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Radomir J. POPOVIĆ

**ITALIANS IN SERBIA
IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY***

Abstract: The link between the Italian and the Serbian national movement is explained in this paper through the presence of Italians in Serbia in the first half of the 19th century. At the time of Napoleon's reign in Italy, marquis Filippo Paulucci (1779–1849) from Modena fled from home and entered the Russian service, and as a Russian envoy was negotiating with the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Karađorđe. After the Congress of Vienna in 1814/15, under pressure of the reactionary policy of the Viennese court in Italy, carbonari and doctors, Vito Romita (?–1828) and Bartolomeo Kunibert (1800–1815) stayed in Serbia, the former until 1827 and the latter until 1839. Due to the revolutionary events in Europe in 1848/49, the Government of Piedmont (Italian: Piemonte), as part of a comprehensive political plan to create an Italian-South Slavic-Hungarian front against Austria, founded a consulate in Belgrade in 1849. Marcelo Cerutti (March–November 1849) and his brother Luigi Cerutti (November 1849–March 1850) performed the duty until the closure of the consulate in March 1850.

Keywords: Italians, Serbia, 19th century, Filippo Paulucci, Vito Romita, Bartolomeo Kunibert, Marcello Cerutti, Italian legion.

Although there were not many Italians in Serbia in the first half of the 19th century, we will pay attention to a few of them in this paper. Their presence and action in this area are the testimony to the indirect connection of two national movements: Serbian and Italian. The awakening of nations in Europe, fuelled by the French Revolution and the Napoleon's wars, further strengthened the awareness of the need for Italian unification – one of the most important processes in Europe in the first half and middle of the 19th century. In the first decades of the 19th century due to political and military entanglements in the Apennine peninsula, the Italian political emigration was formed from which individuals were “recruited”, finding refuge in Serbia. On the other hand, the Serbs were the first people in the Balkans who led the struggle for national and state emancipation against the Ottoman Empire in 1804. The solution to the Serbian national question in the 19th century depended primarily on the attitude of the European powers to the Eastern question: will the Turkish

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possessions in Europe be divided between the Russian Empire and the Austrian Empire, or the national states of the Balkan peoples will be created according to the principle *the Balkans for the Balkan peoples*.¹

Two Italian cities, Trieste and Venice were of great significance for the cultural history of the Serbs at the turn of the 18th to the 19th century. A wealthy and well-organised Serbian community operated in Trieste, producing the biggest names in Serbian culture: Dositej Obradović, Joakim Vujić, Dimitrije Frušić, while at the same time the community was the link with the Italian culture. The priest of the Orthodox Church in Trieste, Vikentije Ljuština published in Vienna in 1794 the *Italian Grammar*, while Vićentije Rakić, founder of the seminary in Belgrade, was the author of *Besedovnik iliričesko-italijanski* (1810), and Dimitrije Vladislavljević wrote the *Serbian Grammar for the Italians* (1849).² One of the most important Italian cultural and national activists Niccolò Tommaseo translated Serbian folk songs in Italian.³ Venice was significant for the Serbs because of the printing shop of Pane Teodosijev in which in the late 18th and early 19th century books were published in the Serbian language, such as the biography of Russian Tsar Peter I the Great, or the work on the collapse of the First Serbian Uprising (*Сербије плачевно пакипарабошченије*) and the first magazine in the Serbian language *Славено-сербски магазин* by Zaharije Orfelin.⁴

Marquis Filippo Paulucci (1779–1849) is the most important Italian who was present in Serbia during the First Serbian Uprising. A few details of his biography eloquently testify to the earthquake which caused the Napoleon's wars in Italy and brought Paulucci to Serbia. He came from an aristocratic family from Modena. His father was a senior official at the court of Vienna. He joined the army of Piedmont in 1793, and when Piedmont was annexed to France, he continued the service in the French army. Having participated in a conspiracy, he escaped into the Austrian army, waging war against the French. Then he joined the army of Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy, and in 1806 he moved to the French General Staff in the rank of colonel. He left the French service in March 1807 and became a Russian officer.⁵ As a Russian officer, Pavel Osipovich Paulucci arrived in Belgrade on 1 July 1807 by order of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Budberg. Coming to Serbia, Paulucci previously

¹ Ljiljana Aleksić, *Politika Italije prema Srbiji do 1870*, Beograd 1977; Vasilj Popović, *Istočno pitanje, Istorijski pregled borbe oko opstanka Osmanlijske carevine u Levantu i na Balkanu*, Beograd 1928; Milorad Ekmečić, *Dugo kretanje između klanja i oranja, Istorija Srba u Novom veku 1492–1992*, Beograd 2007. Luigi Salvatorelli, *Istorija Italije*, knjiga druga, Novi Sad 2006.

² Staniša Vojnović, *Trst i ustanak*, Danica – srpski narodni ilustrovani kalendar za godinu 2014, Beograd 2013, 381–391; the same author, *Pisci, mecene, knjige i pretplatnici u Trstu u 19. veku* (work in press). Stojan Novaković, *Srpska bibliografija za noviju književnost 1741–1867*, Beograd 1869, in: *Izabrana dela*, knjiga šesnaesta, Beograd 2001, 36, 85.

³ Nikša Stipčević, *Tommaseo e la Serbia, Niccolò Tommaseo e Firenze: atti del Convegno di studi Firenze, 12–13 febbraio 1999*, Firenze 2000, 253–271.

⁴ [Orfelin Zaharije], *Славено-сербскій Магазин, т.е. собраніе разныхъ сочиненіи и переводовъ въ ползѣ и увеселенію служащихъ*, томъ первый часть I, Въ Венеціи въ тип. славено-греческой благочестивой Дим. Θεοδισія, 1768.

⁵ *Советская историческая энциклопедия* 10 /нахимсон-Пергам/, Москва 1967, 936.

collected information on the strength of the French army in Dalmatia.⁶ He met with the leader of the First Serbian Uprising – Karađorđe at a camp near Negotin, where he negotiated with him from 6 to 9 July 1807. The result of these negotiations is a document that is in Serbian and Russian historiography called *Paulucci convention*. The unverified written document is considered to be the pinnacle of Russian claims to Serbia during the First Serbian Uprising. The document, edited by Paulucci, contains military and political dimensions. The military side of the agreement is the tendency of Russians to launch a broad uprising against the French in Dalmatia, which would cover the areas from the Danube to the Adriatic Sea, while the political part of the agreement stipulated the inclusion of Serbia under the patronage of Russia. The document on the appointment of a Russian administrator (Governor) in Serbia who will regulate the country, develop the constitution and appoint officials in Serbia on behalf of the Russian Tsar was not signed by Karađorđe for opportune reasons and Paulucci out of caution. However, the mission of marquis Paulucci was not unsuccessful for Russian diplomacy, as the marquis convinced Karađorđe that the Austrian promises in regard to help to the rebels were false and that in the future he could not expect the support of the Viennese court.⁷ Paulucci did not return to Serbia and remained in the Russian service until 1829 where he achieved a remarkable military and political career: he became an infantry general, the deputy of Georgia and the governor of Estonia. In 1829 he returned to Piedmont, was mayor of Genoa and the inspector general of the Sardinian army.⁸

In the third decade of the 19th century two carbonari found refuge in Serbia, leaving their homelands, Piedmont and the Kingdom of Naples due to reactionary politics. Anyway, they were the first trained doctors working in Serbia – *Vito Romita* and *Bartolomeo Kunibert*. Serbian historians were drawn by the fact that the Italian doctors stayed in Serbia, so there is an appreciable number of articles in Serbian periodicals about their activities, but not a comprehensive and detailed study.⁹

⁶ Milenko M. Vukićević, *Karađorđe*, II 1804–1807, Beograd 1912, 530–532.

⁷ Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe*, 1, Beograd 2000², 188–192; *Внешняя политика России XIX и начала XX века, документы российского министерства иностранных дел, серия первая 1801–1815 гг. том четвертый июль 1807 г – март 1809 г.*, Москва 1965, 553–554.

⁸ *Советская историческая энциклопедия*, 936.

⁹ Milenko Vesnić, *K srpskom izdanju* in: Bartolomeo Kunibert, *Srpski ustanak i prva vladavina Miloša Obrenovića 1804–1850*, Beograd 1901; Vojislav Mihajlović, *Dr Kontantin Aleksandridi, Dr Vito Romita*, Srpski arhiv za celokupno lekarstvo XXXIX, 1 (1937) 8–16; *Ibid*, *Dr Bartolomeo Kunibert*, Srpski arhiv za celokupno lekarstvo XL, 3 (1938) 401–408; Vladimir Stojančević, *Doktor Bartolomeo Kunibert lekar knez Miloševe Srbije*, Arhiv za istoriju zdravstvene kulture 1 (I) (1971) 43–46; V. Stojančević, *Dva Italijana lekara-karbonara u Srbiji kneza Miloša: Vito Romita i Bartolomeo Kunibert*, *Acta historica medicinae pharmaciae veterinae* XIII (2) (1973) 115–119; Dušan T. Bataković, *Bartolomeo Kunibert* in: Bartolomeo Kunibert, *Srpski ustanak i prva vladavina Miloša Obrenovića 1804–1850*, Beograd 1988², 313–328. Aleksandar S. Nedok, *Bartolomeo Kunibert*, Srpski biografski rečnik 5 Kv–Mao, Novi Sad 2011, 444–445; Milivoje Pajović, *Doktor Kunibert i pukovnik Hodžes*, *Zapisi* 2 (2013) 121–130.

A citizen of Naples, Vito Romita was in Bucharest and Constantinople before coming to Serbia. He came to Belgrade in April 1823 with his wife Francesca and daughter Antoinette and one of his assistants. According to one report, he was a man in his forties, with a rather *large nose*, in a European suit. In Belgrade, he first treated a Belgrade vizier. Since the news of his medical skill came to Prince Miloš, he soon began to heal the Serbian ruler and members of his family. Being the only doctor in Serbia, with a promising future, Vito Romita decided to stay in Belgrade and in late January 1824, after he was fired by the pasha, he fully moved to Prince Miloš's service for an annual salary of one thousand coins.¹⁰ During 1824, in addition to regular medical service, Romita became an educator of the Prince's daughter Jelisaveta and niece Savka. His main duty, however, was the treatment of Prince Miloš and his family members, but, of course, he also treated other patients from Belgrade and if necessary went to other towns in Serbia. In the work plan submitted to Prince Miloš after taking service on 15 February 1824,¹¹ Romita asked for permission to hold and finance a medical assistant who would represent him during his absence from Belgrade, and to pay for medicines for poor patients, and suggested the establishment of a pharmacy.¹²

In the spring of 1824, Dr Romita began to build a house on a large lot given to him by the Belgrade vizier, located in the then uninhabited area between Topčider and the Belgrade Fortress. For the time it was a very large one-storey building, with the main entrance on the north. The ground and the first floor had a large hall (15.5 x 6.7 m) and on both sides of the hall there were three spacious and high-ceiling bedrooms. Around the house doctor Romita planted a vineyard, procuring seedlings from Italy and Greece. Since its foundation to the present day, the house is known as the *Doctor's Tower*. Today it is located in the central part of the hospital grounds in Belgrade under the protection of the state.¹³ However, with building and decorating the house, doctor Romita got into debt. As the main creditor was Prince Miloš, the doctor's wife with the consent of her daughter and son-in-law surrendered the house to Prince Miloš on 20 October 1832.¹⁴

¹⁰ AC, Kneževa kancelarija (KK), XVIII, 119, 120, 121. Tihomir Đorđević, *Medicinske prilike za vreme prve vlade kneza Miloša Obrenovića (1815–1830)*, Beograd 1921,65; V. Mihajlović, *Dr Konstantin Aleksandridi, Dr Vito Romita*, 11.

¹¹ All dates in the text are in the Gregorian calendar, except for the date of Serbian periodicals from the 19th century.

¹² AC, KK, XVIII, 120; V. Mihajlović, *ibid.*

¹³ The Doctor's Tower in 103 Kneza Miloša Str. is the cultural heritage of great importance. The decision of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments no. 242/8 from 13/10/1965 and the Decision "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" no. 14/79 (<http://beogradskonasledje.rs/kulturna-dobra/gradske-opstine/nepokretna-kulturna-dobra-na-teritoriji-opstine-savski-venac-2>).

¹⁴ AC, KK, XVIII, 43; V. Mihajlović, *op. cit.*, 14 Brother-in-law of Vito Romita, Bartolomeo Kunibert begged Prince Miloš on 3/15 September 1828, to be provided with accommodation in Belgrade, hay for the horses and the payment of debt for the treatment of patients, because he had to pay the outstanding debts of his father-in-law (AC, KK, XVIII, 36).

Unclear were the circumstances due to which doctor Romita left the service and Serbia in 1827 after three years of work. It is obvious that the friendly relations between him and the Prince chilled, but the exact cause is not known. According to one version, the doctor got Prince Miloš angry at him as in the summer of 1826 he engaged in exercising of the Turkish soldiers in the Belgrade Fortress – by abolition of the janissaries in 1826, the Porta ordered a new way of military training, conforming to experiences from European countries. Belgrade Vizier Abdurahman Pasha therefore engaged an Italian, who apparently had military knowledge.¹⁵ According to other, nothing clearer sources, the doctor got Prince Miloš angry at him for inadequate treatment of the Prince's illegitimate son Gavriilo¹⁶. Anyway, Prince Miloš fired Dr Romita in mid-February 1827. Bidding farewell to the Prince in a letter dated 6 March 1827 he wrote: „Now, when your highness has decided to fire me, I want to thank you for all the charities that you showed to me and my family and I hope that you'll show that same charity toward my wife who remains here.”¹⁷ He went to Wallachia, where he died in 1828.

Another Italian, Bartolomeo Kunibert, Dr Romita's son-in-law, left a much larger trace in the history of Serbia in the first half of the 19th century as a doctor and writer of famous memoirs. Bartolomeo Sylvestre Kunibert came from Savigliano in Piedmont, where he was born on 3 December 1800. He finished high school there and the Medical Faculty in Torino.¹⁸ Because of political engagement he left the country in 1824 and came to Constantinople and thence to Belgrade in 1826, where he became a doctor of the Belgrade vizier Abdurahman Pasha. That same year he married Antoinette, the daughter of Vito Romita, and so a small Italian community was created in Belgrade. Relations between the young Italian doctor and the Serbian prince were not good at the beginning, but Kunibert gained trust of the autocratic Serbian prince by devoted and dedicated medical service.¹⁹ In 1828 he moved fully into the prince's service. Mutual friendship was strengthened by the establishment of close family relations. Namely, Prince Miloš first baptised Kunibert's son who was

¹⁵ V. Mihajlović, op. cit., 15; Mihailo Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, II, Beograd 1909, 259–260.

¹⁶ In a letter dated 4/16 January 1827, addressed to Prince Miloš, Dr. Vito says: “Your Gavriilo is better and he is out of danger. Jelenka has been feeling better for two days. The truth is that my enemies have made you believe that my medical knowledge is weak and insufficient, but really I healed the patients with my medication. They will now say that it is good God who healed them and not my mind!” (AC, KK, XVIII, 148; V. Mihajlović, op. cit.

¹⁷ AC, KK, XVIII, 154; V. Mihajlović, op. cit., 15.

¹⁸ M. Vesnić, *K srpskom izdanju*, XIII–XIX.

¹⁹ In a letter dated 13 October 1826, he argues his actions for which he has fallen from grace and begs to be charged a fee for medical services (AC, KK, XVIII, 26). Kunibert at the beginning of 1827 informed Prince Miloš about his intention to leave Serbia with Vizier Abdurahman Pasha (AC, KK, XVIII, 28). Several Kunibert's letters from the end of 1827 and early 1828 were saved, in which he informs Prince Miloš about the treatment of Prince's sons Milan and Mihailo (V. Mihajlović, *Dr Bartolomeo Kunibert* in: Srpski arhiv za celokupno lekarstvo (Serbian Archives of Medicine) XL, 3 (1938) 401–408; AC, KK, XVIII, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34,35, 36).

born in 1829 and later the twins, born in 1834.²⁰ Although Kunibert was a court doctor and performed private practice, he fought with privation and debt. With the support of Prince Miloš, Kunibert was elected doctor of the Belgrade municipality in September 1832, with a regular annual salary (360 thalers) and the possibility to charge medical services from wealthy citizens, while he could not charge the poor.²¹ One can only speculate how much this appointment was related to the later decision of his mother-in-law Francesca Romita to cede the Doctor's Tower to Prince Miloš due to debts. However, a new confirmation of the royal mercy to Kunibert was the Prince's decision of 25 October 1833 to pay three hundred silver florins from the Prince's personal coffers each year. The direct reason for this decision was the prince's efficient recovery from an illness, and at the same time it was a „sign of the grace of mine to you and your family, whose good lay in my heart as good of my own family does, with which you ... became spiritually friendly.”²² Except for the treatment of members of the Obrenović family, a total Kunibert's share in the development of Serbian medicine cannot be properly measured. What is well known is that he examined the healing properties of spa waters, advocated for the implementation of vaccination against measles, visited military hospitals and fought against quackery.

In the political history of Serbia, Kunibert had a visible role in the fourth decade of the 19th century. It was a period fraught with an internal crisis, the struggle between two concepts of government: autocratic which was advocated by Prince Miloš and a legal structure for which the opposition fought. Beyond these principles, there was, in fact, naked struggle for power with foreign factor interference. Prince Miloš sought to find support in Great Britain, while the opposition enjoyed Russian support. Being in friendly and close family relationships with the Serbian ruler, Kunibert became a man of Prince's great trust, an advisor for political issues and a translator in communication with foreigners because he spoke French and mastered the Serbian language around 1829.²³ He advised Prince Miloš about the political situation in Europe and translated him articles from newspapers. Using his medical status, he collected notices to which he came from contacts with the Turks or foreigners. To understand Kunibert's political views, interesting is his proposal of 1829 to send the Serbian delegation to London along with the Greek one to solve the Serbian question. Serbian historians, from Mihailo Gavrilović to Dušan Bataković, referring to reports of British consul Hodges, agree in their assessment that Kunibert

²⁰ Informing Prince Miloš on 21 June 1834 of the birth of twins, Kunibert wrote: “The feeling of joy that came over me in this event, I have no one more important to whom I would say it except to you, a generous and high patron of mine!” (AC, KK, XVIII, 48; V. Mihajlović, *Dr Bartolomeo Kunibert*). Prince Miloš gave one hundred thalers to Kunibert's newborn child in October 1837 (AC, Zbirka Mite Petrovića, 7156).

²¹ AC, KK, XVIII, 41, 42; V. Mihajlović, *ibid.*

²² AC, KK, XVIII, 45.

²³ The first preserved letter of Kunibert in the Serbian language is from 11/23 September 1829, when on the occasion of the signing of the peace at Adrianople between Russia and the Porta he congratulated Prince Miloš on privileges that Serbia received by the act (AC, KK, XVIII, 39).

was “liberal in the western sense”, equally Russophobic and an enemy of Austria, convinced that Serbia could free itself of Russian influence by relying on western countries France and Great Britain.²⁴ During his visit to Serbia in 1834, the Frenchman Boa-le-Comte was assured in the confidence that Kunibert enjoyed by the Serbian Prince and he proposed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs de Rigny to appoint him the French consul in Serbia.²⁵

The key stage of Kunibert’s political action in Serbia was from 1837 to 1839. In order to combat Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain sent the consul Lloyd George Hodges to Serbia who arrived in Belgrade in July 1837.²⁶ It was important for Prince Miloš to hide contacts with the British Consul from the suspicious opposition and he intended the role of a mediator in this communication for his friend Kunibert. On the proposal of Hodges, the Foreign Office paid thirty florins a year for Kunibert’s services.²⁷ Also, Prince Miloš for his part legalised Kunibert’s position, and on 21 April 1838 he promoted him to a captain, awarded him the title of a *dragoman* (interpreter) “in our relationships with the gentlemen overseas consuls who are in Serbia.”²⁸ As already assessed in Serbian historiography, one cannot say that Kunibert was a double paid agent, but his political involvement stemmed from his personal political beliefs. Views on the political situation in Serbia and the rule of Prince Miloš were clearly laid out by Kunibert in his memoirs that he gave to the British consul Hodges, that is, the Foreign Office in January 1838. He points out that Prince Miloš as a ruler has many faults, but in Serbia, nobody else can govern better than him. In favour of this he states the measures which Prince Miloš undertook during his reign for the development of the economy, commerce, public safety and order in the country. He proposes that the British government should influence the Porta and reinforce the ducal government, as otherwise the prince will be thrown “into the arms of Russia”, and correctly concludes that Russia will take the Prince’s powerful influence on the Balkan Christians who lived under the rule of the Turks and will be able to take advantage of.²⁹

A Russophile-minded opposition considered Kunibert, Secretary Jakov Živanović and a chief of protocol Aron Zagorica the Prince’s most loyal adherents and

²⁴ M. Gavrilović, *Počeci diplomatskih odnosa Velike Britanije i Srbije* in: *Iz novije srpske istorije*, Beograd 1926, 117; D. Bataković, op. cit., 321; M. Pajović, op. cit., 126.

²⁵ D. Bataković, op. cit., 319.

²⁶ M. Gavrilović, op. cit., 117.

²⁷ Auty Phyllis, *Neobjavljeni dokumenti engleskog ministarstva spoljnih poslova o Srbiji 1837–1911* (Unpublished documents of the English Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Serbia), ИЧ XII–XIII (1961–1962). At the suggestion of the British representative in Constantinople, the Ponsobija Porta in the fall of 1838 decorated Kunibert with a Turkish order of nishan-iftihara which particularly annoyed the Russian consul in Serbia and the opposition (*Политические и культурные отношения России и Сербии в 30–50-е годы XIX века, Документы российского МИД*, Москва 2013, 157).

²⁸ АС, КК, XVIII, 54.

²⁹ M. Gavrilović, op. cit., 128–130.

opponents of national interests.³⁰ An attempt of British diplomacy to suppress the Russian influence in Serbia during 1837/38 failed. The Serbian Constitution of 1838 limited the power of Prince Miloš, and the encouraged opposition with the support of Russia was not satisfied with it. In an attempt to turn the situation to their advantage, Prince Miloš left Serbia on 29 April 1839 not informing anybody and moved to Zemun. Fearing for his own life and the lives of his family members, Kunibert left Serbia on 30 April to which he never returned. Moreover, under pressure from the opposition, the Prince had to dismiss Kunibert from service.³¹ Kunibert spent the rest of his life in Savigliano, where he died on 13 March 1851. He last met with Prince Miloš in Vienna in 1843.

Kunibert left an important work of memoirs in which he gave an overview of the historical development of Serbia from 1804 until the end of Prince Miloš's first rule.³² What served him as an incentive to write was a book by Cyprian Robert which was, in his opinion, a biased description of the rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović.³³ During his life he finished and released the first volume, while the second volume was shaped and printed according to his notes by his brothers Felice and Michelangelo. The original manuscript of Kunibert's memoirs is kept today in the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) in Belgrade.³⁴ For historians, Kunibert's memoirs are now an indispensable resource for understanding the first rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović. The evidence of how much his work was considered important to his contemporaries, the Italians, was the eulogy by Botero, a citizen of Savigliano, who said that *a historian of Serbia rests here* / "qui riposa lo storico della Sevia".³⁵

Revolutionary developments in Europe in 1848/49 led to Italians once again coming to the ground of Serbia. In fact, a hostile attitude towards the Austrian monarchy brought together the Serbs and Italians, while there were differences

³⁰ *Политические и культурные отношения России и Сербии*, 152.

³¹ R. Ljušić, *Kneževina Srbija 1830–1839*, Beograd 1986, 441.

³² *Essai historique sur les révolutions et l'indépendance de la Serbie depuis 1804 jusqu'à nos jours* par Barthélemy-Sylvestre Cuniberti I (Paris 1850), II (Leipzig 1855). In Serbian: *Srpski ustanak i prva vladavina Miloša Obrenovića 1804–1850*, Beograd 1901 and second edition *Srpski ustanak i prva vladavina Miloša Obrenovića*, I–II, translated by dr Milenko Vesnić, epilogue written by D. T. Bataković, Beograd 1988.

³³ Cyprian Robert, *Les Slaves De Turquie: Serbes, Monténégrins, Bosniaques, Albanais et Bulgares*, Paris 1844.

³⁴ At the session of the Presidency of the Serbian Royal Academy of 22 March / 4 April 1906, the manuscript of Bartolomeo Kunibert that was given to the Academy by Felice Kunibert, head of the military library in Turin was accepted "with gratitude" (*Godišnjak Srpske kraljevske akademije XX* (1906), Beograd 1907, 73). The manuscript is preserved in the Historical Archives Collection of SASA, no. 7124.

³⁵ M. Vesnić, op. cit., XXV. Kunibert wrote another work with the governor of the Serbian state printing works, a German Adolf Berman. *Определение времена, кадъ се по свакій данъ преко целе године по турскимъ саатима сунце рађа, и кадъ є подне; и по европейскимъ саатима кадъ се сунце рађа и кадъ залази* [сочинено одъ Доктора Куниберта и Адолфа Бермана], (Крагујевац) 1835.

towards Russia. Namely, in the thirties and forties in Italy, especially in the Kingdom of Sardinia, it was believed that the struggle for pressing out Austria from northern Italy should be linked to solving the Eastern question and that in this struggle the link must be made with the Hungarians, Poles and South Slavs. Mazzini's revolutionary movement and the moderate-liberal movement of Balbo and Cavour observed the Balkans, particularly the Serbian ethnic area as a territory subject to a strong Russian influence. Mazzini advocated the overthrow of the Austrian and Ottoman empires by a revolutionary struggle and the formation of the confederation of those nations which would prevent Russian expansion, while Cesare Balbo, an ideologue of a moderate liberal direction in the Resurgence (Italian: Risorgimento) advocated directing the Austrian expansionism towards the Balkans to weaken the Austrian influence in Italy.³⁶

For the purpose of reconciliation of the Hungarians and the South Slavs and the creation of a single Hungarian-Slavic block against Austria during the War of Piedmont and Austria in 1848/49, it was decided in Torino to establish a Consulate of the Kingdom of Piedmont in Belgrade.³⁷ Such policy of the Sardinian government was supported by the Polish emigration with Prince Adam Czartoryski in Paris. Marcello Cerutti was appointed consul, and Colonel Monti was sent earlier in Hungary through Serbia to whom the Serbian government helped to cross the border and get in touch with the leader of the Hungarian revolution, Lajos Kossuth in Debrecen.³⁸ A merchant from Piedmont, Giuseppe Carrossini was also coming to Serbia with Monti – a fervent advocate of the alliance of Italians and Hungarians. He remained in Belgrade in order to prepare the ground for the Piedmont consul, establishing contact with the Belgrade Pasha, other consuls in Belgrade and Serbian authorities.³⁹ The consul Cerutti had the first official meeting in Serbia with Avram Petronijević, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Serbia to whom he presented credentials on 26 March 1849. However, Cerutti's main support in Serbia became Ilija Garašanin, the Minister of Internal Affairs, at that time the opponent of Russian influence in Serbia, who allowed him to maintain a relationship with Colonel Monti and Hungarians.⁴⁰ As Angelo Tambora noted, the action of Monti and Cerutti in

³⁶ N. Stipčević, *Dva preporoda: studije o italijansko-srpskim kulturnim i političkim vezama u XIX veku*, Beograd 1979; Isti, *Srbija i Italija u XIX veku*, Glas SANU, Odeljenje jezika i književnosti 16 (1995) 27–35.

³⁷ Lj. Aleksić, *Ujedinjenje Italije i nacionalni program Kneževine Srbije (dilema: podunavsko-balkanske konfederacije. Austro-slovensko carstvo. Južna Slavija)* in: Spomenica dr Danice Milić, Beograd 2013, 171–195.

³⁸ A. Tambora, *Kavur i Balkan*, preface Nikša Stipčević, translated by Snežana Milinković, Beograd 2007, 50–54.

³⁹ A. Tambora, op. cit., 54, 56, 57, 66–68.

⁴⁰ Thanks to the consul Cerutti, in the Napredak newspaper no. 21 of 22 March /Julian calendar/ 1849 which was published in the Serbian Vojvodina, a manifest of the Association of Friends of the Slavs from Turin was published. "Slavs! Wanting to come together with the Hungarians you give notice that you want to secede from Austria, so we extend a brotherly hand. And instead of the enemy of Austria you will have friends, allies, brothers, fifteen million Italians for

respect of establishing the Hungarian-Serbian cooperation started too late, as the gap between the two nations was too deep to be overcome by diplomatic mediation.⁴¹

When the Hungarian Revolution was crushed in August 1849, veterans of the Italian and Polish legions who fought on the side of the Hungarians moved to Serbia. On 20 August 1849, commander of the Italian legion colonel Monti addressed Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević from Tekija, i.e. Serbia, asking asylum for 465 combatants of the legion. "Your honour, in the fight against the tyranny of Austria and Russia, the sacred ideal of defence of libertarian rights of the people led the Italians to the soil of Hungary", begins Monti's letter. The trouble forced him to seek asylum and "to put the remains of the Italian legion which I command at the disposal of all interested liberal foreign governments. Europe can be proud of the legion for its discipline and importance." Monti asked Prince Aleksandar for help in food, housing and animal feed. "In exchange for the help that Serbia gives my legion we cannot offer anything in return except for the hands that we put in the service of Serbia."⁴² The list of Italian legionnaires who fought in Hungary and then crossed into Serbia is kept in the Archives of Serbia in Belgrade. It can be seen from it that the legion was made up of soldiers from all parts of Italy, from north to Sicily.⁴³ A longer stay of the Italians in Serbia was not possible because of the Austrian and Russian pressure and the legionnaires left Serbia and moved to Turkey a week later.

Since the Sardinian government policy was compromised after the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution, Consul Cerutti was recalled from Belgrade in November 1849, and his brother Luigi Cerruti was appointed in his place. Finally, the Sardinian Consulate in Belgrade was closed on 19 March 1850, and the consular archive given for care to the British consul Fonblank. Leaving Belgrade, Luigi Cerutti wrote that he

now... let us unite and do not seek help from the Russians and Germans... Unite with us, and our joint forces will be enough to determine our nationality." About the manifest in: A. Tambora, op. cit., 58.

⁴¹ A. Tambora, op. cit., 64.

⁴² AC, fond Ilije Garašanina 596.

⁴³ Officers in the Italian legion (Legione Italiana – prima divisione) who moved from Hungary to Serbia near Tekija on 20 August 1849 were the following: colonel Aristodimo Monti (Tortona/Piemonte), majors Marco Rodano (Aosta/Piemonte), Carlo Grandolin (Asti/Piemonte), captains: Luigi Bocaforte (Roma/Roma), Francisco Pavanelo (Civitavecchia/Roma), Gasparo Gasperi (Firenze/Toscana), Allesandro Collona (Reggio/Napoli), Roberto Scandanello (Siena/Toscana), Valentino Cervelli (Modena/Modena), Carlo Volonti (Genova/Piemonte), Giuseppe Casa (Vigsa? /Piemonte), Francisco Buttichio (Bologna/Romagna), Napoleon Cerri (Salenna/Napoli), Fioravante Pollo (Portin/Napoli), Allesandro Fapaura (Allessandria/Piemonte), Luigi Zapapian (Mirandola/Modena), Giovanni Panzagrosa (Saluzzo/Piemonte), Antonio Barlaro (Parma/Parma), Luigi Castracani (Parma/Parma), Gaetano Gruzzo (Mirandolla/Modena), Gaetano Bosco (Tivoli/Roma), Luigi Robert (Sarollo/Modena), Luciano Rosini (Poggio/Toscana) and lieutenants: Lorenzo Pipo (Gaeta/Napoli), Giacconno Binfo (Pisa/Toscana), Michelle Bufet (Velletri/Roma), Franco Cessare (Cosenna/Sicilia). Names of non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the legion are in the list (Arhiv Srbije, fond Ilije Garašanina, 460).

enjoyed the favour of the Serbian authorities all the time and thanks to the attitude of his brother, the government of Piedmont and the consulate were not less respected, "what will be a valuable factor in the future and the new Consul here will be welcomed as an old acquaintance."⁴⁴

After that, among the Italians in Belgrade there was only Karozini, who as an agent of Piedmont and Lajos Kossuth followed the situation in Serbia and the neighbouring monarchy. At one time, he was infatuated with the thought of building a trade route through Serbia to the Adriatic Sea to establish trade links between Serbia and Italy. However, his presence bothered the Austrian authorities, who brought about his removal from Belgrade on 1 May 1851.⁴⁵

The tradition of Italian medieval craftsmen, who built sacral and secular buildings in the Balkans, was continued in Serbia in the first half of the 19th century by Giuseppe Antonio from Lugano, in Serbian sources named *Anthony the Italian*. He stayed in Serbia with interruptions from 1823 to 1857. It can be concluded from the source that he was engaged in the construction and renovation of churches and monasteries in Serbia: Čokešina, Petkovica. His mastery in the construction and decoration of ceilings seems to have been especially appreciated.⁴⁶

Upon completion of the revolution in 1848/49, an epoch ended during which the Italians came to Serbia in phases, due to the military and political upheavals on the Apennines during the first half of the 19th century. Since the sixties of the 19th century diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Italy and the Principality of Serbia were established. The Resurgence produced the ideologists of the Serbian national unification, giving a new meaning to the Serbian-Italian political and cultural ties. Seeds for this were sown in the first half of the 19th century.

⁴⁴ A. Tambora, op. cit., 68.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Miodrag Kolarić, *Građevine i građevinari Srbije od 1790 do 1839*, Zbornik Muzeja Prvog srpskog ustanka 1 (1959) 27–28.

Radomir J. POPOVIĆ

GLI ITALIANI IN SERBIA NELLA PRIMA META' DELL' OTTOCENTO

Sommario

Nell'Europa della prima metà del XIX secolo, i rivolgimenti politici e militari spingono vari italiani a recarsi in terra serba. In quel periodo, il processo di unificazione nazionale italiano fu uno dei più importanti eventi europei. Da parte loro, i serbi furono il primo popolo dei Balcani a condurre, dal 1804, una lotta armata per la loro liberazione nazionale. Durante il regno di Napoleone in Italia, il marchese Filippo Paulucci (1779-1849) di Modena fuggì da casa ed entrò al servizio della Russia. Come inviato del governo russo, nel 1807 vicino alla città serba di Negotin incontrò Karađorđe, il capo della Prima insurrezione serba, e il risultato di questo incontro fu la cosiddetta *Convenzione Paulucci*. Dopo il Congresso di Vienna, nel 1814-1815, sotto la pressione della politica reazionaria della corte viennese, molti carbonari italiani furono costretti ad emigrare. Vito Romita (? -1828) e Bartolomeo Kunibert (1800-1815), medici e carbonari, fuggirono prima a Costantinopoli, e poi a Belgrado. Il dottor Romita rimase a Belgrado per circa quattro anni (1823-1827), e tuttora a Belgrado esiste una testimonianza della sua presenza. La Casa di Romita, detta *Torre del Medico*, fu costruita nel 1824, e oggi è un monumento di grande importanza protetto dallo Stato. Bartolomeo Kunibert, fu medico personale e consulente politico del principe Miloš Obrenović e visse a Belgrado dal 1826 al 1839. Le sue memorie, pubblicate in francese in due volumi nel 1850 e 1855, sono una fonte imprescindibile per comprendere la situazione politica e sociale in Serbia durante il primo regno del principe Miloš Obrenović (1815-1839). In seguito ai moti rivoluzionari del 1848-1849, il governo piemontese decise di istituire un consolato a Belgrado, nel 1849, come parte di un progetto politico volto alla creazione di un fronte comune antiasburgico che riunisse italiani, jugoslavi e ungheresi. I soldati della legione italiana che combatté con gli ungheresi, dopo la sconfitta della rivoluzione ungherese, nell'agosto del 1849, si ritirarono in Serbia. Dall'apertura alla chiusura del consolato, avvenuta nel mese di marzo del 1850, il ruolo di console fu ricoperto da Marcello Cerutti (marzo-novembre 1849) e da suo fratello Luigi Cerutti (novembre 1849-marzo 1850).

Parole chiave: Italiani, Serbia, 19° secolo, Filippo Paulucci, Vito Romita, Bartolomeo Kunibert, Marcello Cerutti, legione italiana.

Радомир Ј. ПОПОВИЋ

ИТАЛИЈАНИ У СРБИЈИ У ПРВОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ 19. ВЕКА

Резиме

Политички и ратни вртлог који је захватио Европу у првој половини 19. века довео је Италијане на територију Србије. Процес италијанског националног уједињења један је од најважнијих националних покрета у Европи у првој половини и средином 19. века. Срби су били први народ на Балкану који је 1804. покренуо оружану борбу за национално ослобођење. У време Наполеонове владавине у Италији, маркиз Филипо Паулучи (1779-1849) из Модене побегао је од куће и прешао у руску службу. Као руски изасланик, 1807. године преговарао је у околини града Неготина са Карађорђејем, вођом Првог српског устанка. Резултат ових преговора била је такозвана *Паулучијева конвенција*. Након Бечког конгреса 1814/15, под притиском реакционарне политике бечког двора у Италији, многи карбонари били су присиљени да емигрирају. Вито Ромита (? - 1828) и Бартоломео Куниберт (1800-1815), лекари и карбонари, побегли су најпре у Цариград, а потом у Београду. Доктор Ромита је у Београду остао око четири године (1823-1827), а траг његовог присуства и даље постоји. Ромитова кућа, тзв. *Докторова кула*, саграђена 1824, данас представља културни споменик од изузетног значаја и под заштитом је државе. Бартоломео Куниберт, лични лекар кнеза Милоша Обреновића и политички консултант живео је у Београду од 1826. до 1839. Године. Његови мемоари издати на француском језику у два тома, 1850. и 1855. године, незаобилазни су извор за разумевање политичке и друштвене ситуације у Србији за време први владавине кнеза Милоша Обреновића (1815-1839). Револуционарне дешавања у Европи 1848/49. утицали су на одлуку пијемонтске владе да успостави конзулат у Београду 1849. године као део свеобухватног политичког плана чији је циљ био стварање заједничког италијанско-јужнословенско-мађарског фронта против Аустрије. Борци италијанске легије који су се борили на страни Мађара, након колапса мађарске револуције у августу 1849. Повлачили су се преко Србије. На месту козула од отварања конзулата до његовог затварања у марту 1850. године нашли су се Марчело Черути (март-новембар 1849) и његов брат Луиђи Черути (новембар 1849 – март 1850).

Кључне речи: Италијани, Србија, 19. век, Филип Паулучи, Вито Ромита, Бартоломео Куниберт, Марчело Черути, италијанска легија.

Danko LEOVAC

**THE SERBIAN QUESTION,
RUSSIA AND ITALIAN UNIFICATION (1859–1866)***

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyse the question of possible connections between Serbian and Italian unifications, in the period from the war with France and Italy against Austria (1859) to the Austro-Prussian War (1866). From the return of the Obrenović dynasty to the Serbian throne, at St. Andrew's Day Assembly, Russia played an important, and often a decisive role in directing the Serbian foreign policy. Prince Miloš and later Mihailo Obrenović, were aware that Serbia could expect from St. Petersburg only serious support to its foreign policy. However, the question of the liberation and unification of the Serbian people could not be linked with the Italian, or any other European movement. The Balkans was a sensitive place, and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire was the point that none of the Great Powers dared to cross. And Russia itself, which was the most interested in restoring its influence on the Balkans after the defeat in the Crimean War, demonstrated with great difficulty a willingness to make the final step that would lead to the disappearance of the "sick man on the Bosphorus".

Key words: Serbia, Russia, Italy, Serbian question, Italian unification, Great Powers.

Consequences of the Crimean War

The role of Russia in the Balkans was largely determined by its imperial and geostrategic objectives. Russia's relation to the Serbian, as well as other international issues in general should therefore be seen in this context. In the Crimean War (1853–1856) Russia suffered a heavy defeat, and by the provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty the patronage which it enjoyed as a force protector of the Christians in the Balkans passed into the hands of all the signatory powers of peace.

The principal aim of the new Russian diplomacy was to define the basic principles of the future foreign policy. It was not realistic to expect that Russia could re-establish its leading role on the international stage, which it had after the Vienna

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Congress (1815). Still, it was necessary for Russian diplomacy to work towards regaining its lost positions, primarily on the Black Sea and in the Balkans. In these new circumstances, the main political task of the state was “focusing on domestic issues” and finding a way to come out of international isolation. A new stage in the development of Russian foreign policy was opened by Alexander M. Gorchakov, the new minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Empire. Successful implementation of domestic reforms while avoiding foreign entanglements which could lead to war, was considered a condition for overcoming the difficult situation in the country. Russia was coming out of international isolation and was trying to abolish the imposed restrictions. In order to accomplish this goal, the central question was regaining the lost position in the Balkan region. The possibility of finding political allies among the leading European powers was excluded. The main aim of the Balkan policy was to support liberation movements of the Balkan nations in their struggle for the acquisition and preservation of broad autonomous rights. The results achieved in this field weakened the Ottoman Empire. The Slavic element was becoming the “main point” of Russia’s Balkan policy.¹

In terms of reviving its influence in the Balkans, Russia saw Austria as the largest threat to its foreign policy. Strengthening of the Habsburg Monarchy meant the collapse of the entire Russian Balkan policy since Peter I. Russian politicians were well aware that Vienna wanted weak statelets in the Balkans, which would be easier to dominate and manipulate. It was the main reason for Austria’s fierce resistance to the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia and to a change on the Serbian throne. Gorchakov characterised Austrian policy in the Balkans as “a challenge and provocation”, saying that Austrian political circles very well understood that an insurmountable gap lay between Austria and Russia in the future: the Slovenian question.² Very soon it turned out that Austria was the threat, not only for St. Petersburg, but also for Paris, as the war of France and Italy against Austria was imminent. Under the new circumstances Napoleon III wanted to ensure Russia’s neutrality and possible military support, and showed a willingness to make a deal.

The first step in the realisation of this project was the travelling to Paris of Russian Emperor’s brother, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, and the second meeting of two emperors. The meeting of Alexander II and Napoleon III was held on 25 September 1857 in Stuttgart. The Russian emperor and Gorchakov did not oppose the realisation of French interests and plans in Italy, but on condition of French support to changes to the Paris Peace Treaty. However, the French readiness, for fear of Great Britain, was related only to matters of joint action in the Balkans, but not to further changes to the Paris Peace Treaty.³

¹ Архив внешней политики Российской империи (=АВПРИ), Ф. 137, Оп. 475, Д. 75 (1855–1880) 63; See: Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, 2014, 27–30.

² АВПРИ, Ф. 137, Оп. 475, Д. 36 (1858) 12, 15; В. Н. Виноградов, *Дипломатическая борьба вокруг объединения Дунайских княжеств (1858–1859 гг.)*, Вопросы истории 8 (1986) 57–73.

³ Российский государственный архив древних актов (=РГАДА), Ф. 15, Разряд XV (Дипломатический отдел), Оп. 1, Д. 144, 1–100.

After the agreement between France and Sardinia, signed in Plombières-les-Bains in July 1858, Napoleon III had to secure Russia's support. In September of the same year a meeting was held in Warsaw between Alexander II and Jerome Napoleon, after which the French government stepped up negotiations. On 3 March 1859 a secret agreement was signed in Paris between Russia and France. Russia pledged to remain neutral during the Franco-Austrian war, while France, more vaguely, promised to help Russia in its policy towards the Eastern Question.⁴ Although the French aid seemed irrelevant, Gorchakov realised its importance, after the expulsion of the Turkish and Austrian armies from the Danube principalities in 1857 and the establishment of their autonomy in 1858. Very quickly, Paris stood by St. Petersburg in support of changes to the Serbian throne and return of the Obrenović dynasty.

After the Crimean War, Serbia was still an important part of the Russian Balkan policy. However, for a more active Serbian policy, which was supposed to be a focal point for unification of the Balkan Christians, a stronger ruler was necessary. It was not in Russia's interests for Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević to remain on the Serbian throne, in the first place because of his open austrophile policy.⁵ Therefore, Russia, with the help of France, tried to prevent Turkey and the Great Powers from interfering with Serbia during the St. Andrew's Day Assembly in 1858. Russians were well aware that other Great Powers would have to recognise changes in Serbia and the return of the Obrenović dynasty, as the uprising of Italian provinces and a possible war between France and Austria was awaited every day.⁶ The official Russian political position was that the change on the Serbian throne between Prince Aleksandar

⁴ *Записка министра иностранных дел князя Горчакова о секретных переговорах за 1859 г.*, Красный архив 3/88 (1938) 188–193; А. Р. Андреев, *Последний канцлер Российской империи Александр Михайлович Горчаков. Документальное жизнеописание*, Москва 1999, 154–156; Н. С. Киняпина, *Борьба России за отмену ограничительных условий Парижского договора 1856 года*, Вопросы истории 8 (1972) 37–38; Д. М. Ковачевић, *Спољна политика Русије од Кримског рата до почетка Велике источне кризе (1856–1875)*, Истраживања 22 (2011) 283–288.

⁵ When Serbian prince Aleksandar Karađorđević (1842–1858) set out to suppress the power of the State Council by means of a series of scandalous affairs after 1856, the things started to change. It seemed that the prince would succeed in completely overpowering the opposition of the Council of State by persecuting the members of the Council after disclosing the infamous Tenka's plot (1857). For a moment, it looked as if the prince was successful in his efforts. Those councilors who had not been locked up in state prisons and were still offering resistance to his autocratic power were simply banished. Excessively cruel treatment of conspirators gave birth to protests and discontent both within the country and at the international level, which was why a special envoy from Constantinople was sent to Serbia as a mediator given that Serbia at the time was an autonomous principality under Turkish suzerainty. The problem of the imprisoned councilors was resolved and to some extent the Council of State regained its former power. See: С. Јовановић, *Уставобранитељи и њихова влада 1838–1858*, Београд 1990, 158–183; Ј. Продановић, *Историја политичких странака и струја у Србији*, 1, 181–189.

⁶ Российский государственный военно-исторический архив (=РГВИА), Ф. 428, Оп. 1, Д. 82, 168–192; Российская государственная библиотека, Научно-исследовательский Отдел рукописей (=НИОР РГБ), Ф. 327, К. 4, Д. 19, 1–15.

Karađorđević and the return of the Obrenović dynasty meant the return of a stronger Russian influence in Serbia and the Balkans. Russia was especially pleased because French representatives who supported the return of the Obrenović dynasty also supported Russian interests. In order to preserve peace, the Porta had to recognise the election of Prince Miloš Obrenović, in January 1859.⁷

The war in Italy

Almost immediately after the accession of Prince Miloš to the throne, the news arrived, changing the political landscape of Europe. The unification of Wallachia and Moldavia in early 1859 and the opening of the Italian question, gave prospects for opening of the Eastern Question and the issues of liberation and unification of the Serbian people.⁸ The Sardinian plans that Serbia should take part in the uprising of the Hungarians and the Serbs in Austria did not bring anything concrete. Any action to go to war, without a prior written consent with France and Sardinia, posed a risk for Serbia. It could expose the Principality to an Austrian and Turkish attack. It could lead to a failure or to uncertain territorial promises in the case of success. Prince Mihailo embarked on a trip to Vienna, Paris and London, intending to find out what specifically could be expected from the war in Italy. Mihailo Obrenović had talks with the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Viktor P. Balabin, in late March 1859 trying to learn what the Russian plans were. Russia did not know how the Italian-Austrian conflict would be finished or whether the war would spread to Turkey and open the Eastern Question. Balabin expressed the opinion that Serbia, in such an uncertain situation, should aim to preserve what it already had. In case of a war with Turkey, he considered that Russia could promise acquisition of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Serbian prince. Until then, Serbia had been obliged to keep a reserved attitude, but should be preparing for war, secretly. The Russian ambassador made a promise that Russia and France would provide assistance in arms and money, aiming for the liberation of Bosnia.⁹

⁷ Архив Српске академије наука и уметности (=АСАНУ), Историјска збирка, 7376; *Србске новине*, No. 1, 3/15 January 1859, 1; Ј. Продановић, *Историја политичких странака и струја у Србији*, 1, 230–238; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 31–35.

⁸ L. Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento. State, Society and National Unification*, London – New York 1994, 11–15. Furthermore: О. В. Серова, *Горчаков, Кавур и објединение Италији*, Москва 1997.

⁹ М. Пироћанац, *Кнез Михаил и заједничка радња балканских народа*, Београд 1895, 19; D. Leovac, *Serbia and Russia during the Second Rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović (1858–1860)*, *Belgrade Historical Review* 2 (2011) 213–214.

In Paris, Prince Mihailo had a discussion with Napoleon III, and found out about the plans of France to open the Italian, but not the Eastern Question.¹⁰ The Serbian memorandum, prepared for that occasion, was not handed over to the French ruler, who left Paris to take command of the army in Italy. The Memorandum is interesting because it begins as a complaint against the Turkish government domineering, and ends with offering a war alliance to France against Turkey and Austria.¹¹ The Russian ambassadors in Vienna and Paris were familiar with the contents of this Memorandum. Official Russia supported Prince Mihailo, in terms of the Memorandum and in that way tried to determine the unofficial pulse of France on a sensitive issue of Serbia's entry into the war against Turkey and Austria. A restrained French policy, being against supporting Russia and the events in Italy gave to the Serbian government a motive to take up a more active policy. The government took measures to increase the army troops in all districts.¹²

Mihailo then met in London with British officials and the leader of the Hungarian emigration, Lajos Kossuth. British government feared that the rebellion of Christian peoples in Turkey would lead to the collapse of the whole Empire, in the situation when the war in Italy broke out, and Constantinople would be easily found at a range of Russian military action. Faced with this threat, Britain in all ways tried to remove the motives for the uprising in the Balkans.¹³ Kossuth suggested to Serbian Prince Mihailo that Serbia could mediate between Hungarians and Croats in an agreement in which the Croats would collaborate with the Hungarians in the destruction of Austria, and help the Hungarians in southern Hungary. Territorial compensations were not argued. In Kossuth's view, Serbia was seen as a potential military base and the starting territory for military operations, with organised units of Hungarian volunteers.¹⁴ Prince Mihailo was unable to agree on such uncertain

¹⁰ РГВИА, Ф. 440, Оп. 1, Д. 170, 55–60.

¹¹ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 242 (1859), 119–125.

¹² РГВИА, Ф. 450, Оп. 1, Д. 59, 61–62; On 18 May 1859, the Russian ambassador in Vienna wrote that "the people in Serbia were angry" and that the hatred towards Turkey and Austria reached the highest level. АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 242 (1859) 75–78.

¹³ Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *Спољна политика Србије за владе кнеза Михаила (први Балкански савез)*, Београд 1963, 29–32; Љ. П. Ристић, *Велика Британија и Србија 1856–1862*, Београд 2008, 137–140.

¹⁴ A few months before the meeting of Prince Mihailo and Kossuth, in March 1859, the Hungarian emigration entered into an agreement with Romanian Prince Kuza, who approved the establishment of a warehouse of weapons on the Romanian territory, and the political and military organisation of Hungarian immigrants. The Austrian government learned that in Wallachia there were 25–30.000 guns ready to be smuggled into Hungary. Serbia was also under the watchful eye of Vienna because of fears that Serbia could send an even bigger part of rifles. *Светозар Милетић и Народна странка. Грађа 1860–1885*, I (1860–1869), Никола Петровић (ed.), Сремски Карловци 1968, No. 7, 31–32; L. Kossuth, *Memories of my exile*, translated from the Hungarian original by Ferencz Jausz, New York 1880, 300–320; Г. Бона, *Покушаји јужнословенско-мађарске војне сарадње 1849–1867. године*, Српско-мађарски односи и сарадња 1848–1867, Београд 1987, 136–137.

combinations, especially as Kossuth's plan for Serbia did not bring anything other than friendship of the renewed and independent Hungary.¹⁵ Returning to Belgrade, Mihailo believed that any action on the uprising must await a more favourable moment. The Serbian question could not be associated with the Italian.

In June 1859, after the French victories at Solferino and Magenta, the threat of a European war increased. Napoleon III and Franz Josef made a truce in Villafranca. Following the conclusion of the truce it was in the interest of the Principality of Serbia to prevent any unwanted border clashes with the Turkish army. Serbia also had to deny any assistance to agitators for the insurrection in Turkey. Cautious policy of Serbia in 1859 proved completely justified, because the Italian war was localised and relations between Serbia and Austria and Turkey did not deteriorate significantly.

The issue of the uprising of Christians in Turkey was still a hot topic. The question of refugees from Turkish border areas, who sought refuge in Serbia, was of great importance. The official standpoint of the Ottoman Porte was that Serbia was preparing intrusion of refugees into the Turkish territory. Without a strict supervision by the Serbian government, the refugees became subject to easy manipulation and scheming among certain political groups and foreign consuls in Serbia. In May 1860, the Russian Foreign Minister A. M. Gorchakov presented a note in which he described the difficult situation of Christians in Turkey, and Russia's efforts to discourage them from their rebellious actions. Subsequently, the official attitude of St. Petersburg was that the uprisings of the Balkan nations should be seriously prepared. Such preparations for the uprising required not only military but also diplomatic action. The Russian government prepared a project of reforms in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ Russia then took steps to make an understanding with France and Prussia, since it expected their support in the future events.¹⁷

During the period from May to August 1860, the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi's deed was in the focus of European attention. He managed to stir up a revolt of the people in southern Italy with only a thousand volunteers. His venture left a great impression on all nations in Europe who strove to national unification. Prince Miloš was aware that the heated political situation in Europe and the deterioration of relations with the Ottoman Empire could easily lead to a war in the Balkans. In the first place, there was a question of weapons. In early May 1860, via the Russian consul in Belgrade, Prince Miloš talked to the Asian department of

¹⁵ On reaching of an alleged agreement there were data only in Kossuth's memories (L. Kossuth, *Memories of my exile*, 324–337). In the historiography, only these memories are also quoted in relation to the agreement. Only G. Jakšić and V. Vučković in their seminal book about foreign policy of Serbia (pp. 32–34) tried to critically assess the alleged agreement between Prince Mihailo and Kossuth, but with the wrong conclusion that the prince agreed with Kossuth's ideas, which is in contradiction with Serbia's further policy. See: Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 40–41.

¹⁶ Государственный архив Российской Федерации (=ГАРФ), Ф. 828, Оп. 1, Д. 146, 78–81; D. Leovac, *Serbia and Russia during the Second Rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović (1858–1860)*, 214–215.

¹⁷ ГАРФ, Ф. 1127, Оп. 1, Д. 10, 28–31, 33–34.

the Russian Foreign Ministry, to purchase rifles for the Serbian army. After the Prince's second application, on 12 July 1860, the Russian Military Ministry decided to approve the purchase of rifles for the Serbian government.¹⁸ After Prince Miloš's death on 26 September 1860, his successor, Prince Mihailo, continued his foreign policy and active work on the liberation and unification of the Serbian people.

***Politics of Prince Mihailo in the first years of his rule:
the first steps towards the creation of the Balkan League***

Before coming to the throne, Prince Mihailo was well aware of a few important facts. First, Serbia could expect serious support to its foreign policy only from St. Petersburg, and second, the question of liberation and unification of the Serbian people could not be linked with the Italian or any other European movement. Immediately after coming to the throne, Prince Mihailo encountered important matters of state, in internal and foreign affairs. The basis of Prince's programme consisted of questions for amending the Constitution of 1838, strengthening the power of the ruler, the eviction of the Turks and the reconciliation of political bickering. The Prince was aware that only after their resolution would it be possible to create a political climate in the country that would lead to major foreign policy goals – mutual understanding of the Balkan states and peoples, and the war against Turkey.¹⁹ The Prince dedicated the year 1861 to internal problems.²⁰

Almost five years of uncertainty and extensive action and negotiation preceded the creation of the Balkan League. There was a need to overcome conflicting interests of the Balkan states and peoples, coordinate plans for a joint action against the Ottoman Empire and work in secret, as the views of all European

¹⁸ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/3, Оп. 233, Д. 2 (1860), 1, 3–6; D. Leovac, *Serbia and Russia during the Second Rule of Prince Miloš Obrenović (1858–1860)*, 215–216; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 45–47.

¹⁹ The Prince opted for a diplomatic mission, in order to examine the attitudes of the Great Powers. State Councilor Jovan Marinović, at the end of 1860 and in early 1861, visited Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin and Paris. (АС, Хартије Јована Мариновића, I–12). The visit to Turin was cancelled by Prince's order in late February 1861, immediately after the declaration of a united Kingdom of Italy in Turin. In this way, further suspicion of Austria was avoided. Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 52; Furthermore: Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 48–57.

²⁰ In August 1861, the Preobraženje Assembly was held, adopting four laws: about the National Assembly, about the Council of State, on the organisation of the National Army and the payment of taxes on wealth. By these changes Prince Mihailo opted for the concept of a strong prince, with the National Assembly as a secondary assistant, which approved of his ideas. Furthermore: Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 65–74.

capitals were pointed towards Belgrade, which was considered the centre of the liberation movements in the Balkans. Russia saw in Serbia a central point of unity of Christians and therefore its diplomatic representatives' attempts at other Balkan countries and peoples were directed towards Serbia. As working in secret was greatly important for Russia, independent actions of Montenegro or Greece were frowned upon in St. Petersburg, and especially their ties to the Italian-Hungarian plans. Specifically, during 1860 and 1861, Greece took active negotiations with Italy about the alliance. Italy was even obliged to send to the Greeks weapons and ships for the war against the Ottoman Empire. They also discussed that Garibaldi with the army could appear in the Balkans together with the Hungarians and other volunteers to raise a general uprising. Greeks tried to attract Montenegro and Serbia to these plans.²¹ Prince Mihailo did not agree with such a hefty combination, because he knew that, at that time, the Eastern question could not be linked with the Italian. Russia was also of the opinion that the war against the Ottoman Empire could be led only after thorough preparations and with the joint participation of all countries and peoples of the Balkans.

