment.

Italy was not the only destination for shopping tourism although it was the best-known one. For Slovenes and Croats an alternative destination was Austria, especially for the purchase of technological items; Italy remained the most attractive destination for fashion related shopping. Since the mid 1960s Yugoslav workers emigrated to Germany and Austria, therefore, when visiting home, brought presents for their families and friends ranging from washing machines to toys. On the other side of the country, Yugoslav nationals from Macedonia used to go and buy food and clothes in Greece but the latter was lower-quality merchandise than that of Italy. Other destinations in Italy, apart from Trieste, included Gorizia (2,000 daily entrances of Yugoslav citizens,

¹² Luthar, "Shame", 344-347.

¹³ Cited in I. Duda, *Pronađeno blagostanje. Svakodnevni život i potrošačka kultura u Hrvatskoj 1970-ih i 1980-ih* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2010), 73.

mostly Slovenes¹⁴), Treviso and coastal cities which could be easily reached by ferry.¹⁵

In the second half of the 1960s-shopping trips became more frequent due to the visa abolition and the improved economic situation. It has been noted that Trieste was something of a reliable thermometer for the Yugoslav economy's temperature.¹⁶ For example, 1970 was a record year with 7,3 million border crossings, but already in 1971 this frequency was affected by the first crisis caused by the ~~dinar~~ devaluation of the dinar. Another devaluation took place in 1972 and, along with a smallpox epidemic in Yugoslavia, brought about new restrictions; the same happened in 1973 when ~~cholera~~ an epidemic of cholera broke out in Italy. The following year was no better since it was marked by the increasing tensions between the two countries before the signing of the Osimo agreements.¹⁷

In the mid 1970s the number of border crossings increased once again. It peaked in 1978 (6,5 million), and then fluctuated in the 1980s with a nadir recorded in 1983 (1,1 million).¹⁸ Moreover, in the second half of the 1980s the Yugoslav government, suffering from a chronic lack of foreign currencies, required of its citizens to make a substantial deposit before travelling abroad in order to prevent currency export. Shortly before the break up of Yugoslavia, while the economic situation was getting worse and the shortages more frequent, shopping trips were revived. "Many compare the revival of tourism in Trieste with the hysteria of the golden – or, more exactly, illusory golden – 1970s" wrote the Zagreb-based magazine *Danas* in 1989. However, this revival did not last long and during the dark 1990s refugees rather than shoppers arrived in Trieste from Yugoslavia.

Yugoslav Authorities' and Public Opinion's Reaction to Shopping in Trieste

The Yugoslav authorities favoured the improvement of the relations with Italy, the opening of the borders and the new possibilities of communication between the two peoples, but they were concerned about certain matters.

The consumption fever got hold of Yugoslav citizens as soon as they collected their small amounts of savings. This was a matter of discussion in Party meetings but it was not found incompatible with the official ideology. As has been seen, the living standards of the population became one of the priorities of the government and the achieved results in this respect were a matter of pride

¹⁴ "Gli aspetti economici del piccolo traffico al valico goriziano", *Il Piccolo*, (08 May1962), 4.

¹⁵ Mikula, *Highways*, 217; Švab, *Consuming*, 69.

¹⁶ Duda, *Pronadeno*, 74-75.

¹⁷ G. Battisti, *Una regione per Trieste. Studio di geografia politica ed economica* (Trieste: Del Bianco, 1979), 155-156.

¹⁸ Duda, *Pronadeno*, 74-75.

for Yugoslav socialism. The press often commented on shopping tours with irony, as was the case in the article published in the Belgrade-based magazine *Nin* in 1955¹⁹ – in the first days of tourism in the country. It discussed a trip organized by two travel agencies from Belgrade, Putnik and Turist. 500 tourists visited Venice, Milan and Turin, where they watched a football match between Italy and Yugoslavia. It was quite clear that the enthusiasm for shopping was greater than that for sightseeing. Window shopping in Venice made a good impression, but high prices were disappointing; in the words of a journalist, the trip “didn’t satisfy our touristic passions”. Milan seemed more promising:

“An industrial city, with more than one and a half million inhabitants, was so promising but it could even be frightening. But our people are well known for their intelligence and their ability to adapt. In less than one day we got to know all the most famous places - the department stores. Passing by, we also saw the Milan cathedral because it is located in front of the largest department store. In fact it was useful for orientation”.

Going to a shop was not the only way to purchase goods. There were middlemen like Zora, “a fellow countrywoman, from Šibenik, who is an important touristic factor for our people in Milan”. Zora used to buy cigarettes, sausages and brandy at low prices and sell fabrics at high prices. Turin offered its amenities but at the end of the trip the Yugoslavs felt so tired (and perhaps had run out of currency) that they decided to sell their tickets in front of the stadium. The author mocked such “successful touristic tour which enriched our knowledge of the history and culture of a foreign country”.

Nevertheless this indulgent approach coexisted with a more critical one. Above all, the illegal export of currency worried the authorities. In 1961, every citizen who planned to go to Italy was legally allowed to buy 18,700 lire which were never enough; therefore, the Yugoslavs were “compelled” to resort to tricks. One of the easiest ways to acquire additional currency was by buying it illegally in Yugoslavia and hiding it before getting to the border. One could witness a following scene in a shop: “in front of the shopkeeper, without any restraint or shame, they raise their skirts, roll up their trousers and take out the smuggled money from their socks, from the edge of the dress, from their shoes”!²⁰ Another way of getting lire was to sell some goods which were cheaper in Yugoslavia (local foodstuffs, brandy, cigarettes). Behind this, there was often an entire organizational network with “middlemen”, such as Zora, assisting the tourists.

The correspondent of *Vjesnik u srijedu* spent two days with the Yugoslav customs officers at the border post of Fernetiči, close to Sežana. The money traffic was huge and the customs officers had a lot of work discovering the money and goods not declared. In one of the buses, they found more than

¹⁹ Romet, “Torinska iskustva”, *Nin*, 331, (5 June 1955), 7.

²⁰ N. Doroški, “Jeftini šušlavci iz Trsta”, *Ilustrovana politika*, 130, (2 May 1961), 26-27.

240,000 dinars in a vacant seat—and no one claimed that money. A similar amount of money was found in possession of a woman sewn in a pocket inside her dress. The smugglers were not only Yugoslavs but also Italians. For example, the border police detained the well known Umberto F., a member of a network of smugglers, who had been already stopped several times with his car full of goods (watches, nylon stockings...) to be sold in Yugoslavia. The author of the article condemned those people who were trying to get around the customs control and praised the ones who did not succumb to temptation and returned home without any worries; because "nowadays it is not necessary anymore to buy every kind of article abroad, because one can find everything in our shops".²¹

In a report published in 1961 in *Ilustrovana Politika*, the supplement of the Belgrade-based newspapers *Politika*, another journalist confirmed the experience of his colleague from two years before when he pretended to be a customs officer at the border post in Fernetiči.²² The Sunday train going from Trieste to Belgrade was almost empty because shops were closed in Italy on that day, while the one going in the opposite direction was extremely crowded and it was called *piljarski voz* (from the word *piljarnica*, greengrocery), an ironic reference to vast retail trade taking place on the train. About a thousand travellers, as many empty bags, ten thousand packs of butter and an unspecified number of meters of sausages. The majority of the travellers had tourist visas and tickets to Trieste. The journalist was convinced that there were at least 5 million dinars in that train. In one of the buses crossing the border, 17 out of 80 travellers were found in possession of excess amounts of money. It seems that almost all the travellers – coming from different social categories and from every corner of Yugoslavia – had some hidden money which was confiscated. That night the majority of the passengers, who had been so poorly dressed on their way to Trieste as a reminder of the aftermath of the Second World War, came back wearing the clothes they had just bought and bringing with them a lot of hidden goods. The press was crammed with recurring caricatures: women looking pregnant because they wore several layers of clothes; women wearing fur coats in August; false bottoms in the boots of the cars.

There are different opinions whether the general attitude of the Yugoslav authorities was more or less tolerant towards excess purchases and petty smuggling. They certainly contributed to maintaining social peace, since the lack of goods could be mitigated by purchasing them abroad.²³

The Yugoslav shoppers in Trieste used to buy things for themselves as well as their families, friends and neighbours. One can understand how the line between shopping and smuggling was blurred. In most of the cases the

²¹ V. L., "Tajne Orient-Expressa", *Vjesnik u srijedu*, 368, (20 May 1959), 5.

²² A. Radaković, "Bio sam carinik", *Ilustrovana politika*, 157, (7 November 1961), 16-17.

²³ Švab, "Consuming", 75-76.

smugglers were not criminals but common people trying to implement their poor salaries by selling in Yugoslavia the goods they bought in Italy, at a higher price. The shadow economy, where formal and informal relations coexisted, was a peculiarity of socialist societies, a semi-public area in which people gained access to a range of goods which were officially not available because they were not regarded by the authorities as necessary. As Luthar recalls, “restrictions on exporting money and goods were extremely unrealistic, and custom regulations changed frequently enough”.²⁴

A case study by Vida Rožec Darovec of smuggling activities in the village of Rakitovec,²⁵ nowadays located on the Croatian-Slovenian border, sheds light on the psychology of the phenomenon. The women from the village used to go to Trieste two or three times a week to sell their products (meat, eggs, brandy) - often to regular customers. From Rožec Darovec's interviews with these women, the smuggling seems to have been, although not morally accepted altogether, preferred to other jobs because it was more lucrative. The ability of the most experienced smugglers was perceived as a matter of pride because it allowed them to live better than other people. For example, an old woman recalled how she had taught other inexperienced women and, thanks to her skills, was able to support her children during their studies. It should be noted that the case of Rakitovec village is different from shopping tours from the other areas of Yugoslavia, which have to be inserted in a network of relations between two different political systems, Trieste, with its offer of capitalist consumer goods, and Yugoslavia, a socialist country where some goods were not available. In this context, the Yugoslav specificity was mirrored in the fact that its citizens could freely travel abroad and their economic standard allowed them to go shopping there. Instead, the Rakitovec case was rooted in the historical interaction between Trieste and its hinterland which had been artificially interrupted by the territorial settlement of the post-Second World War period.

Shopping tours abroad were a peculiarity of socialist societies. The case of Yugoslavia perfectly mirrored the specific position of the country at the international stage. Firstly, Yugoslav citizens could travel freely across the borders unlike those in other Eastern European communist countries; as we have pointed out, from the early 1960's the majority of them had a passport and since 1967 no visas were required to go to Italy. Secondly, the smugglers from Yugoslavia used to buy goods in Italy - often of low quality but nevertheless being “something from the West” - and resell them in the neighbouring socialist countries where such merchandise was much more difficult to obtain. This special position of the country was also exploited in other ways: for example, the Yugoslav import-export agencies made profit by selling the goods pur-

²⁴ Luthar, “Shame”, 357.

²⁵ V. Rožec Darovec, “L'attraversamento del confine nei ricordi delle donne istriane”, *Qualestoria*, 1, (2007), 37-58.

chased in the West to the Eastern bloc's countries. In this way, they also contributed to spreading new trends in music and fashion to the Eastern bloc.

Yugoslavia's Image Tarnished

Besides the above-mentioned matters, the Yugoslav authorities were also concerned about the poor image that the shoppers presented in the Italian cities. In 1961, *Ilustrovana politika* made a report²⁶ on the shameful image of Yugoslav shoppers in Trieste, "a city which does look at them in a different way" (apparently not favourable). The first image was that of a group of people, shabbily dressed and looking exhausted, who rested in the Ponte Rosso square. Having taken off their shoes, they slept on the benches and ate bread, cheese and sausages which they had brought from home. They could have easily been mistaken for refugees, but they were just "tourists from the neighbouring country". In the evening, there was a similar scene at the Trieste train station: the waiting room was crowded with Yugoslavs, their bags being tied with rope, their children sleeping in their arms. Further damage to Yugoslavia's reputation was made when the Italian police arrested a number of smugglers, and not just at the borders, but also in the middle of the Italian cities' squares.²⁷

The interviews conducted by Breda Luthar with some Slovenians clearly demonstrated how they had perceived their fellow countrymen from the other parts of the Yugoslavia on a shopping spree in Trieste.²⁸ The Slovenes were often embarrassed when meeting the poorest fellow citizens in Trieste. They resented the stereotype, formed in Western Europe (and Italy in particular) of a dirty uneducated Yugoslav tourist-smuggler used to throwing rubbish in the street insofar applied to them. However, they sometimes attributed such a stereotype to their "brothers" from the South. One of them recalled:

"We, Slovenes, did not go there like they, the Yugoslavs, did. The whole family [of Yugoslavs] would go there, and they would... each with two or three bags, buy, [...] So you went to Trieste and you could see them, they were all over the town, especially in the centre. These brothers of ours sitting around with their bags.At that time we had enough [money] to go to a coffee shop; there was a coffeehouse north of Ponte Rosso, so we could afford a coke or a cup of coffee. But those from the south sprawled on the grass and took out those... and ate".²⁹

This can be regarded as a case of *nesting orientalism*, defined by Milica Bakić-Hayden³⁰ as the use of the Yugoslav peoples to orientalise their neighbours, attributing them some negative characteristics such as backwardness and lack

²⁶ Doroški, "Jeftini", 26-27.

²⁷ DA, Italija, 1959, fas. 49, d. 28, 49/566; DA, Italija, 1965, fas. 59, d. 1, 415540.

²⁸ Luthar, "Shame", 367-369.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 368-369.

³⁰ M. Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalism. The case of former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review*, 54, 4, (1995), 917-931.

of education; accordingly, the level of Europeaness and civilization increased gradually when moving toward the West.

The relativization of one's own identity perception is once again useful to reflect upon the intermediary position of Yugoslavs. As Mikula points out,³¹ on one hand, the Yugoslavs were recognizable as the Easterners in Italy because of their clothes; on the other hand, they looked different from the citizens of other people's democracies, compared to which their economic standard was much higher. Therefore, they felt uncomfortable when comparing their poor clothes with those of the Italians but at the same time stressed the difference between them and the Czechs and Hungarians.

The shopping tourists were an object of criticism not just from the perspective of national prejudice (Northerners vs. Southerners), but also that of class differences. For example, in the novel *Dekartova smrt* (Descartes' death) by Radomir Konstantinović Trieste is depicted as a Mecca for shopping where the poor Yugoslavs could satisfy their hunger for cheap goods, which was regarded as one of the lowest instincts:

“It was as if she could not hear me, probably because this time she was not dead nor she has lost the hope to find me at Standa, but because she has already left, like a sleepwalker, with extended hands, among gondolas, she delved into things, [...] there were bread machines, grinders for coffee, shirts, scarves, dolls, dishes, chairs, deck chairs for the garden, coats, hats, umbrellas, sunglasses, and her head, her head lost under the old black hat, or in that big, coloured pile of objects”.³²

Shopping spree seems to have transformed them into primitives and causes grotesque attitudes, signs of an unaccomplished modernity,³³ which horrified the writer, a son of the Belgrade urban culture.

Italians Going Shopping in Yugoslavia

The shopping tours were not unidirectional and the Italians also sometimes crossed the border to go shopping in Yugoslavia, although these trips were different in nature and numbers. The shopping tours in Italy, as already discussed, can be placed in international context and involved the citizens from all parts of the Federation, who were undertaking long trips to get to their destination. In the case of the Italians going shopping in Yugoslavia, the context was regional, as in the case of the village of Rakitovec, as it was proved by the perishability of exchanged goods. The Yugoslav authorities were eager to stress the

³¹ Mikula, “Highways of Desire”, 218.

³² R. Konstantinović, *Dekartova smrt* (Novi Sad: Mir, 1998), 98-99, cited in T. Rosić, “Beogradski pisci o istarskim gradovima”, *Sarajevske sveske*, 21/22, (1 December 2008).