The first Serbian steps towards the understanding of all Balkan nations began almost immediately after Prince Mihailo came to the throne, and intensified in early 1861. Serbia lent particular importance to ensuring an agreement with Greece and Montenegro.²² In the period from 1860 to 1861, Russia rather shyly got involved in the action of understanding the Balkan peoples. St. Petersburg did not dare to risk compromising and the new grouping of the Great Powers against Russia. The shadow of the Crimean War was still hovering over Russian officials. Since the beginning of 1862, Russian representatives in Belgrade and Dubrovnik centred their campaign on the convergence of two Serbian principalities – Serbia and Montenegro. Russian representatives were initially reserved. Prince Mihailo was advised from St. Petersburg to take care of any early action, and Prince Mihailo directed the same advice to Montenegro and Greece. The reason for anxiety both of St. Petersburg and Belgrade was the knowledge that the Greek government intended to join the Italian plans to raise a rebellion in the Balkans. Montenegro also planned to join the adventurous plans of Garibaldi and the Hungarian revolutionaries.²³ Greek King Otto

²¹ Furthermore: С. Терзић, *Србија и Грчка (1856–1903). Борба за Балкан*, Београд 1992, 90–95; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 72–74; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 149–156.

²² Furthermore: АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 245 (1861), 54–55; *Србија и ослободилачки покрети на Балкану од Париског мира до Берлинског конгреса (1856–1878)*, I, В. Крестић, Р. Љушић (eds.), Београд 1983, No. 155, 157а, 176–177, 179–182; Д. Вујовић, *Три документа о бављењу Вука Караџића у Црној Гори 1860. и 1862. године*, *Историјски записи XVII/XXI*, 1 (1964) 113–114; Љ. Алексић, *О мисији Вука Караџића на Цетињу 1860–1861. године*, *Историски гласник* 1–2 (1958) 77–84; Р. Јовановић, *Политички односи Црне Горе и Србије 1860–1878*, *Цетиње* 1977, 42–46; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 64, 471–474.

²³ Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 91–99; Љ. Алексић–Пејковић, *Планови о повезивању италијанског и српског питања и српско–италијански односи за време источне кризе 1861–1862. године*, *Историјски гласник* 1–2 (1975) 23–42.

and Montenegrin Prince Nikola were too blinded by the combative ideas that they failed to see the essence of the Italian plan – a diversion to weaken Austria and drag off parts of its power from the Italian front. Belgrade knew that such action without the support of Russia and France would be a complete disaster. Russian officials opposed these ideas and carefully watched every step of Italy, Greece, Montenegro, and Hungarians.²⁴

It was clear that the issue of agreements with Montenegro and Greece in 1861 was burdened by a number of issues: the question of leadership of the joint action and military operations in general, distrust between Prince Mihailo and Prince Nikola, difficulties over the question of possible demarcation of the Greeks, the military reluctance of the Balkan states, securing foreign support, internal reforms in Serbia, the constant threat of the Turkish military (we should not forget that Turkish garrisons were in Serbia at the time). All of these questions presented difficulties also in the coming period. The difference was that Russia was actively involved since the beginning of 1862, and its representatives in the Balkans worked on overcoming misunderstandings towards the main goal – the conclusion of the Balkan League. This change in Russian policy was largely caused by personnel changes at the top of the Belgrade authorities. In December 1861, Ilija Garašanin became the Serbian Prime Minister, of whom the Russian diplomacy expected much in matters of foreign policy and understanding with other Balkan countries and peoples.²⁵

New challenges emerged in 1862, when a war broke out in February between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire. Belgrade feared that after the fall of Montenegro, Turkey could attack Serbia.²⁶ A similar view was shared by Russian representatives, who were counting that the Turkish attack on Greece and Serbia was very possible, and they advised both governments to communicate and work together.²⁷ An example of realising the worst-case scenario was seen in the Montenegrin-Turkish war, and soon in the situation after the bombing of Belgrade in June 1862. Realising the seriousness of the situation, Russia was ready to make concessions and to fully support the views of Napoleon III in the policy towards the Kingdom of Italy, while the French ruler pledged to support St. Petersburg in terms of the burning issues in the Balkans. Russia received diplomatic support of the French government in the preservation of Montenegro from total collapse and in supporting Serbia at the conference in Kanlidja. Although Russia was not ready for a war, nor did it want any complications in the Balkans, Russia sent to Serbia a large shipment of weapons and St. Petersburg approved an important cash loan in 1862/63. The reasons were maintaining influence in Serbia and preparing for a possible war, which was supposed to start only with the consent and co-ordination of Russia.²⁸

²⁴ Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 154–155.

²⁵ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 245 (1861), 178–179.

²⁶ Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 156–158.

²⁷ ГАРФ, Ф. 939, Оп. 1, ед. хр. 130, 19–20.

²⁸ Furthermore: Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 75–116.

At the time after the bombing of Belgrade, when the situation in Serbia was on the brink of a war, Prince Mihailo had to make a decision on the issue of renewing negotiations with the Greeks and improving relations with Montenegro.²⁹ Belgrade was concerned about the news that the Greeks began new negotiations with Italy and explored the possibility of the arrival of Garibaldi and volunteers in Thessaly and Epirus. The Russian consul advised Serbia to practice strict restraint in these plans. Also, at that time Serbia could not expect help from Montenegro and Romania. The former suffered huge losses in the war against the Ottoman Empire, while the latter seemed incapable of any greater military action. With these results, Prince Mihailo met the Russian consul, who clearly stated that Russia was now against any movement in the Balkans, and that it must wait for more favourable time.³⁰

Although Serbia accepted the decision of the Conference of Kanlidja, negotiations with the Greeks continued, mostly because of fear that Athens could interpret Belgrade's peacefulness as a sign that Serbia could in the future easily accept the solutions of the Great Powers. However, on 10 October 1862 King Otto was toppled from the Greek throne in Athens.³¹ The Greeks were concerned with the election of a new king, the establishment of a regular government and the adoption of a new constitution, which meant the termination of negotiations with Serbia for a long time. The unstable situation in Greece and neutrality of Serbia in the war between Montenegro and Turkey almost led to the cancellation of all talks on cooperation.³² Russian diplomacy continued with mediation, mostly in order to overcome the disputes between Serbia and Montenegro.³³

Polish Uprising

In early 1863, the situation in the Balkans was boiling. The outbreak of the January Uprising in Poland completely changed the international relations. France

²⁹ Д. Вујовић, *Три документа о бављењу Вука Караџића у Црној Гори 1860. и 1862. године*, 115; Р. Јовановић, *Политички односи Црне Горе и Србије 1860–1878*, 69–70; ГАРФ, Ф. 939, Оп. 1, ед. хр. 130, л. 33.

³⁰ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 246 (1862), 64, 69–70, 78; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 156–158.

³¹ Љ. Алексић–Пејковић, *Планови о повезивању италијанског и српског питања*, 43–46; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 157–158.

³² In late March 1863, Prince of Denmark William George Glücksburg was appointed king in Greece, under the name of George I (1863–1913). Shortly before the election of the new king in Greece, Belgrade sent to Athens Georgi Rakovski to examine the situation and possible resumption of negotiations. The mission did not succeed. АС, ИГ, 1397; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 177, Б. Павићевић, *Црна Гора у рату 1862*, Београд 1963, 349–451.

³³ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 246 (1862) 4–7; Р. Јовановић, *Политички односи Црне Горе и Србије 1860–1878*, 81–86; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 158–164.

and Russia had started to move away, in the first place over the condescending attitude of Paris towards the Poles. Great Britain and Austria inclined to France and the Poles in the Polish question, while Prussia became the only Russian ally in the initial phase of the uprising.³⁴ In early 1863, the government in Belgrade suffered the pressures and accusations of Constantinople, Vienna and London, and pressures from St. Petersburg arrived soon. Almost at the outbreak of the uprising, Russia expressed fears about the situation in the Balkans, but not from the policy of the Great Powers, but from the actions of Polish immigrants.³⁵

In the midst of the crisis caused by the uprising in Poland, the Balkan states intensified activities to harmonise actions against Turkey. Most was done by opening of permanent diplomatic missions – the Serbian in Bucharest, and Romanian in Belgrade. However, Russia acceded to their rapprochement very cautiously. The reason was a gathering of Polish immigrants in the territory of Romania. Russia was disappointed by previous acts of the Romanian ruler, Prince Cuza, who allowed French agents to provide all help to Polish immigrants, also allowing that ships under the French flag should bring them weapons.³⁶ Russian agents received information about the connections of Prince Cuza, the Italian Committee of Turin, which was led by General Tyre and Hungarian emigrants led by Kossuth. The Russians learned that general Tir arrived in Braila and agreed with Kossuth that Prince Cuza give to Polish immigrants 10,000 rifles, which Napoleon III in 1859 gave to the Hungarians and which were stored in Romania. However, the Russian agents had no information about their further plans, and especially about the role of Serbia.³⁷ Russia then increasingly began to put pressure on Belgrade, but the pressure rapidly decreased after the explanations of Prince Mihailo. The Serbian prince was not the ruler who would compromise himself or Serbia by any unsafe and hasty action, whereas Serbia was not ready for a

³⁴ ГАРФ, Ф. 109, Оп. 2а, Д. 436, 1–2; Л. И. Нарочницкая, *Россия и войны Пруссии в 60-х годах за объединение Германии “сверху”*, Москва 1960, 17; Furthermore: В. Г. Ревуненков, *Польское восстание 1863 г. и европейская дипломатия*, Ленинград 1957, 114–262.

³⁵ *Россия под надзором. Отчеты III отделения 1827–1869*, М. В. Сидорова, Е. И. Щербакowa (eds.), Москва 2006, 505–508, 535–538, 571–576; В. А. Дьяков, *Революционное движение в русской армии и польское освободительное движение 1856–1865 гг.*, Советское славяноведение 3 (1966) 16–30.

³⁶ *Россия под надзором. Отчеты III отделения 1827–1869*, 616–617; В. П. Сторожук, *Польская эмиграция в Румынии и восстание 1863 года (по материалам донесений дипломатических представителей России)*, Освободительное движение Западных и Южных Славян XIX–XX вв, Москва 1965, 77–89.

³⁷ In early February 1863, the Italian Committee suggested to the Serbian government the plan of war, according to which Serbia with the other Balkan countries should come to a war against Turkey, while the Hungarian expatriates and Italians started the war against Austria, while Austria was prevented to intervene in the Balkans. Draft agreement to the Serbian government of 2 February 1863, published Vojislav J. Vučković, *Политичка акција Србије у јужнословенским покрајинама Хабзбуршке монархије 1859–1874*, Београд 1965, 94–95; Furthermore: Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 173–174; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 120–123.

war, and no Great Power, especially Russia, provided support to any action in the Balkans at that time.

In late July 1863, the situation in the Balkans was apparently calm. Actions of Polish immigrants from Wallachia were silent, and the action on the ground of the Habsburg Monarchy, was prevented by the Austrian police. While the majority of the Serbian Council members and the government were on a summer vacation, an Italian deputy brought to Belgrade the news that Napoleon III made a secret proposal to Vienna on redrawing the map of Europe. Under that plan, Serbia was supposed to belong to Austria.³⁸ Prince Mihailo did not know that Vienna and London rejected that proposal in the past months because he clearly saw that France, Austria and England were on the same political track.³⁹ In the meantime, the Turkish army launched a new deployment of units and moved closer to the borders of Serbia, while Vienna by numerous actions tried to demonstrate to St. Petersburg and Belgrade that Austria was ready to react in case of any movement in the Balkans.⁴⁰

Serbia received assurances from Russia that none of the Great Powers in the current situation could raise the issues of border changes, arguing that Vienna would not dare do anything because of fear of cooperation between Russia and Prussia, while it was not in the interest of Great Britain to complicate the situation in the Balkans. Russian minister Gorchakov underlined that the Polish uprising was an internal affair of Russia and all the moves of other Great Powers were only a test of the Russian determination.⁴¹ He again formally advised that Serbia should try to avoid any kind of provocations on the borders with the Ottoman Empire, which to the Porte could give a cause for possible military operations.

The Polish uprising did not lead to a European war, or to larger plots in the Balkans. By skilful vacillation, Russian diplomacy managed to defuse passions in the European capitals and Constantinople, and reduced suspicions and accusations against Serbia. Russian officials particularly praised the conciliatory spirit of Prince Mihailo and his desire for maintaining peace in the year 1863.⁴² The complications caused by the outbreak of the January Uprising certainly influenced to draw the attention of the Great Powers from Serbia, which especially intensified in the second half of 1862 and early 1863.

³⁸ Poland was expected to renew and surrender to the government one of the Austrian archdukes, Venice went to Italy, while Austria received compensation in the form of Silesia and Serbia. France should have received the Rhine area, a Prussian indemnity in Saxony and Hanover. ГАРФ, Ф. 109, Оп. 2а, Д. 394, 1–44; R. B. Elrod, *Austria and the Venetian question 1860–1866*, Central European History, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun 1971) 160–164; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 124–126.

³⁹ АС, ИГ, 1416.

⁴⁰ РГВИА, Ф. 450, Оп. 1, Д. 69, 61–64; ГАРФ, Ф. 547, Оп. 1, Д. 217, 1–2.

⁴¹ Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 125.

⁴² ГАРФ, Ф. 828, Оп. 1, Д. 1430, 92–95.

From 1864 to 1866

In 1864 and 1865 Russian officials tried in all ways to calm the situation in the Balkans and make sure that Serbia did not enter into a conflict with the Ottoman Empire. Russian military agents pointed out that there was a great fragmentation of Balkan states, and even their military readiness was not at a high level. On the other hand, Russia managed to deal with an uprising in Poland, but lost France as its main ally in the Eastern Question. Without greater diplomatic support Russia had no intention to support Balkan peoples. Military support was not even contemplated, because entering into the war on the side of the Balkan states was seen as disastrous for the main goals of Russian foreign policy. St. Petersburg was well aware that such a war would destroy all efforts directed primarily at the annulment of provisions of the Paris Peace Treaty, especially the neutralisation of the Black Sea. For these reasons, Russia tried in all ways to peacefully patch up relationships between the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire, while at the same time worked on rapprochement of the Balkan states.

The question of anticipation of a war and a warmed-up atmosphere lasted throughout 1864. The Porta relocated troops to the borders of Serbia, explaining that it thus protected its borders. At the same time, Turkish officials exerted great pressure on representatives of the Great Powers in Constantinople against Serbia. Contentious issues between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire, supposedly resolved by decisions at the Kanlidja conference, were the main cause of constant bickering. Fearing that the German-Danish war in 1864 could cause an earthquake in the Balkans, France and Britain resolved to finally patch up relations between Belgrade and Constantinople. The officials in London and Paris did not want to create a cause in the Balkans as a pretext for serious plots and a war against the Ottoman Empire. Upon the English initiative, talks were opened in the summer of 1864 in Constantinople on resolving contentious issues between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire, but the decision came only a year later.⁴³

The most serious plot in 1865 was caused by celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Second Serbian Uprising, which caused an avalanche of criticism and pressure on Prince Mihailo and the Serbian government. Explaining the seriousness of the situation, Russian reports said that the celebration could easily serve the Turks as a *casus belli*.⁴⁴ The jubilee celebration clearly expressed the Serbian desire to publicly demonstrate the idea of state sovereignty. Prince's main motive for organising the celebration was the rise of the dynasty and the state at the internal and external political level. The news about organising the celebration was received

⁴³ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 251 (1865), 175–177, 183–184, 187–189; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 196–199; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 138–141.

⁴⁴ АВПРИ, Ф. 161/1, Оп. 181/2, Д. 251 (1865), 145–146.

with disapproval among Belgrade Turks. They quickly began to spread rumours that the Turks planned to bomb Belgrade on the celebration day. As a very negative attitude was taken, the Porta, which organised the celebration, supported a number of accusations that Serbia was preparing an uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁵ The celebration was attended by an envoy of the Montenegrin prince, adjutant of the Romanian Prince, many prominent Serbs, Italian representatives and a large number of Serbs from the Habsburg monarchy. "Celebrating the independent Serbia", as Prince Mihailo said in his speech, however, passed without foreign policy issues.

Accusations by the Porta that Serbia was a key element in the destruction of the Turkish power in the Balkans, continued until the end of 1865. Constantinople feared that the tension in the relations between Austria and Prussia could cause Serbia to start an uprising in the Balkans.⁴⁶ All feared the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War, especially the German plans for the uprising in the Balkans, in terms of distracting a part of the Austrian troops. Prussia and Italy very quickly started with some diplomatic manoeuvres in order to gain Serbia for a possible uprising in Hungary. Thus, an adviser of the Prussian ambassador in Madrid came to Serbia in early July 1866. He promised all help from Prussia, if Serbia took part in the uprising of the Hungarians. Prince Mihailo rejected the proposal, citing the increasing concentration of Turkish troops on the borders of the Principality.⁴⁷ General Tyre, adjutant of the Italian king, soon arrived to Belgrade, also asked to help Serbia in the coming uprising in Hungary. However, the day after his arrival, on 7 August 1866, a ceasefire was signed between Prussia and Austria, and through confidential channels from Budapest the Serbian government received a telegram which clearly stated that the ruling circles in Hungary expected negotiations with Vienna over the dualistic organisation of the Monarchy and that currently there was no question of the uprising.⁴⁸ Prince Mihailo looked reasonably at Bismarck's plans and did not believe in the assurances of General Tyre that the Austro-Prussian war would continue, despite a signed ceasefire. Tyre had announced that Serbia could not risk going to war against Austria without proper preparation and signing of the agreement with Prussia and Italy. However, on 23 August a Peace Treaty was signed in Prague between Prussia and Austria, and Bismarck, through the consul in Belgrade, said to

⁴⁵ J. Paunović-Štermenski, *The British diplomacy and the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the second Serbian uprising*, *Belgrade Historical Review* 2 (2011) 191–202; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 141–144.

⁴⁶ Some Russian diplomats in the Balkans, from July 1865, began to insist that the Serbian government should restart negotiations with the Greeks, hoping that it would force the Montenegrin prince to defer Serbia. Russian ambassador in Athens Alexander S. Jonin warned in October 1865 that the agreement between Serbia and Greece had to be concluded as soon as possible, because some of the Greek parties began to turn to England. Russian ambassador in Constantinople Nikolay P. Ignatyev entirely agreed with him. ГАРФ, Ф. 939, Оп. 1, Д. 53, 1–3; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 165–166.

⁴⁷ *Политичка акција Србије*, No. 85, 86, 89, 171–173, 176–177.

⁴⁸ АС, ИГ, 1600; Д. Леовац, *Србија и Русија за време друге владавине кнеза Михаила (1860–1868)*, 146–147.

the Serbian government that Prussia was ready to preserve the unity of common interest in the future. This practically closed the possibility of Serbia's involvement in an uncertain war. In addition, nearly no one in Serbia expected Austria's defeat.⁴⁹

Russia played the major role in preserving the neutrality of Serbia. Russian officials advised the Serbian government to maintain neutrality in the Austro-Prussian War, and did not connect with Prussian and Italian plans, because a simultaneous war with Austria and the Ottoman Empire could be a disaster for Serbia. Russia was not ready to get engaged in any European movement, over the fear of creating a new "Crimean" coalition and defeat.⁵⁰ There are several reasons why Serbia did not enter in the war: military unreadiness; there were no specific agreements with Prussia and Italy; there were no agreements with other Balkan countries; Russia was strongly against the war. Certainly the defeat of Austria influenced Serbia to more freely pursue its foreign policy. The decision was made to speed up military preparations in the country and trigger negotiations with the Balkan states and peoples. The uprising, which in August 1866 flared up on the island of Crete, opened new possibilities in solving the Eastern Question.

Conclusion

Issues related to the effects of the unification of Italy to the Serbian question have been dealt with by a small number of authors. However, these two questions in the context of Russian foreign policy in current historiography were not worthy of special attention.

In Serbia, after the Obrenović dynasty returned to the throne, serious considerations of a more active foreign policy began, involving not only the question of the liberation of the Serbian people in the areas under Turkish rule, but also the strengthening of the autonomous rights of the Principality. In this regard, the most important pillar of Serbia was certainly Russia, which, despite the defeat in the Crimean war, tried to regain its old position in the Balkans.

The war of France and Piedmont against Austria in 1859 opened new problems. Italians saw in Serbia a potential ally who would by sabotage in Austria facilitate work towards Italian units. However, Prince Miloš and his son Mihailo saw that Serbia in these plans did not get anything concrete. Any action and entry into the war, without the prior written agreement with France and Piedmont, represented for Serbia a risk of attack by Austria and Turkey, and unsafe territorial promises. In addition, Russia showed great caution, advising Belgrade to maintain peace. Cautious policy proved to be fully justified, because the Italian war remained localised.

⁴⁹ АС, ИГ, 1581.

⁵⁰ АВПРИ, Ф. 133, оп. 469, Д. 49 (1866), 65–69; РГВИА, Ф. 437, Оп. 1, Д. 42, л. 1–60.

The following years – 1860 and 1861, were marked by strong activity of Italian agents, who tried to attract the Balkan states to numerous war combinations, which entailed a conflict with the Habsburg monarchy. St. Petersburg frowned on independent actions of Montenegro or Greece, and especially on their relationship with the Italian and Hungarian agents. Official Russia constantly advised Prince Mihailo that the war against the Ottoman Empire could be led only after thorough preparations and with the joint participation of all countries and peoples of the Balkans.

An example of realising the worst-case scenario was the Montenegrin-Turkish war in 1862, and the situation after the bombing of Belgrade. Although Russia was not ready for a war, nor did it want any complications in the Balkans, it sent to Serbia a large shipment of weapons and approved an important cash loan in 1862/63. The reasons were maintaining influence in Serbia and preparing for a possible war, which was supposed to start only with the consent and co-ordination of Russia. The major changes brought about an uprising in Poland, which erupted in early 1863 and broke the anyway weak Franco-Russian bloc. Since then, Prince Mihailo was definitely aware that Russia did not support in any case a stronger linkage between Serbia and Italy, especially the Italian friendly relations with France.

Russian policy in Serbia's relations with Italy proved to be important in 1865 and 1866. During this period, the place formerly occupied by France, came to Prussia, which was busily preparing itself for a war against Austria. Plans for a possible diversion in the Balkans, which would weaken the position of Vienna again became topical. However, as before, Prince Mihailo refused to allow participation without proper preparation and signing of an agreement with Prussia and Italy. We see that the officials in Serbia kept the same attitude as towards the war in 1859. In conclusion, we must point out that Serbia could not in any way be involved in conflicts in 1859 and 1866, as well as in a number of Italian war plans. Princes Miloš and Mihailo were aware that such actions brought Serbia more harm than good. On the other hand, the policies of the Great Powers, primarily Russia, resulted in the retention of a Serbian active action. First, France and Italy, and then Prussia and Italy, in the struggle against Austria, saw in Serbia and the Balkans only the area of diversion and distraction of Austrian forces. When looking at the whole situation on the international stage, we think that it is an issue of misinterpretation that Serbia missed a chance to connect the question of liberation and unification of the Serbian people with the Italian question.

Danko LEOVAC

LA QUESTIONE SERBA, LA RUSSIA E L'UNITA D'ITALIA (1859-1866)

Sommario

Il presente articolo analizza le connessioni fra le questioni dell'unità serba e quella italiana nel periodo che va dalla guerra franco-piemontese contro l'Austria (1859) alla Guerra austro-prussiana (1866). In Serbia, il ritorno della dinastia Obrenović sul trono del Principato (1858) segnò l'inizio di una politica estera più attiva, che contemplava non solo la questione della liberazione del popolo serbo dal dominio turco, ma anche il rafforzamento dell'autonomia del Principato. La Russia fu il maggiore sostenitore degli obiettivi della Serbia, anche perché l'impero zarista ambiva a recuperare la sua influenza nei Balcani, diminuita dopo la sconfitta nella Guerra di Crimea. La guerra di Francia e Piemonte contro l'Austria nel 1859 interessava direttamente la Serbia. Tuttavia, mentre il Piemonte vedeva nella Serbia un potenziale alleato militare in funzione anti-austriaca, Belgrado non pensava di agire direttamente sul territorio della Monarchia danubiana, ma piuttosto a concentrare i suoi sforzi contro l'impero ottomano. Vari fattori spinsero la Serbia a non restare coinvolta: l'assenza di un accordo preventivo con Francia e Piemonte, la minaccia di un attacco turco o austriaco e la posizione contraria della Russia.

L'anno successivo fu caratterizzato da un forte attivismo degli agenti italiani, che cercavano di coinvolgere la Serbia in numerosi piani di guerra contro l'Austria. Pietroburgo suggerì nuovamente al principe Mihailo di rimanere neutrale, criticando le azioni indipendenti del Montenegro e della Grecia e le loro relazioni con gli agenti italiani e ungheresi. Dopo lo scoppio della rivolta in Polonia, nei primi mesi del 1863, le relazioni russo-francesi si raffreddarono notevolmente e il Principe Mihailo capì che la Russia non avrebbe appoggiato il rafforzamento dei rapporti tra serbi e italiani, date le relazioni amichevoli tra Torino e Parigi. La questione della partecipazione serba nelle operazioni militari si era riproposta nel periodo immediatamente precedente lo scoppio della guerra tra la Prussia e l'Austria, guerra che coinvolse anche il Piemonte. Il principe Mihailo però rifiutò di partecipare. La situazione nel 1866 era quasi identica a quella del 1859. Era chiaro che la questione della liberazione e dell'unificazione del popolo serbo non si sarebbe collegata con il movimento nazionale italiano o di altre nazioni europee. La Questione d'Oriente era un punto sensibile per tutte le grandi potenze e la politica estera serba non riusciva a trovare posto nei loro piani. Di conseguenza, è errato ritenere che la Serbia avrebbe potuto realizzare i suoi piani attraverso un più stretto collegamento con il movimento nazionale italiano.

Parole chiave: Serbia, Russia, Italia, questione serba, unificazione italiana, grandi potenze.

Данко ЛЕОВАЦ

СРПСКО ПИТАЊЕ, РУСИЈА И УЈЕДИЊЕЊЕ ИТАЛИЈЕ (1859–1866)

Резиме

У раду је анализирано могуће повезивање питања српског и италијанског уједињења у периоду од рата Француске и Пијемнота против Аустрије (1859) до аустро–пруског рата (1866). Повратак династије Обреновић на престо у Кнежевини Србији (1858) означио је почетак озбиљних разматрања о активнијој спољној политици, која је укључивала не само питање ослобођења српског народа под турском влашћу, већ и јачање аутономних права Кнежевине. На том пољу, као најважнији спољнополитички ослонац показала се Русија, која је након пораза у Кримском рату покушавала да поврати старе позиције на Балкану. Рат Француске и Пијемонта против Аустрије 1859. године отворио је и питање могућег активирања Србије. Међутим, политике Пијемонта и Србије су се разликовале у целисти, будући да су у Торину у Србији видели потенцијалног савезника за саботажу Аустрије, док у Београду нису размишљали о акцијама на територији Дунавске монархије већ на простору европске Турске. Краткотрајни рат, непостојање било каквих споразума са Француском и Пијемонтом, опасност од напада Турске и Аустрије, те савети Русије на уздржаност утицали су да српска влада одржи мир.

Наредне године обележила је јака активност италијанских агената који су чинили доста напора да Србију увуку у бројне ратне комбинације против Аустрије. Званични Петроград је кнезу Михаилу поново саветовао уздржаност, посебно критикујући самосталне акције Црне Горе и Грчке у повезивању са италијанским и мађарским агентима. У периоду након избијања устанка у Пољској, почетком 1863. године, руско-француски односи су знатно захладнели, а кнез Михаило је био свестан да Русија ни на који начин неће подржати јаче повезивање са Италијанима, имајући у виду пријатељске односе између Торина и Париза. Питање укључивања Србије у ратна дејства постало је поново актуелно у време непосредно пре избијања рата између Пруске и Аустрије, у који се укључио и Пијемонт. Како је Србија поново требало да буде тачка диверзије против Аустрије, кнез Михаило је одбио да суделује у тим плановима. Видимо да је ситуација 1866. била готово идентична оној из 1859. године. Било је јасно да се питање ослобођења и уједињења српског народа не може повезати са италијанским или неким другим европским покретом. Источно питање представљало је осетљиву тачку политике свих великих сила, а спољна политика Србије тим у прорачунима није имала изгледа на успех. Због тога је и погрешно тумачење да је Србија пропустила прилику да изврши уједињење и ослобођење српског народа повезивањем са италијанским покретом.

Кључне речи: Србија, Русија, Италија, српско питање, уједињење Италије, Велике силе.

Jovana IVETIĆ

DIPLOMATIC MISSION OF DIMITRIJE MATIĆ IN ROME DURING 1878

Abstract: Prior to convening of the Congress of Berlin, abandoned by Russia, Serbia tried to attain support for its independence and territorial expansion within the requested borders from many countries. The friendly relations between Italy and Serbia, since the period of the Revolution of 1848, when the cooperation against Austria was attempted, continued in the years after the Italian unification. The attempt of the Serbian government to ensure Italian support at the Congress of Berlin was encouraged by the arrival of Italian volunteers who participated in the armed conflict during 1876. The goal of the diplomatic mission of Dimitrije Matić was to ensure Italian support to Serbia, which the Italian representative in Serbia and the Italian government in resignation also supported.

Keywords: diplomacy, Serbia, Italy, Dimitrije Matić.

The Peace Agreement of San Stefano did not meet the war plans for the expansion of Serbia, and caused the dissatisfaction of the Great Powers, which demanded its revision. Russia had to abandon the idea of a Greater Bulgaria during diplomatic negotiations with England; joint action with the Austria-Hungary halted the expansion of Russia and temporarily retained the state in Turkey.

A bad diplomatic position of Russia before the session of the Congress of Berlin clearly indicated that Serbia would not be able to count on its support. Russian representatives made it clear that Serbia should address its plea to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which Serbia would do, since it could not count on the help of other Great Powers, which did not forgive its breach of the peace with Turkey, as they were the guarantors. The breach of the peace was not supported either by

Austria-Hungary, but it was not possible to reach an agreement, because Austria-Hungary used every opportunity to diminish Russian influence in Serbia. Backed by Germany and Britain, before the Berlin Congress, Austria-Hungary was a state that was able to strike a balance in the Balkans and its diplomatic position was enviable.¹

During the diplomatic action of Austria-Hungary, the Serbian Prince opted for a diplomatic action in Italy, as the Italian representative in Belgrade, Count Ioannini, looked favorably upon the solution regarding the Serbian territory and compensation issues. The closeness of Serbian politicians, above all, Jovan Ristić, with the Italian representative met with disapproval of the Austro-Hungarian representative in Serbia. In his dispatches, he indicated that the behaviour of the Italian representative Count Ioannini could lead to a rebellion among the Serbian population within the borders of Austria-Hungary.²

The Prince sent to Rome his envoy Dimitrije Matić, who was active in Serbian politics from the time of the revolution 1848/49. In Karlowitz he was appointed a member of the National Committee of the Serbian Voivodina, where he was actively assisting the Serbian movement. In 1868 he was appointed the Minister of Education and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. Before the outbreak of the uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, he entered the Assembly as the Prince's deputy. Dimitrije Matić was a member of the delegation that signed a military alliance with Montenegro, before declaring war on Turkey, and was a member of the diplomatic corps that negotiated peace with Turkey on 1 March 1877. Being the president of the National Assembly in Kragujevac, which accepted the provisions of the Berlin Congress, it was proved that he enjoyed great confidence of the Prince.³

The aim of Matić's diplomatic mission was to provide assistance to the Italian Congress of Berlin and to try to convince the Italian government to support the participation of the Serbian diplomat with a consultative vote at the convention. The beginning of a diplomatic mission was hampered because the Depretis' government was dismissed. The mission can be divided into three crucial moments: the initial negotiations with the government in resignation, audience into the royal palace and negotiations with the new Italian government about Italian support to Serbia.

Shortly before his arrival in Rome, the crisis erupted in the Depretis' government that resigned on 9 March. Officially it was presented to the King on 11 March 1878. The entire Italian diplomatic corps was informed about the decision of the government by a circular note.⁴

¹ Alen J. P. Tejlor, *Vorba za prevlast u Evropi 1848–1918*, Sarajevo 1968, 243, 244. Михајло Војводић, *Путеви српске дипломатије*, Београд 1999, 15; Antonello Biagini, *Momenti di storia balcanica (1878–1914) – Aspetti militari*, Roma 1981, 20.

² *Документи Србија 1878*, Београд 1878, 45, 46.

³ Димитрије Матић, *Ђачки дневник 1845–1848*, Београд 1974; Божидар Марковић, *Димитрије Матић лик једног правника*, Београд 1977; Василије Крстић, *Аутобиографија Димитрија Матића*, Споменик САНУ СХХII, Београд 1981.

⁴ Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna, Lo sviluppo del capitalismo e del movimento operaio 1871–1896*, Milano 1978, 113; *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, seconda serie, volume IX, doc. 592; МАЕ, Moscati VI, Serbia, busta 1411, Belgrado 5. III 1878, No 643.

The Italian representative in Belgrade informed the government about the arrival of the Serbian diplomat, emphasising that the Serbian representative was the man who enjoyed the Prince's trust and carried letters intended for the Italian royal couple. In addition to the dispatch of the Italian representatives and Serbian Foreign Minister Jovan Ristić, a cover letter was addressed to the President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs Depretis, expressing hope that the Serbian representative would be allowed an audience and would be able to present the current situation in Serbia. Why did the Serbian political scene have hopes for the help of Italy at the upcoming congress? Certainly it was due to a lot of support enjoyed by the late king who had provided support in the previous period of the Serbian national development.⁵

Ristić's aspirations of getting closer to Italy were supported by Prince Milan, who also had high hopes for the support of the Italian government, which was clearly seen in the dispatch addressed to the Italian King Umberto I: "As Serbia's old and sincere sympathies are associated with a large and noble Italian people, as well as the Principality of my family, we have inherited the feeling of gratitude and devotion that I have to live up to."⁶

In spite of the fact that the government resigned, the Serbian representative was received by the Italian minister Depretis, who promised that he would plead audience with the Italian King. Although the official promises were not expected, Depretis addressed Matić with the following words: "Knowing the tradition of Italian politics towards Serbia, the Principality could count on sincere and selfless friendship of the Royal Government, in the diplomatic stage that starts, as it was the case in the past."⁷

Matić assessed positively the audience with the Minister Depretis, as they discussed the current position of Serbia and his dissatisfaction with it, which did not surprise the Italian Minister, who already expected such reaction. The subject of discussion was the participation of Italian volunteers on the Serbian side in the war against Turkey, which was praised by Matić.⁸

The Serbian representative believed that it would be better for Serbia to wait for the new government with which Serbia's position was to be discussed. Matić supposed the situation would be positively resolved. Minister Ristić agreed that the Serbian representative in Rome should wait for the convocation of the new government. Matić's mission was to present to Italian King Umberto I Serbia's aspirations for the revision of the San Stefano Peace Treaty, and to seek support for the participation of Serbian representatives in the upcoming congress. Ristić was mainly interested in the question of the degree of Italy's support to issues regarding Serbia's independence, territorial enlargement, the European guarantee for an independent Serbia and the entry of Serbian representatives at the Congress.

⁵ Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, V, Milano 1978, 131.

⁶ *Документи Србија 1878*, 77.

⁷ *Ibid*, 93.

⁸ *Ibid*, 98.

Matić assessed the audience with King Umberto I as a diplomatic success, since he enjoyed all honours and was able to put forward Serbian demands. The King was favourably inclined towards the wishes of Serbia, but could not promise to make every effort for Serbia's participation in the Congress. Moreover, he confirmed that he had received the same demands from the Romanian representative, but could not be certain whether these countries would attend the session of the Congress. In his opinion, if the Great Powers would give permission to Serbia and Romania to attend the Congress, Italy would support this proposal. A benevolent attitude towards Serbia could be seen in the letter that King Umberto I sent to Prince Milan, addressing him with the following words: "Due to its patriotic virtue, Serbia deserves a bright future and is facing the realisation of its national aspirations. In the new era created for the Principality, Italy would be happy to continue the tradition of its cordial friendship which started during the reign of my late father."⁹

The Italian public opinion openly supported the desires of the Balkan nation to exercise its independence, including the question of the participation of its representatives in the Congress. The Italian magazine *Il Diritto* published an article that supported all vassal states in the Sublime Port to be involved in the work of the Congress, not only with a consultative voice, but also with a deliberative vote in the matters that directly affected them. *Il Diritto* published articles which referred only to Serbia and its participation in the Congress.¹⁰

The new government in Italy was formed by Benedetto Cairoli, a former garibaldi and one of the leaders of the irredentist movement. It was hoped that this government would change the course of politics and seriously get engaged in solving of the Eastern question. However, the possibility of such policies halted the foreign minister, Count Corti, who was right-oriented. His aspirations were bounding Italy with Germany and Austria-Hungary, and were aimed at improving the Italian situation in the Mediterranean. Such policy was opposed to the irredentist aspirations of Cairoli, who accepted a compromise in order to avoid a new ministerial crisis. As a condition for coming to the post of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Corti asked for avoidance of an Italian conflict with Austria-Hungary. Count Corti did not approve of Italy's foreign policy, which was the same from the beginning of the union. The inclusion of Italy in the flows of Balkan politics and the solution of the Eastern question could be ensured by merging the territory of Trento and Trieste. From the unification to the election of Count Corti for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the foreign policy of Italy paved the way for combating the further spread of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. However, it was not possible to exclude the possibility of Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in return, required giving to Italy Trento and Trieste.¹¹

⁹ Ibid, 164.

¹⁰ Љиљана Алексић–Пејковић, *Италија и српско-турски ратови 1876–1878*, Историјски часопис 32 (1985) 1986, 182.

¹¹ G. Candeloro, *Storiadell'Italia moderna*, VI, 116–130.

The new government was formed with some discord and proceeded with preparations for participation in the Congress of Berlin, and at the same time tried to solve economic and administrative difficulties that occurred, in order to avoid a new crisis. Count Corti's policy of bringing Italy closer to Germany and Austria-Hungary was not supported by all members of the government, nor by King Umberto I, but for the sake of maintaining the government, it was accepted as a compromise direction.¹²

After the formation of the Italian government, Matić received assurances of Depretis that the new government would be inclined to the Serbian question: "Do not worry about your general thing, even if I get out of the ministry, the government will be formed by my friends, whom I will well recommended." Matić had his first audience with the new government and discussed the Serbian question with the General Secretary, Earl Tornelli, who believed that Serbia should not wait for the preliminary session of the Congress, where it would be decided whether smaller countries had the right to participate in the Congress, but added that Italy would support such a proposal, as well as Serbian independence and territorial enlargement guarantees under European law. Italian diplomacy wanted at all costs to prevent the Austro-Hungarian entry into Bosnia and Herzegovina, so Tornelli advised Matić that Serbia should not raise the question of refugees and possible reprisals to which they could be exposed after their return, because that could be a chance for Austria-Hungary to interfere and offer protection to refugees. Since the Serbian government could not ensure the safe return of refugees, nor advise them to return without a protectorate, the possible solution could be mixed Austro-Italian protection. Matić also pointed to the problem of territorial expansion of Serbia towards Old Serbia, but Tornelli advised him to wait with those Serbian requests, because as he said: "This is not the end of the events, be wise because what was not achieved now could be achieved later, just like Italy went step by step."¹³

Matić was able to obtain audience with the Italian Prime Minister Cairoli and Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Corti to enquire about an official approval of the new Italian government for Serbian independence, territorial expansion and European recognition. The conclusion of the audience was the confirmation of the new government's support to the Serbian question in general. Furthermore, the Prime Minister said: "Italy has achieved its unification according to the principle of nationality. Serbia and the Serbian people aim to achieve the same thing. By principle, the course of the Serbian politics, as you explained, deserves and already has our full sympathy, as well as the support of the present Italian government, just like the previous government pursued a traditional policy towards the cordial Serbian people." Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Corti denied support to the Serbian question. Being a representative of Italy in Constantinople during the Serbian-Turkish conflict, he was aware of possible difficulties in negotiations with Turkey about Serbia's territorial compensation, and stressed out that Italy may support the interests

¹² Ibid,132–136.

¹³ MAE, Moscati VI – Serbia, busta 1210, busta 1411; *Србија Документи 1878*, 193, 194.

of Serbia, but Italian representatives would not be the first to initiate a conversation. Matić in his final dispatch stated that Serbia found another ally in the upcoming Congress, ready to stand for Serbian interests and territorial expansion.¹⁴

The situation before the Congress was changed. The Italian Government did not appreciate Count Corti's foreign policy regarding Italian participation in the Congress and had no choice but to accept a compromise solution due to its inner crisis regarding the economy, administration and the possibility of the government disband. Under the direction of Count Corti, Italy was supposed to accept the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only if it was temporary, otherwise Italy would ask for a territorial compensation. Serbia was not directly mentioned in the plans of Count Corti, except for the part about auditing the Bulgarian border, which should be delimited according to the principle of nationality.

Serbia was not granted the right to attend the meeting of the Berlin Congress. However, its minister Jovan Ristić was present unofficially and advocated Serbian interests. He stated that Italian representatives did not directly plead against Serbian interests, but they mostly abstained from presenting their views on beneficial issues for Serbia. The Italian foreign policy was shaped under the internal events in Turkey, as was witnessed by Count Corti as the Italian ambassador in Constantinople. In his opinion, in recognition of the right of Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy could ask for territorial expansion towards Trento and Trieste, not knowing that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was resolved before the meeting of the Congress with the Reichstag contract and the Budapest Convention.

¹⁴ G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, VI, 135–137, Rinaldo Pertignani, *Neutralità e alleanza (Le scelte di politica estera dell'Italia dopo l'unità)*, Milano 1987, 150–155; МИД, Политичко одељење, 1878, микро филм-ролна 48, фасцикла 2 досије 5; *Документи Србија 1878*, 202.

Belgrado, 5 Marzo 1878

Serie politica 1086 1199
N. 643.

Signor Ministro,

Fu il primo pensiero del Principe Milano, qui giunto sabato dal quartier generale, di designare il signor Matić a latore di una sua lettera a Sua Maestà per fargli omaggio e recarle le sue congratulazioni.

Il signor Matić è consigliere di stato: fu ministro degli affari esteri nel tempo intero della reggenza.

Di Sua Eccellenza
Il signor Commendatore Depretis
Ministro degli affari esteri
Roma

Italian representative in Serbia Count Joanini writes to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Depretis about the arrival of the Serbian diplomat Dimitrije Matić in Rome (1/3)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic historical archive,
Moscati VI - Serbia, file 1411, no. 643 - Belgrade, March 5 th 1878

è persona colta alla quale fra
altri difficili incarichi fu affidato
quello di negoziare l'ultima pace
colla Persia.

Desiderasi che essa sia in Roma
prima del 14 di questo mese, anni-
versario della nascita di Sua Maestà,
ed egli avrà l'onore di recare la
risposta della Principessa Natalia
alla lettera della Regina Margherita.

Nessuno dei tre generali che
conta l'esercito può lasciare
ancora il comando.

Quodda, Signor Ministro, il
nuovo atto della mia più alta
considerazione con cui ho l'onore
di essere

Di Vostra Eccellenza

Stedentissimo Levo
Spaccini

S. B. qui allegato un articolo in cifra.

Italian representative in Serbia Count Joanini writes to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Depretis about the arrival of the Serbian diplomat Dimitrije Matić in Rome (2/3)

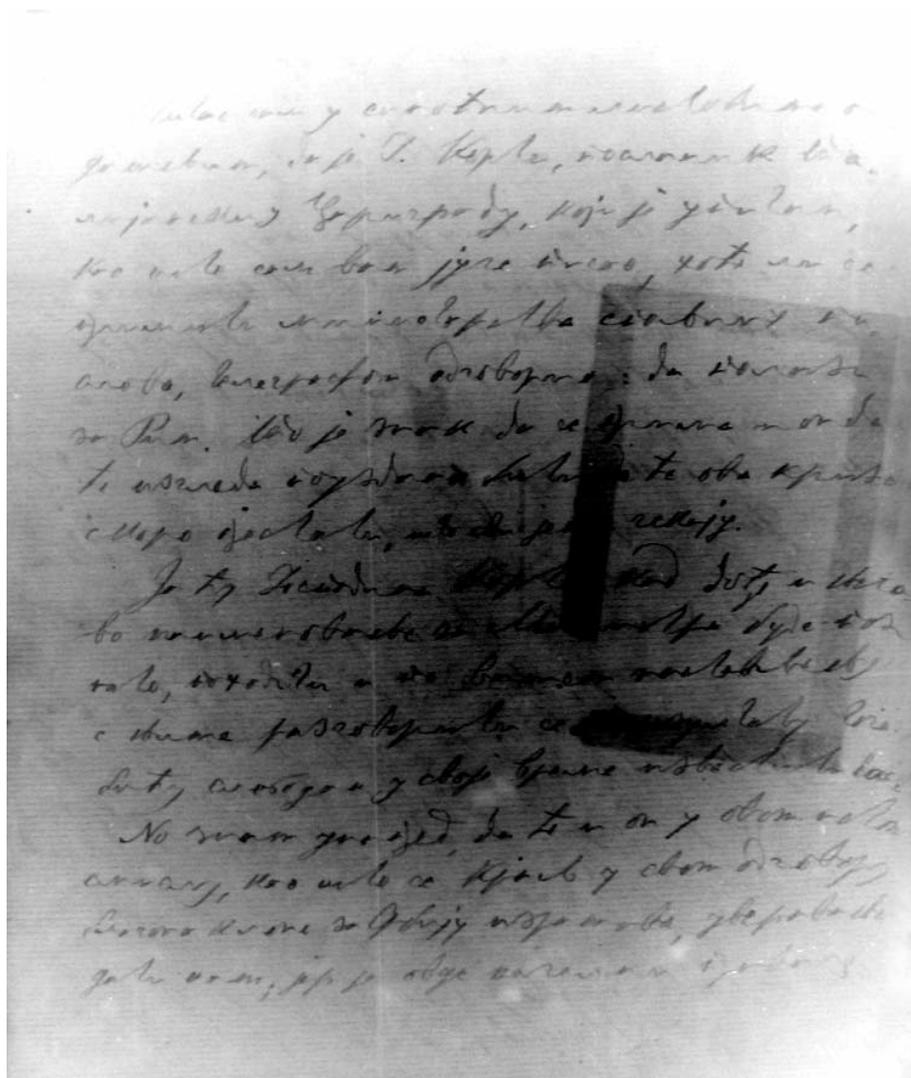
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic historical archive,
Moscati VI - Serbia, file 1411, no. 643 - Belgrade, March 5 th 1878

Amesso al Rapporto Politico N. 643 del
5 Marzo 1878 della N. Agenzia a Belgrado

J'ose soumettre à V. E. de considérer si, à l'occasion
présente il ne serait pas convenable et utile de
proposer à S. M. de conférer à Nitchich le grand
Cordon de la Couronne d'Italie. Le Ministre s'est
toujours montré grand admirateur de nos institutions
et de votre pays et se sachant nous pourrions
compter sur lui dans la mesure entière de
possible. Il se montre plein de respect envers l'Italie
et il sent vivement que les circonstances ont procuré
cette haute distinction à son rival Marinovitch.

Italian representative in Serbia Count Joanini writes to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs
Depretis about the arrival of the Serbian diplomat Dimitrije Matić in Rome (3/3)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic historical archive,
Moscati VI - Serbia, file 1411, no. 643 - Belgrade, March 5 th 1878



Dimitrije Matić to Minister of Foreign Affairs Jovan Ristić about the reception at the Italian court and the appointment of the new Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Corti (1/3)

Archive of Serbia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political Department,
microfilm roll 48, F2 D5, Rome, 8/20 March 1878

Jovana IVETIĆ

LA MISSIONE DIPLOMATICA DI DIMITRIJE MATIĆ A ROMA NEL 1878

Sommario

Le grandi potenze proibirono ai rappresentanti serbi di presentarsi al Congresso di Berlino, il presente articolo si concentra dunque sul funzionamento del servizio diplomatico serbo in Italia nel periodo precedente l'inizio del Congresso. L'articolo analizza in particolare la missione diplomatica di Dimitrije Matić a Roma nel mese di marzo 1878, sulla base dei documenti dell'Archivio diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri d'Italia e degli archivi storici della Serbia.

La missione diplomatica di Dimitrije Matić puntava ad ottenere il sostegno dei rappresentanti italiani alle aspirazioni e agli interessi territoriali serbi. Nello stesso tempo, l'azione diplomatica di Matić tentava di favorire la partecipazione dei rappresentanti serbi al Congresso, o almeno a quelle sessioni in cui si decidevano le questioni relative alla Serbia.

Le aspettative serbe sul sostegno italiano erano basate sulle buone relazioni politiche e dinastiche esistenti tra Belgrado e Roma, così come sui rapporti amichevoli fra il ministro degli esteri serbo, Jovan Ristić, e il rappresentante italiano in Serbia, conte Ioannini.

Grazie ai suoi rapporti con il principe Milan Obrenović e all'impegno dimostrato in occasione delle trattative con il Montenegro e poi con la Turchia, Dimitrije Matić fu scelto per la missione diplomatica a Roma. La sua missione diplomatica si può dividere in tre momenti chiave: le trattative iniziali con il governo italiano dimissionario, l'udienza presso la corte dei Savoia e poi il negoziato con i rappresentanti del nuovo governo italiano.

L'inizio della sua missione diplomatica fu difficile poiché il governo Depretis si stava dimettendo. Grazie alla simpatia che Depretis coltivava per la Serbia ed alle lettere di raccomandazione del rappresentante italiano a Belgrado, conte Ioannini, Matić fu ricevuto da Depretis, il quale promise di adoperarsi affinché i rappresentanti serbi fossero ricevuti dal re d'Italia.

Scopo di Matić era chiedere al sovrano di appoggiare le richieste della Serbia, che mirava a una revisione della Pace di Santo Stefano e a ottenere la partecipazione dei rappresentanti serbi al congresso. Dopo l'udienza, Matić scrisse a Belgrado che la sua missione era stata positiva; era stato ricevuto con tutti gli onori e aveva avuto la possibilità di presentare tutte le richieste della Serbia. Quando il governo italiano di Benedetto Cairoli venne formato, Matić venne ricevuto in udienza anche dal nuovo esecutivo. Durante l'incontro con il primo ministro Cairoli e il ministro degli esteri, Corti, Matić ribadì le aspirazioni territoriali serbe e il desiderio di aver un rappresentante serbo alle sessioni del congresso. I politici italiani assicurarono che avrebbero sostenuto gli interessi serbi, senza però entrare nel dettaglio. Nel suo

dispaccio finale Matic si dichiarò fiducioso che Roma avrebbe sostenuto gli interessi serbi. Tuttavia, immediatamente prima dell'inizio del congresso, le posizioni dei rappresentanti italiani mutarono rapidamente. Ciò anche a causa delle divergenze tra il ministro Corti e il resto dell'esecutivo. I rappresentanti serbi rimasero esclusi dalle sessioni del Congresso di Berlino. Tuttavia, il ministro degli esteri serbo, Jovan Ristić, cercò di difendere gli interessi serbi al di fuori delle sessioni formali del Congresso. Nei suoi dispacci egli scrisse che i rappresentanti italiani non si dichiaravano contrari agli interessi serbi però, nello stesso tempo, si astenevano su questioni di grande importanza per la Serbia. Inoltre, il conte Corti credeva che riconoscendo l'annessione della Bosnia-Erzegovina all'Austria, l'Italia avrebbe potuto ottenere un'espansione territoriale in direzione di Trento e Trieste. Tuttavia Corti non sapeva che l'annessione della Bosnia-Erzegovina era stata decisa ed approvata ancora prima del Congresso, con l'Accordo Reichstadt e la Convenzione di Budapest.

Parole chiave: Diplomazia, Serbia, Italia, Dimitrije Matic.

Јована ИВЕТИЋ

ДИПЛОМАТСКА МИСИЈА ДИМИТРИЈА МАТИЋА У РИМУ 1878.

Резиме

Будући да одлуком Великих сила представници Србије нису могли бити присутни на Берлинском конгресу акценат рада ставили смо на деловање српске дипломатске службе у Италији, пред почетак конгреса. Рад је фокусиран на дипломатску мисију Димитрија Матића у Риму марта 1878 утемељен на обрађеним документима Дипломатског архива Министрства Спољних Послова Италије и Историског архива Србије.

Циљеви дипломатске мисије Димитрија Матића били су усмерени ка добијању подршке италијанских представника у погледу српских територијалних тежњи и интереса, као и покушају да се обезбеди позитиван глас за улазак српских представника на заседање конгреса, или само на оне седнице на којима ће се одлучивати о српској независности и територијалном проширењу.

Наде српских власти у италијанску помоћ биле су утемељене на добрим како политичким тако и пријатељским односима у првом реду владарских кућа двеју земаља, а затим и добрим односима српског министра спољних послова, Јована Ристића и италијанског представника у Србији грофа Јоанинија.

Због добрих односа са кнезом Миланом Обреновићем и активног политичког ангажовања у питањима важним за српске интересе, изабор за дипломатску мисију у Риму пао је на Димитрија Матића, члана делегације која је склопила војни савез са Црном Гором пред објављивање рата Турској и припадника дипломатског кора који је преговарао о миру са Турском 1. марта 1877. Његова дипломатска мисија може се поделити на три кључна момента: почетни преговори са владом у оставци, пријем у краљевском двору и разговори о италијанској подршци Србији са представницима нове италијанске владе.

Почетак дипломатске мисије био је отежан будући да је влада Депретиса била у оставци. Због наклоности коју је Депретис показивао према Србији и због писма Италијанског представника грофа Јоанинија, Матић је примљен у аудијенцију код Депретиса, који је обећао да ће се заложити за пријем српског представника у аудијенцију код италијанског краљевског пара. Матић је Депретисову благонаклоност потврдио својом депешом у којој је пријем окарактерисао позитивним, што доказује и позитиван одговор по питању аудијенције Матића код краља Умберта I.

Циљ Матићеве аудијенције код краља био је да изложи тежње Србије за ревизимом Санстефанског мировног уговора и да затражи подршку око учешћа српског представника на предстојећем конгресу. Својом депешом, након пријема, Матић је своје дипломатско деловање окарактерисао као успех, будући да су му биле указане све почасте и да је успео да изложи све захтеве Србије.

Након формирања нове италијанске владе на челу са Бенедетом Каиролијем, Матић је био примљен у аудијенцију. На састанку са председником владе Каиролијем и министром спољних послова, грофом Кортијером, Матић је изложио српске тежње за територијално проширење и жеље да на конгресу буде присутан српски представник на седницама на којима ће се одлучивати о Србији. Матић је добио уверење да ће италијански представници подржати српске интересе, али да неће први ништа иницијирати, у својој завршној депеши констатовао да је Србија добила још једног савезника на предстојећем конгресу, који ће штитити њене интересе и територијално проширење.

Пред заседање конгреса ставови италијанских представника по питању Србије битно су се променили од договора који је био постигнут са Димитријем Матићем. Иако влада није била задовољна ставовима грофа Кортија по питању италијанског учешћа на Берлинском конгресу, није имала избора, јер је Италију изнутра притискала економска и административна криза, стога није могла дозволити да се влада распусти, па се приступило компромисном решењу. Србија није добила право да њен представник буде присутан на заседању Берлинског конгреса, али је њен министар спољних послова, Јован Ристић, покушао да својим присуством ван заседања и незваничним путевима одбрани српске интересе. Навео је да се италијански представници нису изјашњавали против српских интереса, али и да су били уздржани по многим питањима од важности за Србију. Пут италијанске спољне политике, у време Берлинског конгреса, формирао је гроф Корти потакнут дешавањима у Турској, где се налазио као амбасадор Италије. Сматрао је да би признавањем права Аустрији на анексију Босне и Херцеговине Италија могла да тражи територијално проширење у правцу Трента и Трста незнајући да је анексија Босне и Херцеговине била решена пре заседања конгреса Рајштатским уговором и Будимпештанском конвенцијом.

Кључне речи: дипломатија, Србија, Италија, Димитрије Матић.

Alessandro VAGNINI

**ITALY AND SERBIA: FROM THE ASSASSINATION
OF ALEKSANDAR OBRENOVIĆ TO THE PIG WAR**

Abstract: At the beginning of the twentieth century Serbia was an economic satellite of Austria-Hungary, with Belgrade being also under a considerable political influence of Vienna and St Petersburg. The tragic end of the Obrenović dynasty and its consequences, however, led to a decisive change in Serbian politics. The concern with which Vienna looked to the Balkan question and the security of its southern borders were the decisive factors. This also meant that the requests of Serb nationalism were regarded with extreme suspicion, while the Italian government feared that the borders of the Balkans could undergo sudden changes without Rome being able to participate in decision making. When Serbia began to evade Austrian control, building new links with other countries, Vienna decided to punish Belgrade with economic sanctions. Since the Serbian major export item was pork, the Austro-Hungarian government decided to stop importing pigs from Serbia, which resulted in the famous Pig War.

Keywords: Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Customs war, Italian foreign policy, Balkans.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the main element of destabilisation in Europe was the difficult situation in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Macedonia was in fact at the centre of a series of centrifugal forces and at the same time the target of various nationalisms of the Balkan states. This meant that Austria-Hungary, keen to defend a hegemonic role in the region, tended to make threatening gestures in an attempt to maintain control of this difficult situation. Thus, not surprisingly, since February 1903 several newspapers reported rumours of possible Austrian mobilisation and a rearmament programme, as a direct consequence of the uncertain situation in the Balkans. Italy obviously looked at these events with great concern. However, following a survey conducted by the Italian military attaché to Vienna, Colonel Cesare Del Mastro, these reports were found groundless, though it was not excluded that Austria-Hungary could still make military

preparations in case of further trouble in the Balkans.¹ At the same time, the ambassador to Vienna, Costantino Nigra, continued to report numerous signs of further strengthening of the Austro-Hungarian military in border areas.² The whole issue was conditioned by the attitude of Vienna, which considered Bosnia and Herzegovina integral parts of the Empire although the agreements signed in 1878 referred only to their administration.

The concern with which Vienna viewed the Balkan question and the security of its southern borders also meant that the requests of Serb nationalism were regarded with extreme suspicion, since practically all the efforts of the Austro-Hungarian government were directed at maintaining the *status quo*.

The Italian government feared that the Balkans could undergo sudden changes and that Rome would have no chance to participate in decision making. This is why accurate information was essential, as asked for example in February 1903 by Deputy Foreign Minister Alfredo Baccelli, who expressed his interest in the Austrian intentions towards the Sanjak of Novi Pazar.³ From the Italian standpoint, the whole issue was however reduced to the more complex question of relations with Vienna within the Triple Alliance, especially after German chancellor von Bülow, in September 1903, confirmed the distrust of Rome by Francis Joseph and Austrian Foreign Minister Gołuchowski.⁴ Even the Serbs observed with some apprehension the news of strengthening of the Austrian military in Bosnia and eventually in the Sanjak, especially fearing the risk that Austria-Hungary and Russia could bring about changes in the Balkans against the Serbs and Bulgarians.⁵ In December 1903, the Italian chargé d'affaires to Belgrade, Romano Avezana, admitted the lack of any evidence of the Austro-Hungarian plans for an intervention in the Balkans, although affirming that in the case of violation of the territory of Serbia, Belgrade would react with force.⁶ Then in February 1904 Serbs began to fear that the war between Russia and Japan in the Far East could encourage Vienna to take dangerous actions in the Balkans. Italians also had some doubts in this respect and because of the new crisis in the Albanian areas, feared above all an agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary.⁷ Probably aware of these doubts, on 20 February the German ambassador to Rome proposed to Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Tommaso Tittoni a meeting with Gołuchowski

¹ *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (DDI), Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 328.

² In this respect, the report by the Italian consul in Rijeka of 10 February is interesting – he wrote about a substantial amount of war material sent to Bosnia without passing through customs. DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 343.

³ DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 376.

⁴ DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 728.

⁵ This was also clearly stated by Foreign Minister of Serbia Denić at a meeting of 20 May 1903 with the then Italian minister to Belgrade, Magliano. DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 492.

⁶ Avezana also assumed that in this case the Serbs would abandon Belgrade. DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 107.

⁷ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 185. Italians discussed their fears also with the British and French governments.

to discuss the whole Balkan issue.⁸ The Italian minister advised Gołuchowski against any action in Novi Pazar, before his Austrian colleague, talking with Ambassador Avarna on 29 February. Although Gołuchowski officially belied the hypothesis of a military intervention in the Balkans,⁹ Tittoni still had doubts about Vienna's true intentions and indeed, still in April, the *Corriere della Sera* reported news of troop movements and preparations for an Austrian action in Albania.¹⁰

In all this, the role of Serbia was crucial. At the beginning of the twentieth century Serbia was an economic satellite of Austria-Hungary, and also on a political level, Belgrade was under considerable influence of Vienna and St Petersburg. The tragic end of the Obrenović dynasty and its consequences, however, led to a decisive change in Serbian politics.

In August 1901, a group of young officers started to organise a plot to assassinate the King. Their first meeting took place on 6 September and according to the original plan, the royal family was to be killed at a party for the Queen's birthday a week later, but the plan failed since the royal couple did not attend the event. Thus, the chance to find a possible heir to the Serbian throne if the King died was also discussed with foreign representatives in Belgrade.

Most of the conspirators arrived in Belgrade on 29 May 1903. That night King Alexander had dinner with his ministers and the Queen's family. After midnight Captain Dragutin Dimitrijević led most of the officers in the conspiracy to the royal palace. At the same time, Colonel Aleksandar Mašin went to the 12th Infantry Regiment barracks to take command of these troops while Lieutenant Colonel Petar Mišić was prepared to depart with the 11th Infantry Regiment to the royal palace. Meanwhile, the conspirators surrounded the houses of many officers loyal to the King, including Prime Minister Dimitrije Cincar-Marković.

After a long and exhausting search, the conspirators found the King and Queen, who were hidden behind a mirror in the royal bedroom where there was a small room used for the Queen's wardrobe. The royal couple and General Petrović, aide-de-camp of the King, were then shot. Their bodies were mutilated and afterwards tossed from a window.¹¹

That same night, Prime Minister Cincar-Marković and Minister of War General Milovan Pavlović were killed in their homes while the Queen's brothers Nikodije and Nikola Ljunjevica were killed by another firing squad commanded by Lieutenant Tankosić.

A new interim government, of which many members were part of the conspiracy, soon gathered under Jovan Avakumović. Besides them, other politicians

⁸ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 195.

⁹ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 223.

¹⁰ These reports were denied by both the Austrians and Germans. Despite this, to dispel any doubts, on 26 May General De Giorgis, President of the Military Commission for the Reorganisation of the Macedonian Gendarmerie, proposed to send one of his officers to carry out a survey in Albania and Serbia. DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 429.

¹¹ C. L. Sulzberger, *The Fall of Eagles*, Crown Pub 1977, 202.

joined the cabinet, including Veljković, Ljubomir Stojanović, Ljubomir Živković and Ljubomir Kaljević.

The news of the coup was received with mixed feelings by the Serbs and some months later, angry elements within the Army mutinied in Niš demanding that the assassins be tried for their crimes. Meanwhile, on 4 June, the National Assembly elected Petar Karađorđević as King of Serbia. In the aftermath of the coup, life in Serbia continued as before; however the new King eventually exerted only minimal interference in politics, not wishing to oppose the increasingly powerful nationalist elements.

Though the Serbian ambassador to Rome reported since 11 June that the new government had now the situation firmly under control, the events in Belgrade aroused surprise and alarm in Italy, which feared dangerous reactions by Austria-Hungary.¹²

As a matter of fact, international outrage over the coup came swiftly. Russia and Austria-Hungary vehemently condemned the brutal assassination.¹³ Moreover, in the autumn of 1903 some newspapers began to circulate rumours of a possible Austrian military intervention in Serbia in response to the political crisis following the King's murder. The United Kingdom demanded that Belgrade punish the assassins as a sign of regret and withdrew the ambassador from Serbia, thus freezing diplomatic relations and imposing sanctions, which were not abolished until 1905.

Gołuchowski, while regretting what happened in Serbia, initially assured the willingness of his government to continue to have cordial relations with Belgrade.¹⁴ This notwithstanding, Austrian Ambassador to Belgrade, Konstantin Dumba, persuaded Gołuchowski to coordinate with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Nikolaevič Lamsdorf to boycott Serbia until those involved in the coup were removed from influential positions in the government and the Army.¹⁵ The other diplomats in Belgrade also took part in this action and the boycott had an almost complete success since, as of January 1904, only the ambassadors of the Ottoman Empire and Greece still stayed in Serbia. Nonetheless, King Petar was not willing to give in to the Austrians and decided to remove the conspirators only to promote them to higher positions.¹⁶ Mašin became Acting Chief of Staff, while Popović became Commander of the Danube Division.¹⁷ This anyhow satisfied Russia, who returned its ambassador and was

¹² DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 552.

¹³ According to some interpretations, initially Vienna was not particularly hostile to the change of dynasty, while deploring the way in which this was done. H. W. Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, Constable and Company, London 1914, 241. This interpretation is also reported by Macartney. See C. A. Macartney, *L'Impero degli Asburgo. 1790-1918*, Garzanti 1976, 892.

¹⁴ DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 570.

¹⁵ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 42.

¹⁶ Meanwhile Serbian newspapers published several articles openly hostile towards Austria-Hungary, accused of having aggressive intentions.

¹⁷ Only during Nikola Pašić's second government were the conspirators brought to trial, which forced some into early retirement while other junior conspirators were never punished. Eventually, on 23 May 1917, following the so-called Salonika Trial, Dimitrijević was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death.

followed by other states, leaving only the United Kingdom and the Netherlands alone in boycotting the new Serbian government. In the end, all European governments eventually accepted the new situation, although London and Rome were slow to formally recognise the election of Petar.¹⁸

However, the conspirators were so powerful that it was unrealistic for the Serbian government to act against them,¹⁹ while in the country emerged many societies devoted to the national cause which soon extended their activities to Macedonia, Croatia-Slavonia and Bosnia. Serbian nationalism had always been considered a serious threat to Austria-Hungary, especially given the risk that Russia and even the Italian ally could take advantage of any unrest in the Balkans.²⁰

In fact, since November 1903 there were some signs of Serbia's interest in greater cooperation with Italy, a possibility which however would have undoubtedly annoyed Vienna, but which Avezzana anyway suggested, in order to take advantage, at least for economic purposes, with the full consent of Tittoni.²¹ Moreover, on 30 November, Avezzana met Serbia's Foreign Minister Andra Nikolić with whom he discussed the situation in the Balkans and Macedonia in particular. On this occasion Nikolić spoke with concern of Austrian hegemonic ambitions in the Balkans, admitting that Serbia relied on Russia's support in case of problems.²² They met again on 29 January 1904 to talk about Macedonia, a theme on which the Italian diplomat urged the Serbian government to take moderate tones not to irritate the other powers. A couple of weeks later, Avezzana repeated these words to Serbian Prime Minister Grujić. Thus, a diplomatic answer came from Foreign Minister Pašić who declared full confidence in Vienna, while expressing strong doubts about the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian military.²³

In fact, the possibility that Austria-Hungary ventured in military enterprises in the Balkans was rather remote given the risk that such a policy could threaten the very survival of the Empire, creating conditions for a clash of great proportions with Russia.²⁴ However her ambition of power put Austria-Hungary in an extremely difficult situation. Vienna was in fact concerned with the free and full development of the Balkan countries, but at the same time was not prepared to tolerate their territorial expansion as this could lead to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and affect Austria-

¹⁸ The Italian government officially recognised the new king only on 30 June 1903. DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 595.

¹⁹ As Prince Nikola of Montenegro said to the Italian minister in Cetinje about the request for punishment of the conspirators: "It is very unlikely that the new king will punish those who helped to raise him on the throne". DDI, Serie III, vol. 7, doc. 591.

²⁰ For this reason, since 1903 the Imperial General Staff began to consider the old plans for a possible war against Serbia and Italy, the so-called Case I + S. See G. E. Rothenberg, *L'esercito di Francesco Giuseppe*, Editrice Goriziana, Trieste 2004, 247.

²¹ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, docs. 19 and 27.

²² DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 40.

²³ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 235.

²⁴ This was also the idea that the German ambassador to Vienna, Karl von Wendel, expressed to Avarna at their meeting of 15 June. DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 470.

Hungary's regional dominance. For these reasons, the imperial government was also hostile to any policy of cooperation between the Balkan states and while not aiming at large annexations, it aimed anyway to assert its political and economic dominance in the region.

The crisis in relations with Belgrade came about just as Vienna had to deal with a crisis in Hungary. Between May and August 1903, the Hungarian part of the monarchy was going through a serious political crisis which followed in the resignation of Prime Minister Széll and concerned the role of the Honvédség and the use of the Hungarian language. His successor, Khuen-Héderváry, chosen by the Emperor, who needed a man of trust to handle discontent among the Magyars, did not prove able to resolve the issue and was forced to resign in August. At this point, the military leaders began to consider the possibility of intervention in Hungary, so that Austro-Hungarian Chancellor Beck suggested to Francis Joseph to use the Army and rule *ex lege*.²⁵ Nevertheless, after a few months of the crisis, in October negotiations were initiated and led to an agreement that paved the way for the appointment of István Tisza as the Hungarian Prime Minister.

In this period, the situation in the Balkans added to the parliamentary crisis and unrest in Hungary urged the military leaders to seriously consider the use of force. In February 1904 the first draft plan was drawn up and by April 1905 the General Staff prepared the plan "Fall U" that, once perfected, was submitted to the Emperor and the Council of Ministers on 24 August.²⁶ The crisis, which in effect would drag on until 1907, coincided with the breaking of relations with Serbia and the worsening of the Balkan question.²⁷ In this sense, the internal problems of Austria-Hungary and plans for a military intervention against Hungary highlighted the difficulties of the Empire and also the inability of the military leadership to deal with external threats in a clear and effective way.

At the international level, Austria-Hungary was the most affected by the consequences of the coup in Serbia, which gave space to Belgrade for a more independent policy. As a matter of fact, Vienna had carefully planned Serbia's economic dependence since the 1870s and not surprisingly, by 1903 about 90% of Serbia's foreign trade was with Austria-Hungary that supplied fifty to sixty percent of all Serbian imports. Such disproportionate trade was mostly in the form of livestock. This was not without benefit for Serbia, though, however, many in Belgrade felt that Serbian industrial growth was impeded.

In 1904 Serbia, regenerated with the accession of the new King, threatened Austria-Hungary's ambitions in the Balkans, while the Austro-Serbian commercial

²⁵ Franz Joseph was not convinced of this option, however, on 18 September 1903 he issued a famous agenda directed to the Army with whom he defended his prerogatives as the commander in chief. Rothenberg, *op. cit.*, 259.

²⁶ Rothenberg, *op. cit.*, 262–263.

²⁷ Even the resignation of Beck in November 1908 was partly related to this long crisis. Rothenberg, *op. cit.*, 283.

treaty was running out and renewal negotiations foundered, since Belgrade wanted to reduce economic dependence on the Empire, aiming, for political reasons, to reduce imports from Austria-Hungary without sacrificing the level of exports. Meanwhile, the Hungarians, very interested in these negotiations, demanded that the Hungarian products be protected from Serbian competition, while the Austrians were primarily concerned about the risk of a decline in their exports of industrial products to Serbia.²⁸ Vienna was also concerned about the links between Serbia and Bulgaria, strengthened after the Belgrade meeting between Petar and Ferdinand on 20 June 1904.

Moreover, in the same period Vienna was trying to limit the influence of general De Giorgis in Macedonia and was also worried about the Italian irredentist demonstrations, which took place in Gorizia, Trento and Trieste.²⁹

When Serbia began to evade Austrian economic and political control, building new links with other countries, particularly France, which was also trying to sell military products to the Serbs, the situation became critical. As a matter of fact, Belgrade commissioned a large order of ammunition to the French company Schneider-Creuzot instead of the usual Škoda. Thus, in an attempt to reduce its economic dependence on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in January 1904 Serbia began to import French munitions, also establishing a customs union with Bulgaria in August 1905, eventually making tariff-laden Austrian goods unsalable in Serbia. The fact that Serbia placed a munitions order with a French firm rather than the usual Austrian one, ruined the trade negotiations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. Accordingly, Vienna decided to punish her Balkan neighbour with economic sanctions – since the Serbian major export item was pork, most of which was bought by the Empire, the Austro-Hungarian government decided to stop importing pigs from Serbia.

The tension between the two countries actually began to rise as a result of changes occurring in the Balkans and in Macedonia in particular. In December 1902, Russian Foreign Minister Vladimir Lamsdorf and Gołuchowski reached an agreement on the Balkans. It was decided to maintain the *status quo* and to seek administrative reforms to the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia, also taking on the responsibility to recommend to the Sultan all those measures to be taken and taking charge of controlling their execution. All other powers, including Italy, gave their assent to this scheme and in September 1903, during a visit to Berlin, Gołuchowski expressed great confidence about the future of the Balkans, which he imagined divided between the small states of the region with the progressive exclusion of the Ottoman Empire. Despite these agreements, due to the successes of the anti-Turkish movement in Macedonia, Gołuchowski feared a possible Russian intervention in the Balkans and an Italian action in Albania. To set the Macedonian question definitively, on 4 October 1903, at a meeting between Francis Joseph and Nicholas II, which also took part

²⁸ The Austrians also feared the growing German competition in the industrial sector. See Macartney, *op. cit.*, 892.

²⁹ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, docs. 756 and 765.

between the two respective foreign ministers – Gołuchowski and Lamsdorf, an agreement was signed with the Ottoman Empire requiring specific administrative reforms in Macedonia as well as the respect of different nationalities and religions.

Meanwhile the situation in Serbia seemed restored and on 7 October the Italian minister to Belgrade Alessandro Guiccioli wrote to Tittoni that Belgrade was willing to improve relations with other countries while admitting that the future attitude of Austria-Hungary remained still unknown.³⁰ This notwithstanding, there were still misunderstandings between London and Belgrade, so that Tittoni hoped to act as a mediator. Overall, the Italian government maintained a balanced attitude and subject to the necessary attention, it was quite sympathetic to Serbia. Moreover, when in February Guiccioli met Petar, the King declared himself decided not to change his foreign policy direction and said that even if he wanted to improve relations with Vienna, public opinion would not permit it as it was decidedly hostile to Austria Hungary.³¹

When, in June 1905, an agreement established a customs union between Serbia and Bulgaria the relations between Vienna and Belgrade began to deteriorate. The agreement was in fact to remain secret until the end of the Austro-Serbian negotiations about a new treaty of commerce, but when the Bulgarian government presented the agreement with Serbia to the Parliament, the whole issue became known and Gołuchowski required that the treaty with Bulgaria be not ratified. On 1 March 1906, with the expiration of the previous trade agreement and in the absence of renewal, trade relations between the two countries came to an end. Not having the Serbian government bent to the Imperial demands, Austria-Hungary responded in April 1906 by closing its borders to Serbian livestock. Vienna decided to take advantage of the situation and put pressure on the political choices of the Serbian government, applying an economic stranglehold by stopping the import of all Serbian livestock.

The following period was characterised by total breakdown of trade relations between the two countries and an actual trade war commonly known as the Pig War, a conflict that would last for years, from March 1906 to June 1909, with unexpected results for both sides. It was an economic confrontation brought about by Vienna in an attempt to put an end to a fully independent Serbia and the Pan-Serb movement that tainted diplomatic relations between these two countries and created an atmosphere of tension in the Balkans.

In fact, Serbia refused to bow to Vienna and reacted by attracting French investment to build packing plants for international trade and ordering materials from Germany. As a matter of fact, most of the import now came from Germany and its value increased from 12.5 million marks in 1902 to 17.9 in 1910, while German imports from Serbia went up from 5.1 million to 19.1 million marks.³² Moreover, Belgrade reacted by opening new trade with Egypt, Greece and even the Ottoman Empire. By the end of 1906, the first year of this trade war, the Serbian

³⁰ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 658.

³¹ DDI, Serie III, vol. 8, doc. 878.

³² See Macartney, *op. cit.*, 933.

export of livestock was growing, reaching its peak in 1908, while the whole economy was booming.³³

In those years tension arose also over the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the two Austrian-administered provinces since 1903 the governor, count István Burián, realised that it would be impossible to rule without the support of the Serbian community – the most consistent and the most active of the provinces. The hostility of the Serbs, which increased also because of the activities of secret societies and the increased prestige of Belgrade, could only be contained by granting autonomy at least at a cultural and religious level. To counter the internal effects of the crisis with Serbia, in 1905 Burián granted full autonomy to the Orthodox eparchies in the management of churches and religious schools. In 1907 also came the first statutes of local autonomy and an easing of censorship.³⁴ These measures, however, were not sufficient to curb the centrifugal forces of the Bosnian Serbs, also encouraged by the Serbian Montenegrin press to oppose the Austro-Hungarian rule so much that in 1907 the Serbs organised their elections and formed a sort of shadow parliament adopting a resolution calling for complete autonomy and the right to self-determination.

Moreover, while the situation was often considered an open affront to all the Slavs within the Empire, the Magyars were displeased because the embargo on Serbian livestock export was also having serious monetary implications in Budapest, whereas Serbia also pressured the Austrian-administrated provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a trade outlet on the Adriatic Sea. All these events eventually caused Austria to give up by March 1908.

In the early years of the twentieth century the Balkans was the focus of a long and complicated crisis, while Serbian economic and political dependence on Vienna underwent a sudden change after the tragic end of the Obrenović dynasty. The Austro-Hungarian government looked with extreme concern to the Balkan question and the security of its southern borders, while the Italian government feared that the Balkans could undergo sudden changes without Rome being able to participate in sharing the spoils of the Ottoman Empire.

When Serbia began to evade Austrian economic and political control, Vienna reacted with economic sanctions, stopping the import of pigs from Serbia, which resulted in the famous Pig War. This trade war started with the closing of the frontier to Serbian products, opening a deep crisis in the relations between the two countries. As a result, Belgrade found new markets, especially Germany, and its foreign trade increased.

Meanwhile, Serbian hostility to Austria-Hungary amplified and a need for a trade outlet to the Adriatic Sea increased, nurturing Serbia's nationalist ambitions with regard to Bosnia. Though Vienna and Belgrade developed a new commercial treaty in 1909, Serbia covertly stirred up trouble among the southern Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, annexed to the Empire a year earlier, actions that definitely contributed to the start of the Great War.

³³ From 1904 to 1908 Serbia's export grew more than 20%.

³⁴ See Macarteny, *op. cit.*, 893.

Alessandro VAGNINI

**ITALIA E SERBIA:
Dal'assassinio di Aleksandar Obrenović alla Guerra dei maiali**

Sommario

Nei primi anni del XX secolo, i Balcani sono stati al centro di una lunga e complicata crisi, mentre la sua posizione internazionale subiva un improvviso cambiamento dopo la fine della dinastia Obrenović. Russia e Austria-Ungheria condannarono con veemenza l'assassinio della coppia reale; Londra ritirò il suo ambasciatore. L'Italia era incerta sul contegno da assumere e gli avvenimenti di Belgrado avevano suscitato stupore e allarme in Italia, anche nel timore di possibili reazioni dell'Austria-Ungheria. Vienna seguiva la situazione balcanica con estrema preoccupazione e temeva per la sicurezza dei suoi confini meridionali. Inoltre, Roma temeva che i confini dei Balcani potessero subire variazioni improvvise, pregiudicando le ambizioni italiane nella regione. Dal punto di vista italiano, l'intera situazione era complicata dai rapporti interni alla Triplice Alleanza, specialmente dopo che il cancelliere tedesco, Von Bulow, aveva confermato nel settembre 1903 che Francesco Giuseppe e il ministro degli esteri Goluchowski diffidavano di Roma.

Inoltre, l'Italia temeva un intervento militare austriaco nei Balcani. La Serbia temeva poi che la guerra tra Russia e Giappone in Estremo Oriente avrebbe potuto incoraggiare Vienna a intraprendere azioni nei Balcani. Gli italiani temevano soprattutto che la crisi albanese avrebbe potuto favorire un accordo tra la Russia e l'Austria-Ungheria. Probabilmente consapevole di questi dubbi, l'ambasciatore tedesco a Roma, propose al Ministro degli Esteri italiano Tittoni un incontro con Goluchowski, per discutere l'intera questione balcanica. Nonostante le rassicurazioni austriache, Tittoni aveva ancora dubbi circa le vere intenzioni di Vienna. Poiché la Serbia voleva liberarsi dal controllo economico e politico austriaco, Vienna decise di punirla con le sanzioni economiche. Dato che il principale prodotto d'esportazione serba era il maiale, il governo austro-ungarico decise di interrompere l'importazione di suini dalla Serbia, il che provocò la cosiddetta 'Guerra di Maiali'. Di riflesso, Belgrado cercò e trovò nuovi mercati, a cominciare da Francia e Germania. Vienna era preoccupata per la crescita del nazionalismo serbo che, anche per ragioni economiche, rivendicava uno sbocco sull'Adriatico e la Bosnia. Anche quando Vienna e Belgrado concordarono la ripresa dei rapporti commerciali, nel 1909, la Serbia continuò segretamente a incoraggiare l'irredentismo in Bosnia-Erzegovina, generando una crisi che sarebbe continuata fino alla Grande Guerra.

Parole chiave: Austria-Ungheria, Serbia, guerra commerciale, politica estera italiana, Balcani.

Алесандро ВАЊИНИ

ИТАЛИЈА И СРБИЈА: од атентата на Александра Обреновића да Свињског рата

Резиме

У првим годинама двадесетог века, Балкан је био центар дуге и свеобухватне кризе, док је економска и политичка зависност Србије претрпел изненадну промену након трагичног краја династије Обреновић. Међународни бес изазван превратом насупио је одмах. Русија и Аустро-Угарска снажно су осудиле брутално убиство, Лондон је повукао свог амбасадора, док Италија није био сигурана како да се постави. Иако се у извештају амбасадора Србије у Риму од петка 11. јуна наводило да је нова влада држала ситуацију чврсто под контролом, догађаји у Београду изазвали су чуђење и позорност у Италији, која је страховала опасне реакције Аустро-Угарске. Беч је ситуацију на Балкан пратио са изузетном забринутости плашећи се за безбедност својих јужних граница. Осим Беча, Рим је такође страховао да границе на Балкану не претрпе неочекиване промене које би угрозиле италијанске амбиције у региону. Са становишта Италије, цела ситуација је прерасла у комплексно питање односа са Бечом унутар Тројног савеза, посебно након што је септембра 1903. немачки канцелар фон Билев потврдио да су Фрањо Јосип и аустријски министар иностраних послова Голуховски били неповерљиви према Риму.

Поред тога, Италија се плашила могуће аустријске војне интервенције на Балкану, на шта су Срби гледали са зебњом, страхујући пре свега да би Беч и Санкт Петербург могли да доведу до промена на Балкану против интереса Срба и Бугара. Од фебруара 1904. године надаље, Србија је имала разлога да се плаши да ће рат између Русије и Јапана на Далеком истоку охрабрити Беч да предузме опасне акције на Балкану. Исто су сумњали и Италијани. Штавише, са новонасталом албанском кризом у албанским срединама, Италија се највише прибојавала могућег споразума између Русије и Аустро-Угарске. Вероватно свестан ових сумњи, немачки амбасадор у Риму је предложио италијанском министару иностраних послова, Титонију, да се одржи састанак Голуховским на ком ће се претрести целокупно Балканско питање. Иако је Голуховски званично напустио идеју војне интервенције на Балкану, Титони је и даље сумњао у намере Беча. Усред ове тешке ситуације, царство се такође суочило са опасаном политичком кризом у Мађарској. Када је Србија почела да се ослобађа аустријске економске и политичке контроле, градећи нове односе са другим земљама, Беч је одлучио да казни Београд економским санкцијама. Како је главни извозни производ Србије била свињетина, аустроугарска влада је одлучила да заустави увоз свиња из Србије, што је резултирало чувеним Свињским ратом. Овај трговински рат почео је затварањем граница за српске

производе и отворио дубок јаз у односима између две земље. Као резултат рата, Београд је пронашао нова тржишта и српска спољна трговина се увећала. Извоз је повећан за десет милиона динара. Кредити за кланице и складиштење стигли су из Француске, док је Немачка уговорила увоз. Беч је био забринут због захтева српског национализма и растућег непријатељства Србије према Аустро-Угарској. Истовремено, ојачала је потреба за излазом на Јадранско море која је подстакла националистичке амбиције Србије према Босни. Иако су Беч и Београд склопили нови трговински споразум 1909. године, Србија је тајно подстицала немира међу Јужним Словенима Босне и Херцеговине, анектиране дана раније, што је допринело избијању Великог рата.

Кључне речи: Аустроугарска, Србија, трговински рат, италијанска спољна политика, Балкан.

Alberto BECHERELLI

**SERBIA AND THE BALKAN WARS
IN THE REPORTS OF THE ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHÉ
IN BELGRADE, CARLO PAPA DI COSTIGLIOLE**

Abstract: The paper reconstructs the events of the crisis of the Bosnian annexation to Austria-Hungary of 1908 and the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 according to the reports of the Italian military attaché in Belgrade Major Carlo Papa di Costigliole d’Asti. During that period, Italy closely followed the events in the region due to the political and economic importance of the Balkans, receiving information mainly from the Italian military attachés residing in main European cities and the capitals of the Balkan states. Carlo Papa had the opportunity to personally witness the changes occurring in the region and Serbia’s preparation for war: he had closer contacts and personal friendships with the officers of the Serbian General Staff and the Serbian Ministers of War and participated as an observer in the Serbian Army military exercises. During the First Balkan War, Papa was authorized by the Belgrade government, along with the other foreign military attachés, to join, in Skopje, the General Staff of the Serbian Army. The testimony of Papa contained also extensive reviews of the articles of the Serbian newspapers. Although in some instances Papa’s reports could seem excessively pro-Serbian and partial, they contribute to the study, interpretation and discussion of a period that was a crucial experience in the European history of the twentieth century, the main premonitory sign of the First World War and a key moment in the struggle for the affirmation of Serbia as a regional power in its path towards the unification of the Yugoslav territories.

Keywords: Serbia, Bosnian crisis, Balkan Wars, Italy, Italian military attaché in Belgrade.

Introduction

The Balkans has always been an important cultural and commercial area for the Italian foreign policy and during the Balkan Wars Italy closely followed the events in the region. From the Congress of Berlin (1878), the primary interest of the “young” Italian government was to maintain friendly relations with the European Great Powers for future and more fruitful alliances, such as the Triple Alliance in 1882. The main

Italian goal was to fortify its position in the international arena and to participate with other European countries in the division of the spheres of influence. The Italian objectives included the old ambition of gaining supremacy over the Mediterranean area, which meant having a colony in the North African coast and a policy of expansion in the Balkan Peninsula. Italian officers (military personnel, members of the commissions for the demarcation of borders, experts and delegates at international conferences, staff employed by foreign armies) were particularly active in the issues of the Balkan region, offering their technical and organisational expertise in the process of political settlement that was difficult due to tensions among the emerging national states. Italian officers were directly involved in the region, such as, for example: Major Attilio Velini in 1879, as a member of the international commission for the delimitation of Serbia's new borders after the annexation of Niš, Vranje and Pirot established at the Congress of Berlin; Colonel Alessandro Baldassarre Orero, as a member of the international commission for the delimitation of the border between Bulgaria and the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia (1879); or General Emilio de Georgis, who, after the Mürzsteg Reform Plan (1903), was a member of the military commission for the reorganisation of the Ottoman *gendarmerie* in Macedonia.¹

The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 were mostly followed by Italian military attachés from the main European cities and capitals of the Balkan states involved in the conflict.² The reports sent from the military attachés to the Army General Staff in Rome from October 1912 to August 1913 contain daily information, news, rumours and more or less reliable predictions about the events, primarily focused on military operations and the London Peace Conference. Although based mainly on the analysis of military issues, these reports are in some cases more significant than diplomatic documents because they give a wider interpretation of the national and territorial issues in the early twentieth century in the Balkan states. Besides being written from the perspective of the Italian political and military interest, the reports also show the feelings, beliefs and interests of the European states where Italian military attachés resided.³

¹ In 1908, after the death of General De Georgis, his position was assumed by General Mario Nicolis di Robilant. In September 1911, due to the worsening of the relations between Italy and Turkey, General Di Robilant received from the Italian government the order to return to Italy. The Italian military delegation left Constantinople on the day of the declaration of the war (28 September). About the activities of the Italian officers in the Balkans see: A. Biagini, *Momenti di storia balcanica*, Rome 1981.

² For history of the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 according to the reports of Italian military attachés see: A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, Rome 1990.

³ The archive of the Italian Army General Staff Historical Office (Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, AUSSME), contains their reports about the Balkan Wars in the following groups: G-24, *Correspondence of the Army General Staff*; G-29, *Military Attachés*; G-33, *Army General Staff – Colonial Office – Balkan states*. From 1903, the most important institution that produced, collected and preserved these documents was the Army General Staff Colonial Office. The Colonial Office had the task to plan potential Italian military operations and to collect information of military interest for war operations and defense of the national

Captain Carlo Papa di Costigliole d'Asti (Florence 1869 – Alassio 1955), promoted Major in February 1912, was the Italian military attaché in Belgrade – and for a shorter period in Bucharest – from 1908 to 1913.⁴ During the crisis of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary and during the Balkan Wars, he was a privileged observer of the events in Serbia. From 1908, Papa had closer contacts and personal friendships with officers of the Serbian General Staff and the Serbian Ministers of War; he attended meetings with the royal family Karađorđević and had the opportunity to participate as an observer in the Serbian Army military exercises. In Serbia, still an economically underdeveloped and mainly a peasant society, Papa witnessed the growing role of the army in national emancipation – which had started already in the nineteenth century – covering the function that in the more industrially developed Western countries was instead carried out by the bourgeoisie, the middle classes and the urban proletariat.

In the autumn of 1912, during the First Balkan War and a few days after the Battle of Kumanovo, Papa was authorised by the Belgrade government, along with other foreign military attachés, to join, in the recently conquered Skopje, the General Staff of the Serbian Army. The Italian military attaché had the opportunity to personally visit the battlefields where, a few days before, the Serbian troops had faced the Ottoman forces. From Skopje, on 13 and 14 November, he first moved towards Kumanovo and then joined the command of the Serbian 1st Army – which he followed also to Veles and Prilep – deployed in front of the Turkish positions in Bitola (Monastir). Papa entered into Bitola the day after the town fell into the Serbian hands (19 November 1912). From there he went to Thessaloniki at the end of the month. Mostly he reported details of his stay with the Serbian army in an elaborated report of 1 January 1913, in which he described the Serbian-Turkish War in the autumn of 1912, based on the information provided by the Serbian Army General Staff, the data collected during the field visits, the stories of the peasants whom he interviewed, and those of the injured Serbs and Turks whom he visited in hospitals.⁵ Furthermore, Carlo Papa had the opportunity to collect more information in the report during the other visits to Skopje, Prizren and Mitrovica, from 14 to 26 March 1913.⁶ At that moment, there was still the High Command of the Serbian Army in Skopje, while in Prizren and Mitrovica there were respectively the command of the 3rd Army and that of the Army of the Ibar, where the Italian military attaché had the means to comprehend military operations and the events involving the Serbian forces in those areas in the previous months. A few months later, finally, when the conflict erupted

borders. See: R. Gustapane, *Inventario G-33: Ufficio Coloniale del Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore*, in *Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Bollettino dell'Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico* V, 9 (2005) 37–337.

⁴ For his biography see: AUSSME, *Biografie*, b. 109, fasc. 15, Papa di Costigliole Carlo.

⁵ *Ibidem*, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913.

⁶ *Ibidem*, fasc. 117, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca del 1912–1913*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 3 April 1913.

between the former allies – Serbs and Bulgarians over the Macedonian “disputed zone”, Papa once again was able to be a valuable observer of the military operations and the Serbian political and social situation.

Papa’s testimony, often containing also extensive reviews of articles of the Serbian newspapers, can be added to those of the eminent contemporaries involved in various positions in the Balkan Wars. Although in some instances Papa’s reports could seem excessively pro-Serbian and partial, the hope is that they will contribute to the study, interpretation and discussion of an event of crucial importance in the European history of the twentieth century, the main premonitory sign of the First World War and a key moment in the struggle for the affirmation of Serbia as a regional power on its path towards the unification of the Yugoslav territories.

The Bosnian Crisis of 1908–1909

Papa’s first relevant reports from Belgrade to Rome deal with the crisis provoked by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. As it is well known, in the summer of 1908, the rebellion of the Ottoman troops in Macedonia and Thrace provoked the Young Turks’ revolution, which during the following April led to the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid. Taking the advantage of the chaotic situation caused by the change of power, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 October), which had been administrated by the Joint Government of the Dual Monarchy from 1878, while Bulgaria proclaimed independence (5 October). The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina gave Austria-Hungary an opportunity to consolidate its policy in the Balkans and to oppose the ambitions of the Kingdom of Serbia that were seriously threatening the unity and stability of the Dual Monarchy. For Austria-Hungary, it was necessary to isolate Serbia and in that period to support Bulgaria in its struggle for freedom from the Ottoman Empire in order to consolidate a strong Balkan state that would oppose the Serbian rising in the region. Serbia, in fact, considered Bosnia and Herzegovina its territory in terms of the right of nationality and there was a serious danger that Belgrade might resort to arms, in alliance with Montenegro, against Austria-Hungary; there was a widespread conviction that with the possible arrival of the Serbian army on the Drina, a general revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina would follow, which had already been prepared by voluntary groups that gathered at the river.

In that period, in his records sent to the government in Rome, Papa described the political situation in Serbia: according to the Italian officer, the population of Belgrade “without considering the negative consequences” was categorically demanding from the government to declare war on Austria-Hungary, despite the fact that the *Skupština* had voted against it; the population hoped for an intervention in favour of the “brothers” of Bosnia and Herzegovina and more intense

uprisings in those provinces, as well as the intervention of Turkey and Montenegro against the Dual Monarchy. Even the Crown Prince Đorđe Karađorđević, in his speeches to the demonstrators in Belgrade, was openly encouraged by the spirit of war – Papa wrote that Prince Đorđe was leading the interventionist faction represented by the “old radicals” of Nikola Pašić; the most moderate ones were close to the positions of King Petar⁷ – while the Austro-Hungarian government, for its part, could not rely on the loyalty of any Slavic province and feared an unexpected reconciliation between the courts of Belgrade and Cetinje. In those days, indeed, the Serbian newspapers were reporting a telegram from the Prince of Montenegro to King Petar in which the former stated to be ready to enter with his troops in Herzegovina, if the Serbian ones decided to march towards the Drina. However, the Italian military attaché also reported that there were suspicions that the popular demonstrations in Belgrade in favour of the war against Austria were actually staged to push King Petar at a thoughtless pace to get rid of the dynasty of Karađorđević. The agitation would then be animated by political factions contrary to the royal family, with the support of some military circles. These events were also probably connected to the rumours that spread on 11 October about possible abdication of the king in favour of the crown prince. Besides those suspicions – Papa reported – it was certain that the Serbian nation felt suppressed and threatened by the Austrian expansionism towards the south. Serbian public opinion was divided. Some factions believed that territorial compensation would facilitate the unification with Montenegro and would give to Serbia an outlet to the Adriatic Sea; others considered the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Austria-Hungary a better option. Everyone understood, however, that the Serbian aspirations were unlikely to be accepted by the Great Powers, because they were more favourable to Belgrade than to Vienna.⁸

Papa wrote that there was also the opinion on the streets of the Serbian capital that the decision of the *Skupština* against the declaration of war on Austria-Hungary was in reality a move to gain time and make the necessary military arrangements. The feeling was confirmed by the fact that on the same day when the National Assembly had apparently rejected the solution of war, numerous armed gangs, about sixty men each, left the capital towards the Drina and the Sandžak (bands composed in many cases of experienced volunteers who had already taken part in the struggles in Macedonia). The Serbian army, in fact, was in a crisis due to the transformation of the armament. Vienna prevented the export and transit of any materials useful in the event of war to Serbia and Montenegro. According to Papa,

⁷ At the *Skupština*, the “old radicals” were in favour of an immediate armed action, while the “young radicals” supported the opportunity to invite the Great Powers to protect the interests of Serbia, sustaining the war only if the European countries did not satisfy the claims of the Serbian people. The proposal of the “young radicals” triumphed with ninety-two votes against sixty-seven. Ibidem, b. 22, fasc. 229, *Situazione in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 11 October 1908; idem, *Recenti avvenimenti in Serbia. Condizioni dell'Esercito*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 15 October 1908.

⁸ Ibidem, *Situazione in Serbia preparativi per eventuale campagna*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 17 October 1908.

under these conditions, the Serbian armed forces were, therefore, far from being ready to fight.⁹

Austria-Hungary, for its part, did not allow the *fait accompli* of the annexation to be discussed and held away from Bosnia the Bosnian reservists who were not considered trustworthy, overseeing the Serbian border to prevent the import of arms and ammunition. Several patrols of volunteers were formed (even among the trustworthy Bosnians) to counter incursions of Serbian and Montenegrin bands into annexed territories. The Serbian government tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain territorial compensation sending, together with Montenegro, political figures to European capitals to plead for its cause, but Vienna proved more willing to recognise the need for compensation to Turkey alone, although it had already been met, according to the Austrians, with sacrificing their aims at Sandžak – from where the evacuation of the Austro-Hungarian troops had started – and Thessaloniki. Great Britain and Germany agreed that Novi Pazar had to remain Turkish, but the former one in particular did not conceal its dissatisfaction with the conduct of Austria-Hungary, giving hopes for “moral” support to Serbia and Montenegro in their claims, while Germany unconditionally supported the Austrian positions; on the other hand, Russia and the pan-Slav movement were taking on an increasingly hostile attitude towards the Dual Monarchy. Russia seemed willing to protest strongly against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and asked for a territorial compensation for the two Slavic states that wanted a cession of territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Sandžak. The Russian support for Serbian claims seemed to be confirmed also by the latest violent speech by Prince Đorđe on 7 November in Belgrade, after a mission to the Tsar to plead for Serbia’s cause. The other Great Powers were concerned about the attitude taken by Russia, because they knew that the resolution of the Bosnian question through diplomatic channels only depended on St. Petersburg.¹⁰

Austria-Hungary, however, declared not to accept the Serbian territorial claims over Sandžak and Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, Vienna called upon the government of Belgrade to put an end to the demonstration of hostilities. Vienna was only willing to satisfy Serbia with economic and commercial compensations, encouraging the construction of the railway line from the Danube, over Kladovo or Radujevac, to the Adriatic Sea over Bar, involving in the enterprise Austro-Hungarian banks and capitals, and coordinating and expanding the Bosnian-Herzegovinian railway network and linking it to Serbia. The goal of Serbia and Montenegro was to get an area of land, which by joining together the two states was to serve as an insurmountable barrier to the penetration of Austria-Hungary in the Balkan Peninsula and, in addition to counting on Russia’s support, also to try to have

⁹ Serbia was dependent on foreign countries for the supply of certain raw materials – brass for shell casings, steel for bullets and smokeless powder for the charge. Ibidem, fasc. 230, *Arsenale di Kraguievatz e polverificio di Oblicevo (Serbia)*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 7 April 1909; idem, *Notizie relative all’esercito serbo – Situazione generale*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 27 February 1909.

¹⁰ Regarding Russian foreign policy towards the Balkans in this period see: A. Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy, 1908–1914*, Toronto 1981.

the support of Turkey. In this way the Turkish and Serbian-Montenegrin interests seemed to coincide and could be supported by a common anti-Austrian agreement between the three states. Just the common purpose made the relations between those powers more strained, and empires and nations were ready, each for their own claims, to start a war.¹¹

The most diverse hypotheses were confirmed and just the possibility of a military agreement between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro as anti-Austrian, which also perhaps Bulgaria and Romania could join (even if the government of Bucharest did not show to fully share the sympathies of the Romanian people for Serbia's cause),¹² was the most dangerous for Austria-Hungary. If this Balkan block, about which newspapers spoke insistently, had been realised, the Austro-Turkish negotiations aimed at possible compensations for the annexation would have lowered the probability of success and the Austro-Hungarian position would have become more difficult. Serbia's goal Serbia was, in fact, to hinder any agreements between the two imperial powers and maintain strained relations among them, although Belgrade – as Carlo Papa wrote – was well aware of the difficulty of inducing Turkey to assume aggressive intentions against Austria-Hungary. Much more realistically, the Serbian government aimed at reaching a defensive agreement. Above all, Belgrade needed to negotiate with Turkey the passage of war materials on Ottoman soil from Thessaloniki to the Serbian border. In exchange, Belgrade had to assure the Sublime Porte that Serbia did not have aspirations towards the Sandžak of Novi-Pazar (definitely a statement that was not true but was necessary in those circumstances). It seemed that the conclusion of a formal agreement between Serbia and Turkey was close, although it was unclear if Montenegro would join it, mainly due to the mistrust between the Turks and Montenegrins because of the issues that were still open related to the borders between the two states (or rather between Montenegro and Albania). On 10 December 1908, the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Milovan Milovanović, communicated in confidence to the Italian minister in Belgrade that the Serbian-Turkish military agreement had been reached thanks to Nikola Pašić and Stojan Novaković, lacking only a signature that had to be made during a meeting in Constantinople. The text of the agreement, shown to the Italian minister, guaranteed the territorial inviolability of the two parties; besides, if one of the two states was threatened by any party, Serbia and Turkey would have provided for common defence or mutual aid. At the last moment, however, the Sublime Porte objected, aware that an agreement with Serbia would have definitely exacerbated its relations with Austria-Hungary. Thus the negotiations failed. Papa explained that Turkey apparently seemed willing to strongly protest against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, not because there was any hope to take back the possession of territories over which for the past thirty years it no longer had any authority, but

¹¹ AUSSME, G-33, b. 22, fasc. 229, *Situazione attuale in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 23 October 1908.

¹² *Ibidem*, *Informazioni varie relative all'esercito serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 6 December 1908; *ibidem*, *Principali avvenimenti in Romania ed in Serbia, durante l'anno 1908*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 22 December 1908.

rather to prevent a possible compensation to Serbia, Montenegro, and perhaps others, at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.¹³

As a consequence of these rumours of a possible anti-Austrian alliance, Austria-Hungary, on its part, was preparing to intervene against Serbia and Montenegro. In the Austro-Hungarian political and military circles it seemed that the only one who obstructed a military action against Serbia was the Emperor. Only a defensive action was planned against Montenegro, at least initially. Numerous battalions were deployed on the Bosnian border with Serbia, between the Sava river and the Sandžak and then from there to the sea on the border of Montenegro. A Serbian note to the Powers stated that the Austrians made trenches and other works of fortification along the border of the Drina and from Trieste daily shipments of war materials came and abundant supplies were ensured.¹⁴

The situation apparently improved at the beginning of 1909, when the negotiations between Turkey and Austria-Hungary seemed to finally start moving towards a solution by a compensation that would have repaid the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (what was taken into consideration was also a solution through Austro-Turkish trade agreements). There was widespread hope that a peace process would start, leading to a general agreement also between Turkey and Bulgaria. Above all, a note from Russia to the other Powers, also clarified and demonstrated in a speech held in the Duma on 25 December 1908 by Foreign Minister Aleksandr Petrovič Izvol'skij, finally showed the intention of the Russian government not to protest against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia then ended with the support to the political line of the other Powers for reconciliation between Austria and Serbia through diplomacy, in general, fully aware that hardly any conflict would have remained relegated only to those states. The issue was about finding a fair compromise that reconciled the demands of Serbia that were "excessively territorial" with "exclusively economic" proposals of Austria-Hungary, saving the dignity and interests of the two parties. Serbia instead continued to intensify security measures at the border of the Sava, Danube and Drina, to distribute weapons to the Serbian population of Kosovo and Macedonia, and continued the work of fortification around Kragujevac, the town with the most important Serbian arsenal.¹⁵ Despite the new official Russian government's position, offers of aid came to the Serbian Ministry of War from the most important pan-Slavic associations, which were ready to pay the travel and maintenance during a possible war campaign to all those Russian

¹³ Ibidem, *Circa voci di intesa fra Turchia Serbia e Montenegro*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 27 November 1908; idem, *Trattative fra Turchia e Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 6 December 1908; idem, *Fallite trattative per convenzione Turco-Serba*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 15 December 1908.

¹⁴ Ibidem, G-29, b. 96, fasc. 2, General Staff (Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore), Colonial Office (Ufficio Coloniale), *Promemoria n. 3, Situazione politica e militare Balcanica*, the Head of the Office Lieutenant Colonel Marafini, Rome, 21 December 1908.

¹⁵ Ibidem, fasc. 3, *Situazione politica*, Head of the Office Lieutenant Colonel Marafini, Rome, 20 January 1909; idem, General Staff, Colonial Office, *Promemoria n. 6*, Head of the Office Lieutenant Colonel Marafini, Rome, 17 February 1909.

volunteers willing to join the army of Serbia. At this point, what became fundamental was also the attitude that in this sort of *ménage à trois* of Serbia, Russia and Austria-Hungary, the cabinet of Vienna wanted to assume.¹⁶

At the end, however, as a sign of good measures directed to appease the sympathies of European public opinion, the Belgrade government finally sent to the Russian government a communication where it confirmed the intention to accept the mediation of the Great Powers to protect the Serbian interests damaged by the Bosnian annexation, but the Russian response was to entirely desist from making claims of this nature, "since any territorial claims of Serbia would have met the disapproval of the Powers themselves". Therefore, during the crisis of the Bosnian annexation, the Austro-Russian duel for supremacy in the Balkans was definitely assuming a reassuring attitude to the peace of Europe. Serbia, without the support of Russia, which was engaged in approaching France and Great Britain and in attempts to open a dialogue with Austria-Hungary, was forced to accept the annexation with the Belgrade Declaration – the text of which was actually drafted in Vienna – on 31 March 1909, in which it stressed that its rights were not violated by the *fait accompli* made by Austria and that it would abandon "the attitude of protest and opposition on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also change the course of its policy towards Austria-Hungary in order to live in the future with it in good neighbourly relations." The number of Serbian soldiers had to be reduced to the number prior to the outbreak of the crisis, with the disbandment of companies of volunteers, which were ready to enter Bosnia. In Belgrade a current was affirmed that recognised the futility and damage to which the country would be exposed in insisting on warlike projects, realising that the best way forward was to maintain good relations with the Great Powers. In this sense, Carlo Papa stated that the language of the Serbian press, formerly very aggressive, had already been calmed and the Serbian government had pledged to avoid every kind of excess.¹⁷ The peaceful solution was finally facilitated also by the ousting from the Serbian political life of the warlike Crown Prince Đorđe, who on 25 March renounced his right of succession to the throne in favour of his brother Aleksandar.

From that moment, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the "unredeemed land" for the Serbs. The solution to the crisis between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, in fact, would not be accompanied by a revival of trust towards the Habsburgs. The feeling that remained dominant in the Kingdom of Serbia was the need to be prepared for future conflicts. This feeling brought among the population and especially among the volunteers a period of great interest in joining nationalist associations such as the gymnastic society of *Sokolovi*.¹⁸ Papa wrote that what was notable was the consistency and the seriousness with which the Serbian population, in the moment of crisis, was ready for a possible armed conflict. Besides popular demonstrations,

¹⁶ Ibidem, General Staff, Colonial Office, *Promemoria n. 7*, Head of the Office Lieutenant Colonel Marafini, Rome, 10 March 1909.

¹⁷ Ibidem, G-33, b. 22, fasc. 229, *Situazione attuale in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 23 October 1908.

¹⁸ Ibidem, fasc. 230, *Funzionamento del tiro a segno e degli istituti di educazione fisica in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 5 April 1909.

life in Belgrade remained the same, nothing seemed abnormal, but there were preparations to support the fight, if it was necessary to defend the homeland. The young people, gathered in groups of volunteers, were trained by army officers to use weapons and were acquainted with military disciplines; in the hospitals women of all social classes took courses to be ready to take care of the wounded.¹⁹

At the suggestion of Russia, in the following years, Serbia began to foster good neighbourly relations with the other Balkan states, despite the difficulties relating to an agreement with Bulgaria due to the Macedonian question. Losing Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia would increasingly be heading its hopes to this region, where the aspirations of the Serbs and the Bulgarians were constantly in conflict and represented an obstacle to an alliance between Belgrade and Sofia.²⁰ However, all of the Balkan states aspired to oust once for all the Turks from the peninsula and it became clear that only a Balkan alliance could permanently remove the Ottoman rule from the European territories and at the same time oppose the Austro-Hungarian aspirations of expansionism. When in 1911, the Ottoman Empire showed all its weakness in the conflict against Italy over Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, contacts aiming at an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, and Greece and Romania, increased. In March 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria, supported by Russia, concluded a defensive alliance. Belgrade and Sofia agreed upon military cooperation in case of an attack by a third state (i.e. Austria-Hungary or Ottoman Empire) and with the aim to develop a common action in case of foreign occupation of the Balkan territories under the jurisdiction of the Sublime Porte. The agreement also provided for an arrangement for the future of Macedonia: according to the aspirations of Bulgaria, the region should become autonomous or should be divided. In case of partition, the agreement would recognise Bulgarian interests over southern Macedonia, including Ohrid, Prilep and Bitola. Northern Macedonia, including the town of Skopje, would be assigned to a “disputed zone”, under the Russian arbitration, if Bulgarians and Serbs could not reach between themselves a suitable arrangement for the territory. Then, the anti-Turkish treaty between Greece and Bulgaria (26–29 May 1912) followed, on the initiative of Greek President Eleftherios Venizelos, and the Serbian-Montenegrin military agreement of September 1912.²¹

At the end, the Italian decisive military victories over the Ottomans in the Italo-Turkish War motivated the joint attack of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece in October 1912, giving to the Turks the *ultimatum* of an autonomous Macedonia or war.²² Constantinople did not respond to the *ultimatum* of the Balkan states and the war officially began. In this situation, the first goal of international diplomacy was to confine the conflict to the Balkan area. The international opinion

¹⁹ Ibidem, fasc. 229, *Trattative fra Turchia e Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 6 December 1908.

²⁰ Ibidem, b. 24, fasc. 240, C. Papa, Belgrade, 4 January 1910.

²¹ See: R. C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913. Prelude to the First World War*, London and New York 2000, 11.

²² On the Italo-Turkish War see: Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Ufficio Coloniale, *L'azione dell'Esercito Italiano nella Guerra Italo-Turca (1911–1912)*, Rome 1913.

about the “invincible” Ottoman Empire changed progressively; due to the Balkan League’s advance in the war, the Great Powers began to understand that it was no longer possible to maintain the *status quo* in the region. From this moment, according to the European public opinion, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was considered a matter of time, followed by multiple, closely connected events which, from the end of 1912 to August 1913, changed the borders of the states and the balance of influence in the Balkans. An Italian military report states that “the small Balkan nations are showing to Europe what Europe had to understand a long time ago” – that the end of the anachronistic order of the Ottoman Empire was irreversible.²³

The Balkan Wars of 1912–1913

At this point, the reports of the Italian military attachés became important sources of information for the government of Rome. These are some examples: the reports of the Italian military attaché in Paris, Lieutenant Colonel Zaccone, from the last months of 1912, described the military mobilisation in Bulgaria and the agreements between the states that formed the Balkan League. He wrote that the war was an unpleasant surprise for France because of the large French investments in the “Orient” and the fact that the conflict could worsen the Austro-Russian rivalry. Zaccone also wrote that if Turkey had permitted Macedonian autonomy, which was supported by Bulgaria, the war could have been avoided.²⁴ In London, the reports of Lieutenant Colonel Ugo Bagnani were mainly based on information from the press and political circles in the city and were often sent together with articles from English newspapers. At the beginning of the war, the English press overestimated the Turkish Army in the Balkans, considering that it numbered 1,200,000 men, while according to the Italian military attaché the real Turkish force was only 300,000 men (a number closer to the real estimation), less than the force of the Balkan League.²⁵ In another report from 5 October 1912, Bagnani communicated information about the most important military officers of the several armies involved. He gave short biographies of Turkish, Serbian and Bulgarian officers: among the others, those of King Petar, Radomir Putnik and Stepa Stepanović.²⁶ The widely diffused opinion, as Bagnani wrote, was that Bulgaria, due to the perfect organisation and high morale of its soldiers, would win the war. It is well known that Bulgaria was militarily considered the most powerful of the four Balkan states, with a large, well-trained and well-

²³ AUSSME, G-29, b. 109, *Relazione sulla situazione politica internazionale inviata dall'addetto militare a Londra al Capo di Stato Maggiore italiano*, 28 October 1912.

²⁴ See: A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 86.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 87.

²⁶ AUSSME, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.3, *Military attaché in London*, January-November 1912, Bagnani, London, 5 October 1912.

equipped army. Due to this opinion, Bagnani called the Bulgarians “the Japanese of the Balkans”.²⁷ Other series of reports came from Colonel Calderoni from Berlin, who gave detailed information about military mobilisation of the states involved and the war operations. Although Germany was silent about the issues in the Balkans, Calderoni had no doubt that Germany would enter the conflict, military or politically, if its interests proved to be “jeopardised”. Germany, as Austro-Hungary, wanted to keep free the way to Asia Minor, the rich region where Germany planned to invest capital and export goods for its production.²⁸ The information from the military attachés gave to the Italian government in Rome the possibility for the first evaluation of the Turkish defeat, which was, according to the reports, caused by inefficiency of the supplies, corruption in the Turkish military hierarchy and the fact that the joined armies of the Balkan states outnumbered the Turkish one.

Carlo Papa, for his part, followed the mobilisation of the Serbian army. King Petar was at the head of the army, even if the real command was given to General Radomir Putnik, Chief of the Serbian General Staff. Among the closest collaborators of the King and the Chief of the General Staff there were Colonel Petar Bojović, Minister of War, and General Ilija Gojković, director of the Military Academy of Belgrade. Crown Prince Aleksandar commanded the 1st Army, the main Serbian force settled in the south of the Morava Valley; General Stepa Stepanović, a former Minister of War, led the 2nd Army concentrated between Kyustendil and Dupnitsa. Colonel Božidar Janković commanded the 3rd Army, concentrated in Western Serbia. The Ibar Army led by General Mihailo Živković and the Javor Brigade commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Milovoje Anđelković, which were concentrated in Northwestern Serbia, completed the Serbian Army.²⁹

From the beginning of the hostilities, at the border between Serbia and the territories of the Ottoman Empire, the *comitađi* composed by Serbian volunteers under the command of officers of the Serbian regular army, attacked the Ottoman forces. “Recruited on the spot, highly motivated, well-equipped and with good experience in mountain warfare, the task of the Serbian insurrectional bands is to operate against the smaller groups of the opposing forces, providing information, raising the population against the Ottoman authorities, disturbing in every kind of way the operations of the enemy”. From 16 October to 18 October, the *comitađi*, in some cases supported by the Serbian regular troops, conquered numerous Turkish garrisons at the border, playing a very useful role, even if they were accused of atrocities against the Muslim civilian population.³⁰

²⁷ Ibidem, Bagnani, London, 6 October 1912.

²⁸ A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 102.

²⁹ AUSSME, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913, *Mobilizzazione*, 2–7. See also R. C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 45.

³⁰ AUSSME, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913, *Scontri in prossimità della frontiera durante il periodo di radunata Comitaggi*, 13–14; *ibidem*, b. 9, fasc. 94, *Considerazioni sulla guerra nei Balcani*.

The fast successes of the Serbian forces in the following days are well known. The troops of the 3rd Army entered into Priština and Novi Pazar on 23 October, and into Mitrovica a few days later. The 1st Army conquered Kumanovo on 24 October and two days later occupied Skopje, while part of the Bulgarian Army joined the Serbian troops in the Vardar Valley, and the Greeks continued to advance in Thessaly and Epirus. After being defeated in Skopje, the Turkish troops retreated towards Thessaloniki and Bitola.³¹

Carlo Papa's reports primarily focus on the fundamental victory of Kumanovo. The Crown Prince Aleksandar, close to the fighting troops, personally directed the Serbian operations, which were also attended by volunteer bands. Papa wrote: "The Battle of Kumanovo highlights the value, consistency and strength of the Serbian soldier and it has a special significance for the consequences on the continuation of the military campaign (...). As it happened during the conquest of Priština, also in Kumanovo the Albanian bands of the town tried to oppose the advancing of Serbian soldiers without success (...). In the early afternoon, the Ottoman forces were finally overwhelmed: the Serbian forces lost almost 4,000 men but the Ottoman ones suffered heavier losses, at least 5,000 dead or wounded combatants, especially because of the attacks of the Serbian cavalry during the Ottoman retreat ordered in great confusion by Zeki Pasha (...). The villages in the Kumanovo region, completely abandoned, were destroyed and burned, both by the Turks during the retreat and the Serbian *comitadi* that destroyed the places inhabited by Muslims and Albanians. In the previous months, in fact, numerous villages of the region had seen the rising of new settlements in which the government of Constantinople settled the Muslims from Bosnia to increase the presence of Ottoman elements in the Macedonian lands (...). The Serbian hospitals on the battlefield were quickly filled by the injured, both Serbs and Turks. The Serbian nurses demonstrated particular skills, a huge ability that especially in Belgrade had a well-established tradition in the numerous medical courses organised since the time of the crisis of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary (...)"³² The Turkish defeat at Kumanovo – Papa concluded in one of his following reports – was total. "If any Serbian units had resolutely followed the Ottoman forces during the retreat, their further resistance in the regions of Veles, Prilep and Bitola would have been impossible".³³

³¹ A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 117–118.