³³ Radomir Konstantinović's best known work, *Filozofija palanke* (Beograd: Nolit, 1969) describes the so-called “spirit of *palanka*”, the spirit of small towns in the countryside characterized by backwardness, repetitiveness and xenophobia, the inhabitants of which were neither villagers nor proper city-dwellers.

reciprocity of these trips and thus disperse the impression that just the citizens of the socialist Yugoslavia went abroad to shop. The fact that on one side primary goods are concerned and on the other finished products is a matter that they could easily pass over.

In 1957, *Vjesnik u srijedu*³⁴ highlighted how the opportunities for border towns increased in the wake of the Udine Agreement. The cheapest prices of foodstuffs and petrol attracted the Italians to Yugoslavia. The Udine agreement, which allowed the inhabitants of the bordering areas to cross the border four times a month, stipulated the quantity of goods that could be brought into the country – for Italians 2 kilos of meat, 24 eggs, 4 litres of wine and an unrestricted quantity of petrol. It seems that the shopping trips from Trieste to Yugoslavia took place on a massive scale: according to the article, 5,000 kilos of meat were exported across only one of the twelve border crossings located at Škofije, while a nearby petrol station sold more than 20,000 litres of petrol every weekend, with cars waiting in a queue stretching half a kilometre.

As soon as they crossed the border, the Italians could exchange an unrestricted amount of lire into dinars and, on their way back, they were allowed to export an amount of goods corresponding to the money they had exchanged. Besides shops and petrol stations, the Italians liked to go to *gostionice* (taverns) close to the border, which, after having been almost empty after the war, made the best of the situation created after 1955. Control on the Yugoslav side of the border was not very strict; in fact, shopping across the frontier was the only income for the poor border area. The Italian authorities were not strict either, except occasionally and probably due to the lobbying of the Trieste shopkeepers who were afraid of competition from Yugoslavia.

Eight years later, when *Ilustrovana politika* published another report on the influx of Italians across the border in Sežana,³⁵ the exchange seems to have increased and improved. Housewives from Trieste were such regular customers in the shops in Yugoslavia that the shopkeepers addressed them by names. A shop close to the border could have been a valuable source of income. This was also the case with the *kafana* (tavern) "At Ukmar's" where foreign tourists stopped by on their return from the Adriatic resorts or a one-day shopping tour. When the journalist paid a visit to it, on a Sunday afternoon in September, a hundred cars were parked in front of the guest house and the majority of the plates were foreign. The owner, Ivan Ukmar, said he was working just in high season and refused to tell the journalist how much he earned. 20 years after the Second World War and 10 after the Udine agreement, one of the most troubled borders in Europe seemed to be pacified. The report showed people crossing the border just for the sake of doing it without any need. Two young Slovenes from Trieste crossed the border every Sunday because they played

³⁴ S. Z., "Arrivederci na granici!", in *Vjesnik u srijedu*, 395, 25 December 1957, 5.

³⁵ P. Aleksijević, "Profesor Divije zasladio letovanje", *Ilustrovana Politika*, 359, (21 September 1965), 22-23.

in a Slovenian football team. Customs officers smiled at a girl when she was crossing the border:

”She has a boyfriend on our side”, they say, “so she uses her permit to meet him. They go on excursions in Slovenia, dance in the evening, then he walks her to the border and she comes back on foot”.

The Yugoslav Consulate in Trieste had already stressed in its report for 1957 that the relations between the two countries developed rapidly because of “Yugoslavia’s collaboration with the progressive movements in Italy, commercial relations, which improved every day and, as can be easily observed in this territory, retail trade with its positive results as well as the cultural exchanges programme”. Moreover, tourist stays in Yugoslavia became more attractive for the Italians on account of the low prices.³⁶

Shopping in Trieste and its Memory: a Matter of Nostalgia?

The practice of shopping in Trieste has remained a vivid memory in the popular culture of the former Yugoslav republics, nowadays independent states, often in connection with a feeling of nostalgia. References to shopping tours in the Adriatic city can be found in every field of popular culture: from literature (Drakulić, Ugresić³⁷), to TV series (*Naše malo misto*, *Bolji život*) and pop music (*Zabranjeno Pušenje*, *Rambo Amadeus*³⁸). Moreover, references to shopping in Trieste are well represented also in those projects meant to recollect the unitarian memory of a dead country. In the book entitled *SFRJ za ponavljače* (SFRY for repeaters) one paragraph (*Trst je naš*, Trieste is ours – mocking the famous irredentistic slogan) is devoted to shopping in Trieste, stating that the Adriatic city at in the end became “ours” – Yugoslav – due to shopping tourism. Other paragraphs are devoted to *šuškavac* (raincoat) and other merchandise that could be purchased in Trieste.³⁹ In the *Ex Yu Leksikon* as well as on the related web site there are plenty of entries dealing with the topic in question: the entry for “shopping” is almost completely devoted to Trieste and the enthusiasm of the shoppers; mention is made of “Ponterosso”, “gondola” (the souvenir standing on the top of many TV sets), “*leviske*” (Levi’s jeans), “*šuškavac*” etc.⁴⁰

This memory has acquired new undertones with the passage of time. The citizens of the former Yugoslavia, who had experienced freedom of mobil-

³⁶ DA, Italija, 1958, f. 46, d. 6, 43365.

³⁷ S. Drakulić, *The Balkan Express. Fragments from the Other Side of War* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994); D. Ugresić, *The Ministry of Pain* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006).

³⁸ *Zabranjeno Pušenje*, “Jugo 45”, LP *Agent tajne sile* (TLN Europa, Tessa Audio / Dancing Bear, Active Time), 1999; *Rambo Amadeus*, “Fela Kruti, družje stari”, LP *Hipishizik Metafizik* (PGP RTB), 2008.

³⁹ D. Novačić, *SFRJ za ponavljače. Turistički vodič*, (Novi Sad: Stylos, 2008), 118-120.

⁴⁰ I. Andrić et al. eds., *Leksikon yu mitologije*, (Beograd- Zagreb: Rende, Postscriptum, 2004), 229, 382-382, 387.

ity as early as the 1960s, found themselves, after the breakup of the country and the decade of wars – with the exception of Slovenes and later Croats –, isolated from the rest of the continent and confined in a corner of Europe excluded from the Schengen visa area in which the free movement has been guaranteed. In order to cross many borders they were suddenly compelled to apply for a visa - which implied a very long and expensive procedure - and humiliate themselves in the process by waiting long hours in a queue in front of the foreign embassies. For the most of the former Yugoslav territory this situation lasted for almost twenty years and still happens to those living in Kosovo.⁴¹ It is not difficult to understand that for those who enjoyed (or whose parents also enjoyed) the freedom of movement and better economic standard, the memory of shopping tours to Trieste is often associated with nostalgia of better times. This memory apparently outweighs that of the frequent shortages of different goods, typical for socialist societies, which compelled the citizens to go shopping abroad.

A quick research on the internet reveals that since visas had been abolished for Serbian citizens, many touristic agencies started offering package shopping tours in Trieste. In doing so, they did not fail to remind the customers of the time "when people were used to buying their best clothes in Trieste and drinking Italian coffee". It is also interesting to read the impressions of the tourists on their return home left on internet forums: some of them were disappointed because Trieste is not the city it used to be or did not match what they imagined.

Based on the findings of the most recent studies, the phenomenon of nostalgia is rather a reaction to the injustices and the unfulfilled expectations of the present and the uncertainty of living conditions in the future,⁴² than grievance for the past. In this context, the nostalgic memory of shopping in Trieste can be interpreted as a reaction to the unfulfilled promises of a fast European integration and economic well-being across the countries of which the former Yugoslavia was comprised.

⁴¹ In December 2009 visas were abolished for citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, in October 2010 for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they could still be reintroduced in the future.

⁴² See among the others M. Velikonja, "Lost in Transition. Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-Socialist Countries", *East European Politics & Societies*, 23(4), (2009), 535-551.

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THE FOREIGN POLICY OF YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1980 DÉTENTE AS REGIONAL COOPERATION: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS

Abstract: The foreign policy of Communist Yugoslavia formed in 1945, was undoubtedly Tito's personal creation. The principal objective of its foreign policy was to maintain the internal political system and independence of the state created by the *coup d'état* of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at the second Antifascist Council of National Liberation (AVNOJ) held in Jajce in November 1943. Even though Tito was the most committed ideological follower of Stalin, three years of independent Yugoslav foreign policy that consisted of territorial demands towards its neighbors provoked the Tito-Stalin split in June 1948.

Forced to restructure his foreign policy, Tito lived through first a period of cooperation with the West (1951-1956), then through a period of close relations with the Eastern Block from 1956 onwards, and especially from 1962 to 1968. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia obliged the Yugoslav communist leader to look for other solutions, such as non-alignment and a regional cooperation in Europe, namely with Italy. Italo-Yugoslav relations in the era of détente were a demonstration how a local priorities were able to bridge the Cold War type of ideological and strategic divide in Europe.

Keywords: *Tito, Yugoslavia, Italy, communism, non-alignment, détente*

The sense and purpose behind the Yugoslav foreign policy under Tito were multi-decennial efforts to advocate and defend the ideology and political order established as a result of the civil war of 1941-1945 in the sphere of international relations. During the German and Italian occupation of the country, the communist-led Partisan detachments under the command of Josip Broz

Tito, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), fought a civil war against the loyalist troops of the Yugoslav Army in Homeland led by General Dragoljub Mihailović. The outcome of the civil war was not, however, resolved on the battlefield in Yugoslavia; rather, it was a consequence of the anti-Nazi coalition's decision to send the Anglo-Saxon armies to create a second European front by landing in Normandy in June 1944 instead in the Balkans.

Ever since the German attack on the USSR in June 1941, Stalin had pressed the British (and later the Americans as well) to open a second front in Europe. Churchill did not believe that the Anglo-Saxon armies could triumph over the Wehrmacht in a head-to-head encounter, therefore he thought that Nazi Germany should first be worn out by aerial attacks, economic blockades and a series of peripheral assaults (in North Africa, Italy, perhaps even the Balkans) before the mortal blow could be dealt by landing in Northern France.¹ Contrary to Churchill, George Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff was determined to land in Normandy during the summer of 1944 and deal the final blow to Hitler's forces. Moreover, he was categorically opposed Churchill's suggestion of engaging American troops in the Balkans. President Roosevelt's support, the drastically greater industrial and economic potential of the US, and the significantly larger number of American divisions planned for the second front all contributed to the abandoning of Churchill's peripheral assault strategy in the summer of 1943.²

A unanimous consensus within the anti-Nazi coalition was reached during the Tehran Conference held from November 28th to December 2nd 1943, when Stalin argued that every operation other than landing in Northern France would be a dispersion of power which would not contribute to victory over Nazism. By allowing Stalin to finally discard the plans for a Balkan landing, Roosevelt (consciously) and Churchill (reluctantly) accepted the supremacy of Soviet military and political interests in the region. Hence, it was only natural that they reached a consensus in Tehran about extending their support in equipment and material resources to the forces led by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, simultaneously acknowledging him as the Allied commander on the Yugoslav battlefield.³ The final outcome of the decision made in Tehran was the entry of Red Army troops into Serbia in October 1944, under the provision of the Tito-Stalin agreement concluded in Moscow in September. The presence of 300,000 strong-Soviet divisions in Yugoslavia decided the outcome of the civil war and allowed Tito to

¹ D. Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 122-124

² R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995, 411.

³ Proceedings from the meeting between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, Tehran, 28 November 1943; *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter *FRUS*), *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961), 493-496.

establish a dictatorship of the Stalinist kind in Yugoslavia. In all Balkan states where the Soviet armies arrived, Soviet-type regimes were installed.⁴ The only exception was Greece, where the British landed in October 1944; even so, the establishment of a Stalinist regime was prevented only after a civil war which raged on for years.⁵

American strategists and Roosevelt's administration in general were trying to predict all consequences of the decision made in Tehran. By early 1943, the State Department (followed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in September) concluded that the USSR would dominate post-war Eastern Europe and that it was beyond the US to prevent such an outcome.⁶ President Roosevelt and his administration realized that it would be impossible to triumph over National Socialism and at the same time prevent the creation of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The contribution of the USSR to the fight against Hitler was simply irreplaceable, as even after the Normandy landing in June 1944 the Nazis still had 90 divisions on the Western and 250 on the Eastern front.⁷ Since the imperative of achieving victory over Nazism demanded that the Soviet sphere of interest in Eastern Europe remain unchallenged, Roosevelt's administration strove to impose a minimum of general principles on which the post-war organization of Europe would rest. Accepting that Eastern Europe would be in the Soviet sphere of interest, what Roosevelt had in mind was the concept of an "open sphere of interest" along the lines of the American sphere of interest in Latin America. The American president believed that the USSR would agree to take part in the global system of international relations based on the project of the United Nations. Within this framework, the Soviet "open sphere of interest" would entail the domination of Soviet military interests in post-war Eastern Europe, but not the establishment of Stalinist regimes according to the Soviet model. Roosevelt believed that after the resolution of the conflict in Eastern Europe it would be necessary to introduce the concepts of democratic political order and multi-party system as well as a liberal economic game including the freedom of economic trade with Western Europe and the US.⁸

⁴ V. Dimitrov, *Stalin's Cold War. Soviet Foreign Policy, Democracy and Communism in Bulgaria, 1941-48* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 77.

⁵ Churchill's tardy efforts to organize an Anglo-American landing in Istria in August 1944 (Thomas M. Barker, "The Ljubljana Gap Strategy: Alternative to Anvil/Dragoon or Fantasy", *The Journal of Military History*, 56, 1, 62-63), as well as to secure a British sphere of interest in the Balkans alongside the Soviet one in direct negotiations with Stalin, did not prove successful. Churchill to Roosevelt, October 18th 1944 in F. L. Loewenheim, H. D. Langle, M. Jonas, eds., *Roosevelt and Churchill, their Secret Wartime Correspondence* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), 586-588). The agreement they reached became obsolete with the advance of the Soviet armies.

⁶ J. L. Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 74.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸ E. Mark, "American policy towards Eastern Europe and the origins of the Cold War, 1941-1946: an alternative interpretation", *Journal of American History*, 68, 2, 1981, 320-21; L. C. Gardner, *Spheres of Influence. The Partition of Europe from Munich to Yalta* (London: Murray, 1992), 150,

The aforementioned American demands and the fact that the decisions made at the Tehran Conference placed Yugoslavia in the Soviet sphere of interest provided the framework for the foreign policy led by Tito's movement and the state he created following World War II. Its basic tasks will be to – within these outlines – safeguard the power of the Communist Party and the independence of communist Yugoslavia. There is no doubt, however, that the inclusion in the Soviet sphere of interest was by far the more challenging of the two given elements, for ideological as well as geostrategic reasons. In the first years following the war, this inclusion seemed natural because the second Yugoslavia had been founded on the principle of the Communist Party's absolute power. This fundamental postulate would remain unchallenged even after the split with Stalin in 1948; the only difference would be that the inclusion of Yugoslavia in the Soviet sphere of interest hereafter became the main problem of Yugoslav foreign policy and remained so until the fall of the Berlin Wall and her breakup in 1992.

The absolute power of the CPY meant that it also controlled the country's foreign policy, despite the existence of all institutions of formal democracy in Yugoslavia – from the National Assembly to the Department of Foreign Affairs. Democracy was merely formal – professedly people's since supposedly placed in the hands of the people – because it allowed no opposition at all, institutionalized or otherwise. Tito and his associates firmly believed in the Messianic legitimacy of their Communist dictatorship. In one-party political system, the power over all matters – including those of foreign policy – rested in the hands of the Communist Party, and nowhere more so than in the hands of J. B. Tito, its Secretary-General, who would, after being appointed Prime Minister and then President of Yugoslavia, finally be awarded the latter title for life. The foreign policy of communist Yugoslavia was no doubt a personal creation of Tito's; this was not because he was a great strategist or a trained diplomat, but due to the nature of one-party systems, it was him who made final decisions concerning the foreign policy strategy of the second Yugoslavia. Thus, for example, the widespread debate among our historians about the authorship of the policy of non-alignment is in fact moot – cooperation with the Third World became the Yugoslav official policy only when Tito accepted it, previously having been just one of the options available to Yugoslav foreign policy. In Yugoslavia, the Communist state as a one party dictatorship was embodied in Tito's person and his Stalin-like personal cult. On lower levels of the communist government, others did make decisions in his name; in matters of foreign policy, however, the final decisions were personally made by Tito in the name of the whole country.

From its beginnings in November 1943 until Tito's death in 1980, the history of Yugoslav foreign policy was in fact a series of chronologically linked strategies whose coherence rested on a common goal, that is, paths and ways

162, 172; W. F. Kimbal, *The Juggler, Franklin Roosevelt as a Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 102, 169; B. Arcidiacono, "L'Europe balkanique entre guerre et paix, relations interalliées et partage en spheres", *Relations internationales*, 47/3, 1986, 352-54.

employed to preserve the Communist rule and the independence of the second Yugoslavia. Her inclusion in the Soviet sphere of interest caused this battle to be fought first and foremost against the USSR, both on the ideological and the geostrategic front.

If we take the relations with the USSR as our basic criterion, the foreign policy of the second Yugoslavia can be divided into four distinct parts: the loyal follower period (1945-1948); the conflict (1948-1956); cooperation (1957-1968); détente (1968-1980). Throughout all these periods, there can be no doubt as to the link between the communist ideology and foreign policy; the decisive influence of the relations with the USSR on the orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy is also beyond question. The alternating periods of cooperation and open or latent conflicts (there would be no final breaks after Stalin's death) prove that the Yugoslav Communists thought their country's ideological legitimacy no less important than its independence. The foreign policy of Yugoslavia had to convince the international communist movement and public opinion that it was indeed possible for Communism to exist outside the USSR and the Soviet bloc.

The USSR's Most Loyal Follower: Yugoslavia during the Cold War 1945-1948

It was the main objective of the foreign policy led by Tito's Yugoslavia that caused the Cold War to begin long before the term itself was coined and its meaning established. The explanation for this hypothesis lies first and foremost in the plans of the movement under Tito's leadership. For Tito and his movement, the revolution was the main objective; the struggle against the German and Italian forces present in Yugoslavia was merely the means to this end. Therefore, during talks with the 717th Nazi division in March 1943, Tito (via his envoys) stated that he saw no reason for conflicts, because the side that the Partisans wanted to defeat was their enemy in the civil war – the Yugoslav Army in Homeland under the command of General Mihailović. There is no doubt that Tito considered the war against the Nazis to be just a passing episode in the revolutionary process and that he was convinced that Hitler would be defeated. However, it was of utmost importance that after the Nazis had been defeated the communist-led Partisans will come to power in Yugoslavia with the help of the Red Army. In contrast, if after the defeat of the Nazis the Mihailović forces were to seize power with the support of their Anglo-American allies, who would – in this scenario – land on the Adriatic coast, the fate of the Tito-led communist revolution would be sealed. The main aim of both Tito and the CPY was the revolution and a Stalinist Popular Front;⁹ the war merely provided a favorable

⁹ The policy of the Stalinist Popular Front, proclaimed by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, consisted of making alliances of communists with other political parties in order to reinforce the country's capacity to withstand Nazi pressure and in the case of

moment for the realization of their revolutionary plans. The ideological framework of Tito and his movement was Stalinist and had been adopted before the war, but the manner in which they employed it in Yugoslavia was an indication of the relations which would be established in Europe a few years after the war. The best evidence that Tito and his Partisans were the forerunners of a way of thinking later described as "Cold War logic" lies in their relations with the Anglo-American allies during the struggle for international recognition of their movement and the territorial ambitions they showed after the war.

The Struggle for International Recognition

In December 1943, Tito's movement had no legal or political legitimacy whatsoever, except their participation in the struggle against the Nazis. But his ambitions were much greater: to organize a coup d'état and establish a people's government, and this could only be realized with the recognition from Anglo-American allies, as there was no doubt that the Soviets would, for their part, offer their recognition. It was Churchill who gave Tito the opportunity to solve the problem of his movement's international recognition. In early 1944, the British Prime Minister proposed an agreement between King Peter II and the royal government on one side and Tito on the other. Since there was no other way for Tito to secure legitimacy for his movement on the international scene but to reach some kind of agreement with the royal government, he accepted Churchill's initiative. However, he firmly refused to negotiate with the King and in February 1944 suggested that the royal government be represented by Ivan Šubašić, the governor of Croatia according to the agreement of 1939 and a professed sympathizer of the Partisan movement.¹⁰ Their talks began in June 1944 on the British controlled island of Vis, but the outcome was not a joint government of the Tito's movement and the royal government; instead, two of Tito's representatives were included in the latter. Two parties agreed on the common principles of action, each in its own sphere of activity. By this agreement, all Tito's units and institutions were recognized by the royal government represented by Šubašić, while the Partisans acknowledged the King's authority, but under the conditions stipulated at the Second Session of the AVNOJ.¹¹

war enable it to become a valuable ally for the Soviet Union. The said Stalin's strategy was based on two variants of Popular Front. The initial explained above, or as it was called the Popular front from above, was supplanted in 1939 after Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, with the so-called, Popular Front from below, which saw the Communists as the only organized political force in the Front, all other political parties and forces had to be excluded. The second variant, which was in fact a sort of a program of communist revolution, was Tito's *credo* during the war and afterwards in communist Yugoslavia.

¹⁰ Fitzroy McLean to Anthony Eden, 2 March 1944 in D. Biber, *Tito Čerčil – strogo tajno* (Zagreb: Globus, 1981), 97.

¹¹ The Assembly of AVNOJ, composed exclusively of communists and their sympathizers, decided to forbid the return of the King in Yugoslavia pending the decision on the fate of the

Tito's movement became the only legitimate authority in the country, while Šubašić's government, now enlarged by the two members appointed by Tito, was tasked with representing Yugoslavia in foreign relations.¹² Thus, Tito accepted a compromise in order to gain international recognition for his movement, but also blocked any influence of Šubašić's government and the Allies themselves on events in the country.

The beginnings of Tito's wartime diplomacy were based on attempts to hide the communist character of the Partisan movement from the Anglo-American allies, while simultaneously continuing with the practice of regularly reporting to Moscow. In August 1944, during his talks with Churchill in Caserta, Tito declared he had no intention of introducing Communism in Yugoslavia. In late August, he repeated this statement to Robert Murphy, the American diplomatic representative in the Mediterranean area, during his private visit to the island of Vis on August 31st 1944.¹³ At the same time, Tito was informing Stalin about his decisions and contacts with the other Allies. With Moscow's support, Tito withstood Churchill's pressure to form a joint government with Šubašić's; thus, he effectively removed all grounds for the royal government to influence events in the country.¹⁴ Tito's priority was to achieve victory in the civil war and seize power in Serbia, the key region in Yugoslavia, so a joint government would have only made the realization of his strategy more difficult.¹⁵ After nine months of diplomatic efforts, in September 1944, Churchill was forced to accept that his Yugoslav policy had failed, as Tito left Vis without informing him and flew to Moscow, while continuing his offensive on Serbia.

Moscow's active support and the imminent arrival of the Red Army in Yugoslavia had renewed the Partisans' confidence. The liberation of Belgrade in October 1944 by Soviet troops with the modest help of the Partisans definitely consolidated the power of Tito and his movement in Yugoslavia. After three years of struggle, all conditions required for the political takeover of the CPY had finally been fulfilled. The Red Army had allowed units under Tito's command to defeat the forces of the royalist Yugoslav Army in Homeland in Serbia and finally emerge victorious from the civil war. Owing to the support of Soviet troops, a front in the modern sense of the word was created in Yugoslavia – the Strymian front. In the background of the front, the first territory controlled by Tito's forces was established and managed to withstand German assaults, as opposed to all previous "liberated areas" from the "Republic of Užice" (1941) on-

Monarchy, which was supposed to be taken on the occasion of the elections in the liberated Yugoslavia.

¹² Murphy to Cordell Hull, Caserta, 30 August 1944, *FRUS* 1944, IV, 1402, 1403.

¹³ Murphy to James Cannon, Washington, 8 September 1944, *FRUS* 1944, IV, 1403, 1404.

¹⁴ Henry Maxwell, the Deputy Chief of the British military mission, transmitted the message of the Foreign Office to Tito; Vis, 13 September 1944; (Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, hereafter AJ), KMJ, I-3-b/890.

¹⁵ Tito to Maxwell, Vis, 16 September 16 1944; *Ibid.*

ward, which had fallen as soon as the Germans decided to attack. It was on this liberated territory that the last stage of the civil war begun in 1941 took place – the forceful takeover of power. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, with Tito at its helm, could within the Soviet sphere of interest freely impose the state order it had always wanted and start leading a foreign policy aimed at justifying and defending the political order of the second, communist Yugoslavia. The realization of their political program had given immense confidence to Tito and his Partisans, as well as an almost metaphysical certainty that their political views were justified. The victory in the civil war won with the help of the Soviets led to a change of tone in the communication with the Western Allies. In October 1944, Tito and the Partisans started demanding that relations with Great Britain and the US be established on the state level within the framework of the Allied coalition. They considered their movement (and the state which had emerged from it) to be one of the key allies, as they believed that the victims they had suffered had given them the moral right to realize the program adopted at the AVNOJ in 1943 – international recognition and territorial expansion.

Hence, the talks between Tito and Šubašić, which were resumed after the liberation of Belgrade, went on in an entirely different tone. The former Croatian governor represented the royal government and enjoyed the support of the British Prime Minister; the latter, however, no longer had any means of influencing the events in Yugoslavia. Tito commanded the army and the state administration was entirely controlled by the CPY; hence, he was able to dictate to Šubašić the positions that the new government would take and to impose the institution of the King's regents on him, as well as their names. Despite the personal dissatisfaction of the British Prime Minister with Tito's acts, his Cabinet advised the King Peter II and Šubašić to accept his conditions, as it felt they had no other choice. The modalities of the new agreement were formulated during the talks between Tito and Šubašić in December 1944 and received Allied support at the Yalta Conference. The Yugoslav sovereign opposed the agreement which effectively stripped him of power until February 1945, when he too had no choice but to accept it in principle. The King's attempt to personally choose the regents who would represent him in Yugoslavia failed, because the regents were appointed in accordance with the agreement between Tito and the Šubašić's government. The new government was formed on March 7th 1945, with Tito as its Prime Minister and Šubašić as its Minister of Foreign Affairs. Thus, Tito's movement achieved international recognition without deviating from its political program. The Anglo-American Allies expressed their objections to the undemocratic character of the new government in notes sent to the government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY), but nonetheless accepted to accredit their ambassadors with the regents and the provisional government of the DFY.

This, however, was not the end of the process of establishing the new regime, as it lacked the legitimacy that only post-war elections could provide.

The agreement with Šubašić had stipulated that Tito and the CPY had the obligation to organize elections for the constitutional assembly; they also had to acknowledge the counsels of the Crimea Conference to expand the AVNOJ to include the members of the National Assembly elected at the elections of 1938. However, in its capacity of provisional representational body, the AVNOJ passed a series of laws which made the authority of the provisional government untouchable, while the CPY used its security agencies to inspire such terror that it was impossible to organize any opposition to Tito's regime. Already in the summer of 1945, the members of the former royal government informed the American and British diplomatic envoys that any political action of theirs was entirely stifled and that they feared for their own lives and the lives of their sympathizers. Entirely independently and ignoring the stipulations of the Tito-Šubašić agreement, the provisional government formed the cabinets in charge of the six federal units. The manner in which the AVNOJ was expanded was another indication that Tito and the CPY would not tolerate any kind of opposition. The law on the electoral process had given all competence for the organization of the elections to the Popular Front – that is to say the CPY – because only the Popular Front had authority to decide who could vote and who could be elected. The criterion was always the same – collaboration with the enemy during the war – which did not need to be proven as long as the representatives of the People's Front thought someone guilty of it. In August 1945, Tito even publicly declared that the introduction of multi-party democracy was redundant, as the people had already achieved the type of democracy most suited to its needs. He also said that the rule of the people was not compatible with the monarchy and that the Popular Front must fight for the introduction of the republican system. On August 19th, the representative of the Democratic Party Milan Grol resigned from the Tito's cabinet, followed by Šubašić and his colleague from the Croatian Peasant Party Josip Šutej in October 1945.

On October 18th, the American ambassador Richard Patterson verbally communicated the position of the American administration to Tito, stating that the November elections could not be considered free or fair because of police pressure and the lack of freedom of speech and public congregation. On November 17th, after obtaining the landslide victory at the elections, Tito replied and denied all American complaints:

“In the name of my government and on the grounds of the above statements, I declare that we consider all our obligations fulfilled and the Allied governments freed from the obligations they might consider to have towards the peoples of Yugoslavia. This is best illustrated by the results of the elections held on November 11th, when the people – entirely of its free will and in great majority – expressed its faith in the People's Front and the government over which I have the honor of presiding”.¹⁶

¹⁶ The response of Broz to the American note of November 6th in the telegram sent from Patterson to Burns; Belgrade, 19 November 1945, *FRUS* 1945, V, 1286, 1287.

By his response, Tito let the Anglo-American allies know that he considered the November 11th elections had given his government complete legality and legitimacy and that any further interference in Yugoslavia's affairs on the basis of the wartime agreement would be unnecessary and futile. In December 1945, the American and British governments recognized the government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Having finally achieved international recognition, Tito's movement was free to devote all its attention to the second part of the program adopted at 1943 AVNOJ – territorial expansion. On 30 November 1943, the Presidium of the AVNOJ had passed the decision about the annexation of Italian province of Venezia Giulia, Istria and other Croatian-inhabited islands to the Yugoslav federation.¹⁷

Territorial ambitions

The territorial ambitions of Tito were based on the ethnic principle, the contribution of Partisans to the struggle against the Germany and Italy within the Allied coalition, and the revolutionary solidarity among Communist movements in the Balkans. The common denominator for all three of these grounds was the endeavor to expand the territorial scope of the country Tito intended to lead as much as possible. Despite its revolutionary character, Tito's movement in fact adopted all territorial demands of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; however, they were no longer considered imperialistic or oppressive, but were deemed an expression of the right to self-determination of the peoples which had chosen to join the Yugoslav federation proclaimed by AVNOJ in 1943. Thus, on the basis of their right to self-determination and the activity of the Partisan detachments present even in the vicinity of Trieste, the Slovenes and Croats reasoned, they had every right to demand that all territories of pre-war Italy east of the river Soča (Isonzo) be annexed to the second Yugoslavia.