³² AUSSME, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913, *Battaglia di Kumanovo (23–24 ottobre); Descrizione del campo di battaglia; Avvenimenti durante la notte 23–24 ottobre; Combattimenti del 24 ottobre*; 22–36; *ibidem*, b. 27, fasc. 252, *Dati relativi all'esercito serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 25 October 1912; *idem*, *Kumanovo, Pristina, Ferizovic*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 26 October 1912; *idem*, *Notizie relative alla Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 27 October 1912; *idem*, *Circa la battaglia di Kumanovo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 29 October 1912; *idem*, *Kumanova, Köprülü (Veles), Kociana*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 30 October 1912; *idem*, *Informazioni relative alla Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 November 1912; *idem*, *Notizie avute dal Signor Marchese Solari circa l'esercito serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 2 November 1912.

³³ *Ibidem*, b. 29, fasc. 270, *L'esercito turco di Macedonia durante la guerra fra la Turchia ed i 4 stati alleati della penisola balcanica*, IV – Battaglia di Kumanovo, 14 July 1913, 12.

After the battle of Kumanovo, while the most important information sent by the military attachés to Rome concerned the Bulgarian war operations at Adrianople (Edirne), in November Papa continued to follow the operations of Serbian troops in Macedonia and Kosovo. At that moment, almost all the principle places in Macedonia were under Serbian control: Bitola was conquered on 19 November; the Serbian cavalry entered Ohrid three days later. The battle of Bitola was the second successful victory of the Serbian troops over the enemy forces: at the end of the month, the Balkan states had almost destroyed the Ottoman Army in Europe and its headquarters in Kırklareli, Thessaloniki, Bitola and Skopje came into the allies' hands.³⁴ At the same time, the military attachés continued to send information about the Great Powers' concern to find an agreement between Russia and Austria, the two Powers interested in gaining supremacy over the Balkan region (neither wanted the expansion of the influence of the other in the area), while reactions of the other Great Powers were diverse: although France was against the Turkish defeat, Paris supported the victories of the Bulgarian and Serbian armies, because of the connection between the French Army and the Serbian and Bulgarian officers, who were trained in French military schools. On the other hand, Germany supported Turkey primarily for the same reason – Turkish officers were trained by German ones.

In his concluding remarks about the events of autumn 1912, Carlo Papa reported: "The Serbian establishment had the easy task of popularising the war, so that every Serb participated with all his force in the mutual works against the common enemy, and endeavoured to overcome the hardships and hindrances in the best possible way (...). The widespread anti-Turkish sentiment contributed to the good trial of the Serbian soldier in front of the enemy's fire and to the order of the services behind the lines (...). Thanks to these qualities, he [the Serbian soldier] did not suffer the deficiencies of the services behind the lines, which, although they generally worked well, had neither the speed nor the best organisation for war operations, which quickly pushed [the Serbian Army] far away from the border [of the Kingdom of Serbia] and the railways, in a largely mountainous territory. The said qualities of the soldier are certainly to be counted among the main factors of the victories achieved".³⁵ According to Papa, the mobilisation, the gathering and the development of the operations showed that "the Serbian General Staff had studied and prepared properly the organisation of the conflict" and that "the individual efforts were oriented towards the good success of the overall goal". Papa reported that the Serbs called to the arms were quickly mobilised and the percentage of deserters was minimal: the army in that way had at its disposal the sufficient number of men for the formation of the planned units at the beginning and for replacing the losses of the military campaign later. On the other hand, the Turkish army in Macedonia found itself in difficult conditions both because its mobilisation went slower and was more

³⁴ A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 109–118.

³⁵ AUSSME, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913, *Conclusione*, 145.

incomplete than that of the enemies and because it had to face threats from all the sides.³⁶ Basically, the opponent that the Serbs were facing was equipped with good weapons but did not possess those “moral and material” qualities that were essential for a good army. In addition to the inexperience of numerous soldiers, Papa said that what had to be taken in consideration among the reasons of the Ottoman failure was the lack of motivation of the Christian elements: from every part of the Empire, in fact, the government of Constantinople received protests of the local authorities about the resistance of the Christian population towards the military mobilisation.³⁷ From the beginning of the conflict, the Ottoman troops suffered the desertions of Christian soldiers who opposed the war, but it seems that often also the Muslim population refused to obey: numerous Albanians, who were left alone to counter the Serbian attacks, quickly abandoned the Ottoman ranks.³⁸ When it became clear that the enemy forces, after the defeat of Kumanovo, retreated in disorder towards south and took refuge in the mountainous area west of the Vardar, the Serbian High Command realised that there would be no more strong resistances to overcome and thus took the decision to renounce the participation of a significant part of the available troops to continue the operations. Thus, from that time, the Serbian 2nd Army commanded by General Stepanović was sent to Adrianople, the main target of the Bulgarian Army, while the Serbian 3rd Army continued the operations towards Prizren, Djakova and the Adriatic Sea.³⁹ The Ottoman soldiers, wounded or imprisoned, blamed their officers for the military disaster, caused by their incompetence: among the Turkish and Albanian prisoners in the fortress of Belgrade serious fights occurred, everyone accusing the other to have caused the defeat. In the streets of Bitola, before the town was conquered by the Serbs, disarmed Ottoman soldiers imprisoned by their own comrades could already be seen. Numerous soldiers, who had left their places at the warfront, were sentenced to death.⁴⁰

Finally, Papa wrote some remarks about the massacres and cruelty of which the Serbs were accused. Since the beginning of the Serbian advance, rumours ran about acts of cruelty committed in the occupied territories against the Muslim population (especially Albanians) by the Serbs. It seems that the Serbian troops advancing in the Sandžak of Novi Pazar exterminated the Albanian population in order to facilitate the Serbian domination in those regions. Papa affirmed that he had the opportunity to hear information about these events by “serious people”⁴¹ and he thus

³⁶ Ibidem, *Circa le operazioni dell'esercito turco sino a Kumanova*, 98–100.

³⁷ Ibidem, b. 29, fasc. 270, *L'esercito turco di Macedonia durante la guerra fra la Turchia ed i 4 stati alleati della penisola balcanica*, 14 July 1913, *Contegno della popolazione*, 5.

³⁸ Ibidem, *Popolazione musulmana*, 6.

³⁹ Ibidem, b. 11, fasc. 115, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-turca dell'autunno 1912*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 1 January 1913, *Conclusione*, 145–146.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, *Considerazioni relative alle truppe turche e all'azione svolta da Giavid pascià*, 129–133.

⁴¹ Papa spoke with the foreign consuls in Skopje and Bitola. The Austro-Hungarian consul particularly blamed the behaviour of the Serbian troops. Ibidem, *Circa massacri e crudeltà commesse dai serbi*, 141.

considered that the massacres had actually occurred. He added, however, that the information by the Serbs' accusers could also have been exaggerated on purpose. In defence of the Serbian soldiers, Papa mentioned the report of the Serbian newspaper *Samoupravva* which on 3 January 1913 accused the Austrian press of publishing biased news against the Serbian Army. According to *Samoupravva*, the Serbs had not committed massacres and atrocities in the conquered regions and the Albanians were killed by the Serbian Army during regular fights. As a consequence, "no Albanian would be killed without any guns in the hands". In numerous cases – *Samoupravva* wrote – Albanians surrendered and then shot at the advancing Serbian troops, convinced that they would not have to face resistance: "any disciplined army would have killed these cowards". The newspaper reported as an example an unspecified group of Albanians (perhaps referring to an incident near Podujevo), who after having surrendered, attacked the back of a Serbian column, killing dozens of soldiers. The Albanian group was chased and killed "and this is a natural consequence of their behaviour. This is the truth: the Serbian troops were obliged to kill the enemies, thus acting as any other European army would act". Other examples given by Papa refer to the regions between Skopje and the Montenegrin border where, according to information of the international press, the Serbs burned villages and destroyed agricultural fields. During a trip to these regions (March 1913), Papa had the impression that they were far less devastated by the war than those of Kumanovo and Bitola, and that only few houses appeared to be destroyed. Ferizović (*Uroševac/ Ferizaj*), for example, which according to the international reports was a location of a series of massacres of Albanians and was allegedly completely destroyed with the aim to punish the betrayal of its inhabitants, was in fact substantially intact. Papa wrote that the Albanians were regularly working in the fields and herds of cattle grazed undisturbed. The Italian military attaché concluded his observations on the issue of the Serbian violence remembering that "on the other hand, although not excusable, acts of retaliation are in part understandable in regions where the massacres and cruelty are commonplace (...) and the state of war between the inhabitants is normal". As a proof of his affirmation, Papa described that in some villages of the region the Albanians' houses had outer stone walls and no windows, but only small slits for defence or "for a sudden gun shot against a traveller". Papa continued: "In this setting, with populations always fighting each other, the consequences of the war are naturally much more sensitive. It is certain that the elements of Serbian nationality living in the Macedonian occupied territories have also taken advantage of the success of the Serbian troops to unleash personal revenges against the Turks and the Albanians, by whom they had previously been oppressed; on the other hand, it is also likely that some parts of the Serbian troops and especially the *comitadi* – who also devastated the Muslim cemeteries – have supported such vengeance". Papa, in fact, during his visits to the battlefields and the surroundings of Bitola, saw numerous abandoned villages burned by persons who carried out the destruction without the prevention of the Serbian authorities. In addition, large-scale massacres took place in the region of Strumica-Seres-Thessaloniki, especially at the hands of the Bulgarians, as well as massacres by the Serbs reported in the region of Prizren and towards the Adriatic Sea. In conclusion, however, without denying that in

those regions acts of cruelty were carried out by the victorious troops or by the Serbian population (tacitly supported by the troops), Papa once again believed that the reported news were exaggerated and that the acts of violence had to be considered in the specific social and historical setting of the region.⁴²

In the meanwhile, the armistice between Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro was reached and on 16 December the London Peace Conference started, following the declaration of independence of Albania on 28 November 1912.⁴³ The Peace Conference in London represented the decisions of politicians and the public opinion of European countries, but did not resolve the issues of the Balkans, such as the recognition of the Albanian independence, the Serbian outlet to the Adriatic Sea (Vienna's main concern), the freedom of the Bosphorus, the future of the Aegean Islands and the issue of Adrianople. The Turkish delegates criticised the diplomatic actions of the Great Powers, while in the meanwhile Bulgaria was ready to restart the war because the acceptance of the armistice was regarded as a mistake: according to the Bulgarians, it represented the will of the Great Powers and was particularly favourable to Serbia.⁴⁴

At the same time in Turkey, on 23 January 1913, the Young Turks, led by Enver Pasha, made a *coup d'état*, overthrowing the government of Kâmil Pasha and putting in power Mahmud Şevket. One of the main reasons for the *coup d'état* was the disapproval of the government's decision to give to the Balkan League Adrianople and the Aegean Islands. The protesters accused Kâmil Pasha of being a traitor of the nation, because he was willing to sign a peace treaty with the Balkan League, which was too burdensome for Turkey. The change of government brought back the question of Adrianople and the danger of a new war. International military attachés were very critical towards the new government, Enver Bey as the new Minister of War and the other men in power, due to the fear that they could lead a new wave of political and military uprisings of the Empire. The Italian military attaché in Constantinople, Ernesto Mombelli, wrote about Enver Bey in a number of reports, describing him as an ambitious and energetic man, who often acted without reflecting, but who was unmistakably a great patriot facing a grave military crisis of the Empire. The difficulty, Mombelli wrote, was that the Turkish troops were not strong enough to mount a counteroffensive, a military action against the Balkan states. They were badly equipped, lacking supplies, discipline and cohesion between officers and soldiers. The Turkish issue was very important to the Italian government because of the control of Libya, and Mombelli closely followed military and political events in Constantinople.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibidem, 141–143; ibidem, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Notizie pubblicate da giornali serbi*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 3 January 1913; idem, *Condizioni odierne delle regioni di Mitrovitza, Ferisovic, Prizren*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 26 March 1913.

⁴³ On the London Peace Conference see: R.C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 70–72.

⁴⁴ A. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, 140–150.

⁴⁵ AUSSME, G-29, b. 109, *Colpo di Stato a Costantinopoli*, 24 January 1913; idem, *Nomina di Enver Pasha Bey a ministro della guerra, colloquio con l'addetto militare italiano*, 17–21 January 1913; idem, *Informazioni sulla popolazione di Costantinopoli dopo gli avvenimenti politici-militari*, 29 January 1913.

Serbia's public opinion and the national press, due to the sacrifices and sufferings of the war, were critical and impatient towards the governmental authorities for their weakness in the international arena. *Pravda* criticised the government accusing it of having more regard for the demands of Austria-Hungary and entire Europe rather than for the interests of Serbia.⁴⁶ Also *Srpska zastava* disapproved the policy of the government accusing it of not taking into account the real interests of the country and of finding themselves isolated in the international contest. "The [Balkan] alliance has value if it serves to retain Adrianople for the Bulgarians, but on the contrary it does not exist when it comes to insist that Serbia remains on the Adriatic. For the maintenance of the alliance, it is necessary that the Serbs leave Bitola to the Bulgarians, but it [Bulgaria] does not care to preserve Prizren for Serbia (...). This is the result of the policy of the government, which has sacrificed the Serbian blood for the interests of a Great Bulgaria and an autonomous Albania. The blind policy of the government did not see what was obvious from the beginning: the Austro-Hungarian opposition to the Serbian aspirations (...). The agreement with Bulgaria is incomplete and does not take into account the real interests of Serbia".⁴⁷

Another reason for the widespread discontent in Serbia was the fact that the central authorities maintained great secrecy about everything regarding the military operations. The national press did not receive or could not provide military information, and the citizens of Belgrade were unaware of the destiny of their relatives participating in the war. The only information about them was taken from obituaries that began to appear in numerous newspapers, as tributes to the fallen soldiers. The injured combatants continued to arrive numerously to the capital, where there were already more than three thousand of them, of whom more than a thousand came from Kumanovo, and the situation was becoming every day more critical due to the lack of available doctors. The sanitary conditions, finally, were very critical even in hospitals on the battlefields of the conquered territories, as well as in the regions close to the Adriatic Sea or in Adrianople. Among the several reasons of death, as a consequence of a war fought during the rigid winter season, there were numerous cases of frozen limbs, often followed by death.⁴⁸

On 5 January 1913, *Trgovinski glasnik* wrote that the Serbs were deeply disappointed and offended by Austria-Hungary, which in the international contest was annulling their victories against Turks and Albanians. Papa had the opportunity to address the issue with the Austro-Hungarian military attaché in Belgrade, Major Otto Gellinek, in a very prophetic confrontation about the events that followed in summer 1914. The Austro-Hungarian military attaché explained to Papa that attempts to establish cordial relations between Vienna and Belgrade were largely unsuccessful

⁴⁶ Ibidem, G-33, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Notizie pubblicate da giornali serbi*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 3 January 1913.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, *Notizie pubblicate da giornali serbi*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 10 January 1913.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, b. 27, fasc. 252, *Circa periodo da me trascorso presso l'esercito belligerante serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 15 December 1912; ibidem, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Circa perdite subite dall'esercito serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 28 March 1913.

and Serbia continued to represent for Austria-Hungary “a source of serious conflict dangerous for the future”. This serious conflict for the Dual Monarchy could have been more dangerous if Belgrade had sufficient time to increase its military strength. Hence it was convenient for Austria-Hungary to move immediately into the war against Serbia in order to vigorously strike it and to avert once and for all the threats along the southern border of the Habsburg Empire. According to the Austrian military hierarchies, the war against Serbia was inevitable and sooner or later would inevitably explode: the Austrian officers were very critical towards the attitude of their politicians, who “avoiding the hostilities today, prepare harder contingencies for the future”.⁴⁹

Not less aware of the critical situation that opposed Serbia against Austria-Hungary, officers of the Serbian Army also appeared resolute to open a conflict against the Habsburg Empire. Although Serbian commanders and troops remained for the most part settled in the Macedonian occupied territories, numerous officers came back to Belgrade for a few days to celebrate the Orthodox New Year and Carlo Papa had the opportunity to talk with some of them. “They are all animated by common feelings: the deep hatred of Austria-Hungary; resentment about the possible renouncement of the Serbian possession of the Albanian territories on the Adriatic coast as well as about the possible sacrifice of Bitola to Bulgaria; intention to defend with the army the country’s interests and the recently conquered territories”. Serbian officers – considered too much optimistic by Papa – were convinced that a war against Austria-Hungary would have guaranteed to Serbia the support of the entire South-Slav population, even inside the Empire. Papa commented that it was more convenient for Serbia at that moment to delay the resolution of the dispute with Austria-Hungary and for this reason the Serbian people had to repress the demonstration of hostility towards their powerful neighbour and avoid any occasion for quarrel. “But such a state of mind contains the seeds of a future event that might be especially heavy. The recent victories have awakened in the people of Serbia the consciousness of its value and the feeling of the need to be prepared for the possibility of future complications towards the Austrian border”.⁵⁰

At that moment, however, the Serbian nation was committed to facing the contemporary contingencies more than any future complications: the consequences of the war against Turkey became every day more serious and there was a growing hope in Belgrade that the conflict could definitively end, in order to allow soldiers to return to their homes and resume their work in the fields that had been suspended for nearly five months. The prolongation of the military operations, in fact, was raising serious concerns about the damage that the country was undergoing and the agricultural work that had to be continued as soon as possible. The Serbian population was becoming tired of the chaotic situation created by the war and wished for peace to return.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibidem, *Notizie pubblicate da giornali serbi*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 5 January 1913; id., *Serbia ed Austria-Ungheria*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 21 January 1913.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, *Circa situazione generale in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 14 January 1913.

⁵¹ Ibidem, *Funeste conseguenze del ritardo dei lavori agricoli in Serbia*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 25 February 1913.

For this reason, the Serbian population saw as a good sign the Serbian-Bulgarian discussions about the future border; but if the war against Turkey, actually, seemed to end, new problems were arising within the Balkan alliance because of the growing antagonism between Serbia and Bulgaria. Bitola, Prilep and Veles were the focus of the dispute. Bulgaria claimed rights on them according to the agreements of March 1912, while the Serbian population and the army aspired towards the annexation of those regions “conquered with their blood”. The issue was becoming dangerous, since the disagreements between the two countries seemed not to bring about a peaceful compromise. Also, the reasons for the trip to Serbia of Bulgarian General Paprikov were not a good sign. Paprikov had the task to check if the accusations made against the Serbian authorities – the intention to close the Bulgarian schools in the recently conquered regions and in general the adoption of hostile attitudes towards the Bulgarian elements – were true.⁵² Together with other Bulgarian officers, Paprikov was a member of the Serbian-Bulgarian Joint Military Commission appointed to establish a provisional line of demarcation between the territories occupied by the Serbian troops and those occupied by the Bulgarian ones. In Belgrade Paprikov maintained a very reserved attitude, correct but not friendly, towards Serbian officers. Unpleasant incidents, in fact, continued to occur between Serbs and Bulgarians, especially in the region of Štip: the incidents were often consequences of small competitions between the troops of the two states, which were presiding over the same locality and resented having to share their presence with the units of the allied army.⁵³

Even in the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria, the Serbian press criticised the passivity of the government of Belgrade: the widespread impression in the Serbian capital was that in the event of renewed hostilities against Turkey (Adrianople was still surrounded by the Bulgarian Army and the mediation of the Great Powers was even more necessary), Bulgaria would avoid or at least minimise an additional contribution of the Serbian arms on the battlefields of Thrace, in order not to be forced to repay the aid with the cession of territories in Macedonia. The main controversial issue between Belgrade and Sofia was the possession of Bitola, occupied by the Serbs but reserved for the Bulgarians according to the previous agreements, which probably had not contemplated the possibility of such Serbian large gains on the Ottoman soil. The dominant feeling in Belgrade was that the valid aim of the Serbian army to the common fight against the Turks gave to Serbia the right to claim an appropriate part of the conquered territory.⁵⁴ Sofia insisted that the treaty of alliance unequivocally established what should have been the partition of the conquered territories. According to the Bulgarians, neither Serbia’s claim was appropriate, since it changed what had been established by the treaty of alliance, nor did it recognise that possible special circumstances, occurred during the war, could

⁵² Ibidem, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Serbia e Bulgaria*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 5 March 1913; id., *Informazione relativa al generale Paprikof*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 6 March 1913.

⁵³ Ibidem, *Questioni serbo-bulgare*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 27 March 1913.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, *Serbia e Bulgaria*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 2 February 1913.

be invoked by the Serbs to support their aspirations for wider territorial concessions. On the other side, although the Serbs admitted that the treaty of alliance was clear and explicit, they claimed that while Serbia fulfilled its military obligations, having contributed to the operations at Adrianople, Bulgaria did not do the same, failing to help the Serbian Army in Macedonia with a hundred thousand men. For this reason, the Serbs were claiming territorial acquisitions larger than those previously agreed, believing that they had obtained the right to special compensation.⁵⁵

The Serbian military contribution to the Bulgarian siege of Adrianople became a crucial matter for Serbia in asserting its territorial claims during the negotiations on the Serbian-Bulgarian border in Macedonia. The Serbian troops suffered heavy losses, especially due to the outbreak of cholera and typhus. Once they returned to Serbia, a part of the Serbian troops that had contributed to the siege of Adrianople was locked in the region of Pirot (near the Serbian-Bulgarian border) for a period of quarantine, as a necessary precaution.⁵⁶ In exchange for any territorial acquisition to Serbia (i.e. Bitola), Belgrade was ready to send a third division to Adrianople. The fall of the town brought about further controversy among the national press of both countries that were competing to prove which of the two armies had demonstrated greater merit during the operations. In Serbia, *Samouprava* wrote that “the Balkan alliance would never fully overcome the enemy if Serbia had been limited to perform as it had been established by the agreement. Instead, in the interest of the alliance, Serbia acted beyond what was required from it and intervened for the benefit of Bulgaria. As a consequence, Serbia has the right to call for the revision of the treaty and it is not its intention to destroy the alliance. Serbia wants that the alliance is maintained on a solid foundation, but both the parties need to defend their vital interests”.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the Montenegrin military operations around Scutari, supported by the Serbian troops, made Papa to consider the Serbian-Montenegrin relations.⁵⁸ In the past – Papa explained – these relations between the two “brother states” had not always been good and included mutual accusations. Cetinje had accused Belgrade to plot against the dynasty of Petrović-Njegoš, while the Serbian government had accused the Montenegrin leadership of aiming to overcome the Kingdom of Serbia as the leading Power of the South Slav populations for the creation of the Yugoslav union. When the war broke out, Cetinje admitted that the Montenegrin forces alone could not overcome the resistance of the enemy in Scutari and appealed to the Serbian forces for support. The government of Belgrade substantially satisfied the

⁵⁵ Ibidem, *Circa futuro confine serbo-bulgaro*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 8 April 1913.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, *Truppe austro-ungariche – Quarantena per le truppe serbe di Adrianopoli*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 3 April 1913.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, *Dal giornale ufficioso serbo “Samouprava”*, 18 April 1913.

⁵⁸ On the Serbian aid to the Montenegrins in Scutari see: ibidem, b. 16, fasc. 198, General Staff, Colonial Office, *Avvenimenti balcanici*, Bollettino giornaliero d’informazione, from 1 October 1912 to October 1914, *Dislocazione delle truppe serbo-montenegrine attorno a Scutari (primi di aprile 1913)*.

Montenegrin demand, in order to fulfil the obligations given by the alliance and not to be accused of betrayal. The Serbian-Montenegrin relations continued to be poisoned by the not so much secret Serbian aspirations to the union with the Montenegrin Kingdom (Belgrade had never sufficiently negated the suspicions). The union of the two countries would mean an outlet to the sea for Serbia: “for this reason”, Papa wrote, “the project is very seductive for Belgrade”. In the early months of 1913, with such premises, the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Scutari was still not possible, although the Serbian military circles would not have minded the disengagement from the support to the Montenegrins.⁵⁹ Eventually, however, the Serbian government had to ensure to the Great Powers that its troops would desist from taking part in the attack of Scutari. A part of the Serbian press argued that the decision was due to the threats of Vienna to deploy the Austro-Hungarian troops in the Sandžak of Novi Pazar, if Serbia would not give up the operations around Scutari and would not immediately withdraw its troops from Albania: the Serbian government, aware of the danger from Russian diplomacy, considered it prudent to accept the Austro-Hungarians’ requests. On 10 April, however, *Samouprava* denied this information. According to the newspaper, the alleged threat of Austria-Hungary to reoccupy the Sandžak would not take place and the decision of the Serbian government would be essentially given by the objection of Great Britain and Germany, whose support, together with that of the other Great Powers, Belgrade needed to settle the Serbian-Bulgarian disputes in its favour and in general to promote the economic and political development of the country. In this sense, the false news of the Austro-Hungarian threat – *Samouprava* continued – was only a pretext to justify in front of the national public opinion the change of the policy of the Serbian government towards the issue of Scutari and the withdrawal of the Serbian troops from Albania.⁶⁰

The importance of these issues for the Serbian public opinion was evident a few days later, when the news of the surrender of Scutari came to Belgrade. The whole population of the city – Papa wrote – staged a series of demonstrations hailing the triumph of Serbia. There had not been such enthusiasm even about the capture of Skopje and the victories in Kumanovo and Bitola. In the afternoon of 23 April, a parade ran through the capital in the direction of the royal palace. King Petar gave a short speech sending a greeting to the “Montenegrin brothers”. The demonstrations of joy of the population were directed also to the Russian Legation in Belgrade, which had its residence in the building in front of the royal palace. The important role that Russia played in the Serbian events was known. The procession then went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, waiting for a speech by Prime Minister Nikola Pašić. On 24 April *Samouprava* wrote: “these demonstrations are the result of Europe’s decisions relating to Scutari. They represent a protest against the brutal and arrogant denial of the rights

⁵⁹ Ibidem, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Relazioni serbo-montenegrine*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 3 April 1913; id., *Serbia e Montenegro*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 6 April 1913.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, *Motivi che indussero la Serbia a desistere dall’attacco di Scutari*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 11 April 1913.

of the Serbian nation to life and freedom. Starting from the assumption that collective decisions of Europe should be aimed at ensuring a stable international balance and promoting the welfare of the peoples, we hope that Europe will exam the decisions of the Conference of the Ambassadors in London relating to Albania, and that it will change them with greater regard to justice, law, and the interests of civilisation".⁶¹

Except for the parts about the Serbian-Montenegrin relations, however, the affairs of the Macedonian partition between Serbia and Bulgaria continued to monopolise the reports of Carlo Papa. "The Serbian government", Papa wrote, "is willing to engage with Sofia in friendly agreements to settle the issue, but if Bulgaria shows to be intransigent or the efforts of the Great Powers – both sides look especially to Russia – are not sufficient to establish the agreement between Sofia and Belgrade, the latter is ready to support its reasons with weapons. In the Serbian capital, the weakening of the alliance and a possible Serbian-Bulgarian conflict, which would bring great benefit to those who have interest in breaking up the union of the Balkan peoples, are deplored; but on the other hand, Serbia is ready to do any kind of thing, if its interests are in danger or its rights are not recognised". What Serbia was ready to do first was to develop a new Serbo-Greek agreement against the Bulgarian hegemony: the Macedonian question, in fact, had also brought about the split between Bulgaria and Greece about the control of Thessaloniki, which was occupied by Greek forces.⁶² Papa reported that the excellent relations between Serbia and Greece were sealed by the Serbian public opinion and the press that were supporting the Greek aspirations to the Aegean Islands and the territories disputed at the border with Albania. Since the conflict among the former Balkan allies was increasing due to a series of small armed clashes in the occupied territories, Greece and Serbia, finally, signed the alliance against Sofia on 1 June 1913. The agreement provided for northern Macedonia, including Skopje, to remain within Serbia and southern Macedonia, including, Thessaloniki with Greece. At the end of the month Montenegro also joined Serbia against Bulgaria, while the relations between Bulgaria and Romania worsened too, in regard to Dobruja and the possession of the fortress of Silistra, which, before the war, Bulgaria had promised to Romania in exchange of its neutrality.⁶³

At that time, the Serbian Army seemed ready to enter into a conflict. Papa once again had the opportunity to talk with Serbian officers. All of them agreed that the military potential of the Bulgarian Army was seriously compromised by the poor financial conditions of the country and the lack of ammunition. The Serbian officers who fought in Adrianople had the opportunity to closely observe the Bulgarian troops

⁶¹ Ibidem, *La resa di Scutari e l'opinione pubblica serba*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 25 April 1913.

⁶² On Bulgarian-Greek dispute see R.C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 74.

⁶³ On Romanian-Bulgarian dispute: AUSSME, G-33, b. 28, fasc. 253, *Temporary military attaché in Romania*, Lieutenant Colonel Isidoro Zampolli, reports from 4 November 1912 to 10 February 1913; id., b. 29, fasc. 267, *Romania. Reports from the military attaché to the General Staff about the political-military situation*, I. Zampolli, from 22 December 1912 to 12 November 1913; id., fasc. 268, *Romania. Telegrams, from the military attaché Lieutenant Colonel I. Zampolli, to the General Staff*, from 17 January 1913 to 16 July 1913.

and got convinced that Bulgarian forces did not have those great qualities attributed to them by the Bulgarian press. The Serbian Army, even taking into account the long period of war, was in a good condition. Although the still not well known Serbian losses were considered to be around 20,000 soldiers, the Serbian units had enough ammunition and seemed highly motivated. According to Papa, the Serbian population, mostly engaged in agriculture, was still able to face the impact of the war and the prolonged absence of working men from the fields. This was also due to short periods granted by the military authorities to the highest possible number of soldiers to devote themselves to the most urgent works in the fields. With regard to the state's financial condition, Serbia, despite having consumed the available funds, still had sufficient resources to face difficult situations. "The costs of a new war", the Italian military attaché concluded, "seemed relatively limited due to multiple reasons, also including special qualities of the Serbian soldier, accustomed to sobriety and to withstanding hardships and privations". The Serbian Army, under the command of Vojvoda Putnik, had around 300,000 combatants deployed in four operation groups. In Macedonia, the 1st Army commanded by Crown Prince Alexander, and the 3rd Army commanded by General Janković, formed the southern group. The 1st Army was in the northeast of Skopje, while the 3rd Army was around Veles. The 2nd Army, the central group, commanded by General Stepanović, who had fought alongside the Bulgarians at Adrianople, now confronted them around Pirot. The northern group consisted only of the Timok Army. The western group, consisting of about twenty battalions, was around the still uncertain Albanian frontier. The Serbian military authorities also tried to recruit volunteer corps in the conquered regions, consisting of several hundred people, mostly Muslims. These Serbian attempts at recruitment, however, encountered the hostility of the Bulgarians in the conquered territories, which moved to the Bulgarian occupation zone in order to form combat units created by the Bulgarian Army.⁶⁴

The Bulgarian and Serbian national newspapers attacked each other and the political climate of 1885 returned between the two countries. Serbia, concentrating its troops at the border, was accused by the Bulgarian newspaper *Mir* of aiming to attack Bulgaria, "as it did in similar conditions that year". Most of the Serbian press (*Politika*, *Srpska zastava*, *Pravda*) called upon the government of Belgrade – once again with the accusation of not being able to protect the national interests – to sever the diplomatic relations with Bulgaria and to affirm "the rights of Serbia with weapons". *Samouprava* accused the Bulgarian newspapers of undertaking "a deceitful anti-Serb campaign", and defined "deplorable" the Bulgarian attitude towards the Serbian and Greek allies. While the latter agreed to extend the war to support the Bulgarian aspirations over Adrianople, Bulgaria demonstrated its disloyalty towards its allies by not taking in account their considerations and declaring itself ready to sign peace with Turkey. *Samouprava* wrote that "Sofia sent agitators

⁶⁴ Ibidem, G-33, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Accordi serbo-greci – Dislocazione di truppe serbe e greche*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 9 June 1913; id., *Notizie relative all'esercito serbo*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 11 June 1913.

in the Macedonian regions under the Serbian occupation, in order to instigate the population to rise. The Bulgarian troops attacked the allies to expel them from the regions that Bulgaria would like to annex". On 1 June *Samouprava* also accused the Bulgarians of having advanced near Štip, crossing the line of demarcation on the Bregalnica river and invading the territory occupied by the Serbian troops. According to *Samouprava*, at the time (March 1912) of the agreement about the Serbian-Bulgarian border in Macedonia, the Serbs had accepted the Bulgarian territorial claim assuming that Bulgaria would participate in battles in the Vardar Valley with a hundred thousand combatants. The government of Sofia, failing to send to the Vardar Valley the agreed number of soldiers, forced its Serbian ally to deploy more armed forces, which is why Serbia claimed the right to take in compensation a greater portion of land than provided by the treaty of alliance. *Samouprava* noted that Bulgarian, Austrian and Russian newspapers were excusing Bulgaria arguing that it had to use a greater and unexpected number of forces to defeat the enemy on the fields of the Marica river. In this way – the Serbian newspaper wrote – it was forgotten that it was equally necessary to defeat the enemy on the Vardar, where the victory of the Serbian Army did not allow the Turkish forces to march towards Sofia and thus threaten the Bulgarian offensive in Thrace. "Shortly, Bulgaria promised to give to the alliance more than it actually could give. Serbia, on the other hand, was more humble and promised less, but at the end the Serbian troops fought alone on the Vardar, while other Serbian troops rushed to aid the Bulgarians in Thrace".⁶⁵

Belgrade continued to claim the revision of the treaty of alliance with Bulgaria in order to take the possession of the territories that the agreement assigned unquestionably to the Bulgarians. Sofia instead insisted on the maintenance of the previous pacts, only admitting to the arbitration for the "disputed zone", as it was agreed before the war. The military attaché in Sofia, Lieutenant Colonel Errico Merrone, had no doubts. He wrote to Rome that the reason for the Bulgarian-Serbian rivalry was the unwillingness of Serbia to respect the early plan for the division of the region. For his part, Carlo Papa was more moderate towards the Serbs. He considered it a really delicate matter to induce the Serbian Army to leave the Macedonian territories that the Serbs conquered against the Turkish troops, but he also admitted that, by not taking into consideration the special and unforeseen circumstances created by the war and considering the previous Serbian-Bulgarian agreements, Bulgaria had the right to support its claims.⁶⁶ Papa wrote that the Serbian protest against the validity of the agreements had no foundation for the Bulgarians. Bulgaria appealed to the agreements of 2 July and 28 September 1912, during which the Marica was indicated as the area of the Bulgarian operations and the Vardar as the one of the Serbs. During the first days of the operation on the line Skopje-Celes-Štip, the cooperation of the Bulgarian VII Division with the Serbian forces was established;

⁶⁵ Ibidem, *Sunto di un articolo pubblicato dal giornale ufficioso serbo "Samouprava" il giorno 3 giugno 1913*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 5 June 1913.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, *Notizie militari relative alla Serbia – Cenni sulla situazione generale*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 16 June 1913.

after the Turkish retreat, the division had to be sent to the Marica. At the same time, Serbia, after the victory over the Vardar, had to strengthen the Bulgarian troops near Adrianople with two divisions. Both Bulgaria and Serbia, therefore, respected their obligations: even acknowledging a greater Serbian military commitment, the Bulgarians did not want to allow a higher compensation than that already agreed. According to the Bulgarians, the Serbs had also to consider that their victories in the Vardar Valley had been possible due to the Bulgarian attacks in the field of Adrianople. The Bulgarian Army had suffered heavier losses (more than 90,000 dead or wounded combatants) than the Serbian one and the Bulgarian VII Division had been also crucial in the battle of Kumanovo. Refuting the Serbian claims, finally, Sofia also rejected the Serbian accusation that the war, after the first talks in London, was resumed due to the issue of Adrianople.

The armed clashes between the Balkan allies continued even if the countries involved did not officially declare war, due to the fear of appearing as initiators of new hostilities before the Great Powers. Actually, the war had never stopped. At the end, Bulgaria officially declared war on Greece and Serbia, which were quickly joined by Romania that saw the opportunity to resolve the dispute over Dobruja.⁶⁷ This happened on 10 July, in a very critical moment for the Bulgarian troops that were defeated by the Serbian forces on the Bregalnica. According to Carlo Papa, until that moment, there were rumours in the Serbian press about ongoing negotiations on Romania's joining the Serbian-Greek coalition against Bulgaria, but there was no concrete evidence to evaluate the reliability of the news. On the other side, the Ottomans were also leading a separate offensive: Turkey used the occasion to take back Adrianople. On 12 July, the Turkish troops moved to liberate the territories given by the Treaty of London to the Bulgarians: on 19 July, the Turkish divisions arrived to Kirklareli and three days later entered into Adrianople. This was, according to the military attaché in Constantinople Colonel Ernesto Mombelli, the most important opportunity for Turkey to reoccupy the territories lost in the First Balkan War. The military attaché in Constantinople also emphasised the Bulgarian mistake to undervalue the Turkish Army.⁶⁸

During the first days of July, Carlo Papa saw the arrival of the first Bulgarian prisoners in Belgrade, twenty officers and around 1,200 soldiers. The population of the capital was gathered along the path followed by the procession. They were led by a Serbian non-commissioned officer who, with a small unit, had captured the

⁶⁷ AUSSME, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.8, ex b. 64, fasc. 7, *Military attaché in Bucharest*, April-December 1913, I. Zampolli, 26 May 1913; *ibidem*, G-33, b. 28, fasc. 257, *Bulgaria, 1913. Political-Military Information*, from 4 May to 21 November 1913; *id.*, fasc. 261, *Bulgaria, Reports on the Political-Military situation from the Military attaché to the General Staff*, Lieutenant Colonel E. Merrone, from 8 January to 15 October 1913.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, G-24.6, b. 10, 79.6, ex b. 64, fasc. 5, *Military attaché in Constantinople*, January-October 1913, E. Mombelli, Constantinople, 20 July 1913; *ibidem*, G-33, b. 30, fasc. 272, *Turkey, 1913, Reports from the Military attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Ernesto Mombelli, to the Generale Staff*, from 18 January to 1 October 1913; *id.*, *Turkey. Telegrams from the Military attaché, Ernesto Mombelli, to the General Staff*, from 21 March to 29 September 1913.

command of a Bulgarian regiment, taking the possession of documents of particular value, relating to orders issued by the Bulgarian military authorities concerning the attack against the Serbs and Greeks during the night between 29 and 30 June. In a meeting held on 4 July, these documents were used by the General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia to prove to Papa that the hostilities were initiated by the Bulgarians: according to the Serbian authorities, the Bulgarian prisoners had also reported a previous proclamation addressed to the soldiers by their sovereign, with which he had declared war against Serbia and Greece.⁶⁹ Papa described the parade: "Along the streets of Belgrade, the non-commissioned officer leads the procession of the Bulgarian prisoners, riding a horse taken from the enemy. He is greeted with uninterrupted applauses from the crowd. Behind him, at the head of the prisoners, there is a group of officers, then follow the soldiers: they are for the most part soldiers from the 13th and 26th regiments. The prisoners look thin and emaciated, a fact that suggests that the previous news about the deprivations to which the Bulgarian troops were subjected in Macedonia is not unfounded. On the contrary, among the Serbian wounded soldiers who arrived in the capital, those with minor injuries look relatively in good condition and not skinny as the Bulgarians".⁷⁰

What was known about the Serbian losses at that moment, Papa continued in his report, was that they were already numerous, around 6,000-7,000 dead or wounded men. Heavy losses were mainly suffered by the Drina Division, which at the beginning of the hostilities, had to face the main force of the enemy, which, through Štip and Bregalnica, moved towards west. There was a huge indignation in Belgrade about the news heard about the massacres of the Serbian injured soldiers that the Bulgarian troops carried out during the first day of the battle, although it was still difficult to determine the reliability of the information. "For sure", Papa wrote, "the only thing we know is that even before the outbreak of the hostilities, the secretary of the Bulgarian Legation in Belgrade had openly declared that in case of war there would be bloodshed and that the Bulgarian troops, exasperated by the long waiting, would not respect the injured, women or children. The Serbian press, until that moment an incendiary and instigator of drastic solutions from the government of Belgrade towards Bulgaria, now deplores the fratricidal war desired by the Bulgarians, a war that makes absurd any hope of friendly relations between the two countries. The Serbian newspapers especially persist on the barbarity committed by the Bulgarians, highlighting how these atrocities arouse in the Serbian population hatred and desire for revenge".⁷¹ It also has

⁶⁹ Ibidem. The testimony of the Bulgarian prisoners, if true, would prove that the Bulgarian governmental circles knew and agreed with the Bulgarian General Staff about the offensive against the former allies. This hypothesis, instead, was denied by the Bulgarian newspapers, which ascribed the decision of the campaign exclusively to the Bulgarian military hierarchies. Cfr. Macedonian-Bulgarian Central Committee, *Bulgaria. An Account of the Political Events during the Balkan Wars*, 16, 20–21.

⁷⁰ AUSSME, G-33, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Serbia e Bulgaria*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 4 July 1913.

⁷¹ Ibidem, b. 11, fasc. 116, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-bulgara del luglio 1913*, C. Papa, Belgrade, 22 August 1913.

to be added that during the war against Bulgaria, the Serbian army suffered heavy losses (especially the 3rd Army) – around 40,000 men, of whom 10,000 were dead, including those who died of cholera in the regions of Veles, Štip and Kočana. “It is a high number”, Papa wrote, “if we consider that during the Serbian-Turkish war of the autumn of 1912, the Serbian Army suffered around 7,000 dead men”.⁷²

The target of the Serbian government and High Command – the launching of an offensive action that could assert the possession of the occupied territories in order to annex them to Serbia – was, however, reached. “The government of Belgrade was ready to talk to Sofia about the partition of the conquered territories, avoiding an armed conflict. The Serbian troops were then deployed in defence of the disputed territory without the Serbian High Command developing a special plan for the offensive operations against Bulgaria”.⁷³ Serbia, indeed, was afraid that an attack against Bulgaria could have provoked a more or less direct intervention of the government of Austria-Hungary against the Serbian successes. Above all, Papa explained, during their military operations, the Balkans states essentially aimed to satisfy their territorial purposes: “Their main concern is not to defeat the enemy’s army, but rather to occupy the regions that are subject of their aspirations. Once they achieve this aim, they simply stand in defence of their conquest, without bothering to launch the offensive against the enemy. Even the recent war against Turkey provided examples of such a special way of considering the conduct of war (...). The Balkan peoples think that the military occupation of a territory gives the right to acquire it (...).⁷⁴

According to Papa, the confirmation that the Serbian High Command did not prepare initial operative plans is evident in the fact that when the Bulgarians opened the hostilities, great consternation spread in Skopje. The only directive issued by the Serbian High Command was to repel the enemy all over the fronts. During the war, the Serbian High Command was cautious, trying to avoid excessive military effort of the country and new victims among the Serbian soldiers. Essentially, the spirit that gave impetus to the Serbian military operations during the First Balkan War disappeared. Due to the Romanian military intervention against Bulgaria, the Serbian High Command preferred to fight a conflict without the need to engage in harsh battles against the Bulgarian army. Its first target – Papa wrote – became a passive defence of the conquered territories and many fortifications were built close to the line of demarcation. Everything was arranged for the possible defence of the region of Bitola.⁷⁵ The Battle of Bregalnica – Papa continued – could have achieved a better result, with greater consequences for the success of the military campaign, if the Serbs had chased the enemy and above all if General Janković, commander of the 3rd Army, had approved at the appropriate time the attack towards Štip (Janković’s behaviour seemed particularly doubtful and was condemned by Serbian officers). The Serbs essentially

⁷² Ibidem, *VIII – Perdite*, 40.

⁷³ Ibidem, *Comando Supremo*, 43–46.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, *Scopo territoriale della guerra*, 53–54.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, *Comando Supremo*, 43–46.

gave up taking advantage of the benefits obtained with the battle of Bregalnica. The 3rd Army had never been engaged in a decisive action against the enemy and this inactivity allowed to the most of the Bulgarian forces to retreat undisturbed.⁷⁶

During the war against Bulgaria, such as during the one against Turkey – Papa commented – the value of the Serbian troops and of the subordinate commanders was the main reason of the Serbian victory. “Everywhere, Serbian officers have distinguished themselves, and especially the young ones, between thirty and forty years of age, have often launched their troops to the assault, falling on the field. Some regiments have lost more than half of their officers; those who survived praise the calm and coolness of their soldiers during the fighting (...). Sober, resistant to the fatigue, obedient, calm during the fight”: this is the description that the Italian military attaché gave about the Serbian soldier, whose talents were the basis of the Serbian victories. “What is also noteworthy”, Papa continued, “is the consideration that reservist officers gained in the army. During the harsh months of the war, they have demonstrated the same qualities of their regular colleagues. The Serbian troops were able to reject the attack during the night of 29-30 June and, by quickly overcoming the surprise, to begin the offensive action”. According to Papa, therefore, the Second Balkan War confirmed the good qualities of the Serbian soldier, already reported during the Serbian-Turkish war, and showed the value of reservist units. The Serbian-Bulgarian conflict, however, also proved, more than anything else, that the Bulgarian military qualities were overestimated and that towards the end of the war they were probably exhausted from the previous long and painful period of war operations against the Turks. At the beginning of the war in summer 1913, the Bulgarian troops showed their value, proved by the numerous attacks and counter-attacks that took place on the positions that the Bulgarians occupied during the night of 29–30 June.⁷⁷ Finally, Papa concluded his analysis: “The war against Turkey had been difficult for the Serbian Army especially due to the strenuous marches in bad weather conditions and privations. The resistance of the enemy was not of great importance. Instead, the war against Bulgaria showed, especially during the first period, quite different characteristics: a valiant enemy that the Serbs could hope to defeat only if in possession of high military qualities. The first war did not exhaust the Serbian Army, instead it served as a preparation for the second; it was an excellent experiment that had highlighted deficiencies and gaps but it also raised the troops’ confidence in their own strength. The experience was useful: the High Command improved the organisation of the troops, while the subordinated commanders understood better the qualities of their units (...). In the future, Serbia will have to fill many gaps and correct many flaws of its military organisation. Above all, it will have to improve the education of officers who were to occupy higher levels of the military hierarchy. Its great fortune is that its people are endowed with precious qualities on the battlefield, which will facilitate the constitution of a good army”.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibidem, *Comandi di armata*, 47–48.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 49–51, 56–57.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, *X – Conclusione*, 61–63.

At the end, Bulgaria's only solution was to accept Russia's mediation and sign the armistice on 31 July 1913. On 1 August, the Conference of Bucharest on the new Balkan borders began under the supervision of the Great Powers and ended ten days later.⁷⁹ On 11 August, the peace treaty was signed and the following day Serbia announced the demobilisation of the army.⁸⁰ Appropriate measures were taken to prevent cholera with the troops' return to the country (cholera continued to decimate soldiers): for this reason, numerous units were subject to a special period of quarantine. Approximately 600 cholera patients were still in Veles, 400 in Štip and 1,200 in Kumanovo; in addition, there were still numerous patients in Skopje. Meanwhile, Belgrade was preparing to welcome the victorious troops.⁸¹ The population was deeply satisfied with the territorial enlargement achieved in the wars (Serbia obtained Northern and Central Macedonia with Ohrid, Bitola and the Vardar Valley), but at the same time it feared that the Bulgarian aspirations of revenge could create difficulties in the future, destabilising peace among the Balkan countries. The Bulgarian defeat, in fact, was harsh, both in terms of military casualties, the removal of a strip of its territory in favour of the former allies, and in terms of the consequences it had on the national balance and the international position of the country.

Conclusion

In regard to the Balkan events, the Bosnian annexation meant not only a hard blow to the revolution of the Young Turks, but also a failure of Austria-Hungary in both its railway policy and in the "pigs war" against Serbia, which ultimately emerged economically stronger from the long customs controversy. Though increasing the number of the South Slavs of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna mistakenly considered the annexation of the Bosnian territory a means to consolidate its position in the Balkans towards the Adriatic and to break the South-Slavic unification movement led by Belgrade.

⁷⁹ It was followed by the Treaty of Constantinople between Turkey and Bulgaria (29 September 1913) and the Treaty of Athens between Turkey and Greece (November 1913). Bulgaria lost most of the territories gained in the First Balkan War; Southern Dobruja went to Romania, while Eastern Thrace went to the Porte. Bulgaria kept Western Thrace, its Aegean outlet with the port of Dedeagach (Alexandroupoli) and part of Macedonia. Greece had to leave Western Thrace and Pirin Macedonia (to Bulgaria) and to give Northern Epirus (to Albania), keeping Thessaloniki, Serres and Kavala. Serbia gained Northern Macedonia and Kosovo and Italy kept the Dodecanese Islands, which it had occupied during the Italo-Turkish War of 1911. Albanian independence was officially recognised. See: R. C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 124–127.

⁸⁰ AUSSME, G-33, b. 11, fasc. 116, *Notizie relative alla guerra serbo-bulgara del luglio 1913*, VI – Armistizio – pace – smobilizzazione, C. Papa, Belgrade, 22 August 1913, 36.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, b. 29, fasc. 270, *Ingresso trionfale delle truppe serbe in Belgrado*, Belgrade, 25 August 1913.

Serbia considered Bosnia and Herzegovina essentially its territory in terms of the right of nationality and felt directly affected by the annexation; it reacted violently with the support of the entire national public opinion that demanded a war against Austria-Hungary together with a Bosnian insurrection in the region. The Serbian government tried to obtain territorial compensations: a strip of land between Serbia and Montenegro that, besides connecting the two countries, could bring to Serbia an outlet to the Adriatic. Austria-Hungary, however, proved to be intransigent, but Serbia particularly lacked the support of the Great Powers for its claims, because Belgrade, together with Montenegro, seemed ready for a war, with troops concentrated on both sides of the border.

Serbs and Croats of the Dual Monarchy, in contrast to the Austro-Hungarian predictions, saw the annexation as further strengthening of Yugoslav positions within the imperial society: Croats asked for the region's union with Croatia, while Belgrade continued to aid the Serbian national movement. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina represented for the Habsburgs a harsh backlash: from then on, in fact, until the First World War in 1914, the Austrian domestic and international policy remained essentially inert, while Russia abandoned any illusion about possible cooperation with Austria-Hungary in the Balkan region, and definitely supported with all its influence the formation of the Balkan League in 1912, which was destined to conduct the war, representing the largest bastion created up to then against the imperial presence – of the Ottomans, but in general also of Austrians – in the Balkan peninsula.

Although Serbia was forced to recognise the annexation with the Declaration of 31 March 1909, from that moment Bosnia and Herzegovina became the main object of Serbian irredentism, and a conflict with Austria-Hungary was unavoidable. This worsened the tensions between Serbia and Austria-Hungary and the idea that only a war could solve the Balkan issue gained strength in the young kingdom. Supported by Russia, which during the Bosnian crisis did not sustain the Serbian aspiration, Serbia inaugurated a policy of good relations in the following years and alliance with the other Balkan states which, in 1912, declared war on the Ottoman Empire – the other great opponent of the Serbian struggle for the unification of the South Slavs in one state. The Balkan Wars began with an alliance among the Balkan states and ended with violent conflicts among them. Macedonia was the target of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, while Romania entered in the Second Balkan War over Dobruja. Within one month, from July to August 1913, the coalition against Bulgaria brought about the signing of the Peace of Bucharest.

The numbers of casualties, among soldiers and civilians, were enormous for all the states and nationalities involved. Thousands of men, women and children, were killed or died in the war. In Serbia, however, despite the sufferings, the victories in the Balkan Wars also had a strong impact on the morale of the Serbian nation. Once again, Papa wrote: "The awareness of the admirable effort carried out, the achieved territorial enlargement, the hope in the future, make it possible that even those who most closely and harshly have been damaged by the war, consider the suffered damage an inevitable evil and talk about their losses with quiet resignation.

The country's prestige is now very strong in the Balkans and the admiration for the Serbian army unlimited, but all the Serbs agree that Serbia now needs a period of rest, a period that, actually, many people know will not be so long, foreseeing the next Bulgarian or Austrian assault. It is openly declared that this rest will be devoted to intense preparations for external threats. Diplomatic personalities alert Belgrade that the feeling of revenge is widespread in Bulgaria, but above all Belgrade is worried about the growing dissent with Austria-Hungary". The events of October 1913, which followed the riots that broke out among the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia at the end of September – which inflicted serious losses to the Serbian troops – confirmed the permanent tension between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. Belgrade accused Vienna of instigating the disorders and, after suppressing the riots, the Serbian units entered into Albania. Austria-Hungary, for its part, sent an *ultimatum* to Serbia (17 October) calling for the withdrawal of the Serbian troops. Above all, Papa commented, the crisis underwent a crucial change with the following events: Germany seemed less afraid of a conflict between the two rivals and of potential worsening of the situation that would engulf the entire continent in a war.

The immediate aspirations of Serbia, however, remained the union with Montenegro and the "serbisation" of the conquered territories. The Yugoslav unification was at the centre of the national public opinion: on 11 December 1913, the Serbian newspaper *Tribuna* reported the answer of King Nikola of Montenegro to the telegram by Serbian officers who delivered Djakova to the Montenegrin troops. King Nikola affirmed that: "such a separation has to be considered only as a change of garrisons between two corps of the same army that control the safety of the common Serbian homeland". King Petar, during a meeting with Carlo Papa, explicitly stated that the Serbian-Montenegrin border no longer had a meaning. Only the presence of King Nikola on the throne – Papa wrote: "he has many merits, both towards his own people and the Slav cause" – did not permit, for the moment, any kind of transformation that would have damaged the integrity of his sovereignty over the Montenegrin people. On the other hand, it was also known that the populations of the Macedonian territories conquered by Serbia were mostly adverse to the new regime. Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians and Muslims opposed the government of Belgrade, which – such as the Turkish regime – was "far from being fatherly". All the foreign consuls, in effect, with no distinction of nationality, complained against the atrocities that the Serbs continued to perpetrate in the "new" Serbia. The population, rather than being the victim of hasty "serbisation", preferred to emigrate: mainly the Muslims tried to place themselves under the protection of foreign consulates.

Therefore, the Serbian government had to face great resistance. The main problem became the difficulty to assimilate the newly acquired territories and the deficiency of trustworthy men from those regions for the enrolment in the army. The Belgrade's concerns justified the keeping of mobilisation of the Serbian war machine in the territories recently annexed (populated by around 1,500,000 of inhabitants). The military demobilisation announced in August was not carried out even in late 1913. King Petar invited the Serbian emigrants abroad to return to the homeland and

populate the new territories. There was hope that the occupation of the new lands could also contribute to the country's economic upturn. In May 1913 Serbia had spent more than 180,000,000 dinars on the war, or 250,000,000 at the end of the year.

The Balkan Wars, however, did not completely satisfy the national aspirations of the states of the peninsula. Consequently, the old allies of October 1912 were once again divided in the Great War: Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Romania on the Entente's side and Bulgaria on the side of the Central Empires, in an unsuccessful attempt to regain the territories previously lost. At the end of the war, Serbia satisfied its aspirations regarding the creation of a Yugoslav state, including the South Slav territories under the Austro-Hungarian domination. From 1903 to the end of the Balkan Wars, the Colonial Office of the Italian Army General Staff and the Italian military attachés from the main European cities, and from the Balkan peninsula such as Major Carlo Papa, provided fundamental documentation for the Italian political and military interest in the Balkans, giving valuable records about the events that were an issue of great importance to the European Great Powers and the entire European continent, and the fundamental prelude to the First World War.

Alberto BECHERELLI

LA SERBIA E LE GUERRE BALKANICHE NELLE RELAZIONI DELL'ADDETTO MILITARE ITALIANO A BELGRADO, CARLO DI PAPA COSTIGLIOLE

Sommario

Le guerre balcaniche del 1912-1913 furono seguite con attenzione dagli addetti militari italiani in missione nelle principali città europee e nelle capitali degli Stati balcanici coinvolti nel conflitto. I rapporti inviati dagli addetti militari allo Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, a Roma, dall'ottobre 1912 all'agosto 1913, contengono informazioni quotidiane, notizie giornalistiche, voci più o meno affidabili e previsioni circa gli eventi, le operazioni militari e la Conferenza di Pace di Londra. Anche se basati principalmente sull'analisi delle questioni militari, questi rapporti sono in alcuni casi più significativi dei documenti diplomatici perché danno una più ampia interpretazione delle questioni nazionali e territoriali nei primi anni del XX secolo negli Stati balcanici. Il capitano Carlo Papa di Costigliole d'Asti (Firenze 1869 - Alassio 1955), promosso maggiore nel febbraio del 1912, era l'addetto militare italiano a Belgrado - e per un periodo più breve a Bucarest - dal 1908 al 1913. I primi rapporti importanti di Papa inviati da Belgrado a Roma affrontano la crisi provocata dalla annessione della Bosnia-Erzegovina da parte dell'Austria-Ungheria. Dal 1908, Papa strinse contatti e amicizie personali con gli ufficiali dello Stato Maggiore Serbo e con i ministri della guerra serbi; fu ricevuto dalla famiglia reale Karadjordjević ed ebbe la possibilità di partecipare come osservatore alle esercitazioni militari. Nell'autunno del 1912, ad esempio, un paio di giorni dopo la battaglia di Kumanovo, a Papa fu permesso di seguire lo Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito serbo. L'addetto militare italiano visitò così personalmente i campi di battaglia, dove alcuni giorni prima le truppe serbe avevano affrontato le forze ottomane. Le guerre balcaniche, tuttavia, non soddisfacevano pienamente le aspirazioni nazionali degli stati della penisola balcanica e, di conseguenza, i vecchi alleati del 1912, furono ancora una volta divisi nella Grande Guerra: la Grecia, la Serbia, il Montenegro e la Romania si schierarono con l'Intesa, mentre la Bulgaria con gli Imperi centrali, nel tentativo di riconquistare i territori persi in precedenza. Alla fine della guerra, la Serbia realizzò l'aspirazione di creare uno Stato jugoslavo che comprendesse i territori degli Slavi del sud precedentemente sotto dominio austro-ungarico.

Parole chiave: Serbia, crisi bosniaca, Guerre Balcaniche, Italia, addetto militare italiano a Belgrado.

Алберто БЕКЕРЕЛИ

**СРБИЈА И БАЛКАНСКИ РАТОВИ У ИЗВЕШТАЈИМА ИТАЛИЈАНСКОГ ВОЈНОГ
АТАШЕА У БЕОГРАДУ, КАРЛА ДИ ПАПЕ КОСТИЉОЛЕА**

Резиме

Балканске ратове 1912-1913 пратили су, углавном, италијански војни аташеи у великим европским градовима и престоницама балканских држава укључених у сукоб. Њихови извештаји послате слати Генералштабу у Риму од октобра 1912. до августа 1913 садрже податке везане за свакодневицу, дневне вести, гласине, као и више или мање поуздане прогнозе о будућим догађајима, са фокусом на војне операције и Мировну конференцију у Лондону. Иако засновани пре свега на војним питањима, ови извештаји су у неким случајевима значајнији од дипломатских докумената јер дају шире тумачење националних и територијалних питања у првим годинама двадесетог века у балканским државама. Капетан Карло Папа Костиљола д'Асти (Фиренца 1869 - Аласијо 1955), промовисан у чин мајора фебруара 1912. године, био је италијански војни аташе у Београду, и нешто краће у Букурешту, од 1908. до 1913. године. Први важни Папини извештаји из Београда Риму прате кризу изазвану аустроугарском анексијом Босне и Херцеговине. Од 1908. године, Папа је развио бојне везе и стекао лична пријатељства са официрима српског Генералштаба и министрима рата; присуствовао је састанцима са краљевском породицом Карађорђевић и имао прилику да у својству посматрача учествује на војним вежбама српске војске. У јесен 1912. године, примера ради, неколико дана после Битке у Куманову, Папа је заједно са другим страним војним аташеима добио одобрење Владе у Београду да се придружи Генералштабу Војске Србије у недавно освојеном Скопљу. Италијански војни аташе имао је прилику да лично посети бојно поље где су се неколико дана раније српске трупе суочиле са отоманским снагама. Балкански ратови, међутим, нису у потпуности испунили националне тежње држава на Балканском полуострву па су се стари савезници из 1912. поново поделили у Великом рату: Грчка, Србија, Црна Гора и Румунија на страни Антанте, док је Бугарска прешла на страну Централних сила у неуспелом покушајауда поврати раније изгубљене територије. На крају рата, Србија је испунила своје тежње за стварањем југословенске државе, у коју су ушле територије Јужних Словена које су биле под Аустро-Угарском.

Кључне речи: Србија, босанска криза, Балкански ратови, Италија, италијански војни аташе у Београду.

Uroš UROŠEVIĆ

**BETWEEN ORIENTALISM AND REALPOLITIK:
SERBIA IN WRITINGS
OF EDOARDO SCARFOGLIO AND CARLO SFORZA**

Abstract: The decades immediately following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, were a time of urgent social reorganisation and political positioning for the newcomer to the political scene of Europe. Destabilised by open enmity with the Vatican and endemic unrest in the Mezzogiorno, threatened militarily by its mighty neighbour to the North-East and economically by the one to the North-West, Italy paid little attention to Serbia's struggle in the Balkans and the yearning of its people for freedom and nationhood, equally fervent as the one that had led the Italians to their nationhood. As already Mazzini had predicted, however, sooner or later, Italy needed to define its stance towards the Slavic populations on the opposite side of the Adriatic. Lacking recent historical precedents of political and cultural exchange with Serbia, Italian political thinkers had to create their idea of the small Balkan kingdom from scratch. Unsurprisingly, while doing this, they were frequently led and misled by both literary and political fiction and always influenced by larger considerations of Italian foreign policy. These first efforts to describe and mentally map Serbia, dabbling though they may have been at times, nevertheless formed the basis on which the relationship between the two countries would be built in the 20th century.

Keywords: Italy, Serbia, nation-building, Triple Alliance, First World War.

Cultural exchange between Serbia and Italy in the 19th century was decidedly asymmetrical. For obvious historical reasons, Serbian intellectuals demonstrated a much more pronounced interest in Italy than was the case vice versa. While Ljubomir Nenadović's descriptions and Petar Petrović Njegoš's adages on Italy and the Italians acquired widespread fame among literate Serbs, Serbia remained on the periphery of mental maps of the Italians. Nor was this surprising. At the time Mazzini published his *Lettere slave* in 1857, for Italian readers Serbia was a distant region separated from the disunited Italian lands by the still formidable Austrian Empire. It was but a small part of the Ottoman Empire that hardly played any discernible role in their political reality.

Both the unification of Italy and the official recognition of Serbia's independence helped to reduce this mental distance. After 1878, Serbia was a backward but dynamic newcomer to the political scene of Europe, whose vitality and impetus could not be destroyed even by the heavy political blunders of its ruling class. It did not take the far-seeing Mazzini anymore to realise that a momentous accretion of power was taking place in the Balkans. His vision of a 'Slavic spirit digging together with the Italian one the abyss underneath the Austrian Empire'¹ was slowly beginning to materialise.

The present paper analyses the views of two Italian authors and political thinkers of the new Serbia that emerged from the crumbling edifice of the Ottoman Empire. The first one, Edoardo Scarfoglio (1860–1917), was a journalist, poet and writer, whose support for Italian imperialism took him to several journeys in Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. In the autumn of 1889, returning from Athens and Istanbul, he passed through Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania and compiled his impressions in a volume that was published only a few months later under the title 'In the Levant and across the Balkans'². The second one, Carlo Sforza (1872–1952), was a diplomat, twice the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the president of the provisional National Assembly (*Consulta Nazionale*), instituted after the end of World War II. As minister plenipotentiary at the Serbian court, he spent the years 1916–1918 with the exiled Serbian government in Corfu and was, together with Ivanoe Bonomi, the chief Italian negotiator of the Treaty of Rapallo, signed between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1920. In the late 1930s, he wrote a book dedicated to Italo-Serbian and Italo-Yugoslav relations prior to 1922, which never got published due to the outbreak of the war and appeared only in 1948, in an expanded version, under the title 'Yugoslavia: History and Memories'³.

Considering the difference in professions and the dissimilar personal backgrounds, the writing style of the two authors is more similar than one could have surmised. While Scarfoglio's strong language and forceful expression of his opinions come almost as a matter of course, one is somewhat surprised to find out that Sforza's affinities and aversions are expressed with the same candidness, rather than being muffled by the neutral argot of diplomacy. If Scarfoglio slips into trivial remarks in order to ridicule the secretiveness of the royal regent Ristić⁴, Sforza does the same when he reflects on the poor artistic taste of the 'petit bourgeois nationalist' Wilhelm II.⁵ In one aspect, however, Sforza is by far superior to Scarfoglio: the ability of self-reflection and the willingness to compare the perceived deficiencies of other political systems with those of the Italian state.

The similarities in style, dictated to a certain extent by the genre, are by no means to imply that the overall nature of the two texts is the same or that the authors

¹ Giuseppe Mazzini, *Lettere slave* (1939), 84.

² Edoardo Scarfoglio, *In Levante e a traverso i Balkani* (1890).

³ Carlo Sforza, *Jugoslavia: Storia e ricordi* (1948).

⁴ Scarfoglio, *op. cit.*, 202.

⁵ Sforza, *op. cit.*, 127.

had a cognate way of looking at things. Scarfoglio, as a journalist and a somewhat picaresque character, possessed a fair share of that Hearstian volatility and partisanship that notoriously precipitated Italy into the Libyan war of 1911, and which are entirely absent from Sforza's work. He was an orientalisising advocate of imperialism who made no secret of the fact that his political outlook was profoundly shaped by his support for Francesco Crispi and the Triple Alliance. Sforza, on the other hand, was despite his aristocratic background a deeply egalitarian follower of Mazzini who admired the struggle for freedom and the rough democracy of Serbian peasants. The opposing political ideologies of the two authors inevitably shaped their perceptions. Whereas Scarfoglio's Franco- and Russophobia rubbed off on Serbia, Sforza's deep-seated dislike was reserved for two enemies: Austria-Hungary and fascism.

In spite of this, it would be wrong to discard Scarfoglio's opinions as mere triplicist propaganda or those of Sforza as the hereditary Austrophobia of Italian republicans. Even with their unquestionable limitations they offer insights both on Serbia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and on how that Serbia was perceived by supporters of different political currents in Italy. For this reason, I will not endeavour a deeper historical analysis of political observations formulated by Scarfoglio and Sforza with the aim of determining the extent of their veracity. Instead, I will limit myself to correction of only the most obvious factual misrepresentations and leave all further analysis to the readers.

People and Culture

It is not quite clear to what extent Scarfoglio's comments on Serbia are based on his own observations and to what extent he reproduced information (and possibly also opinions) already provided by other authors. His orthography of Serbian and Bulgarian names suggests that he used both French (*Garachanine* for Garašanin) and German (*Kossowo* for Kosovo, *Zankow* for Cankov/Tsankov) sources⁶ and only occasionally wrote the names the way he (mis)heard them (*'Kara va Yulka* for 'Garava Julka') during his voyage.

Whatever the case may be, it seems that he reached Serbia with an already formed opinion that, after the abdication of King Milan I in March 1889, and the return of his Russophile wife Queen Natalija, Belgrade was 'no more the anarchical capital of Serbia, but the centre of disorder in the Balkans and a subsidiary of Moscow'⁷. The main responsibility for this state of things he ascribed to the Orthodox Church and its 'priestlings' (*popetti*) who 'unlike our parish priests, whose world is in heaven... live among the people, work their little fields, marry, proliferate, not

⁶ Also cases of hybrid orthography can be found, as in *Duchan* for Dušan. They originate most probably from inaccurate transliterations of Cyrillic names in French sources.

⁷ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 185.

different in anything from the rest of the community of which they make part', all the while acting as 'principal indirect agents' of Russian influence.⁸

According to Scarfoglio, the South Slavs are not 'very fervent Christians and practice, above all, with a lot of phlegm'. What priests lose in influence on this account, they more than make up for through their political activity:

*The first ferments of national sentiment in the Balkans were of religious origin, and popes were always at the head of all popular movements directed at shaking off the yoke of political and religious servitude imposed by the Moslems. They are, so to speak, living incarnations of the national idea and their popularity is rather political than ecclesiastic.*⁹

The dangerous collusion of Russian interests and the political influence of the church 'exalts the spirit of this impressionable people prone to sudden actions and hitting brick walls', making these 'big children' believe that 'the most exorbitant dreams deprived of all fundament of reason and possibility of realisation, the most absurd demands, the most insensate pretensions... [are] necessary and imminent facts'¹⁰.

Scarfoglio's dislike for Serbian politics, culture and people was so intense that it influenced even his view of the physical world. Although he dubbed both the Serbs and the Bulgarians (as well as the Greeks and the Turks) 'semi-feral'¹¹, he designated the neighbouring Bulgaria as 'the country of roses', whereas in Serbia he saw only bleak 'masses of water, sleet and fog' and even the cobblestones he walked on appeared 'horrible' to him.¹² He was well aware that he did not paint a pretty picture of this 'crumbling hovel built at the Congress of Berlin'¹³ and populated by 'the most braggart people in the world': 'Here it is', he quipped lightly, 'a picture somewhat gloomy, but much more cheerful than the reality: there is no need to go to this country'.¹⁴

Serbia from Scarfoglio's descriptions appears as the antechamber of Tartarus and the reader has a difficult time imagining it any other way. All the more surprising it is, therefore, to find out that Carlo Sforza came to an entirely different appraisal throughout his work. For the testimonies on Serbia from the first half of the 19th century, Sforza relied mainly on Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient*¹⁵ and the result was an idealised picture of a society exalting freedom above all other things, where 'glory and liberty of all are the pride of each one of them'¹⁶. Saying that 'poets sometimes feel the real nature of things better than politicians and diplomats', he claimed that

⁸ Ibid., 182-183.

⁹ Ibid., 183.

¹⁰ Ibid., 186.

¹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹² Ibid., 197.

¹³ Ibid., 198.

¹⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹⁵ Alphonse de Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient*, Vol. 2 (1856), 181-183.

¹⁶ Sforza, op. cit., 17.

he could not describe the Serbs of that epoch better than through the words of the French poet and went on to redraw a scene that Lamartine had encountered in Jagodina, in September 1833:

...a young mother was breastfeeding two twins; an older child was playing at her feet; the pope and some village elders gathered in a circle, praising the prosperity achieved under the government of liberty; they told of heaths being cleared, of small wooden houses springing along the new streets, of schools being opened in all the villages. Lamartine marvelled; and it made the villagers around him proud and happy; their eyes shone, their brows flushed with emotion for their fatherland... The husband of the young bride returned from the fields and having greeted the guest with respect and dignity at the same time, he sat down to listen with the rest to a story the pope was telling about the battles against the Turks. When the pope came to the battle of Niš and the flags that a handful of Serbs managed to capture from the Turks, the father took the twins from their mother's arms and lifting them towards the skies exclaimed: 'Here are the soldiers of Miloš; as long as our women are fertile there will be free Serbs in the forests of Šumadija'.¹⁷

Sforza's account is a toned-down version of Lamartine's profusely romantic narrative: he omitted the poet's comments on the beauty of the young Serbian mother, the numerical superiority of the Ottoman army ('forty thousand Turks' against 'three thousand highlanders') and he removed the exclamation marks that Lamartine had put into the mouth of the young father.¹⁸ Nonetheless, what remained was still an emotionally charged, idealised image that Sforza completed on the subsequent pages with tableaux of a people living in perfect harmony with the nature, thus likening Serbia to the legendary Arcadia, populated by a people 'chivalrous, poetic, proud and unknowing of what the Occident represents'.¹⁹

If Scarfoglio's 'semi-feral' peoples of the Balkans are an example of orientalising tendencies *par excellence*, so is Sforza's creation (or borrowing from Lamartine) of a Christian, nationally awakened, noble savage in the wooded hills of Šumadija. Sforza included a caveat, however: the Serbs of Lamartine were those of the times of struggle against the Ottomans and those of the villages; his view of the Serbian city-dwelling *homo politicus* was not entirely the same.

Political Life

Scarfoglio's narrative on the political life of Serbia can be divided with regard to its topic, but also its character, into two main strains: the one dealing with the political life in general, and the one dealing with its individual protagonists. In some

¹⁷ Ibid., 16-17.

¹⁸ Lamartine, op. cit., 182.

¹⁹ Sforza, op. cit., 18.

respects, the former reads much like a mixture of Sax Rohmer's *Fu Manchu* and Emilio Salgari's novels, and Scarfoglio, who was fully aware of the fact, sought the explanation for this in the state of things in the Balkans: 'First of all, it is impossible to have an exact criterion of the Balkan reality', he wrote, 'a reality so dramatic and novel-like that it appears implausible'²⁰. The title of his chapter on Serbia, 'The Kingdom of Natalia', followed the logic of the mentioned literary genre and the opening lines could have served as the beginning of a spy novel:

*When I arrived in Belgrade, around the middle of September, all the water the skies held was pouring down on the white city which appeared to be sinking in mud; and the question of Natalia's return blazed in all its fury...*²¹

Natalija is portrayed as a beautiful but vengeful queen, a wronged woman whose long suffering caused by the philandering king Milan had given birth to a furious hatred towards Austria. The real villainous mastermind of Scarfoglio's story, however, is Aleksandr Ivanovič Persiani, the Russian ambassador to the Serbian court. According to Scarfoglio, Persiani enjoyed in Belgrade a position unparalleled in human history, save for that of Lady Hamilton at the Bourbon court of Naples, and 'in Belgrade, nothing is done or said, unless the illustrious Persiani has been informed beforehand and has given his distinguished approval'.²² The Russian ambassador had his trusted associates in the metropolitan of Belgrade Mihailo, 'the sacerdotal Serbian agent of Muscovite propaganda', and the Bulgarian émigré Dragan Tsankov, 'the famous apostle of Pan-Slavism who was the principal protagonist of the Battenberg tragedy'²³:

*The fact is that the exchange of communications between Persiani, Michael and Zankow is continuous and that the official political life of Serbia revolves normally and without any mystery around these three pivots. They are like a government within the government, or to be more precise, atop the government.*²⁴

Speaking of the goals²⁵ of this cabal, however, Scarfoglio remained seemingly neutral and offered no indication of why he found them objectionable. In general, he teetered between impartiality and outbursts of triplicist sentiment, his depiction of Tsankov as a member of the scheming triumvirate stood in stark contrast to his

²⁰ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 180-181.

²¹ Ibid., 179.

²² Ibid., 182.

²³ Ibid., 184.

²⁴ Ibid., 185.

²⁵ 'Persiani acts in the name of Russia, which continues to unfurl its flag of liberation and protection of all the Christians of the East; Michael speaks in the name of the Serbian church, which is inclined towards returning to the common bosom of the ancient mother in Constantinople; Zankow brings into view the aspirations and the sentiment of the South Slavs, who see only in Russia the guarantee of their nationhood and the hope for their future.', 184.

depiction of Tsankov as an aged émigré living in the suburbs of Belgrade.²⁶ Analysing his outline of the political forces at work in Serbia, one acquires the impression that, like in a novel, Persiani, Mihailo and Tsankov stood for ideas rather than the actual people. It is possibly for that reason that he concluded with bitterness and resignation that 'in the kingdom of Natalia, Persiani, Michele and Zankow, they [the Triple Alliance] are powerless'.²⁷

In contrast to this, the second strain of his narrative on the political life of Serbia is dedicated to individual Serbian politicians and based, at least in part, on personal encounters. He had the first one with Jovan Ristić, a royal regent, the former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Serbian representative at the Congress of Berlin. Scarfoglio did not find many things to commend about Ristić: he found him 'well-built' and admitted that 'his coffee is excellent', but considered him otherwise ridiculously secretive and, since the 'conversation revolved around matters of absolutely irrelevant nature', he 'had all the luxury of observing one of the dullest personalities who have ever populated the world of politics, not being summoned by the destiny to a mission higher than that of receiving salary and wearing decorations'.²⁸ His impression of Sava Grujić, the current Prime Minister with whom he discussed the new electoral law and the Serbian relations with Bulgaria, was only slightly better, primarily because he found him 'very jovial although he is reputed to be of usually dark temper'.²⁹ The only Serbian politician he esteemed was Milutin Garašanin, mainly because the latter as the Prime Minister in 1887 had attempted to dissuade king Milan from the divorce that Scarfoglio considered 'a political and moral crime'.³⁰ By the autumn of 1889, however, Garašanin was a 'destroyed man'.³¹ Scarfoglio's overall judgement of the Serbian political culture was scathing. He severely criticised the government which 'granted the monopoly on tobacco while, at the same time, encouraging smuggling in order to reacquire it without reimbursement', he decried censorship and the continued existence of *cabinets noirs*³², and he saw the political parties as 'not divided by any political administrative criterion, but solely by the furious desire to come to power and use it to complete the overall ruin'.³³ 'Serbia', according to him, was 'in a state of disintegration so advanced that no one could lift her up again; and it doesn't possess a single man endowed with such an intelligence, such an energy and such patriotism, to attempt the desperate venture'.³⁴

Scarfoglio's knowledge of the political life of Serbia may have been fragmentary (speaking of its vices he asserted that Miloš Obrenović had been

²⁶ Tsankov was the only of the three men that Scarfoglio personally met during his stay in Belgrade.

²⁷ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 218.

²⁸ Ibid., 202.

²⁹ Ibid., 203-204.

³⁰ Ibid., 190, 192, 214.

³¹ Ibid., 201.

³² Interestingly, Scarfoglio sees *cabinet noir* as 'Russian legacy' although its origin is obvious from its name.

³³ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 188, 200-201.

³⁴ Ibid., 204.

assassinated³⁵) and his skills in comparative political analysis were not particularly pronounced – while criticising the makeshift alliances at Serbian Parliament³⁶ he remained entirely oblivious of the *trasformismo* rampant in Italy at the time. Nevertheless, that his observations were not completely unfounded is confirmed also by Sforza who saw a marked difference between the Serbian peasants who were ‘among the most valorous, the most patriarchal, the most jealous protectors of their liberty who have ever existed in Europe’ and the ‘petty city politicians [who] were – save for rare exceptions – mediocre and corrupt’.³⁷ Once again, however, Sforza did not remain immune to the siren call of the romantic past. Speaking of the days of Miloš’s rule, he likened the ruthless prince who unscrupulously removed his political opponents to a kind of a Serbian Pericles, and the political culture of Serbia to that of Pnyx: ‘everywhere the frank speech that severely censured the actions of the prince if they appeared unjust... The prince explained his policy, defending himself from the critique expressed freely in his presence. Noble and grave familiarity of villagers of a country that had reconquered its liberty dominated these assemblies.’³⁸ By the time Scarfoglio visited Belgrade, also in Sforza’s opinion, the situation had entirely changed. The reign of Milan was characterised by ‘moral baseness and economic ruin’ and ‘the ministers of king Milan availed themselves of the most unscrupulous means of pressure (and succeeded in finding ones that were new even for Serbia, which had appeared impossible)’ in struggle against their political rivals.³⁹ In fact, nowhere did Scarfoglio and Sforza agree so much as in the negative appraisal of king Milan and his rule.

For Scarfoglio, Milan was a ‘dissolute squanderer’, a ‘ruined pig merchant’ (*porcaio decavé*) for whom ‘nothing is sacred and nothing is serious’ and whose main crime consisted in the fact that his imprudent lifestyle had eventually constrained him to abdicate, and by strengthening the position of the Russophile queen Natalija endangered the interests of the Triple Alliance in the Balkans.⁴⁰ A certain comical character cannot be denied to the harangues of the notorious womaniser Scarfoglio⁴¹ and his indignations at Milan’s marital infidelities⁴². It has to be admitted, however, that he also gave a part of the blame to the Austrian government, which had trusted too naively this ‘*boulevardier* lost in politics’, who ‘combines the cynicism of his Parisian education with the brutality of his forest origins’ and whose ‘completely western customs, his very vices appeared to be the guarantee of success of the mission entrusted to him’ – that of ‘stopping at the Danube the terrible Pan-Slavist propaganda’.⁴³

³⁵ Ibid., 200.

³⁶ Ibid., 190.

³⁷ Sforza, op. cit., 16.

³⁸ Ibid., 32.

³⁹ Ibid., 21, 23.

⁴⁰ Scarfoglio., op. cit., 187, 191, 212-219.

⁴¹ Angela Sarcina, *La signora del Mattino: con antologia dei Mosconi di Matilde Serao* (1995), 42.

⁴² Scarfoglio, op. cit., 191-194.

⁴³ Ibid., 187, 214.

Sforza was hardly any gentler with Milan. He believed that 'no Serb in the modern times has been hated and despised so much by his compatriots as this hedonistic and cynical king'⁴⁴ and reported this little flattering opinion of an Italian diplomat who had had the opportunity of meeting Milan in Vienna: 'These Obrenovićs were wild boars; he took from the West only our vices and became what wild boars become when their kind is domesticated.'⁴⁵ Although the appraisals of the two Italian authors regarding king Milan's merits were nearly the same, their reasoning behind it was diametrically opposite. While Scarfoglio reviled him for having failed the Triple Alliance, Sforza believed that his undignified and servile attitude towards Vienna was a betrayal of the national interests of his country.⁴⁶ The latter drew a balance of the king's achievements:

Assets: acquisition of the district of Niš with 38,000 people; construction of 500km of railroads in Serbia.

*Liabilities: three wars that were three debacles; 250 million golden francs of debt, and this in a country that had never had public debt before.*⁴⁷

Sforza also admitted that 'some Serbs would like to credit Milan with one achievement: having created a standing army', but added that the king had done this exclusively for his personal benefit and that 'given his subjugation to Austria' one could not even think of a 'day in which a strong Serbian army would be able to fight for liberation and unity of the South Slavs'.⁴⁸ In the end, Sforza's verdict of the last two Obrenovićs was unequivocal: 'Milan remained until his very last day a traitor of the Serbian idea, while Alexander was merely a poor wretch, an imbecile.'⁴⁹ Precisely this state of things in Milan's Serbia, Sforza believed, led to the rise of the Radical Party.

According to him, the things in Serbia started improving, as soon as Milan abdicated in 1889. The Radical Party began its rise to power bringing a new spirit into Serbian politics:

*...with this party, under Alexander, the political life of Serbia began coming closer to the real soul of the country. The other parties also profited from this as their leaders were really all better, at the end of the day, than they had appeared under king Milan; they all loved their country, some of them were endowed with some virtue...*⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Sforza, op. cit., 19.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 50.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 46-47.

The creator of this spiritual renewal, in Sforza's eyes, was the leader of the Radical Party, Nikola Pašić. The two men met in 1916 when the Italian diplomat became the minister plenipotentiary at the Serbian court and spent two years together during the exile of the Serbian government in Corfu, meeting and exchanging letters sporadically afterwards until Pašić's death in 1926. It is difficult to imagine a more flattering political portrayal of Pašić than the one Sforza left in his book. He considered him comparable to Giolitti with regard to his democratic ideals and his approach to home policy and to Cavour with regard to his foreign policy and a character 'realistic and poetic, at the same time'.⁵¹ He ascribed to him a belief in his ideals superior to that of Mazzini and an unparalleled 'continuity of thoughts and aims'.⁵² He subscribed to the opinion of the former Italian minister plenipotentiary in Belgrade, marquis Guiccioli, that despite Pašić's low birth he was a 'real gentleman, much more so than so many of our Austrian friends with their sixteen quarters of blue blood'.⁵³ Virtually the only criticism he had with regard to Pašić was that he did not leave behind a worthy political successor.⁵⁴

Sforza's opinion of other notable protagonists of the political life in Serbia was mixed. He considered Sava Grujić 'an honest man... but incapable of making any bold decisions'⁵⁵, Milovan Milovanović 'a man of western appearance, glittering, without much substance'⁵⁶, and Dragiša Cvetković 'a third-rate Machiavelli [who] tried to play the two fascist dictators [Hitler and Mussolini] against each other'⁵⁷. King Petar I was in his opinion a perfect monarch, like George V of the United Kingdom or Albert I of Belgium, mediocre but loyal, whose primary quality lay in the fact that he understood his role and put no obstacles in the way of his able Prime Minister Pašić.⁵⁸ On occasions when he found himself on the other side of the negotiating table, as in Rapallo in 1920, Sforza valued his Yugoslav counterparts, deploring only that they lacked in politics the courage they demonstrated on the battlefield.⁵⁹

Serbia and Austria-Hungary

As already outlined above, Scarfoglio made no attempt to hide with whom his sympathies in the looming Austro-Serbian conflict lay. Much of what he observed

⁵¹ Ibid., 31, 39.

⁵² Ibid., 39, 45.

⁵³ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 201.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 51-52, 55.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 173.

in Serbia during his stay was seen through the triplicist optic. For him, the Danube and the Sava formed not a border between two countries but between two political blocks and on the one side of it, in the 'savage village' of Belgrade, he saw everywhere Persiani, 'this grey eminence of Pan-Slavism, this menacing shadow installed on the banks of the Danube, facing the green plain of Hungary'.⁶⁰ With a mixture of pity and distaste he spoke of the Serbs as 'a people so unfortunate', 'agitated by monstrous dreams' and 'poetic fantasies', awaiting with visible impatience 'the return of Serbia to the state of power and greatness that was destroyed at Kosovo'⁶¹:

*All the cafés resound, every night, with frenetic acclaim for the Great Serbia of the future, and the war from which it is supposed to emerge is expected as an inevitability that cannot be long: the disintegration of Austria is, in the minds of the Serbs, a question of months and they are already dividing the spoils.*⁶²

Scarfoglio spoke thus of the Serbs but he made it clear that in Serbia he saw no more than 'a citadel of Franco-Russian politics'⁶³:

*They proclaim themselves to be the Piedmont of the Balkans, claim that they will do for the South Slavs what Piedmont did for the other Italians, and the newspaper that advocates this idea most directly, and which is called precisely *Velika Srbia* [sic], bears as the epigraph, in Italian language, a variant of our famous motto: "LA SERBIA FARÀ DA SÈ." But have no illusions: the proud declaration means that Serbia will manage without the help of Austria, but not without that of Russia. Despite declamations and the Cavourian airs of big-small Belgrade politicians, the idea of great Serbia is a Russian idea.*⁶⁴

The magnitude of the influence Russia exercised in Serbia was, as Scarfoglio deplorably admitted, nonetheless 'owed three quarters to political ineptitude of the Triple Alliance'⁶⁵ whose conduct during the marital crisis of the royal couple had directly contributed to the waxing of Russian power. Instead of supporting Natalija, 'taking side of the victim against the persecutor, joining the cause of a rising star' and thus 'shattering a most dangerous Russian weapon', the Triple Alliance had sided with an 'already fallen asteroid'.⁶⁶ By the autumn of 1889, it appeared to him that since Austrian diplomacy 'has failed the trial, it can only put its hope into weapons'.⁶⁷

Whether these weapons were supposed to be used as a mere deterrent or also as a tool of aggression was a question that Scarfoglio had difficulties answering.

⁶⁰ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 182, 188.

⁶¹ Ibid., 179, 186.

⁶² Ibid., 186.

⁶³ Ibid., 198.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 180.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 212.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 215.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 211.

At times, he saw the Triple Alliance as a 'league of peace' that 'would not be able to sleep peacefully until it has closed off Serbia with a cordon of cannons and troops'; at others, he bemoaned Austrian 'light-hearted tolerance of such a state of things', its 'peaceful endurance of this dominion of the infamous Persiani at only twelve minutes of navigation from its territory', concluding that: 'No one questions whether peace is desirable; but there are certain conditions of peace that are worse than the war itself.'⁶⁸

Sforza's perception of Austro-Serbian relations was entirely different. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire he saw an iniquitous force that 'held over three million Serbs under the most insupportable of yokes', and he severely condemned the condescending attitude of Austrian politicians towards Serbia, reiterating the words of the Italian ambassador to Vienna, duke Avarna: 'When will they begin to understand in Vienna that it would be appropriate to decide to treat Serbia as a country proudly jealous of its independence?'⁶⁹ In his opinion, the responsibility for the tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia rested clearly with the former, whose policy of expansion formulated by count Andrassy made a future conflict inevitable.⁷⁰ The creator of Serbian foreign policy Pašić, on the other hand, correctly recognised, in Sforza's view, that even the most cooperative attitude of Serbia in the relations with Austria could lead to 'nothing but an armistice' but nonetheless 'hope[d] it will be a long one'.⁷¹

In the years leading up to World War I, according to Sforza, one of the main goals of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy was a public humiliation of Serbia, with the aim of destroying its growing prestige in the eyes of South Slav inhabitants of the empire and demonstrating Russia's impotence at the same time. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 was supposed to fulfil precisely this goal.⁷² Put in front of a *fait accompli*, the Serbian people opposed a 'silent and dignified resistance', however, that 'demonstrated to the Slavs of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy the vitality of the young kingdom much more powerfully than some meagre diplomatic recompense would have'.⁷³ Sforza further reported that Pašić had tried on two occasions, towards the end of 1912 and again in October 1913, to establish friendlier relations with Vienna but had been turned down both times by count Berchtold. The Austro-Hungarian Prime Minister had, in fact, already in the summer of 1913 reached the decision to start a war against Serbia and had demanded from the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs San Giuliano to interpret this war as a defensive one, which would have constituted a *casus foederis*, constraining Italy to enter the war on the Austrian side. According to Sforza, Giolitti had categorically refused this possibility, forcing Berchtold to abandon his intent.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Ibid., 196, 199, 211.

⁶⁹ Sforza, op. cit., 25, 54.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 41.

⁷¹ Ibid., 81.

⁷² Ibid., 64-65.

⁷³ Ibid., 66.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 74-76.

Summing up the position of Serbia on the eve of the First World War, Sforza wrote:

*Their situation was tragic. Austria-Hungary was willed to suffocate Serbia, to make out of it once again the little Serbia of Milan's times, to surround it with an invisible barbed wire, constituted by Austro-Hungarian and Bosnian territories in the north and the spheres of influence that Vienna was confident of gaining in the south, as it was confident of an alliance with a Bulgarian government oblivious of its racial bonds with the Serbs. In reality, if there was a country, before the war, which could have screamed encirclement, this was certainly Serbia and not the German Empire, surrounded as it was by allies and vassals.*⁷⁵

Possibly, the only commonality of Scarfoglio's and Sforza's views regarding the relationship between the two political blocks lies in the fact that they both believed that in the present conflict, one side was from the moral standpoint decisively superior to the other. Scarfoglio questioned the utility of the fact that the Triple Alliance 'has on twenty occasions prevented the war' and condemned the 'principle of non-intervention nullifying completely all our influence'⁷⁶, while Sforza spoke of 'the greater dignity among those sons of peasants, the Serbian leaders, compared to the aristocratic Vienna'⁷⁷, and Serbian and Italian politicians who 'had in common, in the years preceding the First World War, the following: they did not intrigue, they were not bellicose, but they knew to read the future. They knew that *fata trahunt*.'⁷⁸

Serbia and Italy

Scarfoglio generally considered himself an 'obstinate and convinced supporter of the Triple Alliance', but during his journey between the Aegean and the Danube he went a step further – he perceived himself in a position to 'represent [the alliance] in front of the politicians of the Balkan peninsula' and assured the readers that this perception was mutual: 'they took me for an envoy extraordinary of Bismarck and Crispi, and made sure they didn't open up in front of me.'⁷⁹ Taking this into account, it seems little surprising that he reported being received by Serbian politicians with 'courteous and diffident hostility.'⁸⁰

What is surprising, however, considering the real character of the Triple Alliance, which was in fact much more flexible than it seemed to be in Scarfoglio's

⁷⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁶ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 212-213.

⁷⁷ Sforza., op. cit., 91.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁹ Scarfoglio, op. cit., 198-199, 212.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 199.

mind and prescribed to none of the signatories a general course of peacetime foreign policy, is that he conceded a very small degree of freedom to Italy to shape its relations with Serbia independently of Austria-Hungary. At only one point, somewhat disillusioned by the Austrian attitude during the crisis caused by the royal divorce, for the reasons outlined above, he allowed that this had been a feasible option:

...it was also possible to find an indirect means, without an immediate intervention of diplomacy and Austria, to profit from the fortuitous situation. Natalia, a Florentine by birth, was in Florence then; and there is no one who doesn't remember what universal affection surrounded her. So, it would have been nice and considerate, noble and clever, if Italy had styled itself as the protector of the beautiful queen against the brutality of a husband undeserving of any kind of sympathy. In the name of European peace, she [Italy] would have well had the right to engage herself in this chivalrous endeavour. Austria, without intervening, would not have seen its most open enemies enthroned: the Triple Alliance in general and Italy in particular would have acquired in the eyes of the queen and in those of the Serbian people claims to gratitude that the Russian influence would have been unable to eliminate either very quickly or very easily.⁸¹

The opportune occasion was missed, however, and Scarfoglio feared that if this 'Andromache with eyes so big and a heart so proud' at some point 'wanted a war, all the cannons and battleships of the Triple Alliance would be powerless to stop her'.⁸²

Both due to his profession of a diplomat and his political position, Sforza put much greater faith in the ability of Italy and Serbia (later Italy and Yugoslavia) to define their relationship themselves. Needless to say, his extensive and successful interaction with Serbian politicians was to a great extent facilitated by his Mazzinian ideological background, which perfectly harmonised with the political outlook of the latter.

For Sforza, creation of 'a league of Balkan states' was not only desirable but also an inevitability first predicted by Mazzini and later reiterated by 'thinkers and poets like Lamartine, Michelet, Louis Blanc and Quinet', which only the reactionary Vienna, 'always an idea behind', failed to recognise.⁸³ Italy and Serbia, joined by the common experience of subjugation to Austria-Hungary and mistreatment by the bureaucracy of the dual monarchy⁸⁴, united by 'the solidarity of political interests', could, in his opinion, be nothing but natural allies⁸⁵. If this was the case in peace times, it was the case even more in times of war and Sforza who was nominated Italian minister plenipotentiary at the Serbian Court in 1916 found himself in the difficult position of disagreeing with the Italian war policy formulated by his superior, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sydney Sonnino.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Ibid., 215-216.

⁸² Ibid., 198.

⁸³ Sforza, 54, 78.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 54, 59.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 205.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 112-113.

In April 1915, Sonnino had authorised marquis Imperiali, the Italian ambassador in London, to sign a secret agreement with the members of the Entente, which secured for Italy, among other territories, the entire Austrian littoral apart from the city of Rijeka (Fiume), as well as the northern half of Dalmatia, in exchange for Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Entente. Although the Serbian government was initially left in the dark by its allies regarding the Treaty of London, only a couple of weeks later the contents of the treaty transpired.⁸⁷ The results of Sonnino's diplomatic move were disastrous, in Sforza's opinion, and were noticed by the Italian Chief of Staff Luigi Cadorna as soon as Italy entered the war in May 1915:

*...Cadorna observed absolute absence of the cooperation he had expected with the Serbian army. It was the effect of the Treaty of London; and without any fault of Cadorna who had advised against the annexation of Dalmatia, the Serbs stopped all their attacks against Austria and turned towards Albania...in Corfu...they told me: 'One of our advantages in the struggle against an enemy so much stronger than us lay in the desertions that we were provoking on the Austrian front among the Croatian, Dalmatian, Slovene regiments; your treaty of London that took from the Slavs a half of Dalmatia offered to the Austrian Supreme Command a perfect opportunity to launch among its Slavic soldiers the war cry: "Defend yourselves from Italian imperialism!"'*⁸⁸

Sonnino remained impervious to such realisations; despite Sforza's insistence and spirited critique of individual Italian politicians like Leonida Bissolati, he stuck stubbornly to the provisions of the Treaty of London and refused any closer cooperation with Serbia.⁸⁹ In the summer of 1915, on the eve of the Austro-German offensive against Serbia, he even blocked an attempt coordinated by Cadorna and the French Supreme Command to send a combined Italo-French force under the command of the duke d'Aosta in support of Serbia, 'fearing that a close military cooperation between Italy and Serbia would bring in its trail some modification of his sacrosanct Treaty of London.'⁹⁰

Throughout the First World War, the question of the Adriatic coast remained a stumbling block in the relations between Italy and the exiled Serbian government, which now also had to consider the stance of the Yugoslav Committee in London. Once again, however, Sforza praised the conciliatory attitude of Pašić, who was ready to recognise the predominant position of Italy in the Adriatic⁹¹ and if he insisted on certain points that were unacceptable for the Italian side, as he did on the partition of Istria during his meeting with Sonnino in September 1917, he did it, in Sforza's opinion, 'only to show to the Yugoslav Committee of London that he kept in mind their recommendations.'⁹²

⁸⁷ Ibid., 110.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 110-111.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁹¹ Ibid., 43.

⁹² Ibid., 113-114.

The relations between Italian and Serbian soldiers and officers on the Macedonian front, on the other hand, were 'most cordial'.⁹³ After the Italians captured the altitude 1050, vojvoda Mišić wrote a letter to the Italian general Petitti, which deeply moved Sforza, and in which the Serbian field marshal expressed his admiration for Petitti's 'brave troops that despite the tenacious resistance of the enemy, despite his infernal fire, despite the enormous difficulty of the terrain, in an irresistible charge took the altitude 1050 yesterday'.⁹⁴ At the same time, Italian troops helped restoring the destroyed civilian infrastructure, opening Italian and Serbian schools in Bitola.⁹⁵

Conclusion

Perhaps it is not surprising that views on Serbia expressed by Scarfoglio and Sforza, two men belonging to two not only different but in many ways opposite political camps, should differ significantly. It becomes even less surprising when one considers that at the time they both chose for the beginning of their narratives, in the early years of the 19th century, for most Italians, Serbia was a *terra incognita*, a region yet to be mapped in their mental geographies, populated by people almost entirely unknown to them. The long centuries of separation took their toll: between the Italians and the Serbs of the late 19th and the early 20th century there was no deep-seated rancour, but no tradition of understanding and friendship either. Their relationship was a function of external foreign-political dynamics.

The irony of Scarfoglio's dislike and Sforza's affection for Serbia is nonetheless striking if one considers the geopolitical contexts in which the two books were written. In 1890, no serious issues encumbered the relations between the unified Italy and the weak Serbia straggling towards modernity. By 1948, however, Serbia had as a part of Yugoslavia become Italy's neighbour and the Trieste crisis had plunged the relationship between the two countries to a historical low. One would have easily understood if the outlooks of the two authors were exactly opposite in value; this way, one has no other choice but to conclude that inclinations towards both war and peace are dictated firstly by personal attitudes and ideologies and only then by Realpolitik.

⁹³ Ibid., 134.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Uroš UROŠEVIĆ

**ORIENTALISMO E REALPOLITIK:
LA SERBIA NEGLI SCRITTI DI EDOARDO SCARFOGLIO E CARLO SFORZA**

Sommario

Mentre, l'élite intellettuale serba, nel XIX secolo, mostrava notevole interesse per l'Italia e la sua lotta per l'unificazione nazionale, l'attenzione di letterati e statisti italiani verso la Serbia era ridotta. Un'eccezione in questo senso è costituita dal caso di Mazzini. Il padre spirituale del Risorgimento italiano seguiva con interesse le vicende dei Balcani dal suo esilio londinese e nel 1847 scrisse "Sul movimento slavo", in cui sosteneva che l'Italia avrebbe dovuto definire il suo rapporto con i popoli slavi dei Balcani. La politica italiana però, nei decenni che seguirono la costituzione del Regno d'Italia, era pressata da altre questioni, più che dai rapporti con le nazioni balcaniche e con la Serbia.

Non sorprende quindi che gli atteggiamenti verso la Serbia delle due opposte correnti della politica italiana, una conservatrice e germanofila, guidata dal Primo Ministro Crispi, e l'altra francofila di sinistra, erano diametralmente opposti. Il presente articolo analizza i punti di vista sulla Serbia di due pensatori politici italiani della fine del XIX e dell'inizio del XX secolo: il giornalista Edoardo Scarfoglio e il diplomatico Carlo Sforza. Scarfoglio è esponente della prima corrente, mentre Sforza della seconda.

Scarfoglio visitò la Serbia nell'autunno del 1889, al suo ritorno da Istanbul. Le sue osservazioni sono riportate nel libro "In Levante e attraverso i Balcani". Come sostenitore della Triplice Alleanza, Scarfoglio era estremamente preoccupato per la situazione creatasi dopo l'abdicazione del filo austriaco Re Milan, con la crescita dell'influenza russa nella capitale serba. A suo parere, la politica statale in Serbia non era guidata dalla reggenza, ma dalla russofila Regina Natalija, la quale era influenzata dall'ambasciatore russo a Belgrado, Alessandro Ivanovich Persiani, dal Metropolita di Belgrado Mihailo, e dall'ex primo ministro bulgaro Dragan Tsankov, che a quel tempo viveva in esilio a Belgrado. Sotto la loro influenza, sosteneva Scarfoglio, la Serbia diventava un agente della Russia nei Balcani, entrando di riflesso in rotta di collisione con l'Austria-Ungheria. Sforza era stato ministro d'Italia alla corte serba tra il 1916 e il 1918, poi Ministro degli Esteri italiano, durante il negoziato tra l'Italia e il Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni per il Trattato di Rapallo, firmato nel 1920. Dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale, Sforza pubblicò "Jugoslavia: Storia e ricordi". A differenza di Scarfoglio, Sforza coltivava una profonda antipatia verso l'Austria-Ungheria e vedeva l'Italia e la Serbia come alleati naturali nella distruzione dell'odiosa monarchia danubiana. Questa posizione fu fondamentale per la sua visione della situazione politica in Serbia.

Sforza considerava il re Milan un "traditore delle idee serbe", mentre stimava profondamente il Primo Ministro Nikola Pasic e il Re Pietro I, il quale aveva

saggiamente confidato a Pasic il governo del paese. L'antipatia che Scarfoglio coltivava nei confronti della Serbia e dei serbi e la simpatia di Sforza si possono spiegare con i loro diversi orientamenti politici. Paradossalmente, al tempo di Scarfoglio i rapporti tra la Serbia e l'Italia erano cordiali, mentre al tempo di Sforza erano gravati da varie problematiche e la crisi di Trieste era all'apice quando uscì il volume "Jugoslavia: Storia e ricordi". Le opinioni dei due autori risentirono dunque più delle loro convinzioni politiche che dei fattori politici esterni.

Parole chiave: Italia, Serbia, creazione di nazione, Triplice Alleanza, Prima guerra mondiale.

Урош УРОШЕВИЋ

ИЗМЕЂУ ОРИЕНТАЛИЗМА И РЕАЛПОЛИТИКЕ: СРБИЈА У СПИСИМА ЕДУАРДА СКАРФОЉА И КАРЛА СФОРЦЕ

Резиме

За разлику од српске интелектуалне елите која је у XIX веку показивала немало интересовање за Италију и њену борбу за уједињење и независност, пажња италијанских књижевника и државника усмерена према Србији била је далеко слабије изражена. Изузетак у том смислу представљао је далековиди духовни отац италијанског покрета уједињења Ђузепе Мацини (Giuseppe Mazzini) који је из свог лондонског изгнанства пратио збивања на Балкану и већ 1847 писао „О словенском покрету“, предвиђајући да ће Италија, која је била у настајању, пре или касније, морати да дефинише свој однос према јужно-словенским народима Балкана. Италијанска политика је, међутим, у деценијама које су следиле успостављање Краљевине Италије 1861. године била заокупљена другим питањима већег значаја, те је однос према балканским народима, па тако и према Србији, био је одређен правцем целокупне италијанске спољне политике.

Не чуди стога да је став према Србији оне две доминантне и супротстављене струје у италијанској политици, конзервативне, германофилске, предвођене дугогодишњим италијанским премијером Франческом Криспијем (Francesco Crispi) и левичарске, франкофилски настројене, исто тако био дијаметрално супротстављен. У овом раду анализирају се погледи на Србију двојице италијанских политичких мислилаца касног XIX и прве половине XX века, новинара и путописца Едоарда Скарфоља (Eduardo Scarfoglio) и дипломате и политичара Карла Сфорце (Carlo Sforza), при чему се Скарфољо јасно може сврстати првој наведеној струји а Сфорца другој.

Скарфољо је посетио Србију у јесен 1889, враћајући се из Истанбула, и своја запажања и ставове изнео у књизи „У Леванту и кроз Балкан“ (*In Levante*

e a traverso i Balkani). Као поборник Тројног савеза Немачке, Аустро-угарске и Италије, он је био изразито узнемирен ситуацијом насталом након абдикације про-аустријски настројеног краља Милана и јачањем руског утицаја у српској престоници. По његовом мишљењу, државну политику у Србији није водила регентска влада већ про-руски настројена краљица Наталија коју су саветовали и усмеравали руски амбасадор у Београду Александр Иванович Персиани, митрополит београдски Михаило и панславистички настројени бивши бугарски премијер Драган Цанков који је у то време живео у егзилу у Београду. Под њиховим утицајем, тврдио је Скарфољо, Србија је постала испоставом Москве на Балкану и гајећи илузије о територијалној експанзији ка Босни и Косову незауостављиво срљала у конфликт са Аустроугарском.

Сфорца, са друге стране, био је опуномоћени министар Краљевине Италије при српском двору између 1916. и 1918. и те две ратне године провео је са српском владом на Крфу и у Солуну, да би се 1920. као италијански министар спољних послова нашао за супротном страном преговарачког стола приликом потписивања Рапалског споразума између Краљевине Италије и Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца. Након Другог светског рата објавио је књигу „*Југославија: Историја и сећања*“ (*Jugoslavia: Storia e ricordi*). За разлику од Скарфоља, он је као идеолошки следбеник маџинијанског републиканизма гајио дубоку антипатију према Аустроугарској монархији и видео Италију и Србију као природне савезнике у рушењу исте. Ова позиција била је од пресудног значаја за његово виђење политичке ситуације у Србији, те је бившег српског краља Милана видео као „издајника српске идеје“ док је дубоко поштовање гајио пре свега према председнику владе Николи Пашићу а затим и према краљу Петру I који је, иако политички „медиокритет“, мудро одлучио да не поставља никакве препреке Пашићу већ да му сасвим препусти вођење државе.

Антипатија коју је Скарфољо гајио према Србији и Србима као и њој супротстављена дубока наклоност Сфорце могу се разумети као последица њихових различитих политичких оријентација али је тешко не видети иронију у чињеници да су ставови првога формирану у време када директне односе Србије и Италије није оптерећивало нити једно озбиљно политичко питање док на симпатије другог није имала утицаја ни дипломатска конфронтација у Рапалу, ни много озбиљнија Тршћанска криза у јеку које је књига „*Југославија: Историја и сећања*“ издата. У светлу ове историјске чињенице остаје закључак да је воља за миром, као и за ратом, последица пре свега личних назора а тек онда спољних политичких фактора.

Кључне речи: Италија, Србија, државотворство, Тројни савез, Први светски рат.

Giordano MERLICCO

ITALY AND THE AUSTRO-SERBIAN CRISIS OF JULY 1914

Abstract: The article describes the Austro-Serbian crisis of July 1914 through Italian documents. Franz Ferdinand was not popular in the Habsburg Empire and his death did not cause much grief. However the Italian diplomacy noticed that the Austro-Hungarian government was eager to use the Sarajevo assassination and the alleged responsibility of the Serbian government as a pretext to wage war against Serbia. Rome and Vienna were tied by their mutual belonging to the Triple Alliance, but Italy's Foreign Minister, Sangiuliano, opposed the Austro-Hungarian aggressive attitude. He feared any territorial enlargement of Austria-Hungary in the Balkan region, for such an enlargement would have altered the balance of power in a highly sensitive region to the detriment of Italy.

Keywords: Sarajevo Assassination, July Crisis, Italy, Serbia, Austria-Hungary, First World War, Sangiuliano, Berchtold, Triple Alliance

Since the beginning of the twentieth century the Balkan Peninsula was one of the most important areas for Italy's foreign policy. Rome projected upon the Balkans its ambitions of a European power, determined to affirm its political and economic influence. On the other hand, the Balkans was of great importance also in the light of relations between Rome and Vienna. Italy and Austria-Hungary were tied by their mutual belonging to the Triple Alliance, but they were at odds on several issues. The attempts to smooth out the disagreements were not sufficient to resolve the tensions that were often fuelled by strategic differences between the two allies. Thus, for Italy, the Balkans constituted a field of confrontation with the Habsburg Empire and the Italian government was determined to prevent any strengthening of Vienna in the Adriatic-Balkan region, which could hinder Italy's political and economic ambitions and alter in a dangerous way the balance of power between the two allies, forcing Italy to play the role of a junior partner within the Triple Alliance. The Italian

diplomacy followed with attention the events in the Balkans, which is why the Italian documents are a very interesting source of history of the region of that period. The objective of this article is to reconstruct, through Italian diplomatic documents, the Austro-Serbian crisis that followed the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo and to analyse the attitude of Italy towards the imminence of the war.

Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo

In the period between the Balkan Wars and the outbreak of the First World War, the relations between Vienna and Belgrade were extremely tense. Austria-Hungary was frustrated by the victories of Serbia and Montenegro which undermined Vienna's role and prestige in the peninsula. Between 1912 and 1913, the two Slavic states had considerably increased their own territory, obtained a common frontier and were then planning a union between them. Furthermore, the Balkan Wars intensified the wish for self-determination among the South Slavs living in the Habsburg Empire, who regarded Serbia and Montenegro as a successful model of nation states that had emerged from the struggle against foreign rule. In this context, Italian diplomats believed that Bosnia and Herzegovina was not chosen randomly as the seat of military exercise of the Austro-Hungarian army in June 1914; such a choice had indeed a clear political purpose. With the military exercise and the visit to Sarajevo of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire intended to show its strength and to make a warning both inside and outside its borders. The Italian consul in Sarajevo, Labia, wrote:

To me it seems (...) that with the presence of the Archduke and of the Chief of Staff of the army [Austria's] intention was to make a demonstration to Serbia and Montenegro, which, especially after their successes in the Balkan Wars, conducted in these provinces a rather audacious propaganda. On the other hand, it was intended to allow to the archduke to make a political affirmation in front of these populations, carrying out the visit which had already been planned for the summer of 1910, but had been postponed because of the cold reception he had received in Dubrovnik (...).¹

Thus, according to Labia, the archduke wanted to "show his power and his strong political determination" in Sarajevo and the date chosen for his entry into the Bosnian city contributed to that purpose. Franz Ferdinand entered Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, the anniversary of the Kosovo battle, which for the Serbs represented the

¹ Historical archive of the Italian Foreign Ministry [Asmae], *Serie politica, 1891–1916*; folder 104, file *guerra austro-serba* (hereinafter: *Serie P*, f. 104), Labia to Sangiuliano, 4 July 1914.

most important national commemoration. The Italian consul wrote that on the part of the heir to the throne it was rather a “deliberate provocation” or at least a “careless act” to enter Sarajevo on that day, because that surely increased the irritation provoked by his visit in Bosnia.²

The bullets fired by Gavrilo Princip did not only kill Franz Ferdinand, but also undermined Vienna’s attempt to warn its Balkan enemies. In their reports, Italian diplomats described in detail the reactions to the death of the archduke in the Balkans as well as in the rest of the Habsburg Empire. Those reactions are actually very interesting, because through them one may analyse the figure of the late archduke, the political situation and political orientation of the South-Slavic population of the Dual Monarchy.

The reports of the Italian diplomats underlined that the death of Franz Ferdinand did not shake the public opinion in the Habsburg Empire as much as one could have expected. The archduke was driven by a profoundly reactionary political culture, characterised by the ideas of legitimacy and autocracy that became increasingly inadequate in the cultural horizon of Europe. His political ideas had thus alienated from him the sympathies of the public opinion. Various social and political circles of the Dual Monarchy looked at him with mistrust to such an extent that, according to the Italian ambassador in Vienna, his accession to the throne was “generally feared by all parties, except for the Christian-Social and Christian-Feudal parties”. The liberal circles and the Austrian bourgeoisie feared the reactionary tendencies of the late archduke and his connections with the most backward component of the Catholic clergy. Neither the conservative and aristocratic circles regarded him with sympathy, especially after his love marriage with Sophie Chotek, whose nobility rank was largely inferior to the one requested from the wife of an heir to the throne. By marrying her, Franz Ferdinand had broken the customary rules of the Habsburg dynasty, arousing the disapproval of the aristocracy and the overt discontent of the emperor himself.³

The Hungarian political elite looked with suspicion at Franz Ferdinand because of his reform projects, which would have undermined Hungary’s role within the empire. Furthermore, the archduke had never hidden his mistrust for the Hungarians. As a result, the Italian consul in Budapest, Martin Franklin, wrote that “in Hungary (...) all the social classes judged him with dislike.” Therefore the news of his death did not cause real mourning in Budapest, but rather veiled satisfaction.⁴ The archduke enjoyed political support only among the higher ranks of the armed forces and the Catholic clergy, particularly among the Jesuits. The Italian ambassador in Vienna actually reported that “a military-clerical party” was gathering around him.⁵

² Ibidem.

³ Ivi, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 5 July 1914.

⁴ Ivi, Martin Franklin to Sangiuliano, 8 July 1914. *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereinafter *DDI*). Roma: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato. Quarta serie, vol. XII, 1964, Martin Franklin to Sangiuliano, 29 June 1914. Doc. 12.

⁵ Asmae, *Serie P*, f. 104, Martin Franklin to Sangiuliano, 8 July 1914; Avarna to Sangiuliano, 5 July 1914.

The bad reputation of Franz Ferdinand was due also to his harsh personality. The Italian consul in Budapest reported that the archduke was “brutal, unpredictable, despotic” and concluded: “archduke Franz Ferdinand was not agreeable, that is something everyone agrees upon. Not even those who were close to him show any special sympathy or favour of him”.⁶ The aforementioned political and personal factors explain why the death of Franz Ferdinand caused a very limited reaction among the Austro-Hungarian public opinion in general and in the very capital of the Habsburg Empire. The Italian ambassador in Vienna, Avarna, clearly stated:

the unexpected and tragic death of the heir to the throne has aroused in Vienna and among the population of the monarchy some pity for his unfortunate sons and for the cruel fate that killed the archduke and his wife, but has not aroused any genuine sorrow.⁷

Not even in Italy was Franz Ferdinand popular; therefore the Italian public opinion was not really impressed by the Sarajevo assassination. Rather interesting is a report of the Serbian ambassador in Rome, who described the reaction in Italy as follows:

The murder in Sarajevo of the Austrian heir to the throne and his wife is received in a somehow strange way. All the newspapers describe the *attentat* as “horrible”, “inhuman”, “terrible”, but they do not condemn it as one may expect. It could be said that the public opinion, if it does not feel satisfaction, at least has the impression that something unpleasant has been removed. Italians did not like Archduke Ferdinand. Here, he was believed to be inclined towards Slavs and thus not favourably inclined towards Italians. They considered him a reactionary Catholic who supported the Pope’s temporal rights and the leader of those Austrian military circles that are hostile towards Italy. As a would-be emperor he was a source of concern for all Italian circles and his death did not cause any grief. As a civilised nation, Italians do not express their satisfaction openly, though it can be felt.⁸

Bosnia and Herzegovina after the assassination

Immediately after the *attentat* Austria-Hungary accused Serbia of being responsible. In particular Vienna blamed the perpetual anti-Habsburg campaign directed by Belgrade. On their part, the Italian diplomats agreed with Vienna: Serbian

⁶ Ivi, Martin Franklin to Sangiuliano, 8 July 1914.

⁷ Ivi, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 5 July 1914.