The Macedonian Slavs were also guaranteed the right of self-determination, but it went without saying that they would – under the leadership of the CPY – use it to unite the three parts of Macedonia (Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Greek) into a single federal unit which would, in turn, become a part of the Yugoslav federation. Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo was entrusted with this task and sent to Macedonia as the envoy of Tito's Supreme Command. In early 1944, the Bulgarian communists received orders from their secretary-general Georgi Dimitrov – i.e. from the Soviet leadership in Moscow – not to resist Tito's intentions and not propagate the formation of an independent Macedonia outside the borders of Tito's Yugoslavia. It was Tito's idea to include Bulgaria itself as a federal unit in the Yugoslav federation, in order to prevent Sofia from perceiving the annexation of Pirin (Bulgarian) Macedonia to Yugoslavia

¹⁷ The decisions of the Presidium of the AVNOJ, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ*, II (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1989), 24-25.

as a territorial loss, but as a change of borders within a single socialist federation. In December 1944, Edvard Kardelj, Tito's closest associate, traveled to Sofia to negotiate with Bulgarian comrades their possible entry in the Yugoslav federation.¹⁸

Kosovo and Metohija and the problem of relations with Albania proved particularly challenging for Tito's policy of self-determination. At the Bujan Conference in 1943, all Albanian communists and some CPY instructors (such as Milutin Popović) sent to Albania opted for the annexation of Kosovo and Metohija to Albania. Tito was repeatedly forced to insist that the condition for the realization of the policy of self-determination was the struggle against the foreign troops in Yugoslavia. This condition was not easy to fulfill in Kosovo and Metohija because the Albanian population thought that its national objective had already been realized during the Italian occupation, when this region had been annexed to the Italian occupational zone in Albania. The Yugoslav communist federation – now tending to become a Balkan one – was the solution that Tito had offered to Albanians on both sides of the border. Tito's movement was giving all available material, ideological and logistic help to the Albanian Communist party and the Albanian resistance movement, hoping that – as Tito stated as early as January 1944 – the Albanians would agree to join the federation headed by himself in order to create a single, powerful, large Balkan country comprised of peoples enjoying equal rights.¹⁹

The territorial pretensions of Tito's movement included Carinthia, because – as Tito told the Slovenian people in April 1944, on the third anniversary of the Liberation Front of the Slovene People (OF) – their brethren in Carinthia had to be united with Slovenia within the Yugoslav federation.²⁰ Thus, already during the war Tito was making plans and preparing the ground for the formation of a federal Yugoslavia from Soča and Carinthia in the West to the Albanian coast and the Black Sea on the East. During his visit to the USSR in September 1944, he received Soviet support for this project. Stalin supported the strongest resistance movement in its intention to become the cornerstone of the Soviet-controlled Balkans.²¹ But, the Soviet support had its limits – the USSR would not allow Tito's territorial ambitions to provoke disagreements with the American and British governments. However, Tito and his movement – entirely convinced that the ethnic principle and the losses suffered in the struggle against the Germans and Italians entitle them to draw

¹⁸ Kardelj to Tito, Sofia, 24 December 1944; AJ, 836, I-3-b/109.

¹⁹ D. T. Bataković, *Serbia's Kosovo Drama. A Historical Perspective* (Belgrade: Čigoja Press, 2012), 97-103.

²⁰ Tito to the people of Slovenia, Drvar, 24 April 1944, J.B. Tito, *Sabrana dela* (Belgrade: Izdavački centar Komunist, 1984), XX, 22.

²¹ Leonid Gibianskii, "Federative Projects of the Balkan Communists and the USSR Policy during Second World War and at the Beginning of the Cold War", in V. G. Pavlović, ed., *The Balkans in the Cold War* (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2012), 52

the Balkan borders on their own – did not shy away from coming into conflict with the Western allies. The American and British governments quickly realized the aggressive nature of Tito's movement, which was a product of a particular mixture of ideological Messianism and the confidence of an autochthonous resistance movement. Already in May 1945, in a letter to his Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Churchill commented on Tito's territorial pretensions, mentioning his metaphor of the iron curtain coming down on Europe, which had yet to become famous. Within the framework of this image, Tito's movement was given a prominent role, as Churchill was convinced that Tito would demand all territories east of Soča.²² So, it was with Cold War logic that the British Prime Minister reasoned when he thought of the territorial pretensions of Tito; he would keep in line with it during his efforts to limit the expansion of Tito's communist movement and Soviet influence in general towards the West.

Tito's Fourth Army was created on March 2nd 1945 and tasked with liberating the Croatian coast and Istria and reaching Trieste before the Anglo-American allies. The advance of Tito's movement in the first days of May led it into direct conflict with the British troops stationed in the vicinity of Trieste. Tito consciously ignored all agreements he had previously made with the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean, the British field marshal Alexander. Hence, the Western allies – in the case of Tito's Yugoslavia, for the first time – decided to prevent any further advance of their recent ally towards the West, even if it led to armed conflict. By applying his aggressive policy, Tito managed to inaugurate the first – albeit limited and regional – confrontation between the East and the West, using the same logic which will be the hallmark of post-war history of Europe. On May 10th 1945, Joseph Grew, the US Undersecretary of State, in a memorandum for the new American president Harry Truman, commented on the advance of Tito's Fourth Army: "At the time when we have finally won the military battle on Europe and have millions of men under arms on that continent, we must decide whether we shall accept that the future borders of Western Europe be decided on the basis of one-sided acts of aggression."²³ President Truman's reaction was clear: "If Tito should refuse to accept the Allied control over this region (as defined by Alexander), the Field Marshal Alexander should be instructed to use all means, including force."²⁴

Defending Italy's territorial integrity, the British forces stopped the advance of Tito's Partisans in the suburbs of Trieste and established their own rule in the city itself. Truman had to intervene with Stalin to get Tito to ac-

²² Churchill to Eden, London, May 4th 1945, The National Archives, Public Records Office, PREM 3 495/1.

²³ Grew's memorandum to Truman, Washington, 10 May 1945; series, National Archives in Washington (NAW), series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /5-1045 group 59.

²⁴ Truman's letter to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, 11 May 1945, NAW, series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /6-1045 group 59.

cept an agreement on June 9th 1945 – the Venezia Giulia was divided into two zones: the Western one under the control of the Allies (including Pola and Trieste) and the Eastern, Yugoslav zone.²⁵

The Western allies also had to consider Tito's demand of April 2nd 1945 to have its own occupational zone in Austria, where his units had already been operating for a while, as he had promised to the OF. The Soviets had already unilaterally allowed Tito to keep his units in their occupational zone in Austria. The British, however, staunchly refused to accept the presence of Tito's units in Austria, precisely because his movement had expressed territorial pretensions over Carinthia. The participation of Tito's units in the occupation of Carinthia could have altered the fate of this region that could only be decided at the peace conference. Due to the firm position of the British government, Tito had no choice but to pull back and move his units over the Yugoslav-Austrian border established in 1937.²⁶

With his aggressive policy of territorial expansion, Tito not only forced the Western allies to act in accordance with Cold War logic, but in time also started provoking the dissatisfaction of his Soviet protector. Every time when there was a chance that Yugoslavia could cause disagreements between the USSR and the Western allies, Stalin was forced to pacify Tito. The project of Bulgaria's inclusion in the Yugoslav federation – the reason for Kardelj's visit to Sofia – was aborted in January 1945 at the request of the British government. Churchill was not sympathetic to the idea of Tito's influence spilling over into Bulgaria, and before the peace agreement with Bulgaria the Soviets had been unable to sanction any kind of Yugoslav independent initiative, as it could be used as a precedent for future peace agreements with Germany and Italy. Stalin advised Andrija Hebrang, the Minister of Economy in the provisional Yugoslav government who was in Moscow in January 1945, that for the time being it would be better to settle for an agreement on mutual aid with Bulgaria instead of pushing for a federation. On the same occasion, he let Hebrang know that he thought a dualist solution for the relations between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria more suitable than a federal one.²⁷ Seeing that due to the opposition from London and Stalin's reservations there was no chance for Bulgaria to join the Yugoslav federation, Tito lost interest in this project. He was much more interested in the annexation of Pirin (Bulgarian) Macedonia to Yugoslav Macedonia, and received Stalin's support for this idea during his visit to Moscow in May and June 1946. The Bulgarian comrades side, however, were more than reserved towards this option and they did not even acknowledge the existence of Mace-

²⁵ The text of the agreement signed in Belgrade on June 9th 1945 in the letter of the chargé d'affaires Harold Shantz, Grew, Belgrade, 18 June 1945, NAW, series, 740.00119 CONTROL (ITALY) /6-1845 group 59.

²⁶ Tito's note to the British ambassador Ralph Stevenson, Belgrade, May 13th 1945; Stevenson's reply, Belgrade, 17 May 1945; Tito's reply, Belgrade, 19 May 1945; AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/905.

²⁷ Hebrang to Tito, Moscow, 2 January 1945, AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/586.

donian minority in the constitution passed in 1946. Eventually, the idea of establishing an institutional link between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria ceased to be a political project and became more of a propaganda slogan, most exploited by Georgi Dimitrov.²⁸

Tito had much more success in establishing an institutional link with Albania. An agreement on economic cooperation was signed in July, followed by an agreement on synchronizing economic plans, monetary policy and import taxes in November 1946. Within the framework of the Soviet bloc, Tito and Yugoslavia were in charge of relations with Albania. During his talks with Stalin in May 1946, Tito mentioned the possibility of including Albania in the Yugoslav federation, but Stalin was unconvinced. He thought that Yugoslavia must first solve the problem of Trieste.²⁹ The envisaged institutional link-up between Yugoslavia and Albania was intended to solve the problem of Kosovo and Metohija. In April 1947, Kardelj told Stalin in Moscow that the Yugoslav leadership had plans to give control over this region to Albania after the establishment of closer institutional links between the two countries.³⁰ To Tito, the aspect of military cooperation with Albania was particularly important, especially in view of the civil war in Greece. There were Yugoslav instructors in the Albanian army, and Yugoslavia was helping its organization in material and arms. The next step in this military cooperation was the project of setting up a Yugoslav military base in the vicinity of the city of Korçë to provide support to Albania in the event of Greek military provocations.³¹ Tito in fact felt that the more than substantial funding Yugoslavia had provided to Albania – 340 million dinars as military aid only – would only be a sensible investment if Albania were to be integrated into the Yugoslav system of defense; that was also the light in which he considered the possibility of sending one division to the base at Korçë. Otherwise, in the case of a Greek attack across Albania, southern Macedonia would find itself at risk, as the Albanian army was entirely unprepared to answer such a challenge. Also, Tito threatened to withdraw military and economic aid to Albania unless she accepted the possibility of including its territory into the Yugoslav defense system.³²

The military cooperation between Yugoslavia and Albania was going on without consultations with the Soviets, who were not informed about the project of setting up a Yugoslav base at Korçë. In January 1948, the Albanian communist leader Enver Hoxha first agreed to this project and then informed

²⁸ Gibianskii, "Federative Projects of the Balkan Communists", 55-56.

²⁹ Proceedings of Stalin's talks with Tito, Moscow, 27 May 1946, Collection of documents: *Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi 1945-1956* (Belgrade: The Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010), 109

³⁰ Proceedings of Stalin's talks with Kardelj, Moscow, 19 April 1947, *Ibid.*, 181

³¹ M. Pavlović, "Albania between Tito and Stalin" in: V. G. Pavlović, *The Balkans in the Cold War*, 165.

³² Tito to Kardelj, Djilas and Bakarić; Belgrade, 13 February 1948, AJ, KMJ, I-3-b/650.

the Soviets about it.³³ The Soviet reaction was more than negative. Molotov issued an official protest via his ambassador in Belgrade, as Yugoslavia was obliged to inform Moscow of projects such as this by the stipulations of the agreement on their alliance. Stalin summoned Tito to Moscow for talks, but Tito sent instead members of his Politburo, Milovan Djilas, Edvard Kardelj and Vladimir Bakarić. Bulgarian leaders came also to discuss the situation in the Balkans. At the meeting held in Moscow on February 11th 1948, after three years of continued Yugoslav territorial demands, Stalin and his associates finally decided that they are damaging to Soviet interests and, more importantly, that Moscow had neither control over nor insight into Yugoslav initiatives. The Yugoslav aggressive policy could have had dire consequences: the Western allies could have interpreted the arrival of Yugoslav forces as an opportunity to interfere in Albania, thereby creating another zone of conflict in the Balkans.

Tito's territorial pretensions had led him into disagreement first with the Western allies and then with the USSR as well. Just like he thought he was entitled to demand that all territories east of Soča River be annexed to Yugoslavia, Tito thought that he could disobey the demands Stalin had communicated to Yugoslav leaders at the meeting in Moscow on February 11th 1948. Also, at the meeting of the Politburo on March 1st 1948, Tito refused Stalin's suggestion of a two-partite federation with Bulgaria, because he judged that it could serve as a way for the Soviet security services to control Yugoslavia with the help of Bulgarian communists. He did not agree to abandon his policy of economic and military control over Albania. In a word, for the first time ever, Tito and his Politburo refused to enact Stalin's directives.³⁴ When Sreten Žujović, himself a member of the Yugoslav Politburo, informed unofficially the Soviet ambassador of these conclusions who then forwarded them to Moscow, the Soviet leadership concluded that Tito was no longer pursuing a common policy in the Balkans, having abandoned it for his own. Tito even refused to accept Stalin's call to order which was in itself an open challenge to the leading role of the USSR among the people's democracies. Therefore on March 27th 1948 the Central Committee of the CP of USSR sent a letter to the Yugoslav communists informing them of their excommunication.³⁵ By Stalin's decision – first formulated in the letters of the Central Committee of the USSR to the CPY and then in the conclusions of the Cominform (Comintern's successor) Tito and his associates were expelled from the communist bloc and denounced as collaborators with the imperialists.

³³ M. Pavlović, "Albania between Tito and Stalin", 166.

³⁴ Proceedings from the session of the Politburo of the CPY, Belgrade, 1 March 1948, *Zbornik dokumenata*, 260-264.

³⁵ L. Gibianski, "Sovjetsko-jugoslovenski sukob 1948: istoriografske verzije i novi arhivski izvori" in: J. Fisher, A. Gabrić, L. Gibianskii, E.S.Klein, R. W. Preussen, eds., *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni* (Ljubljana: Institut za novejšo zgodovino & University of Toronto, 2004), 42-44.

Less than three years after the war had ended, Tito's uncompromising foreign policy had led him to the excommunication from the Soviet-controlled bloc of states and to the verge of conflict with the Western allies. The territorial conflict in the Venezia Giulia was only an episode in Tito's aggressive policy toward his recent allies. In summer 1946, the Yugoslav anti-air defense brought down an American cargo aircraft which had been flying over Yugoslav without its permission. Pursuing his Cold War logic, Tito refused the aid supplied by UNRRA because he wouldn't allow its representatives to distribute it in Yugoslavia. He also refused the aid of the Western powers within the framework of the Marshall Plan, reasoning that this too would also represent an unacceptable interference in the interior affairs of Yugoslavia.

The ambitious and independent regional policy of Tito's Yugoslavia, however, did not originate from an ideological conflict with the USSR – quite the opposite. On the ideological level, the Yugoslav communists were completely in accord with the views of their Soviet comrades. They were the most ardent advocates of creating a new forum for the cooperation between communist parties. The Cominform was created owing to the efforts of (among others) the Yugoslav representatives Kardelj and Djilas at the founding session held in September 1947 in Poland. On that occasion, they enthusiastically accepted the Soviet suggestion that its headquarters be set up in Belgrade. There is no doubt that Tito was Stalin's most loyal ideological disciple, but also the only one who considered himself entitled to his own initiatives in matters of foreign policy. It was Tito's misunderstanding of Yugoslavia's position in the Eastern bloc that led to the break in state and party relations with the USSR in June 1948. The confidence he acquired during the civil war he had fought outside of Stalin's direct control, led Tito to disregard the experiences he had accumulated while residing in Moscow in the 1930s. The leading role of Stalin and the CPSU did not allow any sort of independent policy within the Eastern bloc.³⁶

Conflict: 1948-1956

In 1948, Tito and the CPY, but also the Yugoslavia they ruled, found themselves in an extremely difficult international position. The West thought them orthodox Stalinists who had created the first two hotspots of the Cold War – Trieste and the civil war in Greece; the Soviets, in turn, considered them revisionists and traitors of Communism. Tito had been following the Cold War logic ever since the Session of the AVNOJ in November 1943; less than five years later, he had brought it to paroxysm. In Yugoslavia, the Cold War began much earlier than anywhere else in Europe but also ended drastically earlier – in June 1948 with the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet fold.

³⁶ D. T. Bataković, *Yugoslavie. Nations, religions, idéologies* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1994), 236-243.

His confidence – which at times made him blinded by his own importance – had led Tito and his movement to the very outskirts of the bloc division. They were forced to defend their independence and communist ideology in the face of Western economic pressure, but also the ideological and military pressure of the East. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, Yugoslavia was no longer part of either bloc. It could not be a member of the Eastern bloc anymore and because of its communist regime did not want to become a part of the Western alliance. The Cold War logic was no longer of use to Tito's Yugoslavia, as in the following period its foreign policy had to be based on an innovative concept of cooperation with both blocs. The process of learning and adapting to the new orientation of its foreign policy marked the period of its conflict with the USSR from 1948 to 1956.

The gradual disruption of all relations with the USSR and the Eastern bloc caused a series of problems. Incidents on the eastern borders of Yugoslavia were symptoms of the military pressure, while the ideological conflict manifested itself in the periodic denunciations by the Cominform. Among Yugoslav leaders, Tito was the most enthusiastic advocate of a policy meant to deny the Soviet accusations that Yugoslavia had joined the camp of the enemies of Marxism and Leninism. In March 1949, more than six months after the excommunication, at a meeting of the Politburo Tito suggested that Moscow be asked for advice on how to act in the event of a Greek attack on Albania.³⁷ Tito did not want the conflict with the USSR to get an international dimension, because, as he said: "We must not allow the materialists to take advantage of our dispute with the USSR; we shall follow our own revolutionary course." In August 1949, he refused Western offers of supplying arms to Yugoslavia.³⁸ His conclusion was that Yugoslavia „should not do what would not be to the liking of the Soviet people and the progressive public in the world." In practice, that meant that the Yugoslav diplomacy should apply for non-permanent membership in the Security Council, but not bring up the conflict with the USSR within that institution.³⁹ However, in his speech before the UN General Assembly in September 1949, Kardelj warned the USSR and other East European countries that they must back up their pacifist policy with deeds in relations with Yugoslavia. He drew the attention of the global public to the fact that the USSR and its allies were keeping Yugoslavia under an economic embargo, spreading enemy propaganda and openly threatening it with military force.⁴⁰

The change in the attitude of the Yugoslav leadership occurred in September 1949, after the trial of Laszlo Rajk, the Hungarian Minister of Interior Affairs and later Foreign Affairs as well. The charges brought against Rajk were in fact leveled at the Yugoslav leadership. The Soviets responded to the interna-

³⁷ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 22 March 1949, AJ, 507-40.

³⁸ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 30 August 1949, AJ, 507-42.

³⁹ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 7 September 1949, AJ, 507-43.

⁴⁰ D. Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988), 84-85.

tionalization of the Tito-Stalin split by annulling the agreement of friendship with Yugoslavia, expelling its ambassador from Moscow and finally breaking all political, economic and cultural ties with Belgrade. The Soviet example was followed by all other members of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the deterioration of relations between Belgrade and Moscow helped Yugoslavia gain the support of the West for its non-permanent membership in the Security Council. In October 1949, Yugoslavia was made a temporary member of the UN Security Council with a two-year mandate.

The threats voiced at the meeting of the Cominform in Hungary in November 1949 even suggested the possibility of a military conflict between the Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia. The escalation of the conflict inspired the Yugoslav communists to respond on the ideological level for the first time. In December 1949, in an interview with the French journalist Louis Dalmas Tito stated that the aggressive campaign of the USSR and its allies against Yugoslavia was a consequence of ideological revisionism and the deviation of the Eastern bloc from Marxism-Leninism. In late December 1949, at the Third Plenum of the CPY Central Committee, Kardelj announced the new strategy of Yugoslav foreign policy. He advocated a balanced approach to all capitalist countries, a more "flexible" attitude towards former enemies Italy and Greece, and the lowering of the tone of anti-capitalist propaganda. His speech was met with complete silence from the audience, but – in a typically communist manner – received unanimous support because Tito was in its favor.⁴¹

The end of 1949 was marked by a turnaround in Yugoslav foreign policy, which had in fact occurred more than a year after the resolution of the Cominform. The decision to finally confront Moscow openly and publicly on the international scene but also to emphasize the ideological distinctiveness of Yugoslav communism was made gradually. It was during this period that the basic principles of Tito's foreign policy strategies emerged – the very principles which he would not deviate from until the end of his days. In matters of foreign policy, Tito was governed by a few principles; the first and most important was to never allow the international and „progressive" public to come under the impression that he personally or Yugoslavia had been the instigators of the political and ideological break with the USSR. It was particularly important to him that the ideological orthodoxy of the revolution he had led should never come into question, but also to avoid such acts as could give rise to the accusations that he had caused dissension in the global communist movement. The image of the Yugoslav communists in the global working-class movement mattered to him as much as the position of Yugoslavia on the international stage.

This axiom of his foreign policy – especially in the first years following the resolution of the Cominform – had made the Yugoslav foreign policy

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

dependent on Moscow's moves. As it has already been stated, the conflict became open after the charges against Laszlo Rajk were revealed. Only in June 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War had convinced him that the threat of a direct Soviet attack had passed, at a session of the Politburo Tito suggested that the Yugoslav communists launch an action among the progressive forces of the world (i.e. communists and socialists) to dismantle the aggressive revisionist campaign of the USSR and its satellites.⁴² Tito made the decision to ask the West to supply him with arms in December 1950, after the Chinese army stepped into the Korean conflict and beat the US forces to the ground. The defeat of the West in Korea also weakened the position of Yugoslavia, and in December 1950 it once again found itself convinced of the threat of a direct attack from the East.⁴³ After Stalin's death, the party and state relations with the USSR were resumed at the initiative of the Soviet communist party. The fact that Tito let the Soviets take initiative was at first a consequence of not grasping the situation and later of the Yugoslav wish to present the conflict as a result of a Soviet error which it was up to the USSR to rectify. Tito's efforts not to provide the Soviets with grounds to accuse him of deepening the conflict were as much a tactic of his as a reflection of his belief that the conflict was unnatural. Tito avoided intensifying the conflict, sincerely believing that it could weaken the communist movement. He resorted to open conflict only when he thought that Yugoslavia had come under threat of Soviet aggression.

However, despite the fact that in this period (1950-1956) Yugoslavia had been entirely dependent on Western economic and military aid, Tito never hesitated to publicly denounce the „unacceptable” policy of the West towards Yugoslavia. During a session of the Politburo in February 1950, he condemned the rumors about Western aid to Yugoslavia, which was not receiving any funding at that time. Tito repeated this at a meeting held in the town of Užice.⁴⁴ The signing of the Ankara agreement with Greece and Turkey in February 1953 did not cause any fundamental changes in Tito's position, although this agreement brought Yugoslavia to the verge of joining the Western military alliance. During the crisis of Trieste in the fall of 1953, he allowed the demolition of Western embassies in Belgrade, and he was also ready to resort to armed conflict.⁴⁵ In situations such as these, it seemed that he acted with more ease and spontaneity on the international stage than in his disputes with the Soviets. The moderate position towards the USSR was no doubt a consequence of ideological similarities which did not disappear in spite of obvious ideological differences in the period 1950-1956. The ideological evolution of

⁴² Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 28 June 1950, AJ, 507-48.

⁴³ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 14 December 1950, AJ, 507-49.

⁴⁴ Proceedings from the meeting of the CPY Politburo, 14 February 1950, AJ, 507-49.

⁴⁵ N. Troha, "Yugoslav Proposals for the Solution of the Trieste Question", in Fisher, Gabrič, Gibianskii, Klein, W. Preussen, *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni*, 175-178.

CPY at the Sixth Congress (1952) i.e. self-government and the transformation of commanding into leading role of the party,⁴⁶ including Djilas's attempt to begin the democratization of the party (fall and winter 1953), was only a passing orientation of Tito's in which he became disinterested when Stalin's death removed the threat of immediate Soviet aggression. The removal from office of Milovan Djilas was even one of the conditions posed by Moscow for the start of the normalization of relations.⁴⁷ As a trained agent of the Comintern, Tito could not regard the USSR and the West equally, just as he could not allow the democratization which would have put his personal position at risk. It was precisely the Comintern-type party that allowed Tito to always have the final word in matters of foreign policy. Tito used it in his own special, sophisticated way – by allowing his closest associates to create the public impression that they were the initiators of the ideologically and politically risky policy of opening towards the West.

The second principle of Tito's foreign policy in this period was to generally avoid appearing in public as the protagonist of the policy of cooperation with the West. When due to Soviet threats Yugoslavia had no choice but to bring the attention of the global public to the conflict, Tito let Kardelj do it at the session of the UN General Assembly in September 1949. In September 1949, before the eyes of both the international and Yugoslav public, Kardelj assumed responsibility for the new orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. On this occasion, as on many others, Tito stayed in the background, leaving himself enough maneuvering space to later disavow Kardelj or anyone else. In Yugoslavia, it was Koča Popović – Tito's new Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed in 1953 – who was considered the architect of the Balkan Pact (Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece) established at Bled in August 1954.⁴⁸ There is no doubt, however, that foreign policy had always been Tito's domain and that he controlled it entirely. The difference compared to the policy towards the Soviets was that in relations with the West Tito allowed some of his associates' initiatives to come to life. Thus, he always had the option of distancing himself from them if need be and to pin all responsibility on his associates; in fact, throughout the period of direct cooperation with the West, Tito never personally felt comfortable. Furthermore, Tito defended the independence of Yugoslavia very aggressively and diligently in public, but in diplomatic contacts he insisted on the Western Powers' political – and later economic – support. The other Yugoslav communists also took great care not to appear subject to Western pressure, but Tito's role in this matter was special – at the least indication of a potential normaliza-

⁴⁶ The Yugoslav Communist Party changed its name at its Sixth Congress and became League of Communist of Yugoslavia.

⁴⁷ A. Edemskii, "The Role of Milovan Djilas in Soviet-Yugoslav Relations, 1944–1954", in: V. G. Pavlović, *The Balkans in the Cold War*, 209, 216–219.

⁴⁸ R. Petković, *Subjektivna istorija jugoslovenske diplomatije 1943–1991* (Belgrade : Službeni list SRJ, 1995), 42.

tion of relations with Moscow, he limited the cooperation with the US, France and Great Britain.

The watershed in Yugoslav foreign policy occurred following Stalin's death, with the removal of the direct threat of Soviet aggression towards Yugoslavia. The Ankara Agreements⁴⁹ – the only institutional Western guarantee of Yugoslavia's territorial integrity – proved to be redundant only a few days after it had been signed: it was signed on February 28th and Stalin died on March 5th 1953⁵⁰. The survival of Yugoslavia was no longer dependent on the shipments of Western armaments; the resumed – although at first very limited – contacts with Moscow would henceforth also play a part. The normalization of relations with Moscow began in the summer of 1953 by elevating the status of its diplomatic envoy to ambassador. It is impossible to fully comprehend the Trieste crisis (1953) and the extremely aggressive Yugoslav policy towards Italy without taking into account the opened (albeit very slow) process of normalizing the relations with Moscow. The gradual normalization of state and party relations – inaugurated by Nikita Khrushchev's letter of June 1954 – allowed Tito's foreign policy to start positioning itself anew on the international stage.

The Belgrade and Moscow declarations (1955 and 1956) ended the process of normalization of relations with USSR both on the state and party level; however, they also showed that Yugoslavia had no intention to return under the wing of the Soviet bloc. During his stay in Moscow in June 1956, Tito officially refused the invitation for Yugoslavia to become a member of an organization of socialist states and parties, which the Soviet leadership with Khrushchev at its helm planned to establish based on the model of the Comintern and Cominform.⁵¹ However, only a few months later, Tito agreed to the Soviet intervention in Hungary. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 showed that the Yugoslav foreign policy under Tito's leadership had clearly retained its ideological characteristic. During Khrushchev's unexpected visit to Brioni islands in November 1956, Tito sanctioned the Soviet intervention, saying that an intervention was unavoidable if a counter-revolution was happening in Hungary.⁵² For Tito, proof enough that there was a counter-revolution going on in Hungary was the introduction of a multi-party system. Concern for the preservation of the communist political order was the foundation of all Tito's political activity, including his foreign policy. Hence, if it was based on ideological solidarity, the claim about the equidistance of Tito's foreign policy

⁴⁹ The Ankara Agreements between Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece, were conclude on Yugoslav demand as means of assuring cooperation in the case of Soviet attack. It was the base for effective military collaboration between Yugoslavia and two NATO member states.

⁵⁰ D. Bekić, "Balkanski pakt: Mrtvorodjenče hladnog rata", in: Fisher, Gabrič, Gibianskii, Klein, Preussen, *Jugoslavija v hladnoj vojni*, 122-123.

⁵¹ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956-1961* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2006), 56-58.

⁵² Lj. Dimić, "Josip Broz, Nikita Sergejevič Hruščov i madjarsko pitanje 1955-1956", *Tokovi istorije*, I-IV (1998), 56.

is simply not feasible. It was Koča Popović, the longest serving Minister of Foreign Affairs in communist Yugoslavia, who best summed up the ideological nature of Tito's foreign policy:

“When I said that these disagreements [between Minister Popović and the hard liners in the top echelons of the state and party hierarchy] had deeper roots, I was thinking first and foremost of the unparalleled ideological heritage – the heritage which in spite of everything makes the USSR ‘the main pillar of socialism’, i.e. that even the Eastern camp ‘belongs to the socialist world’. From this ideological source the conclusion which necessarily followed was that Yugoslavia – non-aligned as it may be – cannot be equally impartial towards the West and the East, simply because by its political program and historical aim it belongs to the ‘socialist world’, i.e. ‘the international workers’ movement’ in which, despite everything, the USSR has a decisive role”⁵³

The fact that Yugoslavia did not join either bloc did not mean that it was equally distanced from both – the ideological proximity to the Eastern bloc was a constant factor in Tito's foreign policy.

Cooperation: 1957-1968

In Yugoslav and international historiography, the choice to not join either bloc or the policy of non-alignment has been hailed as a big and innovative step of Yugoslav foreign policy in the bi-polar order of international relations during the Cold War. The Non-Aligned Movement was no doubt an innovation in world diplomacy. From its very beginnings, the Yugoslav diplomacy strove to impose its experiences on the whole movement and to direct its orientation in accordance with its interests. From its inception, the movement had an anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist character, so it was not devoid of ideological characteristics and goals, as was the case with the Yugoslav foreign policy as well. Tito and the Yugoslav diplomats took care for the movement not to lose its non-bloc character, meaning that they made efforts to avoid the movement becoming a part of the Eastern bloc on the basis of ideological similarities. The positions and strategies of the Non-Aligned Movement were therefore almost identical to the position of Yugoslavia towards the Eastern bloc.