⁸ Poslanstvo Kraljevine Srbije u Italiji Ministarstvu inostranih dela. 18. VI/1. VII 1914. *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, Knjiga VII, Sveska 2, Beograd 1980, 440.

propaganda had excited the irredentist feelings of the Bosnian population and as such it had created a suitable social environment for the organisation of the assassination in Sarajevo. However, Italian diplomats believed that the *attentat* was also the result of inner conditions of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Austro-Hungarian rule. Cora, Italy's representative in Belgrade, wrote that the attack was the result of "the perpetual, heated hate campaign against the neighbouring monarchy that [in Serbia] takes place in newspapers, rallies and societies". This campaign "surely had its influence on the exalted mind" of the conspirators. However, Cora also added that the attackers "sacrificed themselves for their persecuted nation". Likewise, the Italian ambassador in Vienna argued that, by shooting Franz Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip wanted "to revenge his nationality oppressed" by the Austro-Hungarian rule.⁹

The reports of the Italian diplomats offer a general overview of the situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the attack and point at the lack of loyalty of the local population towards the Habsburg Empire. After the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, mobs attacked Serbs living in Sarajevo and in other cities of the Dual Monarchy. Though the authorities encouraged anti-Serb violence, only some "rabble" took part in the riots.¹⁰ The vast majority of the Bosnian population was not struck by the death of Franz Ferdinand; on the very 28 June, life in the Bosnian capital remained unchanged, as reported by the consul in Sarajevo: "it cannot be said that this population was deeply struck by the horrible crime. The Sunday habits of leisure and joy did not change at all in the afternoon of that tragic day, although everybody knew about the attack and its sad consequences".¹¹

Labia concluded that the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia was rather unstable. The Italian diplomat believed that the Austro-Hungarian administration had considerably improved the material and moral situation of Bosnia; however the Habsburg Empire could not enjoy a widespread support from local inhabitants. Most of the Bosnian population was actually fiercely hostile towards Vienna's rule, to such an extent that Labia thought that, when the time came, "this population, in its majority, would be ready and capable to do everything in their power and to pay any price for the victory of the Pan-Serbian idea or at least to destabilise the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which is believed to be its greatest obstacle".¹² Some days later, in a long report, the consul in Sarajevo described goals and characteristics of the pro-

⁹ Asmae, *Documenti diplomatici*, Serie XXII, Serbia 1913–1914. Cora to Sangiuliano, 1 July 1914. Asmae, *Serie P*, f. 104, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 2 July 1914.

¹⁰ Ivi, Labia to Sangiuliano, 30 June 1914. Labia reported that the Austro-Hungarian authorities "organised the riots or at least voluntarily abstained from preventing them". The Italian consul in Sarajevo described those who took part in the anti-Serb riots as "few hundreds of bad guys and rabble". Ivi, Labia to Sangiuliano, 4 July 1914.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*. For the reactions in Croatia and Slavonia see: Asmae, *Serie P*, f. 104, Consul in Fiume to Sangiuliano, 23 July 1914. Italian diplomats generally used to refer to Pan-Serbism, ascribing this feeling also to Bosniaks and Croats; what they meant can therefore be labelled as a Yugoslavian feeling, rather than strictly Pan-Serbian.

Yugoslav movement, stating that it was widely spread among Bosnia's inhabitants, regardless of their faith. Analysing the discontent of Bosnians towards the Austro-Hungarian rule, on 24 July, before the outbreak of hostilities between Vienna and Belgrade, the Italian consul argued: "Austria has only one way that would give her the possibility to save itself or at least to gain a respite: a decisive, impressive affirmation of force".¹³

Vienna's reaction

Before June 1914, there were various assassination attempts against Austro-Hungarian officials in Bosnia and Croatia. Although these attempts generally failed, they represented a warning for the Dual Monarchy. With the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Vienna's Balkan problem re-emerged in all its gravity and the Austro-Hungarian government had to find a solution without delay. Furthermore, the murder of the heir to the throne represented an event that could justify strong measures and thus legitimate Vienna's reprisals against those who, inside and outside the borders of the empire, opposed its rule in the Balkans. Italy's representative in Belgrade wrote:

it is clear that in Austria they are trying to take advantage of these circumstances in order to get rid of those political personalities who appear annoying in their opposition to [the Austro-Hungarian] rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to break apart the Serbo-Croatian block. Therefore, [the Austro-Hungarian authorities] accused Major Pribičević (who has been ill for several months), because his brother [Svetozar Pribičević] is member of the Croatian Parliament, they arrested Mr. Jeftanović, who is the father-in-law of Spalajković, Serbia's minister in Petersburg, whose hostility towards Austria is well known, they blamed general Janković, who is the president and leader of "Narodna odbrana".¹⁴

While Vienna took repressive measures to counter inner dissent, it also directed its policy towards Belgrade. For the Austro-Hungarian authorities, the South Slavs' wish for self-determination was strictly related to Serbia's propaganda and subversion activities. Shortly after the death of Franz Ferdinand, Austria-Hungary began a political and media campaign, whose aim was to hold Serbia accountable for the Sarajevo assassination. The main objective of this campaign driven by Austro-Hungarian officials and newspapers was to prepare both the public opinion and European diplomacy for the adoption of strong measures against Serbia.¹⁵ Realising

¹³ Asmae, *Serie P*, f. 104, Labia to Sangiuliano, 24 July 1914.

¹⁴ Ivi, Cora to Sangiuliano, 7 July 1914.

¹⁵ Immediately the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Berchtold, claimed that Serbia was involved in the plot that led to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand; Asmae, *Documenti*

Vienna's aggressive intentions, the Serbian government kept a very moderate attitude, which was in stark contrast to the warmongering mood spreading over the Austro-Hungarian public. Italy's representative in Belgrade, Cora, described Serbia's attitude as follows:

Despite the escalation of the mood of the rabble against the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite the allegations and the cruel remarks published in the Austro-Hungarian and German press, which described Belgrade as a nest of murderers, and despite the claims of the involvement of the Serbian government in the plot, which would have been organised here, the government and the public opinion in Serbia have maintained a quiet and proper behaviour, in order to avoid any pretext for recrimination on the part of Austria (...).¹⁶

Italian diplomats believed that Austria-Hungary was eager to use the Sarajevo assassination as a pretext for legitimising its aggressive policy towards Serbia. On 15 July, from Belgrade, Cora summed up the situation: "it seems that Austria wants to transform the Sarajevo trial, which had to be a trial against two killers, into a trial against Pan-Serbism and Serbia and hasten in this way the unavoidable conflict." A day later he argued: "it is very clear that while the Serbian government is trying in all ways to avoid any complication, Austria wants to keep tensions growing".¹⁷

Italy and the July crisis

As days passed by, Italian diplomacy received more and more clues about Vienna's plans, until 17 July, when Italy's minister of foreign affairs, Antonino di Sangiuliano, dispelled any doubt: "it seems that Austria-Hungary, supported by Germany, both of them convinced that Russia will not intervene, will present unacceptable demands to Serbia, in order to have an excuse to attack and crush it, and then will probably annex some territories".¹⁸ Sangiuliano did not know the exact demands of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, however he knew that Vienna's real

diplomatici, Serie XXII, Serbia 1913–1914. Avarna to Sangiuliano, 4 July 1914. Regarding the Austro-Hungarian press, whose commentaries were aimed to "excite" the public opinion, see: Asmae, *Serie P*, f. 104, Martin Franklin to Sangiuliano, 4 July 1914.

¹⁶ Ivi, Cora to Sangiuliano, 7 July 1914.

¹⁷ Asmae, *Documenti diplomatici*, Serie XXII, Serbia 1913–1914. Cora to Sangiuliano, 15 July 1914; DDI, Cora to Sangiuliano, 16 July 1914. Doc. 285.

¹⁸ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati, Carlotti, Avarna and Fasciotti, 17 July 1914. Doc. 311. It is probable that Sangiuliano was informed about Austro-Hungary's intentions by Flotow, Germany's ambassador to Italy, who spent some days with the Italian minister in the thermal resort of Fuggi.

purpose was to get a denial from Belgrade. The Austro-Hungarian demands were formulated in such a way that they were unacceptable for a sovereign state and Serbia's government would have thus rejected them. That would have provided the Habsburg government with a pretext to declare war on Serbia. The Italian minister confirmed all of his suspicions when he finally read the text of the Austro-Hungarian declaration to Serbia. Sangiuliano stated that the Austro-Hungarian demands were "deeply offensive for Serbia and indirectly even for Russia"; presenting those demands the Dual Monarchy "clearly showed that it wants war".¹⁹

The Austro-Hungarian bellicose attitude posed a threat to Italian interests in the Balkans and Sangiuliano had to think what position Italy should take. Despite its alliance with Italy, Vienna did not inform the Italian diplomacy of its plans, and neither did it ask for Italy's approval of the ultimatum. The Italian government took advantage of that omission, in order to distance itself from Austria-Hungary and to claim that Italy had no obligation to intervene in the conflict. According to the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, each party had to intervene in case of aggression against other parties. But the current Austro-Serbian war was not a war of self-defence for Vienna. Sangiuliano pointed out that the Austro-Serbian conflict was the result of the aggressive policy of the Dual Monarchy. Rome had thus no obligation to intervene to help its ally, not even if Russia and other countries were to get involved, since in any case Vienna bore the responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict. Sangiuliano clearly stated that any possible European conflagration would be "the consequence of Austria's aggressive and provocative behaviour", which is why Vienna could not count on Italy's support.²⁰

Apart from the rules of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, Italy's refusal to support Vienna was due to an analysis of the situation and the risks and opportunities it presented for Italy. In the Adriatic and Balkan region, Sangiuliano's policy was always oriented to prevent any extension of the Habsburg Empire, either through the annexation of new lands, or the projection of Vienna's influence on other states. This was actually the fundamental axis of Italy's foreign policy towards the Albanian question and the possible union of Serbia and Montenegro. Such a priority also highlights the complexity of Italy's approach to the Balkans. Italy surely had its own preferences in each regional question; however, regional questions were relevant also for Italy's relations with Vienna. The need to prevent any strengthening of the Habsburg Empire was actually the key priority for Italy, with all other objectives being of lesser importance. Before the July crisis entered its crucial phase, Sangiuliano explained that in the Balkans Italy had to "prevent any territorial expansion of Austria", at least if such an expansion was not counterbalanced by an "adequate territorial compensation" for Italy.²¹ That was Sangiuliano's key priority in Albania

¹⁹ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 24 July 1914. Doc. 488; Sangiuliano to Imperiali, Bollati, Avarna, Carlotti, Ruspoli, 28 July 1914. Doc. 673.

²⁰ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 24 July 1914. Doc. 488; Sangiuliano to Imperiali, Bollati, Avarna, Carlotti, Ruspoli, 28 July 1914. Doc. 673; Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 28 July 1914. Doc. 672.

²¹ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati, 14 July 1914. Doc. 225.

and Montenegro, and of course the same principle applied also to the Austro-Serbian crisis. Therefore, when Germany tried to convince Rome to support its allies, the Italian minister replied that, for Italy “the existence of an independent and strong Serbia as a counterweight, a balance factor and a bulwark against any Austrian expansion in the Balkan Peninsula is a top priority”.²² If the Italian government had offered military or diplomatic support to Vienna’s aggression against Serbia, it would have, therefore, acted against its own interests.

In search for territorial gains

Sangiuliano’s first reaction to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was intended to mark a distance between Italy and the Dual Monarchy, thus ensuring full autonomy to Italy’s diplomatic manoeuvre. Italian diplomats strongly reaffirmed this position to European governments and above all to Vienna and Berlin. However, Sangiuliano also asked Italian diplomats to keep discreet about Italy’s possible choices in case of war, as well as to avoid any compromising statement on that issue. Italy’s position on the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was described as follows by the foreign minister: “at the moment we have no reason to take any stand”.²³ As Vienna showed its aggressive intentions, Sangiuliano opted for a wait-and-see policy. After all, Rome had no immediate obligation to support any side and as the situation evolved the Italian government could have adopted one position or another depending on its own interests. Italy clearly stated its policy to the allies of the Triple Alliance, particularly to Germany. Relations between Rome and Berlin were actually much warmer than those between Rome and Vienna and the German government was often called upon to help to solve disputes between Italy and the Habsburg Empire. Talking to the representatives of Germany and Austria-Hungary, Sangiuliano did not exclude the possibility of offering political and possibly military support to Vienna, but only if that would prove profitable to Italy. The minister explained that the lack of any obligation to take part in the conflict, “does not exclude the possibility that the Italian government may help Austria, if it is in Italy’s interest to do that”.²⁴

Sangiuliano actually asked for territorial compensations in exchange for the support Italy could offer to its allies. Sangiuliano believed that his demands had a basis in the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, whose Article VII stated that in case Vienna annexed new territories in the Balkans, Italy should be compensated. Before the Austro-Serbian crisis, Sangiuliano had already raised the issue of compensation in relation to the possible annexation of Albanian and Montenegrin lands by the Dual

²² DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 28 July 1914. Doc. 644.

²³ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 24 July 1914. Doc. 488.

²⁴ DDI, Sangiuliano to Imperiali, Bollati, Avarna, Carlotti, Ruspoli, 28 July 1914. Doc. 673. See also: Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 28 July 1914. Doc. 644.

Monarchy. As we have seen, Italy opposed any enlargement of the Habsburg Empire, but the Italian opposition could fall if such an enlargement was counterbalanced by adequate territorial gains for Italy. Sangiuliano thought there were two possible compensations for Italy: some Albanian lands or rather a “part of the Italian-populated territories” under the Austro-Hungarian rule, Trentino in particular. In his analysis Sangiuliano took into account various elements. On one hand, he thought that Italy’s rule over the Albanian city of Vlore would have restored the balance of power between Rome and Vienna in the Adriatic region. The annexation of Trentino to Italy would not have had the same strategic value, but the minister was aware that the latter option was the most favoured by the Italian public opinion, as it was commonly believed that Italy should extend its territory to the Italian-speaking provinces still under the Austro-Hungarian rule. As the outbreak of the war came closer, Sangiuliano himself seemed to prefer this option and referred to “some of the Italian-populated lands of Austria” as “the only possible territorial compensation”.²⁵

Distancing itself from the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, Italy did not intend to disavow the Triple Alliance, but rather to persuade its allies to take into account Italy’s interests. Sangiuliano had this aim in mind when he asked Italian diplomats to keep a friendly attitude towards Austria-Hungary, even when they had to declare Italy’s refusal to support Vienna’s aggressive policy against Serbia. Furthermore, Sangiuliano did not wait for the allies to make their proposals, but he himself urged Vienna and Berlin to begin talks about the compensation issue. The Italian foreign minister also warned the allies that, if Italy could not reach with them an agreement on the compensation issue, to defend its interests Italy was obliged to oppose Vienna’s war. In a bid to put pressure on Berlin and Vienna, Sangiuliano went forward, envisaging that Italy could get involved in the war, but on the other side of the trench, in order to prevent possible Austro-Hungarian expansion.²⁶

Sangiuliano’s thinly veiled threat did not suffice to convince the allies. Germany was ready to recognise Italy’s right to territorial compensations; Berlin, however, was also aware that it was hardly conceivable for Vienna to give up on Trentino. Berlin exerted some pressure on the Austro-Hungarian government, but German diplomacy was not willing to engage in the mediation role that Italy asked for. Thus the German government urged Italy to talk directly to the Dual Monarchy.²⁷ Vienna actually denied that Italy’s claim for compensation had any basis in the Treaty of the Triple Alliance. One year earlier, the Austro-Hungarian government had already stated that according to its interpretation Article VII of the Treaty referred only to Ottoman territories: putting an end to the Ottoman rule in Europe, the Balkan Wars had altered the political map of the region, making Article VII obsolete. However Austria-Hungary tried to reassure Italy by stating that it was not its aim to annex new

²⁵ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati, 14 July 1914. Doc. 225; Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 27 July 1914. Doc. 575.

²⁶ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 27 July 1914. Doc. 575.

²⁷ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 24 July 1914. Doc. 488; Bollati to Sangiuliano, 25 July 1914. Doc. 524.

territories at Serbia's expense.²⁸ The Austro-Hungarian government changed its position only at the beginning of August, when it was clear that the war was to involve the whole Europe. Ensuring Italy's support and possibly its participation was then the key objective for the Triple Alliance and for that reason Germany increased its pressure on Vienna. But contrary to Italy's demands, the Habsburg government retained the position that Italy had to share the burden of the war effort in order to lay its claims for compensation. Furthermore, any possible compensation could not be made at the expense of Austria-Hungary and was therefore out of question for Vienna to give up on Trentino or any other land of the Dual Monarchy.²⁹

The Habsburg government thus changed only partially its position, but it was probably too late. Vienna's refusal to accept the Italian demands strengthened Italy's neutralist option. The declaration of neutrality was officially proclaimed by the Italian government on 3 August, but even earlier neutrality was Sangiuliano's preferred option. Summing up the situation to the Italian king, the foreign minister did not exclude possible participation in the conflict in the future, but he thought that it was unlikely and risky for Italy.³⁰ Moreover, at that time Italy was shaken by deep social unrest and the country's military was unprepared to face a large-scale conflict. It can be thus stated that Italy's neutrality was due to various factors, which went far beyond foreign policy options and included the country's inner situation.³¹ On the other hand, even after the declaration of neutrality, Sangiuliano maintained his talks with Germany and Austria-Hungary in view of a possible Italian intervention. Furthermore, since August the Italian minister started talks also with the Entente Powers. He always retained neutrality as the best option for Italy, but he also aimed to evaluate which alliance could better meet Italy's interests. For Sangiuliano therefore neutrality was not a matter of principle, but rather a starting point for a possible negotiation. Italy had no contractual obligation to intervene and for Sangiuliano that meant that Italy could "decide in one way or another".³² As a consequence, Italy's position in the future remained open, depending on the calculation of risks and opportunities.

The Italian government would later resume talks with Berlin and Vienna about a possible cession of Trentino, but the political scenario of those negotiations was very

²⁸ DDI, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 24 July 1914. Doc. 493; Avarna to Sangiuliano, 29 July 1914. Doc. 681.

²⁹ DDI, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 1 August 1914. Doc. 848; Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 30 July 1914. Doc. 754. Sangiuliano to Bollati, 1 August 1914. Doc. 839.

³⁰ DDI Sangiuliano to Vittorio Emanuele III, 24 July 1914. Doc. 470. DDI, quinta serie vol. I, 1954. Avarna to Sangiuliano, 2 August 1914. Doc. 15, footnote 2.

³¹ In his memories Antonio Salandra, Italy's premier during the July crisis, often remarked on Italy's unreadiness for war; A. Salandra, *La neutralità italiana. 1914. Ricordi e pensieri*. Milano: Mondadori, 1928; see for example pages 83, 243ff. See also: DDI, Sangiuliano to Avarna, 2 August 1914. Doc. 2, where Sangiuliano also argued that Italy was largely unprepared for war.

³² DDI, Sangiuliano to Imperiali, Avarna, Bollati, Carlotti, Ruspoli, 29 July 1914. Doc. 682.

different from that of the July crisis. During the July crisis, Italy's neutrality affected the entire European scenario, as it deprived the Triple Alliance of its inner cohesion.³³

The uneasy alliance between Rome and Vienna

Before the July crisis, relations between Rome and Vienna were already tense and most of the differences between the two countries were related to the Balkans. For that reason, throughout the month of July, Sangiuliano strove to avoid direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary, fearing that, without Germany's mediation, talks would lead to a failure, thus further worsening the relations between Rome and Vienna. Tensions between Italy and the Dual Monarchy worried Italian diplomats, and Italy's representatives in Berlin and Vienna discussed several times the issue with Sangiuliano. Summing up the situation, on 8 July the Italian ambassador in Berlin, Bollati, wrote a long letter to the minister of foreign affairs, where he revealed all the critical issues that affected the relations between Italy and the Habsburg Empire. He argued that the crisis between the two countries was not caused just by occasional issues, but was far deeper and more complex. Bollati believed that tensions between the two countries dated back to "more ancient, long-lasting and even more serious causes", among which there was "Austria's rule over Italian-populated and Italian speaking lands, which according to at least nine-tenths of the Italians living in the Kingdom [of Italy], belong *de jure* to Italy and should sooner or later belong to Italy also *de facto*". Considering carefully the situation Bollati argued:

In fact, probably there is not a single question in which the interests of Italy are not, or at least are not believed to be, in contrast with those of Austria, in which the policy of each of the two governments is not intended to monitor and very often to fight that of the other, to protect itself against it, inspired by the conviction that what brings advantages to one, must necessarily bring damage to the other. Furthermore, there are so many differences and so many rivalries between the basic culture of the ruling elite and the public opinion of the two countries!³⁴

In some cases alliances are not strengthened by common interests but rather by a common enemy. Neither that can be the case for the alliance between Rome and Vienna; on the contrary Bollati wrote:

³³ Besides, this was also the opinion of German diplomacy, which believed that the inner cohesion of the Triple Alliance would have discouraged other countries to intervene on Serbia's side; DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati and Avarna, 28 July 1914. Doc. 644.

³⁴ DDI, Bollati to Sangiuliano, 8 July 1914. Doc. 120.

If there is hatred in Italy's popular consciousness, that's the hatred against our very ally; in Austria, actually, there is not even that, and one could even say that Austria hates especially itself, so strong and deep are the hostilities among the various nationalities of the Dual Monarchy.³⁵

The Italian diplomat believed there was no way to improve the relations between Rome and Vienna and he went on further to propose the end of such an uneasy alliance. In his opinion, that could made bilateral relations better, since Rome and Vienna would no longer be required by their alliance to deal with long and exhausting negotiations in order to find a common position. Sangiuliano was fully aware of the problems described by Bollati and he himself remarked that, despite his efforts to improve the image of Austria-Hungary, the Italian public opinion tended to consider it "a ruthless enemy, sometimes overt, sometimes deceitful", at the same time believing that Italy's alliance with the Dual Monarchy was "naive, cowardly, damaging". Sangiuliano admitted also the possibility that Rome could leave the Triple Alliance in the future, but at the moment he rejected this hypothesis, because he believed Germany and Austria-Hungary to be military stronger than the Entente powers, at least in terms of ground warfare. The Italian minister also believed that it was precisely the land warfare that would make the difference in possible confrontation between the two alliance blocks.³⁶

Although in July 1914 Italy rejected the hypothesis of breaking its alliance with Vienna, it is important to note that such a hypothesis already existed within the Italian diplomacy, not to mention the public opinion that, despite the government's efforts, could never consider Vienna a truly ally. The arguments put forward by Bollati and at least partially acknowledged by Sangiuliano, are very interesting because they reveal the critical nature of the alliance between Rome and Vienna, but foremost because they include almost all the reasons that only several months after the July crisis made Italy to disavow the Triple Alliance and join the opposite front in the war against Austria-Hungary.

³⁵ Ibidem. On the tense relations between Rome and Vienna see also: DDI, Avarna to Sangiuliano, 11 July 1914. Doc. 154. After the outbreak of the war Bollati adopted a different perspective and advocated Italy's intervention to support Germany and Austria-Hungary as the only way to save Italy's international prestige. See: Salandra, *La neutralità italiana*, 147–149.

³⁶ DDI, Sangiuliano to Bollati, 14 July 1914. Doc. 225.

Giordano MERLICCO

L'ITALIA E LA CRISI AUSTRO-SERBA DEL LUGLIO 1914

Sommario

L'articolo descrive la crisi austro-serba del luglio 1914 e la reazione ad essa dell'Italia. Nelle loro relazioni, i diplomatici italiani descrissero minutamente le reazioni provocate dall'assassinio di Francesco Ferdinando nella regione balcanica e nell'Impero asburgico. Sia per le sue idee politiche che per la sua personalità sprezzante, l'arciduca non era popolare. Egli godeva di un rilevante sostegno politico solo tra il clero cattolico e gli alti gradi delle forze armate. La sua morte, pertanto, non causò grande dispiacere nell'opinione pubblica, che in alcuni casi mostrò anzi una malcelata soddisfazione. Per quanto riguarda le reazioni politiche, invece, i diplomatici italiani ben presto notarono che le autorità austro-ungariche erano desiderose di utilizzare l'assassinio di Sarajevo per legittimare l'adozione di misure dure contro la Serbia e contro il movimento irredentista attivo nelle province slavo-meridionali dell'Impero asburgico. Tali sospetti furono finalmente confermati dall'ultimatum austro-ungarico alla Serbia, che la diplomazia italiana considerò una minaccia palese alla sovranità della Serbia.

Nonostante la sua appartenenza alla Triplice Alleanza, l'Italia non condivideva l'atteggiamento aggressivo dei suoi alleati. Secondo il trattato della Triplice Alleanza, ciascun contraente era chiamato a intervenire in caso di aggressione contro gli alleati. Tuttavia, il governo italiano riteneva che la guerra austro-serba non fosse una guerra di autodifesa per Vienna, e quindi l'Italia non aveva alcun obbligo di aiutare il suo alleato. Inoltre, il ministro degli Esteri italiano, Sangiuliano, credeva che l'espansione dell'influenza austro-ungarica nei Balcani era contraria agli interessi dell'Italia, perché avrebbe alterato l'equilibrio di potenza in una regione molto importante per la politica estera italiana. Sangiuliano concluse che l'Italia avrebbe potuto sostenere la guerra di Vienna solo se in cambio l'Impero asburgico le avesse riconosciuto alcuni compensi territoriali. Il governo austro-ungarico rifiutò le richieste italiane, dichiarando che per Vienna era inaccettabile l'ipotesi di cedere all'Italia il Trentino o altre province dell'Impero asburgico. Le divergenze tra Roma e Vienna rafforzarono l'opzione neutralista dell'Italia e rivelarono in tutta la sua gravità il divario che separava i due paesi.

Parole chiave: Attentato di Sarajevo, Crisi di luglio, Italia, Serbia, Austria-Ungheria, Prima guerra mondiale, Sangiuliano, Berchtold, Triplice Alleanza

Ђордано МЕРЛИКО

ИТАЛИЈА И АУСТРОУГАРСКО-СРПСКА КРИЗА ЈУЛА 1914.

Резиме

Чланак описује кризу између Аустрије и Србије у јулу 1914. године, као и италијанску реакцију на њу. У својим извештајима, италијански дипломатски представници у региону детаљно су описали реакције на Сарајевски атентат у Босни и Херцеговини и широм Хабсбуршког царства. Како због својих политичких ставова, тако и због свог безобзирног понашања, Франц Фердинанд није био популаран; уживао је политичку подршку само међу католичким свештенством и у вишим редовима оружаних снага. Његова смрт, дакле, није значајно растурила народ, чак је у појединачним случајевима тешко били сакрити задовољство. Италијанске дипломате су, међутим, веома брзо уочили да аустроугарске власти желе да искористе Сарајевски атентат као оправдање за усвајање оштрих мера против Србије и против иредентистичког покрета, који је деловао у јужнословенским покрајинама Хабсбуршког царства. Такве сумње је коначно потврдио аустроугарски ултиматум Србији. Италијанске дипломате сматрале су да он представља ноторну претњу суверенитету Србије и, према томе, да Београд не може да га прихвати.

Упркос свом чланству у Тројном савезу, Италија није делила ратнохушкачки став својих савезника. Према Уговору Тројног савеза, свака страна је морала да интервенише у случају агресије против других страна потписница. Но, италијанска влада је истакла да евентуални рат између Аустрије и Србије не би био за Беч одбрамбени рат, те тако Италија није имала обавезу да помогне свог савезника. Поред тога, италијански министар иностраних послова, Санђулијано, веровао је да се ширење аустроугарског утицаја на Балкан коси са интересима Италије јер би промењени однос снага у том веома осетљивом региону био на уштрб Италије. Санђулијано је казао да ће Италија подржати рат само уколико би је признало неке територијалне уступке. Аустроугарска влада је одбила италијанске захтеве наглашавајући да препуштање Италији италијанских провинција царства не долази у обзир. Мимоилажења Рима и Беча учврстила су неутралну позицију Италија и откриле пун обим стратешког разилажења између две земље.

Кључне речи: Сарајевски атентат, јулска криза, Италија, Србија, Аустро-Угарска, Први светски рат, Санђулијани, Бертолд, Тројни савез.

Giuseppe MOTTA

**THE BIRTH OF YUGOSLAVIA.
A VISION FROM ITALY (1918–20)**

Abstract: The article aims to give a brief survey of the attitude that an important part of the army showed towards the birth of the Reign of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the first world war. Many documents of the Italian General Staff of the army, as a matter of fact, recorded a widespread belief in indicating as the national problems the Achille's heel of the Yugoslav state. As a consequence, the most radical factions converged towards D'Annunzio's plans to foment this national resistance of Magyars, Croats, Albanians and Macedonians against Belgrade and to subject this political question to Italian interests. This attitude had no immediate results but was soon retaken by Benito Mussolini, who seemed to use D'Annunzio's intrigues as the main directive of his foreign policy with regards to Italian Eastern neighbor.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Irredentism, Italian Eastern Border, peace-treaties.

Introduction. The War, Italy and the Yugoslav State

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created at the end of WWI as the expression of the Yugoslav doctrine formulated in the XIX century by Ljudevit Gaj, Franjo Rački, Josip Juraj Strossmayer, Franjo Supilo and Ivan Cankar, who all advocated the union of Southern Slavs, even if under different political views.¹ As attempts of converting the Habsburg dualism into "trialism", giving full recognition to a Slavic entity, were frustrated by Vienna, these aspirations were re-addressed

¹ These ideas created different political perspectives: while some opted for reform of the Habsburg Empire, others openly contested any German influence. If the moderate loyalists' approach was dominant in the XIX century, the Yugoslav vision of independence prevailed during the war, as shown by the memorandum sent by Franjo Supilo to Sir Edward Grey, which was strongly adverse to German culture and imperialism. *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945*, vol. III, New York, Central University Press, 257.

towards the Serbian Kingdom, where the Karađorđević dynasty returned to occupy the throne after Alexander Obrenović's assassination in 1903.

In the minds of Serbian nationalists, the Habsburg rule represented the main obstacle for the dreams of a Yugoslav state, whose leadership was naturally destined to fall into the hands of Belgrade. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 alerted the more sensitive political observers about the potential hostility which was ingrained in the problems of the region and represented a dangerous "appetiser" of the conflict between Serbs and Habsburgs, which turned into a world war of incredible dimensions and unexpected results.² After years of endless controversies between Vienna and Belgrade – the "Pigs War", the terrorism of Mlada Bosnia and the "Black Hand" – the Great War made this ambitious project come true: during the tragic phases of the conflict, the Serbs consolidated their role in the pan-Slavic project of unifying the Balkan Slavs and their patriotism consecrated them in the eyes of the world. The works of British authors like Wickham Steed and Seton-Watson, as well as the sympathy expressed by American president Woodrow Wilson, spoke in favour of great solidarity with Serbia at the time. These sentiments were strengthened by the sacrifices made during the conflict by the Serbs and Austrian-Hungarian Slavs, who were imprisoned and discriminated. Extensive accounts of the Serbs' sufferings were spread by the international press or by publications such as *Les Yougoslaves* by Cviétisa, which recounted the massacres perpetrated by the *Schutzkorps*, the suppression of Serbian newspapers and numerous criminal indictments against the Slavs.³ The "New York Times", described not only the battles and evolution of the war, but also the deaths of 2,500 persons in the camps of Gmunden and Mehlersdorf in Austria, where the "disloyal" Yugoslav subjects were interned by Habsburg authorities.⁴

The war strengthened the Serbs' Pan-Serbian projects and, on the other side of the front, the pan-Slavic position of Habsburg Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who created a Southern Slav parliamentary club in Austria-Hungary and the Yugoslav

² "The consequences of the recent war, economic, moral, and social, are dreadful enough to justify any honest effort by any person or by any nation to alleviate the really distressing situation. The recently dedicated Peace Palace at The Hague stands as a witness to the new and larger patriotism. As in the long past individuals have brought precious gifts to their favourite shrines, so have the nations of the earth from the East and West brought to this temple their offerings in varied and beautiful forms, thus pledging their belief that through justice peace is to reign upon the earth". *Report of the International Commission to Inquire Into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, Carnegie Endowment for International peace, Washington D.C. 1914, 273.

³ Another meaningful event was the imprisonment of countess Vidovitch from Split, who was found guilty of having sung the Serb hymn, or the four trials against 154 attendants of secondary schools, among them 122 Serbs. F. Cviétisa, *Les Yougoslaves*, Paris 1918, 40 ff. See also J. E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914–1918*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2009; C. Jelavich – B. Jelavich (ed. by), *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, Berkeley, University of California Press 1963.

⁴ V. R. Savić, *Austro-Hungarian Lines of Cleavage* in "New York Times", 7 July 1918. The article reported the experience of a catholic priest, L. Mihalić from Istria.

Committee in London to support the Yugoslav idea. An agreement with Belgrade was reached, on 20 July 1917, when the Corfu Declaration was passed. With this act, the exile representatives from Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia expressed their wish to establish a constitutional, democratic and parliamentary monarchy headed by the Karađorđević dynasty.

On that occasion Ante Trumbić and Nikola Pašić signed an agreement that included a precise article about the future Constitution, which had to “give the people the opportunity to develop their special energies in autonomous units required by natural, social or economic conditions” (art. 14).

In October 1918, the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs living inside the Habsburg Empire was formed in Zagreb, and a month later it issued a declaration concerning the union with Serbia. Since the achievement of this target was accelerated by the pressures coming from those parts of Croatia that risked being occupied and annexed by Italy, the details of the union were not fully defined and were postponed to the works of the Constituent Assembly. The discussions at the *Narodno vijeće* were very tense and animated – as a result, the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs were prepared to shake their right hands while keeping guns in their left ones, hidden behind their back.

Finally, on 1 December 1918, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS – *Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*) was proclaimed by Prince Regent Aleksandar Karađorđević. It united largely different territories, which featured different historical evolutions, ethnic configurations, economic performances and religious preferences.

The territory of independent Serbia was enlarged with Habsburg Slovenia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, independent Montenegro, and with those parts of Kosovo and Macedonia that had been acquired in 1912–13. All these regions contained many minorities with different attitudes towards the new Yugoslav state, starting from the Germans of Slovenia and the Hungarians of Vojvodina, who preferred to remain within Austria’s borders. In Montenegro, where the population consisted of Orthodox Christians, the union with Serbia was troubled by the presence of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty, compromised by the ambiguous management of its war strategy. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not simple either: after centuries of Ottoman rule, since 1878 this province had experienced Habsburg policies and annexation (1908) and only during the conflict did Bosnian Muslims clearly opt for the union with Belgrade. Kosovo featured large Muslim communities, who had strained relations with the Serbs, while Macedonia had experienced the development of a strong terrorist movement – the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) which had close political connections with Bulgaria. Finally, in Croatia, many nationalists accepted the union only with a federal perspective, in order to get a stronger position to cope with Italian “appetites” over Dalmatia, Istria, Fiume (Rijeka) and the islands.⁵

⁵ The importance of the Italian threat during the creation of Yugoslavia is acknowledged in many books concerning the history of Croatia, I. Goldstein, *Croatia. A History*, London 1999; A. J. Bellamy, *The formation of Croatian national identity. A centuries-old dream*, Manchester – New York

After the end of the conflict Italy began the occupation of Istria and Dalmatia, which were regarded by Slavic public opinion as an integral part of their new homeland. As a consequence, the creation of the SHS Kingdom meant a great problem for Italian foreign policy, which was addressed towards a large extension of territorial frontiers in the Adriatic region, conforming to the dispositions that the Italian government had negotiated with the Entente in London, on 26 April 1915. This secret treaty was later published by the bolsheviks in the newspaper "Izvestija", establishing that the Italian adhesion to the Entente and participation in the war would be repaid with large concessions: the regions of Trentino, South-Tyrol (Alto Adige), Venezia Giulia, Istria, a substantial part of Dalmatia and numerous islands, Vlora and Sazan in Albania.

Some years later, at the end of 1918, the problem emerged since the pact had been signed without taking into consideration the final collapse of Austria-Hungary, the creation of a great Yugoslav state and the inclusion of Montenegro into the latter. This "omission" meant the start of harsh diplomatic controversies between Rome and Belgrade, concerning the city of Fiume (Rijeka) and the region of Dalmatia that the treaty of London had assigned to Italy up to Cape Planka, conforming to the Austrian administrative frontiers (*L'Italie recevra également la province de Dalmatie dans ses limites administratives actuelles*, art. 5).

During the second half of 1918, the perception of these inevitable controversies was increasingly clear to Italian diplomacy, as proved by some documents of October. On 15 October, Foreign Affairs Minister Sidney Sonnino instructed his ambassadors in London, Washington and the Italian representative to the Serbian Government in Corfu to deny an explicit declaration of support in favour of the union between the Serbs and the "Yugoslav brothers", recognising them as war allies; on 19 October, the same minister "ordered" to defend the preservation of Montenegro as one of the main elements brought to the alliance with the Entente.⁶

The Italian opposition to the Yugoslav project was even clearer if considering the talks between the Italian ambassador in Washington, Macchi de Cellere, and the American assistant of Secretary of State William Phillips. On this occasion, the Italian diplomat confirmed the traditional friendship with Serbia but defined the Pact of

2003. On relations between Rome and Belgrade: M. Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale*, Bologna 2007; P. D'Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e la questione adriatica (1919-1920)*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1959; C. Sforza, *Jugoslavia, storia e ricordi*, Donatello De Luigi, Milano 1948; R. Pupo, *Il confine scomparso. Saggi sulla storia dell'Adriatico orientale*, Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste 2007; E. Miletto, *Istria allo specchio. Storia e voci di una terra di confine*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2007; E. Apih, *Italia, fascismo e antifascismo nella Venezia Giulia (1918-1943)*, Laterza, Bari 1966; A. M. Vinci, *Il fascismo al confine orientale*, Atti del convegno *Fascismo, foibe, esodo. Le tragedie del confine orientale*, Aned, Associazione nazionale ex deportati politici, Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione, Trieste 2004.

⁶ Messages of Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino of 15 and 19 October. On 11 October, the director of "Corriere della Sera" informed the under-secretary for propaganda outside Italy about the intention of the Slavic representatives to declare their secession from Austria-Hungary and the Yugoslav independence. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, quinta serie 1914-1918, vol. XI, Roma 1986, docs. 657, 674, 705.

Corfu as “imperialistic, undetermined, excessive, contrary to Wilson’s principles”, as an unfortunate hurdle to the application of the programme of liberty that had to be denounced owing to its “spirit of reckless oppression”.⁷ Naturally, this attitude was maintained at the peace conference of Versailles, where the Italian delegates repeatedly asked for total execution of the treaty of London. This request was underlined in April 1919, when the Italian delegation temporarily abandoned the works, and was confirmed in the following memorandums, for example on 9 December 1919, or on 12 January 1920. On this occasion, the new prime minister, Nitti, declared to the Supreme Council: “The Treaty had been made in good faith, and there was a mutual obligation to execute it in good faith. How to alter it to suit the present conditions was a matter for consideration. His colleagues said that they recognised their obligation to carry out the Treaty, but that, if carried out, the whole of its clauses must be carried out”.⁸

The Italian strategy aimed to reiterate the respect of the 1915 treaty, whose application was inevitably conditioned by Wilson’s opposition and his refusal to recognise the effects of secret diplomacy. As a consequence, Italian representatives had to choose another way to pursue the lines of their foreign policy and decided to take into account the problems that were naturally deriving from particular conditions within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This state, in fact, reminded of the old multinational empires because of the multiethnic and multicultural scenario of different regions absorbed into new frontiers. In 1921, Yugoslavia hosted 5,271,500 Serbs, Macedonians and Montenegrins (44%); 2,884,700 Croats (24.1%); 1,020,000 Slovenes (8.5%); 755,300 Bosnian Muslims (6.3%); 505,800 Germans (4.2%); 467,700 Hungarians (3.9%); 439,000 Albanians (3.7%); 231,100 Romanians (1.9%); 150,300 Turks (1.3%) and many other minorities such as Italians and Slovaks⁹. The new state

⁷ The Pact contained something „di imperialistico, di indeterminato, di eccessivo nelle pretese, di contrario agli stessi principi di Wilson per denunciarlo nel suo spirito di sopraffazione avventurosa come un disgraziato inciampo alla stessa realizzazione di quel programma di libertà indipendenza e raggruppamento al quale l’Italia come lo ha dimostrato ampiamente, si sente vincolata non meno di altri” sostegno alle nazionalità oppresse”. Message of the ambassador at Washington, Macchi de Cellere, to Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino on 24 October 1918. Ibidem, doc.747.

⁸ Some days later, Nitti confirmed: “Le Gouvernement Royal Italien, désirant arriver dans l’intérêt général à une solution équitable de la Question Adriatique, a fait des propositions et accepté des contres-propositions qui ont touchés la dernière limite des concessions compatibles avec les intérêts vitaux de l’Italie. Les Alliés ont pû constater durant le cours des négociations jusqu’à quel point la Délégation Italienne a fait preuve d’esprit de conciliation et de sacrifice. Malgré cela, les efforts qu’elle a faits pour arriver à un accord se sont constamment heurtés contre une intransigeance absolue du côté Jugoslave. Par conséquent, la Délégation Italienne, après avoir constaté avec regret l’impossibilité d’arriver à une entente, se voit dans la nécessité de déclarer qu’elle considère sans aucun effet et comme non avenues toutes les concessions faites pendant les longues négociations. Dans ces conditions le Traité de Londres de 1915 doit avoir pleine exécution”. Notes to the Supreme Council in Paris (12 and 20 January 1920).

⁹ P. Eberhardt, *Ethnic Groups and Population Changes in Twentieth-Century Central-Eastern Europe. History, Data and Analysis*, Armonk – London 2001, 360.

was a complex combination of languages, faiths and traditions. Catholicism and Protestant cults were present in western areas such as Slovenia and Croatia, Orthodoxy was the religion of Serbs, while Islam was still practiced by many people in Bosnia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia. In conclusion, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes became a huge melting pot of different nationalities who soon found many causes of disagreement among them.

The Birth of the New State

The confrontation between Rome and Belgrade occupied an important place in the peace talks of Versailles, creating many problems in Italy, where Wilson's position in favour of Yugoslavia was seen as an outrageous act against one of the winners. Both Belgrade and Rome pursued an inflexible strategy claiming the maximum they could; Italy asked for all Dalmatia, while Belgrade wanted even Trieste and some regions of the Friuli's Alps (*Furlanija* in Slovenian). The clash gave birth to a whole of small "accidents": the attack against a train of former Italian interned soldiers coming back to Italy in the station of Ljubljana, or the troubles of Spalato (Split) where Italian mariners were surrounded and beaten by pan-Slavic activists in the port. Sometimes these troubles seemed very childish: an Italian soldier, Francesco Perrotta, for example, reported about the theft of his rucksack during a travel on a train and other intimidations, but decided not to persecute the Serbian soldier who had stolen his rucksack.¹⁰ Other episodes of anti-Italian violence took place in January 1919, when in many cities Italian shops, associations and institutions were attacked and deprived of images of the Italian King. According to Italian diplomacy, Pašić and Serbian government's deliberate strategy was to attack Italy in order to improve inner cohesion and make of the international situation "a cement to join different people and parties", as internal problems were not less acute than international controversies.¹¹

It was obvious, therefore, that Italy had a special interest in the Yugoslav situation and Rome monitored very carefully not only the international conditions,

¹⁰ Note by Maffei, Vienna, 22 April 1919, Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (Aussme), E11, 8, 1; another soldier was searched and deprived of his entire equipment at the railway station of S. Peter (Note of Segre, Vienna, 2 March 1919, Aussme, E11, 8, 1).

¹¹ Note sent by the charge in Belgrade, Galanti, to Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino, Belgrade, 12 December 1918. In case of a Serbian attack in Dalmatia, the Supreme Commander of the Army, Diaz, approved an order to resist such possibility (note sent to the president of the Council Orlando and to Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino, 30 December 1918). *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie 1918–1922, vol. I, Roma 1955, 296, doc. 537. The split between Italians and Slavs was evident since the end of XIX century, when in Dalmatia the two factions emerged with different programmes. But many remained united against the common centralist and bureaucratic regime, 287–288. L. Voinovitch, *Dalmatia and the Yugoslav movement*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London 1920.

but also the political evolution within the SHS Kingdom. Thanks to the careful work of Italian observers, the vision of Yugoslav problems began to be perceived quite clearly also by Rome, consolidating the position of those groups that aimed to exploit the Yugoslav weakness in order to pursue Italian interests in the Balkans. As a consequence, great attention was directed to Croatia, Kosovo and Macedonia, the regions where the resistance against the Belgrade government was stronger and Rome could find powerful and tenacious “allies”.

Generally, historiography has centred its analysis on the Croatian question, which has been treated in all books about the history of Yugoslavia as it marked the interwar experience of this state and generally the European evolution between the two world wars. In Croatia, nationalists initiated a deep split with Belgrade since the very beginning. Croatian regiments had fought on the side of Austria-Hungary during World War I and participated in the occupation of Serbia. The natural consequence of these premises conditions the Serbo-Croatian identity: theoretically, it was to include the great majority of the Yugoslav population (any Slav in Yugoslavia who was not a Slovene) – practically the artificial creation of the Serbo-Croatian identity was used as a cover for the dominion of one people over the other.¹²

After the union, the Croats were deprived of the administrative rights they had enjoyed under Hungary, when Croatia was the only region to benefit from minimum status of autonomy – granted in 1102 by the *Pacta Conventa* and in 1868 by a special agreement with Budapest – while the other people were instead subjected to strict measures of Magyarization. The troubles experienced after 1918 and the failure of any federal solution made the Croats start to quarrel with Belgrade over the territories occupied by Serbian armies at the end of the conflict. The office of *Ban* was reduced to a mere executor of the orders coming from Belgrade, while other discussions were centred on the role of Croats during the war; had they liberated themselves or were they freed by the Serbs?

The Croatian opposition was led by the Peasant Party and the Party of Rights (*Stranka prava*) – the Croatian Union (*Hrvatska zajednica*) was more moderate, though both of them exploited Croatian pride and history to criticise Belgrade and the pro-Serbian approach under which the union was taking ground. The opposition to the unitary state was very considerable and was manifest since the beginning. On 24 November 1918, Stjepan Radić delivered a very critical speech at the assembly of the National Council, in advance of the final negotiations to be held in Belgrade. Radić violently reproached his colleagues and their “empty and unjustifiable words” and openly attacked the ideas of centralism, highlighting his interpretation of Yugoslav nationality, which was not composed of a single group, but of the union of different people.

¹² As it happened also in Czechoslovakia. This vision was immediately shared by Italian irredentists such as Attilio Tamaro and later inspired “revisionist” historiography. A. Tamaro, *La Lotta delle razze nell'Europa danubiana*, Rome 1923; R. Pearson, *National minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848–1945*, London 1985.

“Do not put your head in the lion’s mouth! Do not accept a uniform government with the Kingdom of Serbia, because, if anything else, what we have before us is just a single telegram in the name of the Kingdom of Serbia...We, the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs, are three brothers and not one person... the most terrible thing, the greatest sin and the greatest political error is to present one’s own native people with a done deal, in other words, to govern according to the will of the aristocratic minority without the people and against the people”.¹³

In the same days two Croatian detachments attempted to seize the control of Zagreb, inaugurating the difficult integration of Croatia into the Kingdom. But the political situation, in spite of Radić’s opinion, evolved towards the final proclamation of the union with the decision of 1 December 1918; the decision was contested by the Peasant Party and the Party of Rights, which both denied its representative character. In January, a revolutionary attempt was reported by the Italian army, then a conference summoned in Zagreb appealed to the conference of Paris for the liberation of Croatia from Serbian troops; 160,000 signatures were collected by Radić at the end of February 1919 against the state of siege imposed by military authorities; in March other 115,000 signatures were gathered and then confiscated, while the whole country was experiencing political arrests and hardships.¹⁴

On 8 March 1919, the central committee of the Peasant Party passed Radić’s resolution against the recognition of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the Karađorđević dynasty, as it had not been proclaimed by the Croatian *Sabor*. The full statement was included in a memorandum which was addressed to the peace conference asking for a “neutral Croatian Peasants’ Republic” with its own Constituent Assembly.

The government reacted to these demonstrations throwing Radić into prison along with several other party members and keeping them there until the elections for the Constituent Assembly, in November 1920. Radić was arrested because he prejudiced the Serbian position and international image; he also created a “bad mood in the people aiming to provoke a great uprising in Zagreb and in Croatia”. The impressions reported to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry in April 1919 described the situation as optimal for an anti-Serbian campaign as “all agreed about the impossibility of further tolerating the Serbian dominion imposed with violence in the last months”.¹⁵

Italian observers followed these events with great interest and reported in their documents of 1919–20 about strikes, riots and anti-Serbian demonstrations (Ogulin, Karlovac, Sisak, and Zagreb) which even ended with the troops shooting at the crowd and

¹³ Speech at the Night Assembly, *Discourses on Collective Identity*, 159–160.

¹⁴ In Sarajevo the petition was signed by 120,000 people, while in Slovenia there were only revolts of little groups and a general feeling of political inconvenience. Note of the ITO office sent to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, August 1919. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, vol. III, doc. 463, 468.

¹⁵ Confidential note 849/1183, Rome, 3 April 1919; Report of the Supreme Command attached to note no. 3601, 8 April 1919. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, vol. III, doc. 105, 110; doc. 152, 163 ff.

killing some demonstrators. A great turmoil was caused by the trial against Radić, which was accompanied by several riots and agitations, which were repressed thanks to military extraordinary measures under the state of siege. Carrying out his “fight of the plough” against the “Serbian bayonet”, Radić denounced the “military dictatorship” in Croatia, considering the address of 1 December 1918 as null and void, since it was contrary to the letter and spirit of the *Sabor’s* decision of October 1918, and to the electoral results of November 1920. Another outstanding source of conflict was represented by the economic policies of Belgrade, which were strongly criticised by the Croatian press.¹⁶

In 1919 and 1920, the new regions of the Kingdom witnessed troubles and agitations which could not be properly considered as friendly expressions of welcome to the new rulers. It was a common impression that the Serbian occupation of the new territories was conducted through violence and discrimination, as denounced by some press articles or by publications such as O. D. Skopiansky’s *Les atrocités serbes d’après les témoignages américains, anglais, français, italiens...* In this book of 1919, the author emphasised the violent approach of Serbian authorities and compared Belgrade to a child who had eaten too many green apples and could not digest them.¹⁷ A formal protest against Belgrade was decided upon also at the convention of Croats in the United States (Pittsburgh, 26 April 1921), which denounced the “barbaric executions, tortures and crimes perpetrated recently by Serbian officials in Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia”.¹⁸

The Italian diplomatic reports from Yugoslavia mentioned numerous little conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia and Montenegro. Since their arrival in these regions, military authorities had to start collecting taxes for the government but encountered general resistance of the population who had to be calmed down with strong measures and strict management of public order. Italian documents reported many revolts and some political attempts to send away Serbian troops, as indicated by a petition which appeared in Sarajevo and was signed by more than 120,000 people. The Italian director of “Ufficio I.T.O” in Venezia Giulia described the situation as a “Balkan Serbian bluff” (*bluff serbo balcanico*) and calculated that the number of people arrested in the four regions (Croatia, Slovenia, Slavonia, Bosnia) exceeded 3,000 individuals (*un totale superiore alle tremila persone*).¹⁹

¹⁶ “Obzor” of Zagreb denounced the illusion of the Yugoslav richness on 30 September, while “Trgovinski list” of Zagreb (30 August 1921) stated: “The land reform had not given the expected results, railways do not function, public security leaves much to be desired”.

¹⁷ O. D. Skopiansky, *Les atrocités serbes d’après les témoignages américains, anglais, français, italiens, russes, serbes, suisses etc. etc.*, Lausanne 1919, 74–77. The author especially focused on Macedonian and Albanian territories.

¹⁸ The resolution stated: “the barbaric executions, tortures and crimes perpetrated recently by the Serbian officials in Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, as such acts surpass in brutality exhibited by Turks in the Balkans in the past. Our gallant soldiers did not shed their blood for such a government on the fields of Europe”. Historical Archives of the League of Nations, Section 41, R1661 dossier 12627.

¹⁹ Note of the Director of the I.T.O department in Venezia Giulia, colonel Finzi. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, 1918–1922, vol. III, Roma 2007.

Other documents spoke about a Croatian band of bandits, *Grüne Kader*, formed by deserters and rebels, and about the disorders that inflamed Montenegro in 1919. While at the end of November 1918, the assembly of Podgorica had unanimously adopted a resolution for the deposition of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty and the union with Serbia, at the beginning of 1919, a rebellion started in Montenegro, divided between the white pro-Serbian faction (*bjelaši*) and the Greens, who claimed autonomy (*zelenaši*, also called *krilaši*): the term Whites and Greens derived from the colours of the paper on which the lists of candidates in the elections to the Grand National Assembly were printed.²⁰ It was a real civil war between two factions fighting to conquer the government of the little country. Despite the appeals of the rebels who asked for the occupation of international troops with the exclusion of Serbs, the Whites succeeded in controlling the political situation and joining Montenegro in the SHS Kingdom.²¹

When the peace-conference started, Montenegro was still considered an independent state but, due to the chaotic situation in the country, its delegation could not attend the negotiations and it was quite clear that the question was leaning in favour of the union with Serbia. The unionists consolidated their positions notwithstanding the continuation of the internal fight that Italy tried to influence by creating a committee for Montenegro's independence, headed by Antonio Baldacci. The committee was helping the Greens at least until 1921 and permitted, though with some suspensions, an intensive anti-Yugoslav propaganda in papers such as the "Adriatico Nostro".²² The conflict continued after the first uprisings in December 1918

²⁰ Several documents sent from Montenegro reported about the outbreak of a revolt and the perturbations of public order. Note of the Supreme Commander of the Army, Diaz, sent to the president of the Council Orlando, 1 January 1919. Note sent by Sonnino to the ambassadors in Paris and London, Bonin Longare and Imperiali, Rome, 4 January 1919 doc, 758, 408. According to the first news, a thousand of persons fought in the streets of Cetinje. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie 1918–1922, vol. I, Roma 1955, doc 726, 393; doc. 817, 435.

²¹ Note sent by the "Capo di gabinetto" of the president of the Council, Battioni, to the president of the Council, Orlando, Paris, 27 February 1919 t. 536. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, 1918–1922, vol. I, Roma 1955. Note sent by the Supreme Commander of the Army, Diaz, to the president of the Council, Orlando, Italia, 1 January 1919, Tel. 3148/35908: "in questi ultimi tempi sono corse voci di probabili perturbamenti ordine pubblico in Montenegro". According to another document: "insurrezione Montenegro scoppiata 2 corrente, insorti chiedono occupazione alleati con esclusione serbi, onde mettere il paese in condizione di decidere liberamente propria sorte". Note of Foreign Affairs Minister Sonnino to the ambassadors in Paris, Bonin Longare, and London, Imperiali, Roma, 4 January 1919 t. 14: *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, 1918–1922, vol. III, Roma 1980.

²² This organisation was connected with analogous societies in Switzerland or in other countries, A. Vento, *In silenzio gioite e soffrite: Storia dei servizi segreti italiani dal Risorgimento alla Guerra fredda*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 2010, 156, 157. Baldacci's interest in Montenegro dated back to 1885 when he travelled along the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea as far as the Bay of Kotor, continuing his researches in the following years and trying to improve the economic relations between Italy and Montenegro. S. Burzanović, *Antonio Baldacci e il Montenegro*, in V. Kilbarda – J. Vučo (a cura di), *Contesti Adriatici. Studi di italianistica comparata*, Aracne, Roma 2008.

and January 1919, which were repressed by the unionists, as well as the following attempts performed by the Greens to take control of the country, fighting “for justice, honour and the freedom of Montenegro”.

King Nikola planned to come back to the country once the independent side had won the battle; in spring 1919 he travelled to Italy hoping for an imminent return to Montenegro.²³ But his troops headed by Captain Krsto Todorov-Zrnov Popović failed to conquer the capital city and could only continue to destabilise the region with constant *guerrilla* tactics until 1925, many years after King Nikola’s death. In this year Italy supported the international committee for the independence of Montenegro with intensive propaganda led by Antonio Baldacci. The end of Montenegrin independence was defined as “grave injustice” to the brave and ancient people of Montenegro – “the bloodiest slaughter spot in Europe”.²⁴

Many tensions inflamed the entire periphery of the new state, which was inhabited by many minorities. These regions were claimed also by the neighbouring countries and the treatment of different ethnic groups was subsequently conditioned by relations with their respective states. No mercy was shown in the regions populated by the Magyars, where the Serbian troops penetrated, overcoming the borders indicated by the Belgrade armistice. The regions of Banat, Bačka and Baranja were integrated under the menace of the army, which continued to denounce the discovery of plots and conspiracies of irredentist Magyars. In this chaotic climate, a short-lived Magyar republic of Baranja and Bačka was proclaimed by Béla Linder and put under the protection of Yugoslavia until the Serbs enforced the control of the region. Also in this region, Italian documents reported about serious problems with the local population: in Pecs, for example, the Serbian army confiscated the Austro-Hungarian bank, and the personal dossiers, liquid assets and shares worth 19,061,527,97 krone were moved to Belgrade. In the following years, land reform served as a pretext for bringing in new Serbian settlers, who were employed as

After the clashes occurred on Christmas Eve 1918, the “Greens” advanced several demands insisting that the Podgorica Assembly had broken the country’s Constitution and acted against the will of the majority of the Montenegrin people. They also suggested that there was a general consensus that Montenegro should enter the Yugoslav state on an equal basis with the other provinces and that the final form of that state’s internal structure should be decided by a constitutional assembly. Š. Rastoder, *A short review of the history of Montenegro*, in F. Bieber (ed.), *Montenegro in Transition. Problems of Identity and Statehood*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft Baden-Baden 2003, 131 W. Warren: *Montenegro. The Crime of the Peace Conference*, Brentano’s, New York 1922; F. Caccamo, *Il Montenegro negli anni della prima guerra mondiale*, Aracne, Roma 2008.

²³ He travelled to Genoa and Rapallo. Note set by the Montenegrin delegation in Paris to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, 26 June 1919. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, vol. III, doc. 615, 626.

²⁴ W. Littlefield, *Annihilation of a Nation*, in “New York Times”, 16 April 1922. Serbs Wipe Out Royalist Party in Montenegro. Official Observers Bring Gruesome Reports to Paris, in “Chicago Tribune”, 4 September 1919.