The policy of non-alignment could be described as a sublimation of the Yugoslav experience accumulated during the period of conflict with the USSR (1948-1956) and transformed into a series of principles, which were suggested to the recently liberated countries of Asia and Africa as the common denominator of a joint project. The essence of the idea of non-alignment was best summed up by Mirko Tepavac, Tito's Minister of Foreign Affairs 1969-1972:

“The significance of our non-alignment had always lain in resisting to unwillingly be included into a bloc (on the grounds of our belonging to the ‘socialist world’) and the tendency of our party members – as well

⁵³ A. Nenadović, *Razgovori s Kočom* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), 134-135.

as the international public – to interpret our non-bloc position as the distancing of our country from the USSR ([...] as the USSR is, after all, a socialist country). [...] The declaration of our non-alignment was in fact a declaration of independence. First and foremost of independence from the USSR, where the threat was more imminent, and we, due to our ideological burden, more susceptible to it.”⁵⁴

Not only were the basic principles of the movement formulated during the conflict between Belgrade and Moscow, but the movement itself got its institutional form at the First Conference in Belgrade (September 1961), during the so-called second Yugoslav clash with the USSR. The reason behind it was the refusal of the LCY to sign a declaration of 12 communist parties in November 1957, which contained an invitation for the formation of a new common forum. Instead of joining the new Cominform, in its new program prepared for the Seventh Congress (April 1958), the LCY insisted on the independence of communist parties in their choice of the path to socialism. Once again, the differences of opinion were so great that the Soviet side cancelled all political and economic arrangements with Yugoslavia, and the Eastern bloc countries sent only observers to the LCY’s congress.⁵⁵ The paradox of the Yugoslav communists’ new position was that the countries of people’s democracy considered the new program of the LCY as avant-garde and a breach of the basic norms of Marxism-Leninism, while the socialist and social-democratic parties refused to attend the Congress as a form of protest against the new sentences against M. Djilas and other Yugoslav dissidents. Thus, the LCY found itself in the position to at once be considered a nucleus of right-wing revisionism and a Stalinist dictatorship.

The result of this position was its evident isolation within the „progressive”, socialist and communist world. The relations with the West were no more favorable. In late 1957, Yugoslavia recognized the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which led to a break in the relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. Also in 1957, Tito demanded that the American military aid be discontinued and that the American military mission leave Yugoslavia by March 1958 at the latest. The relationship with France became tense in January 1958, when the French navy intercepted the Yugoslav ship *Slovenija*, finding her full to the brim of arms intended for the rebels in Algeria who were fighting against the French forces. The aforementioned arrest and trial of Djilas and other dissidents (such as Aleksandar Pavlović and Bogdan Krekić, members of the Socialist International), as well as the refusal to allow Vladimir Dedijer to travel to Manchester to give a series of lectures, all worsened the relations with Great Britain.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ A. Nenadović, *Mirko Tepavac, sećanja i komentari* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1998), 160-161.

⁵⁵ Bogetić, *Nova strategija*, 184-192.

⁵⁶ D. Bogetić, “Drugi jugoslovensko-sovjetski sukob 1958. i koncept aktivne miroљjubive koegzistencije”, *Istorija 20. veka*, 2(2004), 123-124.

In mid-1958, it seemed that after ten years Yugoslavia had ended up in a position identical to the one it held when the conflict with the Cominform had been at its peak. Undoubtedly, some similarities did indeed exist. Tito's Yugoslavia had tense relations with both blocs; in addition, it was at risk of an economic catastrophe due to the definite cancellation of an extremely important Soviet investment program. In 1956, very favorable agreements on investment programs amounting to 285 million dollars and intended for the industrialization of Yugoslavia, were signed with the USSR and GDR. The response of the Yugoslav leadership was based on the same logic as had been the case ten years earlier. A request for urgent (primarily American) aid was issued, but at the same time efforts were made to provide valid proof to the Soviet comrades that the Yugoslav communists had not strayed from the path of Marxism-Leninism. From February to September 1958, instead of the cancelled Soviet investment program, Yugoslavia asked Washington for loans in the form of food supplies and investment programs for further industrialization of the country amounting to the princely sum of 352 million US dollars.⁵⁷

Despite the fact that the economic future of the country depended on the American aid, Tito's diplomatic staff did not hesitate to unambiguously take the side of the USSR in the matter of the Iraq crisis, where in June 1958 General Abdul Karim Qasim had organized a coup d'état and established a republic which annulled all agreements with Great Britain and withdrew from the Baghdad Pact. Tito recognized Qasim's revolutionary government and condemned the arrival of the American Marines in Lebanon and the presence of British troops in Jordan, even though the Western troops had arrived following official invitations from the governments of Lebanon and Jordan in order to prevent the revolutionary wave spilling over from Iraq into their countries. On this occasion, General Secretary of the Soviet party, Nikita Khrushchev offered praise to his Yugoslav comrades, commenting that their views were identical even though they had not consulted with each other on this topic.⁵⁸ Certainly, what the Yugoslav and the Soviet communists had in common was their anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist policy in Asia and Africa. Tito explicitly confirmed this to Khrushchev during their meeting in September 1960 at the fifteenth session of the UN General Assembly.⁵⁹

However, certain differences did exist between them. Tito was reproached by Moscow for mentioning the two blocs, because his Soviet comrades thought it unacceptable to describe the struggle of people's democracies for peace and progress in the world as bloc policy. As a communist, he was criticized for allowing the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment to be devoid of

⁵⁷ D. Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i svetsko tržište kapitala. Americka finansijska podrška jugoslovenskim razvojnim programima krajem 50-tih godina", *Tokovi istorije*, 3/2010, 96.

⁵⁸ V. Mićunović, *Moskovske godine 1956/58* (Belgrade: Jugoslovenska revija, 1977), 482.

⁵⁹ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Khrushchev, New York, 28 September 1960, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/12.

the class element. In 1958, Khrushchev began offering economic and political support to the recently liberated countries and movements in Asia and Africa, believing that it could provide a new platform for a global revolution and the triumph of progressive forces over the “imperialists and colonialists.”⁶⁰ The fact of the matter was that the Soviet economic aid was the only basis for the development of the new countries, as they could not hope to receive any funding from former colonial powers and did not have enough economic strength to enter into commercial arrangements with the US. The importance of Soviet aid was so great that even the closest of Tito’s allies in Asia and Africa distanced themselves from him in 1958, fearing that their close ties with Yugoslavia might put the Soviet economic support at risk. Therefore, during his tour of Africa and Asia in 1958/1959, Tito received a very lukewarm welcome. His talks with Nehru held in New Delhi in January 1959 were reduced to a monologue of Tito’s which Nehru practically never interrupted.⁶¹

The reaction of Tito and the Yugoslav diplomacy to the challenges which had arisen from their second conflict with the USSR was expressed in the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. The policy of non-alignment was given its full expression during preparations for the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in September 1961 in Belgrade. The policy of peaceful co-existence meant the kind of relations Yugoslavia wanted to establish with all countries, especially with the two competing blocs. Considering the circumstances which led to the full application of these two axioms of the Yugoslav foreign policy, the question of their genuine meaning arises.

In fact, the policy of non-alignment was a long and arduous process of establishing an active political and – to a much lesser degree – economic cooperation with the newly liberated countries in Africa and Asia. The meeting of Tito, Nasser and Nehru in summer 1956 on the Brioni islands had only nominal importance, as no concrete political action ensued from it. Despite being touted as the founding session of the Third bloc, the meeting of Tito, Nasser, Nehru, Nkrumah and Sukarno held in September 1960 in New York went no further than issuing a joint declaration calling on the two powers to dialogue. In fact, Tito’s endeavor to find an economic and political alternative to his tense relations with the blocs in the cooperation with Third World countries yielded only limited results. In April 1961, Tito and Nasser, shortly joined by the Indonesian leader Sukarno, issued a joint invitation to the leaders of 21 non-bloc countries resulted in the First Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in September 1962 in Belgrade.⁶² Undoubtedly, this was a huge

⁶⁰ S. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: The Creation of a Superpower* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 404.

⁶¹ D. Bogetić, “Politička pozadina i stvarni domašaj saradnje Tito – Nehru 1954-1964”, *Arhiv*, 1-2, 2006, 146.

⁶² The joint statement of Tito and Nasser following their talks in Cairo, 26 April 1961, *AJ*, 837, KPR I-2/13.

success of Yugoslav diplomacy. The gathering of non-bloc countries around a platform defined by Tito's diplomacy on the basis of past Yugoslav experiences had brought Tito world-wide fame. However, the practical results of the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement fell very short of Tito's and his diplomats' expectations.

Despite the obvious increase in Yugoslavia's prestige, the summit did not help solve its pressing political and economic problems – quite the contrary. Tito's speech at the opening ceremony was in fact a very sharp and inappropriate attack on colonial powers and the US. His speech not only conveyed the impression that Yugoslavia's policy in Asia and Africa was identical to the Soviet policy, but Tito also tried to justify the Soviet testing of nuclear weapons, which had until then been subject to a moratorium. He then condemned the intention of the West to start arming the Federal Republic of Germany in response to the erection of the Berlin Wall. Koča Popović, at the time serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, later claimed that the pro-Soviet speech of Tito's was written without consulting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

“I was not even informed of the decision not to condemn the Soviet explosion at the opening ceremony of the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries; this was included into Tito's speech afterwards, without consultations with the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. It was left to me as the first man of the diplomatic office to try and put out the fire which had promptly erupted as best I could. I had no choice but to unconvincingly deny the protests of the Western representatives, particularly those of the US ambassador George Kennan – a man who was, by the way, very much in favor of strengthening Yugoslav-American relations. The vacillations and deviations from the true non-aligned path – like this one at the Belgrade Conference in fall 1961 – convinced me that the reality check dearly paid for in 1948 was being ignored. I feared that the renewal of the ‘party line’ together with Moscow's political leaders was pulling us into pro-Soviet waters and putting at risk the very independence of the country in matters of foreign policy as the only acceptable basis of the non-aligned policy.”⁶³

It was the ‘party line’ that was the reason for the change in the orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. Already during their meeting in New York in September 1960, Tito proposed to Khrushchev a renewal of party ties and said that the Yugoslav comrades were doing their best to revise everything that could hinder the correct application of the Marxist-Leninist theory.⁶⁴ But Tito's concession was not enough as Khrushchev on that occasion – as well as at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet party – denounced the LCY as revisionist. At the Congress, however, he changed his official appraisal of non-aligned countries, declaring that they were fighting against colonialism and imperialism and for

⁶³ Nenadović, *Razgovori s Kočom*, 138.

⁶⁴ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Khrushchev, New York, 28 September 1960, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/13.

world peace. This positive opinion of the non-aligned countries was the basis for the Soviet thesis about the common goals of the movement and the socialist bloc in the struggle against imperialism.⁶⁵ In fact, Khrushchev's appraisal of the non-aligned countries was essentially in accord with the statements Tito had included in his speech at the Summit; the difference was that Tito saw only possibilities for cooperation between the two movements, but certainly not for unity. Thus, the policy of non-alignment – the first of the two axioms of Yugoslav foreign policy – gained the support of Soviet comrades. The meaning and realization of the second axiom – peaceful coexistence – were defined by the end of 1962, when Tito after his return from the USSR declared that Yugoslavia was pursuing a policy of peaceful and active co-existence with all countries, but that it was also following the “principle of closest cooperation with socialist countries”, as it was itself a socialist state.⁶⁶

The process of aligning the positions of Belgrade and Moscow had begun in summer 1961, after the signing of an important trade agreement. As the main topic of the 22nd Congress of the Soviet party had been de-Stalinization of the Soviet society, the premises required for the renewal of relations between the two communist parties were once again put in place. However, the Soviet's opinion that their Yugoslav comrades were guilty of revisionism was still an obstacle. At the meeting with the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko in April 1962 in Belgrade and during the visit of the President of the USSR Presidium Leonid Brezhnev to Yugoslavia in September and October 1962, foundations were laid for the removal of this last problem. During his stay in the USSR in December 1962, Tito agreed with Khrushchev that they should no longer dwell on the differences between them. Khrushchev, whose reputation and authority had been quite damaged after the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba, made a concession to his Yugoslav comrades and officially declared that Yugoslavia was a socialist country.

Almost ten years after Stalin's death, Tito finally succeeded in establishing relations with the USSR on principles of his own choice. For him, peaceful co-existence meant that Yugoslavia would maintain close economic and political ties built on its ideological closeness with socialist countries. Thus, the professed equidistance of Yugoslav foreign policy was merely formal, as – although Yugoslavia did not belong to either bloc – its foreign policy shared the ideological premises of the Soviets, which often led to identical views. The key difference was that Yugoslavia kept its independent position and did not accept any form of cooperation which could have been interpreted as a return to the Eastern bloc. Tito and his closest associates based their argumentation on these points in their talks with American diplomats. In fact, they believed their closeness to the Eastern bloc was natural and felt that the fact that Yugo-

⁶⁵ D. Bogetić, “Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi pocetkom 60-tih godina”, *Istorija 20. veka*, Belgrade, 3/2011, 211.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

slavia was not a member of the Warsaw Pact but a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement was proof enough of its non-aligned position.

The reaction of the US to the new orientation of Tito's foreign policy intimated in his speech at the First Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement was gradually taking shape. In the atmosphere of the Berlin crisis and renewed Soviet nuclear testing, the Democrat administration of President J. F. Kennedy paid particular attention to Tito's support for Soviet views. The newly appointed American ambassador to Belgrade, George F. Kennan, the author of the famous long telegram which had in 1947 set the foundations for the policy of containment, was held in great esteem by President Kennedy and the State Department, so his reports were read very carefully. His reaction to Tito's speech was rather strong – he wrote that the Yugoslav president was the architect of the new, pro-Soviet course of Yugoslav foreign policy, but that there were other Yugoslav officials who disagreed with the pro-Soviet course, such as ambassador Josip Djerdjica and even Kardelj.⁶⁷ He thought that the US response to Tito's unreserved support to the Soviets must be the cancellation or decrease of various forms of aid, so that the Yugoslav would not start believing that American aid was guaranteed to them no matter what.⁶⁸ Kennan concluded his analysis of Tito's new policy by saying:

“There is no doubt that the goal of the Yugoslav as well as Moscow's policy is to obstruct American efforts and to remove our country as an important factor in international relations. This policy is not the result of a lack of independence, but a willing choice of Tito's. If he wanted, he could very well pursue a different course.”⁶⁹

The State Department's Bureau for European Affairs and the White House only partially adopted Kennan's advice. The most important form of American aid – the supply of grain – went on, but the American side announced that it would in the following period demand payment in dollars instead of dinars. The financial aid to the Yugoslav investment program, agreed upon at the request of Yugoslavia in 1960, was not discontinued. However, President Kennedy did discontinue the program of aid in military equipment, limiting it to the supply of spare parts for the equipment which had already been delivered.⁷⁰ At the same time, the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk refused Ken-

⁶⁷ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 15 September 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 97, 204.

⁶⁸ Kennan's letter to McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, Washington, Belgrade, 27 October 1961 and the attachment, Kennan's letter to Foyle Culler, the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Belgrade, 27 October 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 106, 222–230.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Memorandum of the National Security Council, Washington, 15 January 1962, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 118, 255. The Yugoslav request for financial aid from 1958 was repeated in the fall of 1960 and in late 1960 resulted in a program of international aid amounting to 275 million dollars, with the

nan's suggestion to fundamentally re-examine the American policy towards Yugoslavia. He thought that after 1948 it had played a key role in preserving Yugoslavia's independence. In his opinion, Yugoslavia had kept its communist regime, and tended to lend support to Soviet views in the international stage, but its position was more alike to the Leftist non-aligned countries such as Indonesia than to that of Soviet satellites.⁷¹ A more detailed analysis by the State Department Bureau of European Affairs confirmed Kennan's conclusion that Tito was the author of the pro-Soviet policy and that his regime was a communist one, but American diplomats also decided that Yugoslavia had made much progress in comparison to its status of the most loyal Soviet satellite in 1948. They judged that it was in the interest of the US to do all in its power to encourage Yugoslavia's development in that direction.⁷² The position of the American administration was summed up in a commentary of the National Security Council:

"As long as the communist regime stays in power in Yugoslavia, our relations will be difficult [...] the goal of our policy was not to alter Yugoslavia's political views, but to tie it to the West as much as possible and thus limit its dependency on the eastern bloc."⁷³

Yet, the decision to cooperate with Yugoslavia was not unconditional – it demanded that Tito would not base his foreign policy on ideological criteria and, most importantly, that Yugoslavia would keep its independence. These minimal prerequisites were communicated to Koča Popović by the American President himself during the former's visit to Washington in May 1962.⁷⁴

Precisely because it thought that Tito's regime was disrespectful of it, the American Congress assumed a much harder line towards Yugoslavia than Kennedy's administration. Believing that Tito had in his speech in Belgrade crossed over to the Soviet side, the American congressmen classed Yugoslavia as an Eastern bloc country. Despite the lobbying of Kennedy's administration, this resulted in the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services decision of June 1962 to strip Yugoslavia of its status as the most privileged

participation of the US, England, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and the International Monetary Fund. Kennedy's administration completed its part of the agreement, providing 100 million dollars in aid. Lj. Adamović, Dž. Lempi, R. Priket, *Americko-jugoslavenski ekonomski odnosi posle Drugog svetskog rata* (Belgrade: Radnička stampa, 1990), 62.

⁷¹ Dj. Tripković, "Poboljšanje jugoslovensko-sovjetskih odnosa 1961-1962", *Tokovi istorije* IV, 2008, 84. D. Rusk's memorandum to President Kennedy, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 112, 238-241.

⁷² F. Culler to Kennan, Washington, 4 December 1961, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 113, 242-247.

⁷³ The memorandum of David Klein from the National Security Council to Bundy, the President's Adviser on National Security; Washington, 17 April 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 122, 260-261.

⁷⁴ Memorandum on the talks between Kennedy and Popović, Washington, 29 May 1962, *FRUS*, 1961-1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 122, 260-261.

country in trade agreements with the US, which Serbia and later Yugoslavia had enjoyed ever since 1881.⁷⁵

The whole Kennedy administration, especially the US ambassador in Belgrade Kennan, thought this decision of the Congress extremely risky, because it blocked the export of Yugoslav goods to the US and hence contributed to its economic isolation. Therefore, Kennan was called to Washington and asked to lobby for the reversal of this decision.⁷⁶ Despite Kennan's efforts, in September 1962 both houses of the Congress passed a bill which stripped Yugoslavia of its status of the most privileged country in dealings with the US. The complexity of the American policy towards Yugoslavia is perhaps best illustrated by the situation in late 1962 and early 1963. Kennan reported from Belgrade that the main priority of Tito's movement was to regain the respect of and be readmitted into the fold of the global communist movement, which had had it expelled in 1948.⁷⁷ On Tito's return from his visit to the USSR in December 1962, Kennan went a step further and stated that the Yugoslav president no longer thought the relations with the US vitally important for the Yugoslav regime.⁷⁸ The paradox of Kennan's position lay in the fact that the hard line – which he had initially advocated – was adopted by the US Congress despite his protestations and that it had also proved the only effective method.

In 1963, American-Yugoslav relations entered a less tempestuous phase, primarily thanks to the efforts of Yugoslavia, which was very interested in regaining its status of the most privileged country in dealings with the US.⁷⁹ Tito took it upon himself to convince the Americans that his policy would not jeopardize the minimal prerequisites for cooperation Kennedy had demanded of Popović. In a letter to the American President sent in April 1963, he pointed out that the Yugoslav foreign policy rested on the principles of independence and non-alignment. He thought it necessary to underline that the better relations with the USSR and other socialist countries were not established at the cost of American friendship.⁸⁰ In his letter, Tito emphasized that it was necessary for Yugoslavia to regain its status of the most privileged country. The Yugoslav side also insisted on this point during the visit of the US Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Yugoslavia in May 1963.⁸¹ After his talks with Koča Popović and an audience with Tito on the Brioni islands, Rusk

⁷⁵ Adamović, Lempj, Priket, *Americko-jugoslovenski ekonomski odnosi*, 64.

⁷⁶ J. L. Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: an American life* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

⁷⁷ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 28 November 1962, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 140, 296.

⁷⁸ Kennan's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 3 December 1962, *ibid.*, document 144, 316.

⁷⁹ D. Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i SAD – od sporenja ka saradnji: iskušenja na putu normalizacije odnosa tokom 1963", *Istorija 20. veka*, II, 2009, 125.

⁸⁰ Tito's letter to Kennedy, Belgrade, 7 April 1963, AJ, 837, KPR, I-1/1089.

⁸¹ Rusk's telegram to the State Department, Belgrade, 5 May 1963, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 160, 350–353.

concluded that they were determined to preserve the independent position of Yugoslavia.⁸²

The normalization of relations had become possible because Tito and his associates offered assurances to Kennedy's administration that Yugoslavia would not join the Eastern bloc. However, they also pointed out that they would not maintain close ties with the USSR and would frequently lend their support to Soviet positions in matters of foreign policy, because – as Tito told Kennan in March 1963 – Yugoslavia did not vote in the UN in accordance with the Soviets because it was forced to, but because it sincerely believed that the Soviet solutions to certain problems were indeed the best options.⁸³ The identical conclusion in a somewhat different form was communicated by Tito to Kennedy during their talks in Washington in October 1963. Tito stated that the bloc division of countries was an outdated concept and that, in his opinion, what mattered was the difference between the countries which strived for peace and those that did not.⁸⁴ The implicit admittance of the Yugoslav allegiance to the Soviet foreign policy postulates did not harm the process of normalizing the relations with the US. For his part, Kennedy underlined that their bilateral relations had progressed since Tito's speech at the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries of September 1961, and that he wished them to progress even further.⁸⁵ The tone of the discussions in Washington was indicative of the new phase in their bilateral relations – a phase marked by the acceptance of each other's differences. The US was willing to accept the pro-Soviet orientation of Tito's foreign policy as long as it did not lead to Yugoslavia formally joining the Eastern bloc. For their part, the Yugoslavs suggested that their economic relations no longer be based on American aid but on the principle of normal trade exchange. This meant that Yugoslavia would once again become the most privileged country, but also that any exchanges would take place under the usual market principles – the payments were henceforth to be executed in dollars, as the American President had wanted since January 1962.⁸⁶ In November 1963, after Kennedy's tragic death, the Democrat administration managed to return the status of the most privileged country in trade agreements with the US to Yugoslavia.

The normalization of relations with the US was the last step in the consolidation of Yugoslavia's position on the international stage, a process which had begun with the signing of the Moscow declaration in 1956. Freed from any imminent Soviet pressure, Tito's diplomacy sought to find a viable framework

⁸² Dragan Bogetić, "Jugoslavija i SAD", 128.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸⁴ Proceedings from the meeting between Tito and Kennedy, Washington, 17 October 1963, FRUS, 1961–1963, Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 162, 353-359.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

for the country's non-bloc position. On a nominal and communicational level, the policy of non-aligned was indeed such a concept. The drastically increased prestige of the country and its president illustrated the success of this strategy, just like the strained relations with both blocs from 1959 to 1963 had revealed its shortcomings. The policy of non-alignment could not, however, offer solutions for Yugoslavia's basic political and economic problems. The pro-Soviet orientation of Tito's foreign policy removed external pressure and solved the country's economic problems; in addition, it was entirely conform with Tito's personal beliefs about the unity and identical aims of socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement. Tito's insistence on the institutional differences between the two movements, his concern for the preservation of Yugoslav independence and particularly the efforts he made to stay in power in Yugoslavia were deemed by the US as adequate – albeit minimal – prerequisites for the continuation of economic cooperation. The Kennedy administration abandoned its plan to significantly limit or even discontinue its aid and the economic relations with Tito, believing that in this case he would not hesitate to join the Eastern bloc. Interestingly, ambassador Kennan – who left Yugoslavia in the summer of 1963 – was an advocate of exerting increased pressure on Tito, arguing that he would never join the Eastern bloc as that would entail Soviet influence on the personnel chosen to lead Yugoslavia and could potentially lead to his personal fall from power.⁸⁷ After its consolidation in 1962–1963, the position of Yugoslavia on the international stage would not undergo significant changes until the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The pro-Soviet and non-aligned orientation combined with active economic cooperation with the West seemed best suited to the communist beliefs of Tito. The first signs of its inadequacy in the context of new global events appeared within the Non-Aligned Movement.

To the domestic as well as foreign public, the Non-Aligned Movement was presented as the foundation of Yugoslavia's foreign policy. The prestige acquired by the Yugoslav diplomacy for its leading role in the movement was an indirect guarantee of the country's independence. But future events would show that the internal cohesion of the movement and its economic significance were far from what the Yugoslav diplomats had hoped for. The participants of the Belgrade Summit were not even unanimous in their opinion of its character, let alone its future. In accordance with his position of independent action on the international stage, Nehru held on to his view that it was a one-off summit with only declarative significance.⁸⁸ The summit in Cairo of 1964 did not contribute to the institutional shaping of the movement or its internal

⁸⁷ Kennan's letter to McGeorge Bundy, the President's National Security Advisor, Washington, Belgrade, 27 October 1961 and the attachment, Kennan's letter to Foyle Culler, the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Belgrade, 27 October 1961, *FRUS*, 1961–1963 Volume XVI, Eastern Europe; Cyprus; Greece; Turkey, Washington 1994, document 106, 222–230.

⁸⁸ Bogetić, "Politička pozadina", 149; B. Zachariah, *Nehru* (London: Routledge, 2004), 236.

cohesion, while economic ties were still very limited. From 1961 to 1968, Yugoslavia's trade with the other two founding countries of the movement – India and Egypt – never accounted for more than 3% of the country's annual export or import. In this period, for example, the export to USSR amounted to 17.5% (1967) and to the US 20.5% (1962), while the import from West Germany in 1968 amounted to 17.8% of the imported goods sum-total.⁸⁹

The structural fragility of the movement was revealed during the Israeli-Arab conflict of June 1967. After the conflict had ended, on 12 June Nasser received Tito's personal envoy Koča Popović, and informed him that he thought the Non-Aligned Movement had lost its purpose.⁹⁰ Egypt's catastrophic defeat in its conflict with Israel was no doubt the reason for this conclusion of Nasser's. The real reason for his abandoning of the policy of non-alignment, however, was revealed during his talks with the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Nikolai Podgorny in June 1967 in Cairo. On this occasion, Nasser declared that the Non-Alignment Movement was no more and offered control of Egyptian harbors from Alexandria to the Red Sea to the USSR. Thus, in the first serious crisis since its inception, the movement lost one of its founders to the Eastern bloc. Podgorny refused Nasser's proposal of a military alliance and, on his way home, paid a visit to Tito on the Brioni islands, informing him of his talks with Nasser. On that occasion, he also informed Tito of the Soviet leadership's opinion that Nasser and his country should stay members of the Non-Aligned Movement, as they were a convenient proxy for pursuing certain policies in Asia and Africa. The irony that the President of the Supreme Soviet was forced to defend the purpose of the movement before one of its own founders did not escape Tito; he could only respond that the responsibility for such a turn of events did not lie with the movement but with Nasser.⁹¹

The Israeli assault and victory over Egypt came as a shock to both Tito and the other Yugoslav high-ranking officials. On the very first day of the conflict (5 June 5 1967), Tito reacted in accordance with his most genuine beliefs when during a previously arranged visit he told the Bulgarian president Todor Zhivkov that all non-aligned and socialist countries were under the imperialist threat and that they must fight together against it.⁹² Hoping to facilitate the cooperation between non-aligned and socialist countries, Tito took part at the conference of socialist countries held in Moscow on 9-10 June 1967. On that occasion, he stated that the attack on Egypt was part of a larger imperialistic

⁸⁹ *Jugoslavija 1918-1988. Statistički godisnjak* (Belgrade: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1988), 300-307.

⁹⁰ Proceedings from the talks between Popović and Nasser, Cairo, 12 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35-3.

⁹¹ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Podgorny, Brioni islands, 24 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-3-a/97.

⁹² Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Zhivkov, Belgrade, 5 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35.

plan in the Mediterranean, and that Yugoslavia was also under its threat. The April 1967 coup d'état in Greece, as well as US military bases in Italy, Spain and Cyprus, proved the aggressive intentions of the West, Tito claimed. According to him, the attack on Egypt was part of a wider strategy of the West to defeat the progressive forces in a series of localized conflicts; hence, it was imperative to change the widespread belief that local wars unavoidably lead to global conflicts. Tito was convinced that Nasser must be given all available help and support, as the fate of progressive forces in Africa depended on his staying in power.⁹³

Tito decided to take part in the Moscow conference without consulting his high-ranking party and state officials. This was a precedent in Yugoslav foreign policy. Until then, Tito had always refused to participate in conferences held in Moscow, as those were reserved for the members of the Eastern bloc. It was the attempt to defend the Non-Aligned Movement that had brought Tito to Moscow; no doubt, this was also the moment when his pro-Soviet orientation was at its peak. At the second conference of socialist countries held in Budapest on July 11th 1967, Tito was entrusted with the mission of mediating in the Middle East. He accepted the task, but noted that he would not do so in the capacity of a representative of socialist countries but as the Yugoslav president.⁹⁴ Tito's strategy of united action of socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement was ultimately revealed to lead to the supremacy of Soviet interests within the movement. The response of Egypt and other Arab countries (such as Algeria) was to demand that the USSR take the Arab side in the conflict with Israel.⁹⁵ This more than limited the space for the Yugoslav interpretation of the non-aligned movement as a group of countries led by common principles in matters of foreign policy. Yugoslavia's diplomatic campaign in the United Nations was not met with much support in the Arab world, as these countries wanted to triumph on the battlefield, and needed Soviet arms to accomplish this. Tito's visit to Egypt, Syria and Iraq in August 1967 provided an opportunity for the Yugoslav president to realize just how much the reputation of the Non-Aligned Movement had been damaged. In his talks with Nasser, the Arab leader revealed his opinion that the Non-Aligned countries were disunited and helpless to defy the decision of the great powers which are in agreement with each other. Tito's concept of the Non-Aligned Movement as a powerful moral factor in international affairs which would not take the shape of a static group defined once and for all was not received as particularly significant in these circumstances. Nasser held on to his view that the US were forcefully threatening the survival of progressive countries in Africa and that the Non-Aligned were helpless (and the USSR unwilling) to challenge it.⁹⁶

⁹³ Tito's report from the conference in Moscow, AJ, 837, 11 June 1967, KPR I-2/33.

⁹⁴ Tito's report from the conference in Budapest, 11 July 1967, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/34.

⁹⁵ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and Boumediene, 16 July 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35.

⁹⁶ The proceedings from the talks between Tito and Nasser, Cairo, 12 August 1967, AJ, 837, KPR, I-2/35-3.