“border guards”, diluting the Hungarian areas in order to “Serbianise” the Hungarians linguistically and culturally.²⁵

Some controversies emerged even with Romania, concerning the division of Banat, where Belgrade tried to play its cards and once again showed an attitude which was perceived as aggressive by the Romanians. In summer 1919, while Serbs and Romanians were fighting against bolshevik Hungary, on 20 July the Yugoslav army occupied the railway of Temesvár and was accused of conducting an *acte d’hostilité flagrante* against the Romanians.²⁶

Another troubled question that Italian documents widely analysed was the German minority in the Alps. As it happened with Italy, there was a territorial controversy with Austria over Styria and Carinthia, which could be partially solved through a plebiscite. Meanwhile, this controversy exacerbated the attitude of Serbian authorities towards the Germans, who contested the extension of the newborn Kingdom. After the end of the war, the army headed by Rudolf Maister started to occupy the regions of Carinthia and Styria, where it confiscated without indemnities the cattle of German villages, especially at Spiefeld and Murek.²⁷ The Yugoslav authorities were clearly worried about the presence of Italian troops in the region, who were guilty of sustaining the German population, and were spied and controlled. Italian documents defined the Yugoslav approach as dominated by the Serbs, who were imbued with wild imperialism as they were greedy for territories to constitute a Greater Serbia. Italians showed to be surprised by the Serbian attitude and by the will of contesting Italy as regards to Dalmatia:

²⁵ Note 3563/W.S./12 on *Misure coercitive degli slavi del sud in Pecs*, signed by Gino Maffei, maggiore addetto, to the Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Vienna, 10 April 1919, Aussme, E11, 8, 12. Other minorities were present in Medjimurje or Mur Island, Prekmurje (land beyond the Mur), which were traditionally parts of the Hungarian state but had in fact only a minority of Hungarian residents; there, the majority of Slovenes were considered by the Magyars different from the Slovenes and were called Wends. In the interwar period, Yugoslavia resorted to a two-pronged policy to weaken the country’s Hungarian minority: outright repression on the one hand and divide-and-rule tactics of Habsburg times on the other. Beset by nationality problems, the government backed loyal ethnic groups, Germans and Jews, against the irredentist Hungarians. A. Ludanyi, *The Hungarians of Vojvodina under Yugoslav Rule*, in S. Borsody (ed.), *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation*, New Haven 1988. On 25 August 1921, the “*Currier de Geneve*” dedicated a whole page to Yugoslavia (*En Yougoslavie*) and reported about the events of Baranja. Yugoslavia was only apparently strong, the multiethnic clashes were reflected by the violence of the press and by the system of national schools. Thanks to the law of 1920, denominational schools were converted into private ones: the whole system of schools and confessions was developed to the detriment of the minorities also with anti-Catholic attitude of the authorities who regarded Catholics in Vojvodina and Croatia as a menace to the state.

²⁶ *Le 20 Juillet la Roumanie a été attaqué par une armée trois fois lus forte de bolchevistes Magyars*, note of the Romanian delegation at the Peace conference to president Georges Clemenceau, sent by N. Mişu, 3 August 1919. Aussme, E8, 74, 1.

²⁷ Telegram sent by general Segre to the Supreme Command, Vienna, 13 March 1919. Aussme, E11, 8, 12.

“Fa una certa impressione sentir dire dal soldato serbo, che solo pochi mesi fa no sapeva che esistesse una Dalmazia: noi abbiamo fatto la guerra per la Dalmazia!”²⁸

Even if the Italian documents were surely conditioned by the government’s adversity against Yugoslavia, they undoubtedly represent a good source of information when testifying to the treatment reserved for the Germans of Styria and Carinthia. As a matter of fact, the hostility showed towards the Italians was insignificant compared to the treatment of the Germans, who were victims of one of the bloodiest episodes of the postwar period. On 27 January 1919, when the American commission arrived at Marburg (Maribor), a German parade marched in the streets of the city to welcome the Americans with slogans referring to liberty and Wilson’s self-determination. The crowd was accompanied by a musical band and peacefully demonstrated in the squares and in front of the municipality of Marburg until a policeman called Seneković appeared with a revolver and started a brawl. Soon afterwards, other soldiers reached their colleague, defended him and positioned themselves in front of the municipality, shooting in the air and also against the people who started to run away seized by fear (the official version focused on the soldiers’ intention to defend the municipality, *Narodni dom*, against the assault of the crowd). Many people were wounded and eight died (according to the Italian official dispatch, 13 persons were dead), among them, a six-year-old child. The American commission was not informed about the facts and visited a city which had been emptied by the Yugoslav army.²⁹

This episode, known as the “Bloody Sunday” (*Marburger Blutsonntag*) was not an isolated case but was accompanied by many different measures aimed to cleanse the region from any German influence: the expulsion of all former soldiers of German origin, closure of schools, ban on the distribution of goods, demolition of all shop signs and of official advertisements that were written in German, replacement of German officials (teachers and public employees) with Slovenian ones. Many Germans were arrested and others expelled, while their houses were occupied by soldiers who threw families out; at Windischgraz even speaking in German was forbidden and sanctioned with a 100-krone fee. Despite the official measures, soldiers were quite free to perpetrate any kind of violence against the population – to steal from houses, arrest people with no serious accusations, throw grenades inside bars and form bands of drunken and clamouring soldiers who injured and disturbed the passers-by.³⁰

²⁸ The Serbs were angry with the Italians because, it was said, they did not have any relations with their allies but created good ones with the Germans. Note 3507 sent by Segre to the Supreme Command, Vienna, 7 March 1919, Aussme, E11, 8, 4.

²⁹ Italian officials argued that the aim of the action was to prevent the Germans to show to the commission the character of the city. Note of the “Alpini” Captain, Giorgio Caioli Carrara, “Rapporto sugli avvenimenti del 27 gennaio 1919”. Aussme, E11, 8, 4.

³⁰ Document signed by Alpini Captain, Giorgio Caioli Carrara, and attached to the Note 3507 sent from Segre to the Supreme Command, Vienna, 7 March 1919, Aussme, E11, 8, 4. The Italian Caioli was deprived of a sum of money, expelled by his domicile under various pretexts and had to quarrel many times with Seneković, who had been expelled from Trieste and had very strong anti-Italian feelings.

In summer, other troubles occurred at Marburg, but this time they involved Yugoslav soldiers, showing that behind the common hostility against the non-Slavs the relations among ethnic groups of the new army were not so good either. On 22 July, after the reduction in their daily income from five to two krone, Slovenian soldiers demonstrated in the streets, converging towards the central square of the city. The Serbian and Croatian soldiers, who were settled in other barracks, received the order to repress the march. The fights ended with many casualties and 200 wounded persons, while 70 soldiers were sentenced to death by shooting (the effective punishment was later postponed).³¹ Italian diplomacy in Paris emphasised the behaviour of Yugoslav troops in Carinthia, which was strongly reproached also at the peace conference, as proved by a telegram of May, with a joint declaration of the four powers aimed at stopping the hostilities.

The situation was critical and in many regions it was on the verge of turning into a full-scale rebellion. To react against the agitations that sometimes turned into real uprisings, the Serbian command proclaimed martial law and tried to define the revolts as bolshevik ones, even if the protests were mainly addressed against Serbian troops and only sometimes showed a socialist character, menacing private properties or the highest social classes. At the same time, it is necessary to stress that the socialist tensions merged with the national ones, as the government's oppression was attacked from both points of view, calling for national and social reforms. As a consequence, nationalism and socialism were equally perceived as a threat to the state and fell under the application of Obznana – the 1920 decree on defence of the state.

The troubles were widespread and involved almost all ethnic communities, for example the Muslim community, which unanimously argued that the arrival of Serbian troops implied the start of a strict rule, that is to say the continuation of the approach applied in other territories also during the conflict, when Muslims along the Albanian and Bulgarian frontiers had to flee, abandoning their homes, lands and cattle. During the conflict, Italian documents reported about the treatment reserved to Muslims who were beaten or arrested when they dared to visit Italian consulates, and this approach was naturally destined to continue even in the postwar period.³²

³¹ Note sent by colonel Camillo Caleffi, to General Staff headquarters in Rome, 5 August 1919, Aussme E11, 8, 4. The declaration was obviously sponsored by Italian ambassador in Paris Bonin Longare, who put pressure on French Foreign Affairs Minister Pichon. Note of the supreme commander of the Army, Diaz, to the Foreign Affairs Minister in Paris, 1 May 1919; report of 31 June 1919. *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, vol. III, doc. 364, 383; doc. 379, 399.

³² Note sent by the Italian military attaché, Galanti, from Uskub to the Foreign Affairs Minister in Rome, 16 January 1915, no. 34/3, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito Historical Archive (Aussme), Rome, G33, b. 35, 320: *“lungo tutte le frontiere albanesi e bulgare i musulmani fuggono in gran numero abbandonando le loro case, le terre, il bestiame...il nostro consolato è giorno e notte sorvegliato da agenti di polizia e da spie e mi consta che tutti i musulmani che vi si sono recati in questi giorni sono poi stati tratti in arresto e bastonati”*. The Serbs *“Procedono ora ad arbitrarie visite e perquisizioni nelle case di turchi, mentre agenti subalterni non di rado si impadroniscono degli oggetti di valore che trovano”*. The Italian Consul at Monastir and Nisch, Monastir, 27 January 1915, no. 23/6, Aussme, G33, b. 35, 320.

Since January 1919, some military confrontations took place between the Serbian troops and the Albanian inhabitants of Gusinje and Plav, who had appealed to Britain for protection. In June 1919, the Italian Commander Piacentini sent from Albania some interesting telegrams reporting about the revolt of Kosovo Albanians against Serbs – the Albanians “burnt villages and massacred women and children; the rebellion took control of almost the entire district of Prizren and generated great enthusiasm among the Albanians.”³³

In 1919 a memorandum was sent to the government to stop the violence against Muslims in Bosnia, Montenegro, Sandžak and Kosovo. But it seemed to have no effect as the same situation characterised the following years, whereas in 1921 a violent revolt occurred in Sandžak under the bands of Husein Bošković and Jusuf Mehonić. The rebellion in Kosovo continued and was repressed in bloodshed with the destruction of many villages. Also in the following years, many Albanians were forced to flee to the Shkodër area because of the land reform, which rewarded Serbian colonists with homesteads. This policy was denounced by “Pravda” of Sarajevo, which on 3 December 1921 published a critical article against the government’s attitude to force the Muslims to emigrate in order to replace them with families coming from Serbia and Montenegro.

Finally, a special attention in analysing interwar Yugoslavia should be given to Macedonia, which in part had already been ceded to Serbia after the Balkan Wars. Here, the Romanians complained about the brutal treatment by the new authorities, who were accused of refusing to distribute food to Vlachs who could not prove that they were sending their children to Serbian schools, and of hampering the return of those who had left during the war or even forbidding people to speak in Romanian.³⁴

In this “Yugoslavia in miniature” the restoration of Serbian rule in 1918 and 1919 meant a replay of the first occupation which occurred between 1913 and 1915. What ensued was the expulsion of the Exarchist clergy and Bulgarian teachers, the removal of all Bulgarian-language signs and books, dissolution of all Bulgarian clubs, societies and organisations and Serbianisation of family surnames. Belgrade considered Macedonia Southern Serbia even if since the late XIX century the region developed a strong political process which was addressed towards Bulgarianism.³⁵

³³ Notes sent by the Commander in Albania, S. Piacentini, 3 and 16 June 1919, *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, sesta serie, vol. III, doc. 683, 694; doc. 786, 792.

³⁴ Notes of the Direcțiunea poliției și siguranței generale, 12, 13, 22 February 1919. Mircea Valcu-Mehedinti, *Dezvaluiri fața necunoscuta, a istoriei României. Un popor care se stinge: aromanii (macedo-romanii). Culegere de documente originale din fondurile serviciul special de informații direcțiia siguranței generale, direcțiia generala a poliției, corpul detectivilor casa regala*, Editura Mircea Valcu-Mehedinti 2008.

³⁵ Macedonia had a special place in the Serbs’ national memory. It was in Skopje, on the Orthodox Easter of 1346, that Stefan Dušan was crowned “Christ God’s well-believing Tsar of Serbs and Greeks”. Macedonia was the region of Prince Marko, the legendary hero of Serbian heroic epic and of his memorial church of Saint Demetrius (popularly Marko’s monastery, at Sušica near Skopje). Serbian aspirations soon gave rise to an elaborated system of theories about Serbia’s right to Macedonia, as reflected in the works of Miloš Milojević, Dr. Jovan Hadži-Vasiljević,

As it is well known, Macedonia generated one of the most impressive movements of the XX century – the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (*Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija*), which gave birth to the constant guerrilla that the notorious *Komitadji* carried out against the Ottoman authorities and then against the Serbian, Greek and even Bulgarian ones. This organisation debuted after 1893 and its *Komitadji* gained international “recognition” in 1903, when they organised the insurrection of Saint Elia’s Day (*Ilinden*). In the following years, the anti-Turkish fight converted into an “all against all” conflict and the Balkan Wars helped inflame the relations among the region’s different ethnic groups, as proved by the start of the second Balkan War and the collapse of the Balkan League between Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria. Macedonia remained the epicentre of Balkan violence also during WWI, when brutal and barbarian treatments were habitual and affected all populations who cohabited in the region.³⁶ After the Balkan Wars, representatives of the IMRO and other Macedonian organisations strengthened their relations with Sofia and, in 1919 they tried to condition the decisions of international diplomacy, drafting some documents in which they admitted their Bulgarian affiliation, maintaining at the same time the requests of independence or autonomy. For example, the Statement of the Provisional Representation of the former United Internal Revolutionary Organisation denounced, on 30 May 1919, the Greek and Serbian policies:

Jovan Cvijić, Aleksandar Belić and Dr. Tihomil Đordjević, sponsored by the Society of Saint Sava founded in Belgrade in 1886. The main purpose was to fight the Exarchist „Bulgarism„. The society’s publications and educational institutions were powerful agencies of Serbian national propaganda; thanks to these, some 20,000 students from the „southern regions” attended schools in Belgrade in 1887–1912. After the war, the Serbisation of names proceeded as before the war, with Stankov becoming Stanković and Atanasov entered in the books as Atanacković. I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics*, Cornell University Press, 1984, 307–338. J. Cowan, *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, Pluto 2000; D. M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893–1903*, Duke U. Press, Durham 1988; V. Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870–1913*, East European Monographs, Boulder 2003. D. Mackenzie, *Ilija Garasanin: Balkan Bismarck*, East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, New York 1985.

³⁶ The arrival of Serbian and Greek troops, thus, did not halt the war climate as the occupation often meant the prosecution of violence, as it was documented by reports of the American Red Cross commissions. As the war ended, many of those who were expelled or deported during the war could return back home and were often driven to revenge. The world will never know how many men, women and children lost their lives through the deportations, but what is certain is that tens of thousands people died. The reports recently received by the National Headquarters of the American Red Cross suggest that Bulgarians claim less than 60,000 of Greek civilians who were interned in Bulgaria, but the Greeks place the number at more than 100,000”. *Reports of the American Red Cross Commissions Upon Their Activities in Macedonia, Thrace, Bulgaria, the Aegean Islands and Greece*, Oxford University Press, New York 1919, 4. D. Walshe, *With the Serbs in Macedonia*, London John Lane, 1920. For an account of the terrorist organisation: A. Londres, *Les Comitadjis, ou le terrorisme dans les Balkans*, Paris 1932.

“The governments of Greece and Serbia have only one serious argument which artificially mars the struggle for Macedonian independence in order to compromise it and to handicap its drive and destroy it”.³⁷

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation and its representatives abroad, A. Protogerov and T. Alexandrov, sent to the Paris Conference another memorandum (1 March 1919), asking to attend the Conference and present their demands. The memorandum accused the irreconcilability of the Serbs and their draconian measures and asked for Macedonia’s return to Bulgaria as the only solution to keep the region indivisible. Other documents, instead, were more inclined to considering Macedonian autonomy and disavowed the pro-Bulgarian line of Aleksandrov and Protogerov:

“Why must Macedonians be treated as slaves by the neighbouring countries? We Macedonians believe that the great democratic ideals brought by the 20th century will help us in our fight for the right of self-determination”.³⁸

In this context, Italian diplomacy decided to pursue the anti-Yugoslav strategy, supporting the minorities of this state and proposing a plan to create an autonomous Macedonia. On 15 July 1919, the Italian delegate to the new states’ committee drafted some articles in order to create a regional Diet with legislative powers in matters of language, education and religion, and other questions of local administration.

“Yugoslavia agrees to organise the territory of Macedonia within the frontiers set by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers under the form of an autonomous unit within the Yugoslav State, provided with the greatest degree of self-government compatible with the unity of the Yugoslav State. The territory of Macedonia shall have an autonomous Diet. This Diet shall exercise the legislative power in matters of language, education and religion, and questions of local administration, including all other issues the competence for which may be assigned

³⁷ “We, the representatives of the former United Internal Revolutionary Organisation, have done everything we could to raise and substantiate the above demand, backed up by all Macedonia, before the world and before the Peace Conference in Paris itself. Expressing the will of all Macedonian Bulgarians who have remained in their native place and of its sons who have been driven away from their homes, we have a whole series of arguments which cannot be refuted... Our demands rise above victory and defeat, we stand above victors and vanquished”. V. Bozhinov – L. Panayotov (editors), *Macedonia. Documents and Materials*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 1978. Some other examples could include the protest of the cultural societies in Kazanluk of 30 September 1919 or the article in the newspaper *Osvobozhdenie* (15th May 1920), which appreciated the Communists’ support to the federal requests issued by Bulgarians of Macedonia. Other petitions are collected in *The Complaints of Macedonia: memoranda, petitions, resolutions, minutes, letters and documents addressed to the League of Nations, 1919–1939*, Geneva 1979.

³⁸ Notes of the Council of Macedonian communities in Switzerland to British State Secretary Arthur Balfour (11 January 1919), in T. Hristov (ed. by), *Collection of documents concerning the creation of the Macedonian state (1893–1944)*, Academy of Social Sciences, Skopje 1976. docs. 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92.

to it by the laws of the Yugoslav State. The Governor of the said territory of Macedonia shall be named by the Yugoslav Government and shall be responsible to the Diet. Yugoslavia agrees that the officials of the territory of Macedonia shall be chosen as far as possible from among the inhabitants of this territory. Yugoslavia guarantees to the territory of Macedonia an equitable representation in the Legislative Assembly of the Yugoslav State, to which this territory shall send deputies elected according to the constitution of the Yugoslav State. However, the said deputies shall not have the right to vote in the Skupština in any legislative matter of the same order as those assigned to the competence of the Diet of Macedonia".³⁹

On the same occasion, similar clauses were proposed also in favour of the Albanians in Kosovo, to grant autonomy to the districts of Ipek, Djakova, Prizren and Dibra:

"Yugoslavia agrees to grant to the Albanian districts of Ipek, Djakova, Prizren and Dibra the autonomy in language, instruction and religion, as well as in the questions of local administration. An Administrative Council for each of the above-mentioned localities and sitting in each of them shall have the power to regulate these matters as well as all others over which jurisdiction shall be granted to it by the laws of the Yugoslav State. A religious head, Catholic, Orthodox and Moslem, in each district shall be *de jure* member of the Administrative Council. The other members shall be elected in conformity with the Laws of the Yugoslav State. The Governor of each district shall be appointed by the Yugoslav Government. Yugoslavia agrees that officials of the Albanian districts shall be chosen as far as possible among the inhabitants of these districts".

During the following meetings, the Italian delegation continued to draw the Committee's attention to the serious prejudice that could be caused to all minorities by not allowing them to use their own language before administrative authorities, as well as before courts, and recalled the attention on the case of the Italian minorities in Dalmatia whose right to use the Italian language in communication with administrative authorities had been recognised even by the laws of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Italian endeavours, anyway, were contested by France and were only partially inserted in the final report of the competent commission. As a matter of fact, no special mentions to Macedonia and Kosovo were made in the minority treaty that Belgrade signed at the end of 1919 in order to safeguard the position of the minorities and to reassure international diplomacy about the democratic basis of the new state. Unfortunately, the following evolution did not help to pacify the wide Yugoslav periphery where the first postwar years were characterised by military administration and by concrete diffidence to establish cooperative relations with the government. Even if these problems were not overriding widespread sentiments of Slavic brotherhood and solidarity, it could not be ignored that many shadows darkened the creation of a new stable balance among the different populations, and these problems were perceived quite clearly also outside the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

³⁹ Minutes of the 33rd meeting of the Committee for the new states, 15 July 1919.

Conclusions

As we have briefly tried to point out, the postwar situation in the new Yugoslav state was quite problematic and tense, and the internal problems were undoubtedly aggravated by the precarious international situation, which showed an open hostility between Belgrade and the neighbouring countries (Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria). Italian documents “perceived” this troublesome context and represented a very important source for those anti-Yugoslav factions in Italy who wished to impede the creation of a strong rival along the Eastern frontier. The perception of a Yugoslav state that was soon ready to crumble was shared by many nationalists and by the man who more than others contributed to defining Italian success in the First World War as a “*vittoria mutilata*” (mutilated victory): Gabriele D’Annunzio, “the poet” (*il Vate*).

During the long occupation of Fiume, D’Annunzio defined an ambitious project of an anti-League of Nations in defence of oppressed and colonised people such as the representatives of Dalmatia, Montenegro, Croatia, German Austria and many other irredentists in Europe (Catalonia, Poland, Czechoslovakia etc.) and all over the world (Panama, Cuba, Afghanistan, India, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria etc.)⁴⁰ At the same time, D’Annunzio’s consuls, Giovanni Giuriati, Giovanni Host-Venturi, Corrado Zoli, began to arrange a more aggressive plan against Yugoslavia, establishing solid relations with representatives of different nationalities in order to organise a revolt against the Serbs, initiating in this way a wider rebellion in many regions of the new state.

These contacts involved also “official agents” such as Cesare Finzi Pettorelli Lalatta (head of the information department of the third army in Venezia Giulia) and Baldacci, who went to Fiume and met D’Annunzio who was dreaming about a war of liberation and secretly discussing an Italian expedition in Dalmatia and Montenegro. As a matter of fact, the link between Italy and Montenegro was confirmed in 1916 during King Nikola’s exile and was further renewed with the Italian support to the independist faction and the pact that D’Annunzio signed with Prime Minister Jovan Plamenac, at Fiume on 12 May 1920. Under Italian auspices, the refugees from Montenegro even created a legion which was to be recognised as a part of the Montenegrin army.⁴¹

Similar negotiations were carried out with the Croats and their committees that were composed of *Frankovci*, the supporters of Josip Frank’s Party of Rights, with

⁴⁰ On D’Annunzio’s political plans and ambitions, see Renzo De Felice, *D’Annunzio politico 1918–1938*, Laterza, Roma – Bari 1978; Michael Arthur Ledeen, *D’Annunzio: The First Duce*, Transaction Publishers, Piscataway 2002.

⁴¹ This agreement was drafted on 30 April, A. Madaffari, *Italia e Montenegro (1918–1925): la Legione Montenegrina*, in “Studi storico-militari”, 1996, 100 ff.

the Albanian Kachaks from Kosovo (represented by Hasan bey Priština and Dervish bey Lufti), Macedonians and Magyars from Vojvodina.⁴²

Giuriati met Vladimir Sachs-Petrović and Finzi in January 1920 and arranged a compromise over Dalmatia and the creation of a neutral Croatian state. In Venice, on 5 July 1920, these contacts led to a well-defined plan including the creation of a Croatian state and an independent republic in Dalmatia with a “friendly” military servitude in favour of Italy. Zara, Sebenico, Traù, Spalato and Ragusa were to be declared as free towns, with political and administrative autonomy.⁴³

The dialogue continued in Vienna, Sofia and Budapest and D’Annunzio’s project “Yugoslavia delenda est” was further carried out by Corrado Zoli, who gathered other anti-Serbian activists in Fiume on 16–19 October 1920, renewing the July pact, involving also Magyars and Macedonians and establishing the beginning of concrete military operations for November (on 21 November in Croatia and Montenegro, on 27 November in Vojvodina, while in Kosovo and Macedonia the start of a revolt was postponed to December, after the signing of a pact between Protogerov and Hasan Bej).

Host-Venturi and Giurati tried to obtain the support of the Italian Army to these Balkan intrigues but Badoglio refused to cooperate without the political and financial endorsement of the government which, on the contrary, disavowed this plan.⁴⁴ This refusal was quite natural if considering the great aversion between D’Annunzio and Prime Minister Nitti, who categorically excluded any aggressive policy and tried to find “normalisation” or at least a *modus vivendi* with Belgrade, after signing the Treaty of Rapallo.⁴⁵

In 1920, the Italian political scenario was falling into the hands of fascists and violence was spreading all over the country, especially in those regions where it was associated with anti-minority feelings, for example in Eastern Italy, as proven by anti-Slavic violent episodes such as the attack against the Hotel Balkan in Trieste, on 13 July 1920, which has been defined by Renzo De Felice as the real baptism of

⁴² For Italian policy with regard to Albania, see A. Biagini, *Storia dell’Albania contemporanea*, Milano 2006; P. Pastorelli, *L’Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914–1920*, Jovene 1970.

⁴³ The text of these treaties was later published by one of the authors, G. Giuriati, *Con D’Annunzio e Millo in difesa dell’Adriatico*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1954, pp. 148 ff, 221–226. See also M. Bucarelli, *Delenda Jugoslavia. D’Annunzio, Sforza e gli “intrighi balcanici” del ‘19–‘20*, in “Nuova Storia Contemporanea”, 2002, n. 6, 19–34; F. Gerra, *L’impresa di Fiume. Nelle parole e nell’azione di D’Annunzio*, Vol. II, Milano 1966, 18–20.

⁴⁴ For some, Badoglio was personally favourable to this initiative but was also conscious that it needed the political support of the government. This plan involved also the birth of an independent Dalmatia which had to be united with Croatia only after a plebiscite. A. Ercolani, *Da Fiume a Rijeka. Profilo storico-politico dal 1918 al 1947*, Rubbettino, Soveria-Mannelli 2009, 105–106; L. E. Longo, *L’esercito italiano e la questione fiumana: 1918–1921*, Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito, Roma 1996, 124

⁴⁵ The troublesome relation between Nitti and D’Annunzio has been fully analysed by Paolo D’Alatri, *Nitti, D’Annunzio e la questione adriatica*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1976.

organised squad violence”.⁴⁶ And while Mussolini’s fortune was rising, D’Annunzio’s was instead decreasing. The last “revolutionary attempt” of D’Annunzio’s legionaries was recorded in November but, without the support of admiral Enrico Millo, the military governor of Dalmatia, it was destined to be rapidly sedated, practically anticipating the final end of the Fiume adventure.

After this important turn of events, the interest of Italian diplomacy in Yugoslav minorities was limited to the conditions of Dalmatian Italians, who were inserted in some articles of the Treaty of Rapallo (art. VII, 1, 2, 3). As a matter of fact, the treaty safeguarded the Italians opting for Italian citizenship and those who chose to become Yugoslav, but not the ethnic Italians who decided to keep on living in Slavic Dalmatia maintaining their Italian citizenship. Rome asked to extend to the latter the rights of the Treaty, such as the passive and active right of electorate, and demanded the repeal of some inappropriate regulations, such as those requiring the use of Serbian in activities of foreign societies.⁴⁷ With regard to the situation in the city of Zara (Zadar), Rome defended the Italian properties of the surrounding zones, where the Italians were affected by the agrarian reform and encountered many obstacles to enjoying their estates located in the SHS Kingdom. Zara – which was assigned to Italy – was almost isolated. The city was subject to rapid impoverishment owing to a decrease in trade and the lack of a Yugoslav customs office to establish constant connections with the hinterlands.⁴⁸

Anyway, the reconciliation between Rome and Belgrade was soon to be interrupted by the rise of fascism and Mussolini’s adoption of a new, more ambiguous and aggressive foreign affairs policy. All former D’Annunzio’s “friends” became important fascist politicians – Host-Venturi was one of the executors of the anti-Slavic denationalisation policy in Eastern Italy. In 1927 the contacts with Croatian nationalists were resumed: the senator and director of “La Tribuna”, Roberto Forges Davanzati, was the first to meet Ante Pavelić in Rome. He introduced Pavelić to Mussolini, proposing him as a perfect candidate for an Italian agent in Yugoslav affairs.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “Il vero battesimo dello squadristo organizzato”. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883–1920*, Einaudi, Torino 1965, 624.

⁴⁷ *Promemoria* about the protection of minorities in Dalmatia (Tutela minoranze Dalmazia), Belgrade, 1 July 1921. Aussme F3, 325, 7

⁴⁸ It was “evidente e improrogabile necessità economica Zara, divisa nei suoi possessi e rapporti tradizionali con l’immediato retroterra delle nuove frontiere politiche....Deve essere assicurato ai cittadini di Zara, che abbiano acquisito la nazionalità italiana, il pieno godimento dei diritti di proprietà dei beni mobili e immobili e dei diritti reali... l’applicazione della progettata legge agraria con l’espropriazione forzata di talune categorie di proprietà agrarie etc. comporterebbe la pratica confisca di questi beni per i nostri nazionali”. Note of the War Ministry on the situation in Zara, 1 July 1921, Aussme, F3, 325, 7. What was noticed was “una diminuzione sensibile ed ogni giorno crescente, degli acquisti di merci che i contadini e commercianti del circondario (ceduto allo Stato S.H.S.) solevano fare in passato su quella piazza” from general Tamajo and Zara prefecture, to Ministries of the Army and War, 16 October 1923. Aussme, F3, 374, 7.

⁴⁹ The future *Poglavnik* was not described exactly as a charismatic leader: “Personaggio modesto, tranquillo, limitato, ma privo fortunatamente delle caratteristiche dell’agitatore e congiurato

After 1927 Mussolini carried out with great intensity an aggressive campaign with the aim of breaking up Yugoslavia and celebrating Italian dominion in the Adriatic region, supporting rightist terrorist movements (the Croatian Ustaša, Albanian rebels and Macedonian terrorists) and conditioning this support on Italian interests in the international scenario, that is to say alternating the periods of quiet and moments of embarrassing ambivalence to disrupt the Yugoslav state by means of subversion.⁵⁰

The future events that marked Balkan history during the XX century, unfortunately and tragically, gave partial satisfaction to all those Italian “revisionists” such as Attilio Tamaro, who since the beginning criticised and attacked the decisions of Versailles, expressing their dissatisfaction with such fragile settlement. Like D’Annunzio and his advisers, Tamaro thought that the melting pot of Balkan populations and religions had few possibilities to be successful: this perception had the deficiency of being inspired by an excessive nationalist zeal but, at the same time, showed to be at least “prophetic” about the tragic conflicts that accompanied Balkan history during the XX century and that finally destroyed the order of Versailles.

balcanico. Piuttosto un’ aria rurale”. Pasquale Iuso, *Il fascismo e gli ustascia 1929–1941. Il separatismo croato in Italia*, Gangemi editore, Roma 1998; Eric Gobetti, *Dittatore per caso, Un piccolo duce protetto dall’Italia fascista*, L’ Ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001.

⁵⁰ J. Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918–1940*, Westport 1997, 43 ff.; see also M. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia (1922–1939)*, Graphis, Bari 2006; F. D’Amoja, *L’Italia e la pace di Versailles*, Padova 1963; F. D’Amoja, *Declino e prima crisi dell’Europa di Versailles: Studio sulla diplomazia italiana ed europa (1931–1933)*, Milano 1997.

Giuseppe MOTTA

LA NASCITA DELLA JUGOSLAVIA. UNA VISIONE DALL'ITALIA (1918-20)

Sommario

L'articolo si prefigge di descrivere la reazione di alcuni ambienti politici e militari italiani verso la nascita del Regno di Serbi, Croati e Sloveni e la difficile questione del confine orientale italiano in Istria e Dalmazia. In particolare, si citano alcuni documenti dell'Archivio dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito e alcuni rapporti diplomatici per descrivere la nascita di un vasto fronte anti-Jugoslavo che trovava numerose adesioni all'interno dell'esercito e nell'opinione pubblica, e che trovò in Gabriele D'Annunzio una guida efficace e carismatica. Al di là delle velleità dannunziane, tale approccio sopravviverà negli anni seguenti e fornirà a Mussolini le linee guida della politica estera fascista nell'area balcanica.

Parole chiave: Jugoslavia, irredentismo, confine orientale italiano, trattati di pace.

Ђузепе МОТА

РОЂЕЊЕ ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ. ВИЗИЈА ИЗ ИТАЛИЈЕ (1918-20)

Резиме

Чланак има за циљ да опише реакцију италијанских политичких и војних кругова на стварање Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца, као и тешко питање источне италијанске границе у Истри и Далмацији. Посебно ће бити наведени поједини документи Генералштаба Војске Републике Италије, као и поједини дипломатски извештаји не би ли се приказало стварање широко распрострањеног анти-југословенизма, с великим бројем поклоника у војсци и широј јавности, и који је у лику Габријела Д'Анунција нашао ефикасног и харизматичног вођу. Овај приступ ће надрасти Д'Анунцијеве личне амбиције и ударити правац Мусолинијевој фашистичкој спољној политици на Балкану.

Кључне речи: Југославија, иредентизам, италијанска источна граница, мировни споразуми.

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ITALIAN PENETRATION IN THE BALKANS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MONTENEGRO IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND SERBIA DURING WORLD WAR I (1914–18)

Abstract: On the eve of the serious events that would set the world on fire, Italian diplomats and military officials close to the Balkan world showed keen interest in the political union between Serbia and Montenegro. Both internal factors, such as the common South-Slavic sentiment and the traditional relations between the two "brother" kingdoms, and external factors, such as the anti-Austrian and pro-Russian feeling, urged the establishment of the union. The Corfu Declaration of July 1917 encouraged the creation of the Kingdom of the South Slavs. At the same time, even Italy tended to tone down the loudest voices of nationalist propaganda and to look for a possible agreement with the Yugoslav delegates before the end of the conflict. However, the agreement was not possible because of the question of Dalmatia where the majority of population was Slavic, not Italian. On the one hand, there were Italian demands, often unjustified, while on the other, there was Yugoslavia – the new, still fragile state with a lot of discords. These were the reasons that made impossible the compromise before the end of the war and that generated disastrous consequences at the Peace Conference of 1919. This final stage outlined the Italian double-approach policy with Montenegro: on the one hand, the tendency to keep alive the anti-Serbian (and therefore anti-Yugoslav) sentiments among the Montenegrin population, while on the other, the tendency to seek some form of compromise with the Serbs (and therefore with the Yugoslavs).

Keywords: Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, World War I, Montenegrin resistance.

Although subject to different aspirations and desires, often completely opposite, of various Balkan countries, in the early twentieth century the Balkan region experienced two moments of common feeling in the process of national development. These feelings were connected to the passage from a *nation* to an independent national state and to a desire to undertake common anti-Turkish and

anti-Austrian actions, despite some local opposition of remote origin. In both of the two moments, the model of Italian *Risorgimento* – where the national unification and liberation from the foreign rule came through a rather modern regional power with international vision (like the Kingdom of Sardinia under the Savoy dynasty), was the main source of inspiration among the South-Slavic population, especially of Serbia and Montenegro. Not by chance Serbia, the biggest centre of irredentist agitation, openly claimed the role of the *Yugoslav Piedmont* naming, for instance, a well-known nationalist newspaper as *Pijemont*. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the European international scene was very well aware that the realisation of Italian unity had upset the traditional balance of the old continent and that this unity made the Austro-Hungarian Empire face the problem of orientation towards the Balkans, where it met the opposition of Tsarist Russia. It was, therefore, Italy that enjoyed great moral prestige in the Balkan world¹ while, in Italy itself, public opinion manifested sympathy for the Balkan insurgents, urging the launching of a campaign for the liberation of the Christian peoples from the Turks. This was the period of flourishing of publications “somewhere between journalism and memoirs” rich with “sincere participation in the events of the Slavic peoples in their struggle for national independence”. Very often, it was the case of direct participation of the authors who found themselves fighting for that cause in the crisis years between 1875 and 1878.

Through a long process of political and military maturation, the formation of national states finally took place, although with difficulties. However, precisely because of the implementation of this project, serious problems arose regarding the definition of the territories belonging to each of the new constitutional parts. Serbia was the first to feel the need for a Balkan alliance able to oppose the hegemonic aspirations of Austria, which became more evident after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The season of the Balkan wars did not solve territorial disputes in the region between the successor states of the Ottoman Empire, nor did it suppress the cumbersome role of Austria-Hungary, especially on the Adriatic. The evolution of the crisis in July 1914 was the proof of the extreme tensions between nations and empires against the background of national state development. It should be taken into account that this region had already become hypersensitive to a national and nationalist discourse. In this context, Italy was seen as a possible anti-Austrian support of Montenegro, which descended into war on the side of Serbia.²

¹ “The champions of Yugoslav unity believed that the way in which the unification of Italy was achieved, under the guidance of Piedmont, was a model that deserved to be followed; Italy was for them the most convincing defender of the principle of nationality, to which the South Slavs referred in their national claims; also, it was well known that, from the *Risorgimento* onwards, the aspirations of the South Slavs for their national unity were regarded in Italy with great sympathy”, D. Šepić, *Italian Policy During the Crisis of the East in 1875–1878 and the Southern Slavs*, paper at the Conference of Italian and Yugoslav historians (Florence, 10–11 June 1977), 12 and the bibliography.

² The somewhat modified text of the article is given below: A. F. Biagini, *I rapporti tra l'Italia e il Montenegro durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale, 1914–1918*, *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento* 68 (1981), n. 4, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, Rome.

One of the main consequences of the “industrial revolution of the Giolitti period³” was the interest of Italian entrepreneurs in the Danubian-Balkan world. The need emerged for Italian heavy industry – mechanical and metallurgical, and Italy started to look beyond its national borders seeking both the raw materials at low price and new markets where to sell one part of final products. In fact, after the massive colonial expansion that particularly marked the second half of the nineteenth century, there were not too many regions left where the Italian industry could have been directed to. One of these territories was also the Balkan Peninsula, which stood out due to its geographical proximity. Here, mineral raw materials, tobacco, textile and food could be exchanged for the products of heavy industry, in a market that virtually had no absorption limits except for those marked by the level of economic and social development and by the inadequacy of infrastructure (roads, railways, harbours)⁴. Hence, what had already happened on the political level, repeated on the economic level – the interdependence between the Balkans and Italy became present before and after Cavour⁵, who was the key element in the process of Italian unification. In conclusion, it is obvious that Italian industrial development could have been facilitated with economic penetration into the Balkan Peninsula. This, moreover, was in line with the expectations of the other party: it was this very prospective that the Serbian Minister in Italy, Milovan Milovanović (afterwards, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1908 to 1912) was dedicated to in the years 1903–1907. The Italian presence would also mean the re-dimensioning of Austria and its presence in the Balkan peninsula – with this aim in mind, the Serbian politician called for the “intensification” and “strengthening” of Italian presence in the Balkans. “The Italian interest – he said – is identical to ours⁶”. Identical were the expectations of Montenegro as well.⁷

This is the period when the first headlines on railway projects in the Balkans appeared in the Italian press, with Italian representatives abroad reporting about this initiative (diplomatic, military, businessmen etc.). The Historical Archives of the Italian Military Forces preserve a great number of studies and reports of Italian officers about conditions of the project and its military and strategic values⁸. Among the first entrepreneurs to turn to the Balkan Peninsula was a group led by Giuseppe Volpi⁹. His

³ Cf. R. Romeo, *Breve storia della grande industria in Italia*, Bologna, 1972, 65 and the following.

⁴ See A. Tamborra, *The Rise of Italian Industry and the Balkans (1900–1914)*, *The Journal of European Economic History* III, 1 (1974) 87–120.

⁵ A. Tamborra, *Cavour e i Balcani*, Torino 1958; Id., *Imbro I. Tkalac e l'Italia*, Rome 1966.

⁶ D. Đorđević, *Milovan Milovanović*, Belgrade 1962, 66.

⁷ Cf. *Archives du Ministère des Aff. Étrangères*, Paris, Monténégro, Politique étr., Dossier Général III, 1905–1910.

⁸ Cf. Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito (from now on AUSSME), fondi Addetti militari, Studi particolari, Ministero della Guerra-Scacchiere orientale-Ufficio coloniale-Stati esteri, Stati balcanici.

⁹ On Giuseppe Volpi see S. Romano, *Giuseppe Volpi, industria e finanza tra Giolitti e Mussolini*, Milan 1979, 267 and R. Sarti, *Giuseppe Volpi*, in: *Uomini e volti del fascismo*, F. Cordova (edited by), Rome 1980, 521–546. More generally, cf. R. A. Webster, *L'imperialismo industriale italiano, 1908–15. Studio sul prefascismo*, Torino 1974, 543–574.

interest was directed particularly towards Montenegro, a country whose somewhat “archaic” structure with the unchallenged rule of a small group of families, led by the Petrović-Njegoš family, had not allowed for the economic and social boom already present in other countries of the peninsula. On the other hand, Montenegro had other important advantages: the long tradition of independence, active presence in the Balkan affairs, strong refusal to be economically connected to Austria-Hungary and, finally, a constant need to fill up the exhausted state treasury, a necessity for which the traditional assistance of Tsarist Russia was not enough. All this influenced King Nikola to welcome and encourage Volpi’s interest. In 1903 the latter formed the *Italo-Montenegrin union* in Venice. The Union, as its first initiative, established in Montenegro a local associated office for tobacco – *Regia Cointeressata dei Tabacchi*. The establishment of tobacco monopoly was the only method, at least initially, to provide a secure income and stable finances for Montenegro. Among the first tangible results of such an enterprise was the construction of a tobacco factory in Podgorica, with more than 340 workers and experimental fields for tobacco cultivation that involved approximately seven thousand families. Despite some difficulties, the results were positive and immediate. The increase in capital between 1905 and 1910 and the consolidated economic position of the company led Volpi to launch an initiative that would become one of his most important ones, the same one that would throw him in the midst of international political affairs. Volpi’s goal was to make of Montenegro a bridge for Italy’s further economic and commercial penetration into the Balkans. To realise such a plan, it was necessary to set up a system of connections that would connect Venice with Bar and from there continue towards Vir Pazar and Lake Skadar. Obviously, the infrastructural plan did not involve only Montenegro, but the entire Balkan Peninsula, including Turkey, which was supposed to have access to the Adriatic through a number of roads passable even in winter. The question was, therefore, how to overcome the immense difficulties arising from a kind of a priority right that Austria-Hungary claimed in the construction of railways in the Balkans.

The creation of the *Bar Company* on 5 December 1905 was the concrete act of Italian enterprise. The company was formally Montenegrin, but with all Italian capital. On 1 January 1909 the railway between Bar and Vir Pazar began to operate and the same year, in October, the Harbour of Bar was inaugurated. The establishment of the free port, construction of an industrial zone and a regular shipping line on Lake Skadar were the logical consequences. Obviously, these initiatives did not develop smoothly for a number of problems present in the Balkans: the political instability, burdening presence of Austrian interests, outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912–13, and, finally, the beginning of World War I. As soon as Montenegro declared its support to Serbia in 1914, the first targets of Austro-Hungarian aviation and navy were the plants of the Bar Company and the occupation of the railway¹⁰. The First World War, therefore, posed serious limitations to this complex activity. The problem of repairs arose in the situation where political events

¹⁰ A. Tamborra, *The Rise...*, op. cit.

were entirely beyond the control of the economic groups. In September 1914 consul Lanino Edoardo clearly outlined the future economic and political difficulties of Montenegro. According to Lanino, the Kingdom of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty would not survive even if victorious in war, due to the imprudence of its government, its internal disorganisation and the Pan-Slavic feelings of the population.

On the eve of the serious events that would set the world on fire, Italian diplomats and those who, for various reasons, were close to the Balkan world showed keen interest in the political union between Serbia and Montenegro. Both internal factors, such as the common South-Slavic sentiment and the traditional relations between the two “brother” kingdoms, and external factors, such as the anti-Austrian and pro-Russian feeling, urged the establishment of the union. The dispatches from Vienna, as well as from Berlin, Belgrade and Cetinje, echoed these issues¹¹. However, such hypothesis was rather unlikely although the chargé d'affaires in Cetinje, Paterno, stressed out that even if Austrian policy in theory opposed such a union, in fact it ended up promoting it. Humiliation and onerous conditions increasingly imposed on Montenegro by the Habsburg monarchy were objectively pushing Montenegro ever closer to Serbia¹². Only too late did the chargé d'affaires of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ask for a change of attitude towards Montenegro, and the government in Vienna sponsored the international loan to Cetinje. Faced with Germany's rejection, caused by King Nikola's refusal to give to it the oil monopoly in Montenegro, Austria-Hungary proposed as many individual loans to be granted by Italy, France and England¹³. That the loan became a mandatory requirement was confirmed by the Italian minister in Cetinje, Lazarus Negrotto Cambiaso, who reported that in an urgent meeting with the Montenegrin foreign minister, the latter made granting of the given loan a condition for general peace¹⁴.

In fact, King Nikola was determined to save his country from a new war. Montenegro was still exhausted from the recent Balkan wars and from the military help given to Albanian insurgents, but there was no doubt that a widespread popular anti-Austrian feeling operated in reverse, pushing Montenegro towards the war immediately after the outbreak of the crisis between Austria and Serbia, opened with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The extremely harsh Austrian ultimatum to Serbia of 23 July 1914 contained, in fact, demands that Belgrade could not accept in any case: the suppression of newspapers against the Habsburg Empire,

¹¹ Cf. Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (from now on DDI), Quarta serie (1908–1914), vol. XII, Avarna, ambassador in Vienna, to A. Di Sangiuliano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vienna, 4 July 1914, 47; id., Bollati, ambassador in Berlin, to A. di Sangiuliano, Berlin, 5 July 1914, 54.

¹² Ibidem, Paternò, chargé d'affaires in Cetinje, to A. Di Sangiuliano, Cetinje, 9 July 1914, 64.

¹³ Ibidem, Tittoni, ambassador in Paris, to A. Di Sangiuliano, Paris, 17 July 1914, 208; id., Avarna to A. Di Sangiuliano, Vienna, 20 July 1914, 243.

¹⁴ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso, Minister in Cetinje, to A. Di Sangiuliano, Cetinje, 21 July 1914, 250; id., A. Di Sangiuliano, ambassador in London, Avarna, ambassador in Vienna, Bollati, ambassador in Berlin, Carlotti, ambassador in Petersburg, Negrotto Cambiaso, Minister in Cetinje, Ruspoli, chargé d'affaires in Paris, Rome, 11 July 1914; id., Rome, 22 July 1914, 267–268.

dissolution of *Narodna Odbrana*, expulsion from educational institutions and from the army those men who were adverse to Austria, cooperation with Austrian authorities in the investigation to be carried out on the territory of Serbia and establishment of a process with the participation of Austrian judges. For this reason, the Serbian reply, apparently conciliatory, was preceded by the mobilisation of the army and by the consequent inevitable rupture of diplomatic relations with Vienna.¹⁵

At the urging of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, to which Italy was bound by virtue of its accession to the Triple Alliance, and owing to dynastic and commercial relations that bounded Italy and Montenegro, the Italian foreign minister urged Negrotto Cambiaso to put pressure on King Nikola, so as to make the small kingdom remain neutral even in the event of worsening of the Austrian-Serbian crisis. And in fact, this had already happened. Cetinje actually maintained nonaligned behaviour, but in front of the Austro-Hungarian pressure against the neighbouring Serbia, to which Montenegro was bound by deep ties, it could not remain indifferent. Hence, if the diplomatic crisis was to result in a conflict, the country would intervene on the side of the Serbs.¹⁶

In order to gain time, on 26 July the Montenegrin government ordered the concentration of forces to reinforce the protection of its borders, whereas, only two days later, it ordered general mobilisation so as to reiterate its full and unconditional support to Serbia¹⁷. Besides, this was a way to respond to real provocations of the Austrians, such as the mass expulsion of Montenegrins from the territory of the Empire. However, the hope to have a neutral Montenegro was surprisingly widespread: Albricci, the military attaché in Vienna, realised in a meeting with Conrad that they believed that King Nikola was to maintain peace with Austria-Hungary.¹⁸ Carlotti from Petersburg showed greater scepticism. In the Russian capital they were convinced that the actual relations between Austria and Montenegro were a kind of farce: Montenegro threatened with war, but its intention was hindered by Austrian military and naval manoeuvres. The mobilisation was, in the end, a means to appease domestic public opinion.¹⁹

On 1 August, however, *Skupština* unanimously decided to declare war on Austria-Hungary, while the ambassador Giuseppe Avarna in Vienna confirmed the intention of the Habsburg Empire to compensate for Montenegro's neutrality at the expense of Serbia²⁰. Hence, the Italian attempts to call for prudence of the small kingdom were in vain and, as Negrotto Cambiaso had appropriately emphasised, Cetinje's choice was inevitable. If King Nikola had in fact continued to equivocate, his

¹⁵ Cf. A. Tamborra, *L'Europa centro-orientale nei secoli XIX-XX*, Milan 1971, 410.

¹⁶ DDI, Quarta serie (1908–1914), vol. XII, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 21 July 1914; id., Cetinje, 24 July 1914, 297–298; id., Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 24 July 1914, 305; id., Cetinje, 25 July 1914, 321; id., Cetinje, 28 July 1914, 395–396.

¹⁷ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 27 July 1914, 367.

¹⁸ Ibidem, Avarna to A. di San Giuliano, Vienna, 30 July 1914, 457.

¹⁹ Ibidem, Carlotti, ambassador in Petersburg, to A. di San Giuliano, Petersburg, 31 July 1914, 478.

²⁰ Ibidem, Avarna to A. di San Giuliano, Vienna, 1 August 1914, 516.

prestige would have been damaged²¹. The Montenegrin army, despite its military value, could have been considered a little more than militia. The new system, established after the Balkan Wars of six divisions of three brigades each with four battalions of 600–800 men on average, was not yet put into practice. At the beginning of the war, Montenegro could have summoned up just over forty thousand men, with about one hundred field cannons and as many mountain ones. The armament came mostly from Russia, and a part of the artillery from Italy. Rarely used uniforms, scarce food and ammunition, determined that the Montenegrin army could not mount any large-scale strategic operations. However, the fighting spirit and the perfect knowledge of the difficult terrain of karst nature of the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian-Dalmatian border, favoured the guerrilla warfare, characteristic for the Balkan region for already many years.

For its part, the General Staff of the Serbian Army asked for two-thirds of the Montenegrin forces to be placed at Pljevlja, to take part in the offensive on Sarajevo. King Nikola was of a different opinion and, in his capacity of the supreme commander of the armed forces, he considered impossible the moving and, above all, supplying such a large quantity of men. More than really helping Serbia, King Nikola was interested in defending his own territory and, if anything, in directing his energy towards Kotor and northern Albanian territories, a part of the Montenegrin long aimed goals. It is interesting, however, that these very projects of King Nikola would then serve as the basis for propaganda of the Yugoslav unity advocates led against the sovereign of Montenegro. Nevertheless, only six thousand men gathered in Sandžak, about fifteen thousand of them on the Herzegovinian western frontier, while on the front of the Bay of Kotor there were around eight-thousand soldiers. In this way, the Montenegrin army was fully deployed in the protection of Lovćen, which at the time was not in danger because Italy had subordinated its own neutrality to the safety of that mountain. The rest of the forces were partly held in the interior of the territory, partly as a defence of the border to Albania.²²

²¹ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 31 July 1914, p. 479; id., Bari, 31 July 1914, 483. On 30 July A. di San Giuliano sent Paternò to Bar to look after the Italian interests. Cf. DDI, Quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. I, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 6 August 1914, 50–51. It was confirmed that Montenegro was waiting to check the firmness of the promises made by Austria-Hungary. Id., A. di San Giuliano to Bollati, Rome, 7 August 1914, 55–56. Faced with a substantial enlargement of Austria in the Balkan Peninsula, Italy could not remain inactive.

²² Cf. In this matter A. Bollati (a cura di), *L'ultima guerra dell'Austria-Ungheria 1914–1918*, Archivio di Guerra di Vienna, vol. I, *L'anno di guerra 1914*, Rome, Ministero della Guerra-Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore-Ufficio Storico, 1934, 115 and the following; C. Geloso, *La campagna austro-serba del 1914 (agosto-dicembre)*, Ministero della Difesa-Esercito, Ufficio Storico, Rome 1948, pp. 238. On the question of Lovćen cf. DDI, Quarta serie (1908–1914), Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 21 July 1914, 251–252; id., Cetinje, 23 July 1914, 284; id., Cora, chargé d'affaires in Belgrade, to A. di San Giuliano, Belgrade, 23 July 1914, 281; DDI, Quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. I, Avarna to A. di San Giuliano, Vienna, 4 August 1914, 26; id., A. di San Giuliano to Bollati, ambassador in Berlin, Aldovrandi, chargé d'affaires in Vienna,

Certainly the question of Albania, in the middle of ardent interests of Italy, Montenegro and, traditionally, those of Austria, was not a minor problem. This issue, therefore, was destined to alter the relations between Montenegro and Italy, and between Italy and Serbia. Projects of Italian occupation existed and they were sufficiently well-known; the Albanian question would in the same way constantly burden Italian diplomacy between the end of the nineteenth century and the first forty years of the twentieth²³. Italy actually wanted a protectorate over the country, and the Treaty of London (26 April 1915) would have given a concrete form to this hypothesis, recognising with Article 5 the neutralisation of the coast from Dubrovnik to Aoos, assigning to Serbia and Montenegro the entire coast from the promontory of Planka to the river Drim, that is, up to Shëngjin. Italy would be given full sovereignty over Valona (Article 6), the island of Saseno and over an area large enough to ensure the defence of these strategic points. Finally, if Italy had obtained Trentino, Istria, Dalmatia, Adriatic islands and Valona, it would not oppose the division according to which the central part of the country would have been incorporated in an autonomous state with a Muslim majority, while the northern and southern regions were supposed to be divided between Montenegro, Serbia and Greece, according to the will of Russia, France and England (Article 7)²⁴.

The Salandra's government decided in September 1914 to occupy Valona, despite the concerns and opposition clearly expressed by General Cadorna who feared, and rightly so, that the Albanian campaign would meet the same failures as the Libyan one, or the Austrian one in Bosnia, where it had been necessary to mobilise 260,000 men²⁵. Nevertheless, an Italian marine assault troop occupied Saseno on 30 October, and on 29 December the 10th Regiment of Riflemen, with a battery and core service,

Rome, 6 August 1914, 46; id., Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 7 August 1914, 59–60. The same problems in AUSSME, Ministero della Guerra-Scacchiere orientale-Ufficio coloniale-Stati esteri, b. 45, fascicolo Notizie politico-militari dal Montenegro (1914).

²³ See P. Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana 1914–1920*, Napoli 1970. Among other, see G. Colonna Di Cesarò, *L'Italia nell'Albania meridionale. Note e documenti (1917–1918)*, Foligno 1922; A. Giannini, *L'Albania dall'indipendenza all'unione con l'Italia (1918–1939)*, Milan 1940. For the events that anticipated the World War, see M. Mazzetti, *L'Italia e la crisi albanese del March-May 1913*, Storia Contemporanea, a. IV, 2, (1973) 219–262.

²⁴ It is evident that the acclaimed nationality principle, which the Entente powers proclaimed to refer to in 1917, urged by the United States to make explicit the aims of the war, was at this time absent from the political perspectives of the Entente.

²⁵ Cf. L. Cadorna, *Altre pagine sulla grande guerra*, Milan 1928, 104 e ss. Cf. also DDI, Quarta serie (1908–1914), vol. cit., Allotti, Italian Minister in Durres to A. di San Giuliano, Durres, 13 July 1914, 137; id., Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 22 July 1914; id., Galli, Italian Consul in Skadar to A. di San Giuliano, Skadar, 31 July 1914; id., Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Bari, 1 August 1914, 502. Cf. also, AUSSME, Ministero della Guerra-Scacchiere orientale-Ufficio coloniale-Stati esteri, b. 45, Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Ufficio Informazioni a capo di Stato Maggiore, a comandante in 2^a all'Ufficio coloniale, notes from N° 125 to N° 352, February–November 1914.

was sent to Valona. However, Cadorna's concerns were partially taken into account, since it was determined that the area of employment should not go beyond Valona.²⁶

The Austro-Hungarian offensive against Montenegro took place from 14 to 17 August 1914. Montenegrin forces offered rather mild resistance to the pressure of Austrian lines *Gabrieli* and *Tolmann*. With Cetinje's entry into the war, the Habsburg Navy also undertook attacks against Montenegro and three cruisers (*Kaiser Karl IV*, *Szigetvár* and *Zenta*), which were stationed at the Bay of Kotor, bombed Montenegrin fortifications and destroyed the radiotelegraph station of Bar. In order to allow the Entente to maintain naval contact with Montenegro, the French fleet sailed to the waters of Bar on 16 August where, reinforced by some units of the British Navy, it prevented *Zenta* from returning to the port, and sank the Austrian cruiser in the end.

The disappointment with Italy's permanent abstention from the conflict²⁷ was quite significant in political circles of Belgrade and Cetinje. The situation at the Albanian-Montenegrin border was getting worse day by day, with mutual accusations of massacres and looting. Montenegro had not occupied the territory of the neighbouring state out of certain respect towards Italy, although the Entente forces did not actually oppose such an operation. The Italian representative stressed out that Montenegro wanted to occupy Skadar before the end of the war, creating thus a status quo²⁸. A confirmation of this political project was also seen in dispatches of De Facendis, the consul in Skadar, who underlined that possible dismemberment of Albania as a result of the Montenegrin actions would irreparably harm Italian interests. He also felt that the potential expansion of Serbia-Montenegro in those territories would create enormous difficulties to the two Slavic states. Due to their national compactness, Albanians were entitled to having their own country. However, an "Independent Albania", he concluded, "could hope to remain stable if it was not destroyed by the same forces that had once created it – by the antagonism between Austria and Italy."²⁹

The Italian "non-intervention" in the conflict raised various suspicions and controversies, as inquiries of different ambassadors in major European capitals showed. Carlotti wrote from Petersburg in September 1914 that suspicions about the Italian and Romanian conduct were already widespread: the Entente feared that the

²⁶ Cf. *Le truppe italiane in Albania (anni 1914–20 e 1939)*, M. Montanari (edited by), Stato Maggiore Esercito-Ufficio Storico, Rome 1978, 446.