The more than limited influence of the Non-Aligned Movement on the diplomatic outcome of the Middle Eastern crisis was partially remedied by Tito's role in their peace discussions owing to his personal reputation in Arab countries. Tito regularly communicated with the American President Lyndon Johnson and the Soviet party's Secretary-General L. I. Brezhnev. His visit to the Middle East in the summer of 1967 was also meant to give him an opportunity to familiarize the Arab leaders with the views of the socialist countries and with Johnson's suggestions for the solution of the crisis. However, The Americans felt that the proposed solution for the crisis which was the result of Tito's talks with the Arab leaders, did not give adequate guarantees to Israel, as it did not stipulate a ceasefire or an explicit obligation on the part of the Arab countries to recognize Israel and guarantee its territorial integrity. Hence, the diplomatic framework for the solution of the crisis was found in the British proposal of a compromise, which was finalized as the 242 UN Security Council Resolution. The resolution stipulated that Israel would withdraw from the conquered territories and that the Arab countries would, for their part, accept the existence of Israel and pledge to respect its territorial integrity and independence.⁹⁷

The Middle Eastern crisis revealed the limitations of the Non-Aligned Movement. The unity shown concerning general principles did not prove an effective basis for common action in the times of crisis. The only palpable result if its policy was the role of Tito as mediator. He could not be more than that, since the solution was found on the basis of the agreement of the great powers. The crisis undoubtedly contributed to the growth of his personal reputation, but the price was another difficult period of the country's foreign policy. Efforts to preserve the Non-Aligned Movement and keep Nasser in power resulted in the establishment of closest ties between Yugoslavia and the Eastern bloc since 1948. Yugoslavia took part in the Eastern bloc meetings held in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1917 October Revolution, but also at the conference of ministers of foreign affairs held in December in Warsaw. On that occasion Andrei Gromyko suggested that these meetings be made regular so that the socialist countries could formulate common views and act together on the international stage.⁹⁸

The Soviet call for the establishment institutional ties between socialist countries within a Cominform-like framework was the ultimate outcome of the close cooperation of Yugoslavia with the Eastern bloc. Tito's foreign policy had given the Soviets enough grounds to invite Yugoslavia to join the institutions of the Eastern bloc. At the same time, the relations with the US had taken a turn for the worse in June 1967 following Tito's participation at the conference of the Eastern bloc, but also because of a very sharp campaign against the US as the

⁹⁷ B. Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 346.

⁹⁸ D. Bogetić, "Priblizavanje Jugoslavije socijalistickom lageru tokom Arapsko-Izraelskog rata 1967. godine", *Tokovi istorije* 3-4, 2008, 114.

instigator and protector of Israeli aggression. Hence, Tito had no choice but to personally assure the American ambassador in Belgrade Charles Elbrick that Yugoslavia had not abandoned the principles of its independent foreign policy.⁹⁹ The Yugoslav condemnation of the American involvement in the Vietnam War, the diminished role of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Tito's support to Arab views, were the elements which led to a decrease in the concern of the Johnson administration for the positions of Belgrade and hence to the worsening of their bilateral relations. In mid 1968, the Yugoslav foreign policy once again entered a phase of uncertainty as the position established in 1962-1963 had been challenged by bad relations with both of the great powers. The Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia of August 1968 and Brezhnev's doctrine of limited sovereignty shaped the new orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy.

Détente as regional cooperation: Italo-Yugoslav relations

The end of the Prague Spring just ten days after Tito's visit to Prague (10-11 August 1968) clearly indicated the limits of the pro-Soviet orientation of Yugoslav foreign policy. Tito went to Czechoslovakia trying to prevent intervention, but all his, and the efforts of his diplomats to convince their Soviet leadership that the intervention was unnecessary were futile. He was not even informed of the invasion, which came as both a surprise and a public refutation of his mediation. Furthermore, the Soviet criticism of the Czechoslovakian leadership was increasingly beginning to sound as condemnations of any other path to socialism except the Soviet one. Not only was the attempt of democratizing the Czechoslovakian society trampled under Soviet tanks but this danger again loomed over Yugoslavia too.¹⁰⁰ Once again, Tito's Yugoslavia had no choice but to seek help for the preservation of its independence in the West. Yugoslav diplomats headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Marko Nikezić repeatedly asked their American colleagues what would be the reaction of the US in the event of a Soviet aggression against Yugoslavia. The assurances the Secretary of State of Dean Rusk gave to the Yugoslav ambassador in the US Bogdan Crnobrnja, or those of US ambassador in Belgrade Elbrick to Nikezić, did not convince the Yugoslav leadership until President Johnson personally declared on 3 September 1968 that the US would not allow acts of aggression against a sovereign state.¹⁰¹

The anxiety in Belgrade was provoked by what Tito and his colleagues qualified as a mild if not inexistent American reaction to the invasion of

⁹⁹ Proceedings from the talks between Tito and the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court Warren and the US ambassador Elbrick, Belgrade, 27 June 1967, AJ, 837, KPR I-2/35.

¹⁰⁰ Lj. Dimić, "Pogled iz Beograda na Čehoslovačku 1968. godine", *Tokovi istorije* 3-4, 2005, 227.

¹⁰¹ Notes of conversation of Rusk with Crnobrnja, Washington, 30 August 1968, AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-170. Notes of conversation of Nikezić with Charles Elbrick, Belgrade, 30 August 1968, AJ, KPR, I-5-c, box 302.

Czechoslovakia. They were convinced that it was due to the existence of the agreement between superpowers that in essence had divided Europe in two distinct zones of influence. Various arrangements and talks between Moscow and Washington were the basis of the climate of *détente* that in Belgrade feared would be detrimental to the interests of small and especially non-aligned states such as Yugoslavia. As early as December 1966 Nikezić concluded that the understanding between the superpowers will diminish the risk of the nuclear war but will also enable them to tighten their control over countries in their respective blocs.¹⁰² The Yugoslav Foreign Minister, almost two years later, in September 1968 confirmed his previous conclusion. Moreover he did not exclude the possibility that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was not only a way of reinforcing its control over the Eastern Europe, but also a first stage in its expansion towards the Mediterranean. In that case Yugoslavia might still be in peril as the biggest obstacle for the Soviet expansion.¹⁰³

While in Belgrade the dilemma over the real objectives of Soviet policy persisted, a surprising imitative arrived from Italy. The Italian Foreign Minister, Giuseppe Medici, convoked the Yugoslav ambassador in Rome, Srdja Prica, on 2 September 1968 to inform him officially that Italy is prepare to give to Yugoslavia any kind of guarantee should Yugoslavia decide to remove its troops stationed on Italian in order to reinforce its northern frontier.¹⁰⁴ This rather unusual diplomatic gesture was a proof that the anxiety of Belgrade was shared by Italian government. The Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia obliged Italy's government to fundamentally revise its policy towards its neighbor.

The Italo-Yugoslav frontier was, as mentioned above, one of the first hot-spots of the Cold War. The London memorandum of 1954 codified the situation on the ground, i.e. the division of the ancient Italian provinces of Venezia Giulia and Istria in two zones, Western (A) Italian and Eastern (B) Yugoslav. The two neighbors over the years developed a flourishing commercial exchange on state and on the local level. Nevertheless, the territorial issue remained a huge problem, since the provisional status of the two zones meant that this was one of the last unsolved frontier problems in Europe. Furthermore, the citizenship or the property rights of the people living in both zones remained officially unsolved, even though the respective zones were gradually integrated in respective states. The Yugoslav government was pushing for the official acknowledgment of the situation on the ground, that is to say the conversion of the border between the zones in the frontier between two states, while Italy was against since an im-

¹⁰² Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade 7 December 1966, AJ, 507, III/124.

¹⁰³ Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade 2 September 1966, AJ, 507, III/135.

¹⁰⁴ Prica's report to Belgrade, Rome, 2 September 1968, AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44, 13. See also: Saša Mišić, "Jugoslovensko-italijanski odnosi i čehoslovačka kriza 1968. godine", in Radmila Radić ed., *1968 – četrdeset godina kasnije* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008), 293-312.

portant part of public opinion and some, mainly local, political parties refused to accept the loss of a part of pre-war Italian territory.

After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia the Giovanni Leone's Christian Democrat government proposed the talks on the final settlement of the territorial issue. The proposal was in the form of an unofficial offer made Medici via the Italian ambassador in Belgrade Folko Trabalzza, and came as soon as 17 September 1968. The new climate of cooperation between Rome and Belgrade was even extended to include military issues, since the Italian guarantees were discussed by the military staff of both countries in January of 1969. Pietro Nenni, the Italian Foreign Minister (1968-1969) explained the Italian policy of cooperation with Yugoslavia by a common fear of Soviet aggression. In his diary he spoke of Tito's Yugoslavia as a guardian of Italy's eastern frontier.¹⁰⁵

The importance of regional cooperation of Italy and Yugoslavia was demonstrated not only in the aftermath of Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, but also in the years to come. The visits of Nenni and the President of Italian Republic, Giuseppe Saragat to Belgrade in 1969, and Tito's visit to Italia in 1971 were a proof of a durable regional partnership that went beyond the cleavages of the Cold War. The Italian initiative for the definitive solution of the territorial issue was followed up by a series of meeting of experts that were supposed to propose a common solution to the two governments. Their work went on hindered occasionally by outbursts of irredentist and national propaganda in Italian newspapers and even in Parliament. As Aldo Moro, several times Italian President of government and Minister of Foreign Affairs explained to his Yugoslav counterpart, Mirko Tepavac, in Venice in February 1971, the policy of seeking a durable settlement of territorial issues was an axiom of Italian foreign policy. However, Aldo Moro as well as his predecessors, and his successors, had to carefully choose the moment in which to make the negotiations public. The unstable majority of Christian Democrat governments in Italian Parliament made them fear the reaction of right wing opposition, but the principle of settlement on the basis of the situation on the ground, with perhaps minor adjustments, remained a constant of their Yugoslav policy.¹⁰⁶

The fast developing trade exchanges between Yugoslavia and Italy was the other pillar of their cooperation. As the President of the Federal government of Yugoslavia, Petar Stambolić, put it in March 1967, the intense trade relation with Italy were also a guarantee of good political relations, since Italy could not afford to put its own industrial interest in peril by worsening of political atmosphere between Rome and Belgrade.¹⁰⁷ From 1965 onwards the

¹⁰⁵ Massimo Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava" nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945-1999)* (Roma: Aracne, 2008), 38-39.

¹⁰⁶ Notes of conversation between Moro and Tepavac, Venice, 9 February 1971, AJ KPR, I-5-b/44, 15.

¹⁰⁷ Notes from the reunion of the Politburo of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 16 March 1967, AJ, 507, III/125.

exchange trade between Yugoslavia and Italy grew by 9 percent annually.¹⁰⁸ The ever more developing trade, the general climate of *détente* in Europe, and the ongoing negotiations of experts led to the solution of the territorial issue, sealed by the Treaty of Osimo of 10 November 1975.¹⁰⁹ Regional cooperation was only a part of Yugoslav answer to the challenges created by policy *détente* between superpowers. The other was based on a multilateral approach.

Détente: Multilateral approach

The last period in which Tito was responsible for the creation of foreign policy was characterized by a multilateral approach based on the Non-Aligned Movement. The Movement's aims, however, were now defined more precisely than had been the case in the previous period. The Yugoslav diplomacy insisted that the organization of non-aligned countries must stay merely a movement instead of evolving into a bloc. That meant that they shared certain basic principles on which international relations should be based: the respect of territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries, a ban on using force in international matters, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. Its insistence on the movement's initial shape, based on the principles proclaimed at its inception, was a necessary precondition for the growth of the movement and for allowing as many countries as possible to join it despite their different political organization. The movement's shape also allowed the Yugoslav diplomacy to have a key role within the movement, although such a role was not proportional to its economic potential and political significance. Yugoslav diplomats had great success in initiating a series of conferences meant to confirm the initial foundations of the movement and Tito's (as well as their own) leading role within it. Every other form of stronger institutional connection would necessarily have to take into account other criteria such as economic potential, political influence and military capacity – all aspects in which Yugoslavia could not possibly match the great states which had emerged in Asia and Africa following the process of de-colonization.

On the basis of this platform, the Yugoslav diplomats took part in conferences of the Non-Aligned held in Lusaka (1970), Algiers (1973), Colombo (1976) and Havana (1979). These regular conferences, a series of ministerial and preparatory meetings, the organized actions of the Non-Aligned Movement in the United Nations – all of this contributed to this period being quite rightly proclaimed the golden age of the Non-Aligned Movement. As the longest-standing leader of the movement, a member of the generation which had fought in World War II and (after Nasser's death) the only living founder of the

¹⁰⁸ M. Capriati, "Gli scambi commerciali tra Italia e Jugoslavia dal dopoguerra al 1991", in F. Botta, I. Garza eds., *Europa adriatica* (Bari: Laterza, 2004), 171.

¹⁰⁹ Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava"*, 73.

movement, the Yugoslav president enjoyed an immense reputation and great prestige within the movement. The Yugoslav diplomats proved very capable in multilateral negotiations and were the initiators of most of common actions of the Non-Aligned in the United Nations. It was thought that Yugoslavia held a very important position on the international scene. This, however, was merely an impression.

In times of major international crises, such as the Israeli-Arab conflict of 1973, Tito was regularly consulted by all major statesmen. In 1970, the American president Nixon paid a visit to Yugoslavia, which was certainly an important acknowledgement of Tito and Yugoslav diplomacy. During the visit, he asked to visit Zagreb, where before tens of thousands of its inhabitants he cried out "Long live Croatia!" in the Serbo-Croatian language. Nixon's act shows that the Republican administration was very much aware of the internal difficulties Yugoslavia was facing. Tito was certainly the first recipient of their support; however, President Nixon showed that he also had alternative solutions in mind if that course should not yield results. Brezhnev's visit to Yugoslavia in 1971 took the shape of an act of pressure on the Yugoslav leadership precisely because the reports of nationalism-fuelled and communist-led unrest in Croatia (Croatian Mass Movement) revealed that the Yugoslav path to socialism did not provide a solution for nationalistic conflicts.

From this perspective, Tito's policy of non-alignment seems not unlike a Potemkin village. Tito and Yugoslav diplomats were very active in the solution of the first oil crisis. The second meeting of the CSCE was held in Belgrade in 1977. Simultaneously, the process of reforms in Yugoslavia was aborted, and under the mask of self-government Yugoslavia became a confederation of six economically autarchic republics ruled by their respective communist parties and presided over by its aging dictator, life-long president, a one-time Partisan commander and the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Foreign policy has no vocation to organize internal affairs, but its orientation often does influence the circumstances within a country. But, as Tito focused his foreign policy on the cooperation with the Non-Aligned states, it could not have any positive impact on events in Yugoslavia. Ideological puritanism had prevented communist Yugoslavia from closer cooperation with the European Economic Community. The two axioms of the elderly Yugoslav lifetime dictator were non-alignment and self-government; what they had in common was that they were not financed domestically, but were fuelled by funds from Western sources. The increase in the standard of living, a series of great state-funded projects, a huge diplomatic network, aid provided to the Non-Aligned states – all these were parts of a project meant to demonstrate the validity of the Yugoslav path to socialism as a realistic alternative to the Soviet model. This was also the main reason that Tito's regime was so generously funded by the West in the last decade of his reign. The reason for supplying financial (and every other) aid to Tito had not changed since 1948 – it was only

the scope of Western aid that changed in accordance with the project's needs. When the West insisted on the concept of human rights, it was necessary to showcase the affluence of Yugoslav citizens so that their Eastern neighbors might use the freedoms granted by the "third basket" of the Helsinki Process – to demand changes in the Soviet political and economic model.

From this perspective, in the period following 1948, the Yugoslav diplomacy certainly showed commendable skillfulness, knowledge and initiative, but its results were nonetheless dire. In fact, its function was to act as a glass vitrine facing the world while Tito's policy pursued its own courses behind it. There was never a Yugoslav path to socialism – that attempt had proved itself economically unfeasible and politically inept to answer the challenges of the one-party system of the Yugoslav society. What kept this long-term illusion alive was Western economic aid and occasional political support, while the Yugoslav diplomacy created the impression of a disproportionately large and unfounded importance of Tito's Yugoslavia on the international scene. It is sufficient to consider the economic and political development of the Mediterranean countries which had in the 1970s ended long periods of dictatorship (Spain, Portugal, even Greece) in order to conclude that the Yugoslav path to socialism and its diplomacy were simply a failed experiment of the Yugoslav communist leader who could never outgrow the basic political postulates he had learnt in Stalin's capital in the 1930s.

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