²⁷ DDI, Quinta seria (1914–1918), vol. I, Squitti, Italian Minister in Belgrad to A. di San Giuliano, 28 September 1914, 497.

²⁸ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 7 October 1914, 545–546.

²⁹ The widely spread rumour of a possible Italian occupation of Albania provoked strong reactions in Montenegro. It undermined the principle of integrity repeatedly stated for Albania, and Montenegro pushed to occupy Skadar diverting thus the necessary forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The rumour was, however, substantially unfounded: on the contrary, Italy had always opposed the withdrawal of the international contingent from Skadar. Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to A. di San Giuliano, Cetinje, 20 September 1914, 445–446. Cf. also id., Borsarelli, vice secretary at the Ministry of Foreign affairs to Negrotto Cambiaso, Rome, 22 September 1914; id., De Facendis, Italian Consul in Skadar to A. di San Giuliano, Skadar, 7 October 1914, 546.

two nations with two intact armies, connected by parallel interests, wanted to maintain a strong Germany in the middle of Europe and, if necessary, Italy to act against Austria and Romania against Russia, in order to realise their national aspirations. However, it was doubtless that if Italy wanted to keep and expand its dominance in the Adriatic, it would have to take the side of the Entente. According to Carlotti, France, Britain and Russia, having no interest in the Mediterranean would easily grant to Italy Trieste, Istria, the Dalmatian islands, some coastal towns and the protectorate over the Muslim Albanian state, once Serbia obtained its ethnic borders (Croatia and Slovenia), and Montenegro its sufficient territorial widening. In fact, Italy would thus become a master of the Adriatic.³⁰

There was much discussion on the Italian demands and claims that were beyond the legitimate interests to complete the process of national unity: by that time, it was quite obvious that the Italian entrepreneurs and the Navy were those who cared most for the occupation of Dalmatia, while the General Staff was against it. Military strategic assessments, just like those Cadorna had expressed about Albania, made him aspire to reach the border at Brenner. On the other hand, the annexation of Dalmatia would create, among other things, a useless and harmful Slavic irredentism. The case was similar to the Albanian, where the best thing was to reach an agreement with Russia and occupy the coast alone, since the mainland was of little economic, commercial and strategic value. According to this vision, Skadar and Shengjin would be granted to Montenegro.³¹

After the first victories of the Serbs and the simultaneous offensive action in Slavonia, a plan of action was devised for Bosnia and Herzegovina with Sarajevo as the main goal. The first events were, in fact, auspicious for Serbia. Owing to the command of General Putnik, on 24 August Serbia pushed the Austrians beyond the river Drina. By the end of the year, the Austrian offensive was again rejected, while the occupied Serbian territories were liberated. The expeditionary force in Bosnia would have to proceed in three lines: to the right, the Serbian column with twenty thousand men, while the central and left columns were made of Montenegrin soldiers, commanded by General Vukotić and General Martinović. The three columns penetrated effectively in Bosnia, and Montenegrins occupied various locations from which the Austrians retreated. However, on 11 October, the column of General Vukotić got near Sarajevo and this manoeuvre was deemed imprudent and reckless, so much so that only a few days later the Austrian troops that left Sarajevo inflicted heavy losses to Montenegrin

³⁰ DDI, Quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. I, Carlotti, ambassador in Petersburg to A. di San Giuliano, Petersburg, 5 August 1914, 37; id., Petersburg, 16 September 1914, 405; id., Petersburg, 27 September 1914, 486–488; id., Petersburg, 28 September 1914, 490–491. In a private interview, Steed said that if Italy left Serbia and Montenegro the role of liberators of the South Slavs, it would then encounter serious difficulties in the realisation of its aspirations to Trieste: *ibidem*, Imperiali, ambassador in London to A. di San Giuliano, London, 1 September 1914, 301–302; id., London, 17 September 1914, 418–419; id., Tittoni to A. di San Giuliano, Bordeaux, 15 September 1914, 402–404.

³¹ *Ibidem*, Tittoni to A. di San Giuliano, Bordeaux, 28 September 1914, 495–496.

forces (about six to seven hundred men out of action) and Vukotić was forced to retreat. Apart from the results of the military campaign in Bosnia, deep disappointment prevailed because it was believed that the local population would arise at arrival of the Montenegrin forces. In addition to this false hope, the disagreements between the two Montenegrin generals, Vukotić and Martinović, were definitely one of the main causes for the immediate failure of King Nikola's troops³². Even the provision of eight French cannons placed on Lovćen around 20 October did not give great results. On the contrary, the arrival in Kotor of a large Austro-Hungarian naval unit, with its 305 cannons, put in serious difficulty the batteries installed on Lovćen. "It is undeniable" – wrote Negrotto Cambiaso in Salandra – "that the appearance of this great unit and the possibility that it could be supported and joined by other forces, brought quite a bit of chaos in the attack plan, and it raised doubts about the effectiveness of means available for this Command." Additionally, the imperial aviation incessantly continued its activities and while flying over Bar on 23 October it undertook extensive bombing.³³ The Information Office of the Italian Navy informed the Colonial Army Office stationed in Montenegro about these events, stressing the great discontent towards France that reacted rather mildly in the matter of Kotor, which still remained central to the interests of Montenegro. During the inspection of Rear Admiral De Bon sent on a mission to Cetinje, it was confirmed that the French cannons of Lovćen were absolutely ineffective against modern Austrian fortifications. By the mid-November, the French-Montenegrin action against Kotor virtually failed. King Nikola ordered suspension of bombing while, at the same time, the serious news of the defeat and the discontent of the army in Bosnia reached Montenegro. Dramatic retreat of the General Vukotić's column and lack of General Martinović's support diminished the morale of the troops. The author of the Information Department's memo reports commented that these two fractions of the Montenegrin Army certainly did not lack courage and patriotism, but rather discipline and training, which were understandable deficiencies considering the idiosyncratic character of Montenegrins, especially evident once the popular war against Austria came at an inopportune moment. In the end, the logistic unpreparedness subjected

³² AUSSME, Ministero della Guerra-Scacchiere orientale-Ufficio coloniale-Stati esteri, b. 45, fascicolo Notizie politico-militari dal Montenegro (1914), Negrotto Cambiaso to Salandra, President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cetinje, 24 October 1914.

³³ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to Salandra, Cetinje, 27 October 1914, ll. 772/242, oggetto: *Operazioni attorno a Cattaro*.

³⁴ Ibidem, Ufficio del capo di Stato Maggiore della Marina, Reparto informazioni a Ufficio coloniale, Rome, 6 November 1914, promemoria n. 317, oggetto: *Montenegro: notizie sulle operazioni contro Cattaro. Malcontento contro l'azione francese*; id., Roma, 16 November 1914, note N° 320, ris.mo, oggetto: *Notizie sulle operazioni franco-montenegrine contro Cattaro. Condizioni dell'esercito montenegrino*. On the situation in the Montenegrin internal affairs see id., Negrotto Cambiaso to Sonnino, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cetinje, 10 November 1914, n. 792/250, oggetto: *Situazione interna*; id., Cetinje, 21 November 1914, n. 811/255, oggetto: *Operazioni militari e situazione interna del Montenegro*.

the soldiers to intolerable hardships.³⁴ The unsuccessful campaign had two obvious consequences: the internal one and the one related to the existing tensions between Serbia and Montenegro that escalated even more. Ultimately, these complex relations characterised the events of 1915. Dispatches that the Minister of Italy in Cetinje sent to Rome precisely echoed these difficulties.³⁵

Montenegro came before Italy with the urgent request for supplies and food³⁶, to which Italy would have answered willingly if there had not been for the Montenegrin aspirations towards Albania.³⁷ To this end the Italian diplomacy in June 1915 advanced a joint statement of the Entente³⁸ governments. As a reaction to these measures, the Montenegrin government was inclined to take positions that were at the same time increasingly austrophile and italophobic. Concretely, the common presence in Skadar could not but give birth to problems of coexistence, aggravated by the arrest of an Italian citizen and seizure of local consular archives.³⁹ Small-scale events actually showed the deep disquiet which characterised relations between Italy and Montenegro. Besides the obvious question of Albania, the reasons behind such a situation were logically best explained in the report of the military attaché in Belgrade, Major Michele Serra, who wrote: "There is a vivid antipathy against us and it is reinforced by the concessions we demanded before starting the action..."⁴⁰ And it is from this moment onwards that a sort of double-track policy was adopted in regard to Montenegro, just as it would become obvious during the French exile of King Nikola and the attitude that Italy took towards the idea of Yugoslavia.

Military operations were resumed in 1915 with what has been called the Second Serbian Campaign. The well known fact is that the results of this enterprise were disastrous for the Serbian army despite the numerous qualities of its men who, among other things, were waiting for the aid that the Entente promised too many times, and never actually provided it. By the end of 1914, the heavy losses due to the epidemic of typhus also put in a serious crisis the valiant army of Serbia, just at the most critical moment of the Turkish intervention and Bulgaria's attack. Especially the intervention of the latter, which fought on the side of the Central Powers, had a

³⁵ DDI, Quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. IV, Rome 1973, Negrotto Cambiaso to Sonnino, Cetinje, 11 June 1915, 88; id., 12 June 1915, 92; id., 13 June 1915.

³⁶ Ibidem, Negrotto Cambiaso to Sonnino, Cetinje, 27 May 1915, 11.

³⁷ Ibidem, Sonnino to Negrotto Cambiaso, Rome, 17 June 1915, 93.

³⁸ Ibidem, Sonnino to Vittorio Emanuele III, to Imperiali, Tittoni, Carlotti, Negrotto Cambiaso, Squitti, Rome, 12 June 1915, 21; id., Rome, 12 June 1915, 92; Imperiali to Sonnino, London, 12 July 1915.

³⁹ Ibidem, De Facendis, Italian Consul in Skadar to Sonnino, Skadar, 20 June 1915, 181; id., Sonnino to Negrotto Cambiaso, Rome, 3 July 1915; id., Negrotto Cambiaso to Sonnino, Cetinje, 26 July 1915, 285; id., Cetinje, 27 September 1915; id., Sonnino to Negrotto Cambiaso, Rome, 30 September 1915.

⁴⁰ AUSSME, Military Attache in Serbia, b. 1, Serra, to Supreme Command in Kragujevac, 4 July 1915, prot. n° 66, oggetto: *Circa le intenzioni operative dei serbi*; id., 6 July 1915, prot. n. 69, oggetto: *Circa l'azione collettiva esercitata sul Comando serbo per indurlo ad intraprendere l'offensiva*.

fundamental importance in bending Serbia down. It is to be noted that at that time, the Central Powers with King Ferdinand of Bulgaria seemed to have in hands the destiny of the war. Austria did not hesitate to promise Bulgaria the cession of Serbian territories in Macedonia that Sofia had lost after the Second Balkan War in 1913. The Bulgarian intervention marked the final collapse of possible Serbian resistance. Despite the opening of a Balkan front with the Entente's landing in Thessaloniki, Serbia remained completely isolated: its army, accompanied by thousands of refugees, could not do anything but retreat towards the Adriatic coast. Hunger, deprivation and attacks suffered from Austrians and Albanians close to Durres and Valona, as well as the difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions decimated much of the Serbian army. In Valona the Serbs (about one hundred and fifty thousand men) were boarded on the ships of French and Italian fleets and taken to Corfu to regroup. The retreat ended in mid-April of 1916. However, already in July of the same year, an army of more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand Serbian men was ready to go in battle, reaching the front of Thessaloniki, until the final victory. Incidentally, it should be mentioned how the failure to help the Serbs gave rise to many controversies, which can be easily tracked down in reports and dispatches of the Italian Military Mission at the General Headquarters of Russian Army.

The situation of Montenegro that in these events stayed or tried to stay more in the background inevitably followed that of its Serbian ally. In this regard, the naval attaché in mission in Cetinje, Lieutenant Enrico Accame, while confirming the Austrophile attitude of Montenegro and the rumours of its possible agreement with the Habsburg Empire, righteously claimed that it was high time for the Entente, and in particular for Italy, to abandon any suspicion against the small Slavic state and to send concrete aid and supplies. He wrote that, by that time, famine had become an established fact and that it would have been impossible for the Montenegrin soldiers to spend another winter in those conditions. "The lament of the soldiers is really justified. They are so badly nourished and badly dressed walking around barefoot, yet still willing to follow orders while they see and understand that this war, which is stripping them off of everything, is fought for the higher classes; that this war is the source of more than lavish and equally dishonest profit for the rich and the powerful. Famine is so close now that it is necessary to urgently act on it. Only the good provisions of Italy can give the prompt relief that is more than needed in order help this government which, while poorly masking its old attitudes, turns for help with the most amiable smile and the best words for it. Once it gets the long wanted help and in momentary abundance forgets the famine and painful calculation of what would have happened, the policy of this country will again show its real face that is the one which is not very benevolent towards us." Therefore, there was no place left for delusions – the real help was indeed indispensable. The reasons behind it were of general and especially of military nature, that is it was an imperative to avoid the final collapse of the Montenegrin army.⁴¹

⁴¹ AUSSME, Ministero della Guerra-Schacchiere orientale-Ufficio coloniale-Stati esteri, b. 45, fasc. 2, Informazioni detta Marina, Accame, Marine Attache' to the Head of the General Staff of the Navy, Cetinje, 19 September 1915, oggetto: *Rapporto di missione*.

Analysing more generally the policy of Montenegro, Accame stressed out that the various acts of its government showed rather apparently a substantial line of continuity (negotiations with Austria on the armistice at the time of the siege of Skadar) "... that does not convincingly show great devotion to the cause of the Quadruple Alliance." In his opinion, the claims of loyalty constantly repeated by the government served actually to satisfy domestic public opinion. The possibility of an allied landing in Kotor was out of question because the winter season had already advanced. At the same time, distrust about the success of the war was widespread so the idea of concluding a separate peace with Austria was ever more present. "It's true", concluded Accame, "that public opinion here is somewhat variable but, either way, this event is also significant and it can at least indicate that the threat against Serbia has very little moved its Slavic brothers who intend now to cautiously wait and above all, it seems to me, to land on their feet."⁴²

In early January 1916, the 62nd Austrian Division renewed the attack on the Montenegrin lines and already on 10 January it reached the top of Lovćen. The Supreme Command of Montenegro launched then a counter-attack that failed due to fatigue and extreme discomfort of the troops. The same day the Montenegrin government proposed to King Nikola to ask for suspension of operations in order to arrange the cessation of hostilities. The next day, delegates of the Montenegrin government went to the Austro-Hungarian lines to ask for a six-day ceasefire. The Imperial High Command did not adhere to this request and ordered the continuation of operations: only an unconditional surrender with the delivery of weapons would be taken into account. Operations continued and on 13 January Austrian troops occupied Cetinje. The refusal of the Austro-Hungarians of the new request for suspension of the fighting prompted King Nikola to accept the Austrian conditions on 16 January. The surrender and the yield of weapons were arranged for the 25th. On 20 January King Nikola left for Brindisi on an Italian torpedo boat, giving order not to accept any conditions and to continue the fight. But the Montenegrin army had already ceased to exist and the 3rd Austrian Army had the open way to the coastal plain of northern Albania, according to the Conrad's project of 1915 that had foreseen the end of the Serbian, Montenegrin and Albanian states. Skadar and Podgorica were occupied on the 23rd while on 31 January Lesh and Shengjin fell down. According to General Cadorna, Italians from Durres should have to be evacuated by land in order to reconsolidate their position in Valona. On the other hand, Sonnino, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, reckoned as necessary to maintain the possession of Durres as a political pledge. Peace negotiations with Montenegro began on 29 January and, contrary to the project Conrad, Minister Burián and the Berlin government were favourable not only to the maintenance of Montenegro as a state, but also to its enlargement at the expense of Serbia, with the obvious purpose of blocking any Pan-Serbian ambition and of depriving the pro-Yugoslav propaganda of any meaning

⁴² Ibidem, Accame to the Head of the General Staff of the Navy, Cetinje, 18 October 1915, oggetto: *Rapporto di missione*.

whatsoever. Montenegro remained thus occupied by Austrian troops until autumn 1918, while on the political level the relations between its government in exile and the governments of other Slavs and of the Entente allies were getting increasingly complex. The Entente, in fact, with the exception of Italy, was quite favourable, albeit for different reasons, to the Yugoslav unification which was one of the most important national issues of the First World War. Obviously there were other as well, like the Polish, Czech, Ukrainian and Italian issues. Hence, World War I is rightly seen as the last war of Europe fought in the name of the idea of nationality.⁴³ However, it is equally true that the principle of nationality became an explicit purpose of war for the Entente states (with the exception of Italy and Russia) only in 1917, when President Wilson asked for the war purposes to be explicitly declared and made it a condition for US participation in the conflict.⁴⁴

The supporters of Yugoslav unity and, particularly, of the Serbs began then to lobby for an instant unification, even before the end of the war. In January 1917, Radović who had advocated immediate opening of negotiations with Serbia resigned and King Nikola accepted his resignation affirming the unification request unacceptable as it was not possible to consult the people or the allied governments. In fact, Italians wanted to keep Montenegro alive and with the formation of the new government this became impossible due to: "... the successful conspiracy organised by the Serbs to push Montenegro to commit suicide before the Peace Conference, with the tacit approval of the Russian and French governments." Romano Avezana, the Italian Minister in mission at the Office of the king of Montenegro in Paris, ended his report by saying: "... if our policy is to restore Montenegro, or at least not to leave the matter to be compromised in the peace negotiations, it might be desirable that we step up our activities to support it."⁴⁵ This was the biggest problem that year in the relations between Italy and Montenegro. Economic and commercial reasons, mentioned before, dynastic reasons and, particularly, the opposition to Yugoslav unity were the crucial motivation behind Italian policy. If the dynastic ties had been easy to overcome, as well as if economic ones easy to resolve (since the very beginning of the conflict, Volpi and his collaborators had predicted the end of the Montenegrin kingdom as an independent state), there remained, however, the political question of the control of the Adriatic and of Italian aspirations in Dalmatia, which were progressively expanding. It is rather complicated to retrace here all the events concerning the relations between Italy and the Yugoslav movement, between sophisticated Italian men, such as Gaetano Salvemini, and the Yugoslav exponents like Trumbić, Supilo, Pašić etc., particularly since there are more in-depth studies by

⁴³ A. Tamborra, *L'idea di nazionalità e la guerra 1914–1918*, Atti del XLI Congresso di Storia del Risorgimento, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, Rome 1964, 1–115.

⁴⁴ L. Valiani, *La politica delle nazionalità*, in AA.VV., *Il trauma dell'intervento: 1914–1919*, Florence 1968, 235–270.

⁴⁵ DDI, Quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. VII, Rome, 1978, Romano Avezana, Minister at the Office of the King of Montenegro to Sonnino, Paris, 17 January 1917, 75; id., Paris, 18 January 1917, 85–87.

various authors already mentioned.⁴⁶ It needs to be pointed out here that following the political logics of the Italian Government, and not without conflict, the end of Montenegro made more difficult the implementation of agreements on the Adriatic region reached between Rome and the allies before the war had started.

According to Romano Avezana, the French government stood behind these events, contrasting Italian hegemony in the Mediterranean with the establishment of a strong Serbia and strong Greece: "If some new fact does not appear, some clear explanation or a review of the situation that would give birth once again to that mutual confidence among the allies that is so essential both for cooperation in the war and for common actions after it, the questions of the Adriatic, Montenegro, Serbia or Greece, as well as the Mediterranean, will continue to follow the current course of getting out of our control more and more every day." If, in the end, Italy had not managed to establish its position in the future structure of Europe, it would have gradually become isolated and it would have broken the ties with the allies at the end of the war. Hence, a clear and determined position was important, if not essential.⁴⁷

The Corfu Declaration of July 1917 encouraged creation of the kingdom of the South Slavs, leaving behind the projects related to Great Serbia, increased by Bosnia and Herzegovina, with access to the Adriatic in Zadar and Kotor. At the same time, even on the Italian side there was a tendency to tone down the most ardent voices of nationalist propaganda and to start searching for a possible agreement with Yugoslavia's representatives before the end of the conflict. During the meetings between Pašić and Sonnino in September 1917⁴⁸, and between Leonida Bissolati and Ante Trumbić in the summer of 1918⁴⁹, it was acknowledged that a reasonable and just solution would be to leave Trieste, Gorizia and entire Western Istria, to the west of Mt. Maggiore, to Italy. However, the final settlement was not possible yet because of the question of Dalmatia, where, as already mentioned, the majority of the population was of Slavic and not Italian origin. On the one hand, there were Italian, often exaggerated, claims, while on the other demands of the other party, like those of the Yugoslav Committee, which at the time was still a fragile organism with a great number of internal and external opponents.⁵⁰ These were actual reasons that hindered the agreement before the end of the war and that generated brought about negative consequences at the Peace Conference. It is exactly at this stage that the

⁴⁶ Besides the quoted studies of Tamborra see the same author: *Gli studi di storia dell'Europa Orientale in Italia nell'ultimo ventennio*, in *La storiografia italiana negli ultimi vent'anni*, Milan, 1970; id., *L'Europa Orientale*, in *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento in onore di Alberto M. Ghisalberti*, Florence, 1974, vol. III, 473–510. Useful from the Italian point of view L. Tosi, *La propaganda italiana all'estero nella prima guerra mondiale. Rivendicazioni territoriali e politica delle nazionalità*, Udine 1977.

⁴⁷ DDI, quinta serie (1914–1918), vol. VII, Romano Avezana to Sonnino, Paris, 11 April 1917, 515–517.

⁴⁸ Archivio storico del Ministero degli Affari esteri (ASMAE), Archivio amb. d'Italia a Londra, b. 329, fascicolo 4, Sonnino to Imperiali, 11 September 1917.

⁴⁹ Archivio centrale dello Stato (ACS), carte Bissolati, b. 3, fascicolo 12, Bissolati a Nitti, 24 July 1919.

⁵⁰ A. Tamborra, *L'idea di nazionalità...*, op. cit.

double approach of Italian policy towards Montenegro got more outlined: on the one hand, the tendency to still keep alive an anti-Serb (and, therefore, an anti-Yugoslav) feeling, while on the other to seek for a certain form of compromise with the Serbs (and, hence, with the Yugoslavs).

The problem was more evident in the last period of military operations in 1918. Diaz ordered to General Piacentini, head of the Italian forces in the Balkans, incorporated in *l'Armée d'Orient* which was commanded by General Franchet d'Espèrey, that the occupation of Montenegro was to take place only in conjunction with the French and English troops.⁵¹ The objective of the Italian Supreme Command was not to offend in any way the susceptibility of Montenegrins while waiting for some clearer political directives; directives that, however, came too late as it can be witnessed from the two Piacentini's dispatches, respectively one from the 10th and one from 22nd November 1918. In the first he informed Diaz that, according to the orders received from general d'Espèrey, he had prepared the landing of Italian troops in Kotor and Bar, so as to proceed then for Cetinje, Lovćen and other target destinations that were crucial for maintaining the public order. In the second dispatch the general mentioned that a group of Montenegrin parliamentarians had invited him to stop his march to Cetinje because it was believed that the Italian action was in favour of King Nikola. So not only was Piacentini waiting for the instructions from Italy, but he also stressed out that the commander of *l'Armée d'Orient* had done nothing to create an inter-allied defence in Montenegro.⁵² The immediate Italian interest was, in fact, to maintain the occupation of Kotor. The occupation of entire Montenegro, on the other hand, would have taken place only if inter-allied forces were engaged in such an enterprise.⁵³ The Italian ambiguity was best evidenced in its double-approach attitude. With the aim to counter the Yugoslav propaganda demonstrated in Montenegro by Serbian troops and to give proof that Italy was in favour of an independent Montenegrin state, although federated with other Yugoslav states⁵⁴, Italy accepted the Montenegrin volunteers in favour of King Nikola into the Italian troops while, at the same time, it looked with suspicion at attempts of the Montenegrin sovereign to enter into direct dialogue with representatives of the Yugoslav movement. The crux of the matter was therefore to undertake a rapid conquest of Montenegro by inter-allied troops, and to extend and consolidate the Italian occupation of the Albanian territory.

⁵¹ DDI, sesta serie (1918–1922), vol. I, Rome 1956, Diaz to Sonnino, 5 November 1918, 3.

⁵² Ibidem, Diaz to Sonnino, Supreme Command, 9 November 1918, 99; id., Piacentini to Diaz, war zone, 22 November 1918, 141.

⁵³ Ibidem, Orlando, President of the Council to Badoglio, Head of General Staff of the Army, Rome, 24 November 1918, 155.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, Borsarelli, vice secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Bonin Longare, ambassador in Paris to Imperiali, ambassador in London, Rome, 7 November 1918, 23; id., Di Montagliari, Minister at the Office of the King of Montenegro to Sonnino, Paris, 8 November 1918, 30; id., Borsarelli to Di Montagliari, Rome, 14 November 1918, 79–80; id., Di Montagliari to Sonnino, Paris, 79–80; id., Di Montagliari to Sonnino, Paris, 20 November 1918, 123; id., Paris, 25 November 1918, 167; id., Paris, 10 December 1918.

The end of the war and, in many ways, the unexpected collapse of the Habsburg monarchy created, therefore, an unmanageable, chaotic situation where every nationality and every country, especially Italy and Serbia, tended to create as many status quo situations as possible so as to be considered at the Peace Conference at which Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Montenegrins presented a maximum program of demands. The need to determine the border between Italy and Yugoslavia in a mixed region opened, inside and outside the Peace Conference of 1919, a long dispute that would end only with the Treaty of Rapallo of 12 November 1920, when Italy renounced its highest aspirations, enshrined in the Treaty of London of 1915 but poorly compatible with the Yugoslav ones.⁵⁵

On 26 November 1918 the National Assembly of Podgorica proclaimed the deposition of the dynasty Petrović-Njegoš of Montenegro and the union with Serbia. This union was not recognised by King Nikola and in the first months of 1919 his partisans provoked a number of riots, while Rome ordered to General Piacentini to accept the king's supporters, should they enter in Albania occupied by Italian troops, as members of an allied army.⁵⁶

Not even the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920), which consolidated the borders of the new Serb-Croat-Slovene state, resolved the issue which was finally settled only in July 1922, when the Conference of Ambassadors recognised the unification of Montenegro with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

⁵⁵ Cf. I. J. Lederer, *La Jugoslavia dalla Conferenza della pace al trattato di Rapallo*, Milan 1966. Cf. also A. Tamborra, *La fase recente della questione adriatica*, Annali della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche ed Economia e Commercio, Università degli Studi di Perugia, n. 8 (1963–1964) 73–96.

⁵⁶ DDI, Sesta serie (1918–1922), vol. I, Galanti, Charge d'Affairs in Belgrade to Sonnino, Belgrade, 10 January 1919, 448; id., Badoglio to Sonnino, 11 January 1919, 450; id., Bianchieri, secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Sonnino, Rome, 12 January 1919, 455; id., Imperiali to Sonnino, London, 13 January 1919, 460; id., Borsarelli to Sonnino, Rome, 13 January 1919, 460.

Antonello BIAGINI

**LA PENETRAZIONE ITALIANA NEI BALCANI E L'IMPORTANZA DEL MONTENEGRO
NEI RAPPORTI ITALO-SERBI DURANTE IL CONFLITTO MONDIALE (1914-18)**

Sommario

Una delle conseguenze principali della "rivoluzione industriale dell'età giolittiana" fu l'interesse degli imprenditori italiani verso il mondo danubiano-balcanico. Emerse la necessità per l'industria pesante italiana, meccanica e metallurgica, di guardare fuori i confini nazionali sia per l'approvvigionamento delle materie prime a basso prezzo, sia per collocare una parte dei prodotti finiti. Di fatto, dopo la massiccia espansione coloniale che caratterizzò soprattutto la seconda metà del XIX secolo, le zone rimaste disponibili dove l'industria italiana potesse indirizzarsi non erano molte: fra queste, anche per motivi di vicinanza geografica, la penisola balcanica. Qui, materie prime minerarie, tabacchi, tessili e prodotti alimentari potevano essere scambiati con prodotti dell'industria pesante, in un mercato che praticamente non presentava limiti di assorbimento se non quelli segnati dall'arretratezza economica e sociale delle popolazioni e dalla deficienza delle infrastrutture.

Si ripete così, in sede economica, quello che già era avvenuto in sede politica quando l'interdipendenza tra Balcani e Italia, tra "questione d'Oriente" e problema italiano era stata sentita, prima e dopo Cavour, quale elemento fondamentale del processo unitario italiano. In conclusione si avverte che lo sviluppo industriale italiano poteva essere agevolato da un fattivo intervento imprenditoriale nella penisola balcanica. La presenza italiana avrebbe anche significato un contenimento dell'Austria e della sua presenza nella penisola.

È questo il periodo in cui nella stampa italiana e soprattutto nei rapporti dei rappresentanti italiani all'estero (diplomatici, militari, uomini d'affari ecc.) si inizia a parlare di progetti ferroviari nei Balcani: presso gli archivi italiani si conservano numerosi studi e rapporti redatti proprio sulle possibilità di tali realizzazioni e sulle conseguenze militari e strategiche delle stesse. Alla vigilia dei gravi avvenimenti che avrebbero condotto alla conflagrazione mondiale i funzionari italiani coinvolti a vario titolo nei Balcani si interessano inoltre al problema dell'unione politica tra la Serbia e il Montenegro.

Altra questione viva è poi quella dell'Albania, gli interessi che su di lei si accendevano ora da parte italiana, montenegrina, e tradizionalmente da parte austriaca, non era problema di poco conto e destinato, quindi, ad alterare i rapporti tra i due alleati futuri quali sarebbero stati il Montenegro e l'Italia e tra questa e la Serbia. Progetti di occupazione italiana esistevano e sono sufficientemente noti; nello stesso modo la questione albanese impegnerà costantemente la diplomazia italiana tra la fine del secolo XIX e il primo quarantennio del XX. La dichiarazione di Corfù del luglio 1917 infine solleciterà la creazione di un regno degli Slavi del Sud.

Parallelamente anche da parte italiana si tenderà a smorzare i toni più accesi della propaganda nazionalista e si cercherà un possibile accordo prima della fine del conflitto con i rappresentanti jugoslavi. L'accordo non sarà possibile a causa della questione della Dalmazia dove la maggioranza della popolazione era slava, non italiana. Da un lato le richieste italiane, spesso ingiustificate, dall'altro un organismo, quello jugoslavo, ancora fragile e cui non mancavano gli oppositori. Questi i motivi che non resero possibile un compromesso prima della fine della guerra con conseguenze nefaste in sede di Conferenza della Pace del 1919. In quest'ultima fase si delinearà nella politica italiana un doppio atteggiamento nei confronti del Montenegro: la tendenza da un lato a volerlo mantenere in vita in funzione anti-serba (e quindi anti-jugoslava); dall'altro a ricercare con i serbi (e quindi con gli jugoslavi) una forma di compromesso.

Parole chiave: Italia, Montenegro, Serbia, Prima guerra mondiale, resistenza montenegrina.

Антонело БЈАЋИНИ

ИТАЛИЈАНСКИ ПРОДОР НА БАЛКАН И ЗНАЧАЈ ЦРНЕ ГОРЕ У ОДНОСИМА ИЗМЕЂУ ИТАЛИЈЕ И СРБИЈЕ ЗА ВРЕМЕ ПРВОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА (1914–18)

Резиме

Једна од главних последица „индустријске револуције из времена Ђолитија“ је интересовање италијанских привредника за дунавско-балкански свет. Постало је неопходно да италијанска тешка индустрија, механичка и металуршка, изађе ван националних граница и потражи нова тржишта како за набавку сировина по ниским ценама, тако и за пласирање својих крајњих производа. Након масовне колонијалне експанзије која је посебно одликовала другу половину 19. века, није преостало пуно слободних територија на којим је италијанска индустрија могла да се афирмише. Једна од ових малобројних области било је и Балканско полуострво, интересантно такође због своје географске близине. Минералне сировине, дуван, текстилни и прехранбени производи овде су могли да се мењају за производе тешке индустрије, на тржишту на ком практично није постојала бојазан од засићења, нити су постојала органичења осим оних које је наметао друштвено-економски развој народа и мањкавости инфраструктуре.

Тако се на економском плану поновило оно што се већ десило у политици: међузависност Балкана и Италије, укључујући „Источно питање“ и италијански проблем, постојала је и пре и после Кавура, централне личности процеса италијанског уједињења. Може се закључити да су проактивне предузетничке интервенције на Балканском полуострву могле да потпомогну

италијански индустријски развој. Италијанско присуство на Балкану значило је такође и смањење аустријског утицаја и улоге на полуострву.

У овом периоду у италијанској штампи, а посебно у извештајима италијанских представника у иностранству (дипломатских, војних, економских, итд.), почињу да се помињу планови за изградњу железнице на Балкану. У италијанским архивима сачуване су бројне студије и извештаји који се директно баве изводљивошћу такве иницијативе и њеним војним и стратешким последицама. Уочи избијања озбиљних догађаја који ће запалити свет, италијански званичници који су по разним основама боравили на Балкану суочили су се и са проблемом политичке уније Србије и Црне Горе. Друго важно питање било је питање албанских територија на које су бациле око Италија, Црна Гора и, традиционално, Аустрија. Албанско питање не треба пренебрегнути будући да је баш оно одредило односе будућих савезника, Црне Горе и Италије, и Италије и Србије. Италијанске окупационе аспирације биле су врло добро познате будући да је италијанска дипломатија једнако била ангажована око њих од краја 19. века па све до четрдесетих година 20. века.

Крфска декларација из јула 1917. отворено је охрабривала стварање краљевине Јужних Словена. Истовремено, чак је и италијанска страна тежила да утиша најгласније заговорнике националистичке пропаганде и да постигне евентуални споразум са југословенским представницима пре краја рата. Но, договор није био могућ због Далмације у којој је већина становништва био словенског а не италијанског порекла. С једне стране, ту су били често неутемељени италијански захтеви, а с друге захтеви и даље нестабилне пројугословенске стране којој није фалило противника. Све су то разлози који су онемогућили да се постигне компромис пре краја рата, што је имало катастрофалне последице на Мировној конференцији 1919. Ову последњу фазу посебно је обележио двоструки став који је Италија имала према Црној Гори: тежња да, с једне стране, одржи у животу антисрпски (и самим тим и антијугословенски) сентимент, а с друге да пронађе компромис с тим истим Србима, односно с Југословенима.

Кључне речи: Италија, Црна Гора, Србија, Први светски рат, црногорски отпор.

Andrea CARTENY

**ITALY, END OF THE GREAT WAR
AND THE UNION OF MONTENEGRO WITH SERBIA:
DETAILS FROM ITALIAN DOCUMENTATION**

Abstract: Italian diplomatic and military documents witness to the period of genesis of the Montenegrin resistance to the union with Serbia and to the creation of Yugoslavia, from the Assembly of Podgorica (end of 1918) to the Christmas Uprising (beginning of 1919). Italy was not only a spectator, but it took active part in these events. Italian interests were particularly at odds with those of France, whose government tended to expand its area of influence in the Balkan region through the strengthening of Serbia.

Keywords: Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, World War I, Montenegrin resistance.

The Balkan wars and complex diplomatic and military context of the Great War had a decisive influence on the evolution of the particularly intense¹ relations between Italy and Montenegro, and Italy and Serbia, especially in view of a "Serbian-centric" outcome of the Yugoslav project at the end of the conflict.² Hence, the union between Montenegro and Serbia, proclaimed by the Assembly of Podgorica (24 to 29 November 1918), was an event of great importance for the Italian Government given the relations of friendship and support that Italy nourished for the Montenegrin government in exile and the dynasty of Petrović-Njegoš.³ In view of the events at the end of the Great War, the waiting game that Italy played was indeed a consequence of the affirmation of the policy of nationality, enshrined in the Congress of Oppressed

¹ The broader bibliography mentioned here contains works of prominent historians such as A. F. Biagini, *L'Italia e le guerre balcaniche*, Ufficio Storico SME, Rome 2012, and Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *Italija i Crna Gora 1914–1925: studija o izneverenom savezništvu*, Službeni List SRJ, Belgrade 1998.

² Cf. Biagini, *I rapporti tra l'Italia e il Montenegro durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale...*, cit.

³ The interest in this period is renewed in the recent publications, such as F. Caccamo, *Il Montenegro negli anni della prima guerra mondiale*, Aracne, Rome 2008.

Nationalities and in the Pact of Rome (April 1918). This meant leaving behind Sonnino's policy that implicated maintaining the pre-war international political framework, including the survival of Austria-Hungary, and implementation of provisions of the Treaty of London.⁴ Specifically, the restoration of Montenegro and, therefore, the suppression of the role of the Radović's Montenegrin Committee for the National Union, recognised by Serbia as the sole interlocutor in Montenegro and proved as such also in Paris and London, was rather important for the Italian national interest. This would have secured the preservation of Italian positions in the region, in particular in Kotor and Lovćen. Relevant economic and commercial considerations were driving Italy in the same direction, as it can be seen from the observations that Giuseppe Volpi brought to the attention of Sidney Sonnino. In mid-October, Volpi insisted on bringing back the *Bar Company* and *Regia cointeressata dei tabacchi*⁵ under the control of Rome.

From a military point of view, a clear French prevalence emerged once the idea of sending the volunteers to the battlefield, organised by the Montenegrin government in exile in Neuilly, was rejected. L'Armée d'Orient, commanded by General Franchet d'Espérey assumed in October an important role in the liberation and occupation of the Montenegrin and Albanian territories, side by side with the Serbs and bands of volunteers known as *komitadji*. Due to Italian protests, in the last days of October there was further division of the occupied territories; Italians were stationed in northern Albania, at Skadar, and those deployed in Montenegro were subjected to the command of l'Armée d'Orient. Despite the French opposition, General Piacentini, commander of the Italian expeditionary corpus, decided on the entrance of the Italian navy into Bar on 4 November: Italians proceeded to take control of Ulcinj and Vir Pazar, and then to join the allies in Kotor and advance to Lovćen. Faced with strong penetration in the field of Serbs and Radović's unionists, Rome decided to allow the Montenegrins related to king Nikola to return to Montenegro, following the Italian troops. After the first days of enthusiasm of local people for liberation from the Serbs and Montenegrin unionist volunteers, a rather sharp contrast soon became obvious between the two sides, caused by the rivalry between the Montenegrin clans. The forces in the field were divided between the independentist faction that favoured king Nikola – the *nikolists*, including the elements that had collaborated with the occupying Austrians, the autonomists and the federalists on one side, while on the other stood the contra-faction – Yugoslav unionist and pro-Serbian elements. The latter created a National Council and a provisional Central Executive Committee. These bodies organised the elections for the national assembly supported by Serbia and in collaboration with the French. Even

⁴ On these subjects, in broader bibliography, see: L. Albertini, *Venti anni di vita politica*, Parte II: *L'Italia nella Guerra Mondiale – Volume III: Da Caporetto a Vittorio Veneto (ottobre 1917–novembre 1918)*, Zanichelli, Bologna 1953; L. Valiani, *La dissoluzione dell'Austria-Ungheria*, Il Saggiatore, Milan 1966; L. Tosi, *La propaganda italiana all'estero nella prima guerra mondiale*, Del Bianco, Pordenone 1977.

⁵ Caccamo, op. cit., 167.

though many Montenegrins were still in exile, like those who were with the Royal Family in Neuilly or many prisoners of the former Austria-Hungary that had not yet returned to the country, the *Great Assembly – Velika Skupština*, was held in November in Podgorica (instead of Cetinje) and voted on the union with Serbia.

As it can be witnessed from the diplomatic documentation,⁶ the uprising happened on the day before Christmas and it was provoked by the independentist faction, the so-called *Greens (zelenaši)*, against the unionists, the *Whites (bjelaši)*. This opened a period of civil conflicts in which Italy played quite a significant role, though many times rather unwillingly.⁷ The information also indicated that there was still some room left for saving the kingdom of Montenegro, even at the cost of abdication of the old king, and, consequently, for Italy to continue to support this cause.⁸ In this context, while the chaotic situation in the field indicated an increased risk for the soldiers stationed in the region,⁹ in the eyes of other powers Italy was seen as pretty unbalanced favouring the Montenegrin independence.¹⁰ The Montenegrin independentist faction, on the other hand, was pressing for more active Italian involvement on their side, and Italy, unwittingly, found itself involved also in the “Christmas Uprising”, which broke out on 7 January, on the very day of Orthodox Christmas.

The concerns of Rome remained unconsidered by the allies, despite worsening of the situation in the field. Italian military commanders and officers deployed in the region were particularly loud in calling for a vigorous political action from Italy itself, that would assure the inter-allied command in the main areas of

⁶ Cf. Italian Diplomatic Documents – Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (MAE, Commissione per la pubblicazione dei documenti diplomatici), particularly: DDI, VI serie, 1918–1922, Vol. I (4 novembre 1918 – 17 gennaio 1919).

⁷ Cf. ibidem, doc. n. 514: Paris, 10 December: Montenegrin protest against Serbs and French (for favouring the unionists of Andrija Radović) reported by Italian Minister Di Montagliari at the office of the Montenegrin Government in exile, to Sonnino.

⁸ Cf. ibidem, doc. n. 526: Rome, 11 December: Sonnino’s reporting to Montenegrin embassies and to allied countries (Paris, London, Washington): *Reliable sources inform that artificial situation created by the Serbs in Montenegro is not desperate. The majority of the districts of Katumskat, Zerumlzair, Kazeitali, Juskep, Dalea are for independent Montenegro. It is argued that due to this desperate situation it might be necessary for King Nikola to proclaim a successor, Prince Mihailo’s son Mirko.* Meanwhile, on the 5th in Kotor, a *Te Deum* celebrated the union with SHS “reliable sources judge that Serbian oppression will lead to a conflict.”

⁹ It is reported that on 16 December a meeting was held in Rome for the preservation of the independent Montenegro. Cf. ibidem, doc. n. 726 (1 January: Supreme Commander Diaz to Orlando), where it says: “Rumors on probable turbulences in the public order in Montenegro”, as well as “possible future attacks against our garrisons by the Montenegrin komite. The Serbs also said that the Montenegrin independence activists want to surprise our garrisons to get hold of the weapons which they lack”. This was the general tone of the only information on the riots transmitted by Commander Piacentini to the French command.

¹⁰ Cf. ibidem, doc. n. 795: Paris, to Sonnino, 7 January: when the Government in Belgrade proclaimed the demission of the Royal Family Petrović. The report also mentions a protest note sent by Radović to Trumbić for the meeting held in Rome on the 16th, asking for withdrawal of the Italian troops from Montenegro and Yugoslav territories.

confrontation, so as to prevent the French (and pro-Serbian) control from consolidating at the expense of Italian interests.¹¹ Regarding the actions of the independists, General Piacentini wrote: "...conflicting news about performance of Montenegrin rioters. It seems, however, that it can be confirmed that the two main centres of revolt are the regions of Cetinje and Podgorica. Development of the fighting was adverse for the Montenegrins who were under the command of the nikolist Jovan Plamenac, appointed head of government by King Nikola instead of Evgenije Popović on 17 February. We want, hence, to disarm them on their arrival on the Albanian territory under Italian command."¹² The report on the state of affairs drawn up by the Italian Legation in Cetinje indicated the causes and context of the insurrection: "The uprising in Montenegro was mainly determined by the outcome of the resolution passed by the self-appointed Skupština of Podgorica, which took place under the threat of Serbian troops who prevented any opposing manifestation. On 3 January, the insurgents began the blockade of Cetinje while simultaneously asking the Serbian General, commander of the city, to let them enter peacefully and thus avoid bloodshed. The General refused... Four thousand insurgents were awaiting the intervention of Jovan Plamenac, while on the other hand the Serbs called for reinforcement. Upon the highly anticipated arrival of the allies in Cetinje, on the second day the insurgents presented several requests (including the liberation of prisoners, leaving of the Serbian troops from Montenegro, new elections under the guarantee of the allied forces) compiled by the Royal Chancellor of Legation. On the fourth day of the clashes, marked by actions of Serbian artillery, Montenegrin survivors retreated to the mountains, leaving four hundred dead and wounded."¹³

Thus started a period of the independist military resistance, for which Italians, in a certain way, remained the sole point of reference and "guarantee" on the international level. The Treaty of Rapallo (November 1920), death of king Nikola (March 1921) and dying out of the hostilities in the first years of the second decade of the 20th century marked the end of this political phase.

Hence, in the first weeks and months of 1919, Italians collected information and wrote interesting reports, now preserved in the archives of the History Office of the General Staff of the Army.¹⁴ The material contains two important reports on the

¹¹ Cf. *ibidem*, doc. n. 817, Badoglio to Orlando and to Sonnino, 9 January, denouncing that in the light of the Montenegrin riots, Serbian troops are sent from Kotor to the inland, while: "The French Command communicates nothing to the Allies and it seems that the Serbs are left free to operate in those regions". Hence, he declares that: "an energetic intervention by the Government is essential in order to occupy by the inter-allied forces at least the cities of Cetinje and Podgorica and to put an end to the Serbian arrogance and to the vague French conduct against interests of the Entente, and of Italy in particular."

¹² Cf. *ibidem*, doc. n. 843: Rome, 11 January, Head of the General Staff of the Army, Badoglio, to Sonnino.

¹³ Cf. *ibidem*, doc. n. 861: Rome, 13 January, vice-secretary Borsarelli to Sonnino (Paris): report of the Chancellor of the Royal Legation in Cetinje.

¹⁴ Various folders are dedicated to the situation in Albania and Montenegro, including the folders 44 and 45, F1 Supreme Command and various offices.

situation in Montenegro at the beginning of 1919. The first is a report by Lieutenant Commander Ugo Perricone,¹⁵ sent in early March to the Supreme Command, containing information (“only partially transmitted also to the French under the General De Fourtoux”) received from a British officer, Captain Brodie, aide of General Phillips:

“Captain Brodie did not find a single person in the cities in Montenegro that expressed his opposition to the Serbian regime; all respond with the same prepared phrases, as if repeated by a gramophone. But he could not have had any contact with the peasants. The general idea he got was that the Italians were detested; no sympathy for the French either; distrust of Englishmen, and sympathy for the Americans, as long as they did not come from Rome. He failed to conduct interrogations without the direct control of Serbs and Yugoslavs who, under the pretext of treating him with courtesies, accompanied and stalked him everywhere he went.

The report adds that two Americans (Bruce and Tree), coming from Rome, ‘were completely isolated’, while the American major Wellington Furlong was well received and welcomed by Martinović. The American Major considers Martinović and Radović ‘sincere and patriotic’. Furlong, however, was seen as a ‘superficial person’ and it seemed that he ‘easily judges the most difficult questions, although he stayed only 24 hours in Skadar and but a few days in Montenegro’. Moreover, he ‘got completely detached from the American commission of Tree and Bruce, acting on his own with decisions opposed’ to those of his co-nationals, using as orientation the memorials given to him by Radović and Martinović.

Brodie in Montenegro was treated with every possible courtesy: hosted generously, not paying either for food or accommodation. He told me: ‘The mentality of these people is such that think that I would write reports in their favour only because I was saved from spending money’. Radović and Daković assured him that Mijušković was to come back to Montenegro to mount a revolution and to kill Radović, on the instigation of the Italian Government.

However, the evidence and documents of this plan were not available. It was neither possible to meet Mijušković, referred to as “the representative of the Italian government”, in the presence of an interpreter. Brodie managed to meet Mušković only in prison, finding him in a pitiful condition; the interpreter for his part seemed to be there rather to control the meeting than to facilitate the conversation. Helped by the Italians during his journey, Mijušković arrived in Montenegro to trade, and he “complains that he was not defended by the Italian Garrison of Virpazar that left him to be imprisoned completely innocent the moment he set foot on the ground.” His liberation was therefore entrusted to the British government, which was not able to give any promise.

¹⁵ “Report by Lieutenant Commander Ugo Perricone”, sent on 4 March 1919, to Supreme Command, Prot. n. 67 Highly Confidential, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Head of General Staff of the Navy, to the Ministry of War, to the Command of the Italian troops in the Balkans in Valona, in: AUSSME, F1-CS, b. 44, f. 1: “Comando Supremo – Ufficio Operazioni. Albania – Situazione politico militare del Montenegro (1919)”, 1–5.

Radović, on the other hand, confirmed to Brodie, as the English representative, the need for Yugoslavia to take control of Skadar and the entire course of the Drim river, in order to facilitate the construction of the proposed railway from Niš to the sea, offering him also 'lucrative employment' and confirming the inexorability of this operation:

'If the Peace Conference would not take now such a decision in favour of the Grand Yugoslavia, two years will not pass from now and Skadar will forcibly be annexed by the will of the Slavic people and their force of arms. Italy, pushed from the west by France and by Yugoslavia from the east, will return naturally into the arms of Germany, and this alliance would certainly be a danger even for England. It is for this reason', said Radović, 'that Italian imperialism should be cut down at its very beginning.' And talking about imperialism, he did not hide the Yugoslav aspirations even for Thessaloniki.

Moreover, the belief that the entire Montenegro should be included into the Yugoslav state already became widespread in the American circles, to begin with the head of the mission of the American Red Cross in Montenegro:

"Captain Brodie assures me that Montenegro is already convinced that the only way for it to be saved from famine and misery, is through annexation to Serbia as a richer country that represents an organised and constitutional state. It is hunger that the Montenegrins are currently suffering from, which is the strongest stimulant of the principle of annexation. He believes that there is already a switch in French policy towards the Serbs, but I do not know what are the bases of this thought."

Brodie is seeking information and organising patrolling in areas where riots were reported, said by Serbian-Montenegrins to be provoked by separatists and easily repressed:

"In Rugovo, Ipek, Plava and Gusinje the Serbian-Montenegrin forces have attacked the Albanian people who claimed their nationality rights, and did not want to suffer the yoke of Yugoslavia. Albanians resisted as long as they had ammunition, and then they had to leave their villages that were looted and destroyed: 15,000 Albanians have fled, one part of them to the snowy mountains in the region of Shala, while the others took the roads leading to Skadar. In the very city there are already more than two thousands of them. The Serbs are also in the region of Krasnice, and they massacred all those that stayed behind. Refugees tell of wild and pitiful scenes."

The Serbian-Montenegrin "veterans from America" are present in the region of Ana Malit. Here '... there were Serbian officers who spoke with Albanian leaders of those regions, and warned them not to show any hostility to Serbian-Montenegrin troops, *that will soon be directed towards the bridge on Bojana*, or strict measures would be taken against the inhabitants living there.' This is why the Albanian leaders went to Skadar to ask for the intervention of the allied officers in the region. Even the French are very irritated because of the bad impression and because of refugees caused by the action of the Serbian-Montenegrin soldiers:

"The French captain Dilles, talking with English Captain Brodie, wanted to convince him that the refugees were not but the Montenegrin rebels, and they were to be pushed back within their borders. Meanwhile, the consul Martinović continues to make distributions of rice and flour, and it seems that he makes the beneficiaries

to give statements in the form of a voluntary request for annexation of Skadar to Yugoslavia. I have not been able yet to verify this fact with some evidence.”

He refers then to a preliminary meeting between General De Fourtou and Major Molinero, who advocated for the annexation of Skadar to Montenegro, showing different information and files. Finally, he mentions the (failed) attempt of the French commander to send two delegates to Paris “paid by different Muslim quarters.” The report of captain Perricone ends thus confirming the risk for Italy of the territorial enlargement of Montenegro, as an integral part of Yugoslavia, advocated by the serbophile France at the expense of Albania and, indirectly, also of Italy.

Another interesting document is the report written by Lieutenant Edoardo Lanino, showing the observations he made during his stay in Montenegro.¹⁶ As evidence of its value, the report was initially transmitted to the Informational Service and then, on 2 May it was sent by the head of the office, Colonel Marchetti, to the Supreme Command (Secretarial Office, Operational Office, with the suggestion of sending it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). On 11 May it was sent to the first aide of the delegation in Paris. The report outlines rather comprehensively the situation arisen in Montenegro at the beginning of 1919, and given its importance, it deserves to be fully quoted here.

MONTENEGRIN NOTES

I have the honour to report on my recent stay in Montenegro, which lasted from mid-January all through March. The delay in reaching my destination of Bar was caused by the need to first receive the instruction in Rome at the ROYAL MINISTRY OF WAR and the ROYAL NAVAL MINISTRY, the ones on which our occupation garrisons in Montenegro depend; in the meanwhile, the Inter-allied High Command of Italian, French, British and Serbian detachments was still in Kotor and it was in hands of the French General Venel, replaced afterwards by General Tahon.

According to the terms of the armistice, the command over the local garrisons was to be entrusted to the contingent that had come firstly to the given location, hence we have the Italian Command of Ulcinj, Bar and Virpazar, even though the same garrisons were made of mixed troops: Italian, French, English and Serbian. Cetinje, on the other hand, never had any Italian occupation troops, even though one of the first to come to this city was our patrol. The same case is in Podgorica.

¹⁶ *Report on military and political situation in Montenegro*, compiled by a second lieutenant with the information gathered during his stay in Bar (E. Lanino, *Note Montenegrine*, Trieste, Pasqua 1919), in: AUSSME, F1-CS, b. 44, f. 1, ... cit.

This is important to emphasise because the latter two locations, both important, being the first capital of the Kingdom, and the second the most populated city of the old Montenegro, were the main stage on which the recent political-military events took place.

The locations that we hold remained, however, immune to any important movement. This was because they were mostly inhabited by the Muslims, who were utterly indifferent to the political struggles between Serbs and Montenegrins and remained completely out of them. On the other hand, these cities are of great importance for us because of our political and economic interests that essentially involve the Bar Company, the company with exclusive Italian capital directed by Italian officials, which has been for several years now under the control of the Royal Government and which has a 60-year right of possessing and using the port of Bar and the adjoined free zone, as well as the right of using the railway between Bar and Lake Skadar with a stopover in Virpazar, and the stopovers and the access channels to ports on that same Montenegrin lake, which are three: Virpazar, Rijeka (from which there is a road that leads to Cetinje) and Plavnica (from which branches off a road that goes to Podgorica). The same company also holds the exclusive right of the power-driven navigation on Lake Skadar.

The captaincies (districts) of the Sandžak and Novi-Pazar, assigned to Montenegro by the Treaty of Bucharest, also did not participate in the political upheavals since inhabited by people of Muslim race.

However, the two districts of Ipek and Đakova, already Albanian and inhabited by mixed population, partially Muslim and partially Albanian, did not escape the internal strife. Still, these are not interesting for new Montenegro exactly because they are inhabited by different races, whereas these notes are referring to Serbian and Montenegrin relations and hence will stay within these limits.

The chronology of political and military events that took place in the Old Montenegro after the occupation of the inter-allied forces is summarised as follows.

The interior of the country was occupied mainly by Serbian troops; the British commands (in Bar, Podgorica and Cetinje) were mere spectators of the events and were later withdrawn to Podgorica and Cetinje; on the contrary, the French commands openly tolerated the actions carried out by the Serbian command that were under supreme command of the Serbian General residing in Cetinje. The American troops were absent, except for a brief stay in Cetinje, to which they were directed from Kotor soon after the Montenegrin uprising in January, but were withdrawn almost immediately.

Upon the occupation, the Serbs announced general elections for the Constituent Assembly. It is a well known fact and, moreover, perfectly true, that these elections were held irregularly. The deputies were elected by acclamation rather than by secret

ballot, as required by the Montenegrin Constitution. People who voted were not Montenegrin subjects. The great number of Montenegrins who had the right to vote did not participate in these elections.

Those elected were gathered in Podgorica at the headquarters of the Tobacco Company (owned as well by the Italian company and now arbitrarily occupied) where they were asked to vote on the resolutions previously prepared by the Serbian side, bringing about the decline of the Montenegrin dynasty and the union of Montenegro with Serbia. The surroundings of the place where the meeting took place were occupied by Serbian troops with machine guns. The vote took place without debate and by acclamation, again in contrast to the *magna carta* of Montenegro. It should be noted that the elections have been held with a different programme, which postulated the union of Montenegro to Yugoslavia, instead of Serbia.

The very same Serbs realised the illegality of these proceedings and later on spread the word throughout the country that there would be new elections; but they have never put into effect this promise of theirs.

From this moment onwards, the country was governed by an Executive Committee composed of five members residing in Podgorica and completely devoted to the Serbian cause.

It should be noted that, although the Executive Committee in Podgorica had no longer any reason to exist after the establishment of the general union of SHS and the Provisional Representation in Belgrade as the governing body of Yugoslavia alongside the Karađorđević dynasty, to which 12 deputies of the Montenegrin Skupština were sent, it was however maintained and it has recently been moved from Podgorica to Cetinje.

From the beginning, the influential personalities of Montenegro were indeed dedicated to the Serbian cause, including General Mitar Martinović, President of the Council during the last two Balkan wars, General Serdar Janko Vukotić, President of the Council and the Supreme Montenegrin Commander during the European War, General Bećir, notoriously Austrophile, and Andrea Radović, appointed President of the Council after the Austrian invasion of Montenegro. He did not stay for a long time on this position because, breaking with the King and the Government, he moved to Geneva where he founded the Montenegrin National Committee for the union of Montenegro and Serbia together with some intellectuals.

However, a great deal of the Montenegrin people were against the union of the two states, wanting Montenegro to regain the status of an independent country.

General Major Count Clam-Martinić, Supreme General and Military Governor of Montenegro during the Austrian occupation, writes in a report to his government,

traced in Rijeka: "The prevailing feeling in Montenegro is the wish to return, if possibly, to be a kingdom again; but if this is not possible, the Montenegrins would rather be united, in any form, to Austria and never to Serbia."

Abstracting the sentiments towards Austria, based only on the attitude of some influential leaders, but with no roots in the people, the conviction of the Austrian General Governor about the union of Montenegro to Serbia is deemed reliable.

Although part of the same stock, the Montenegrins have their own history and traditions that they are very proud of. They feel the formidable pride of being the only Balkan race never completely enslaved by the Turks, against whom they have fought alone three times, in addition to the help always given to the Serbs in their wars against the invader.

These sentiments are deeply rooted in the soul of the Montenegrin peasant, that is to say of the great mass of the population consisting, in fact, of peasants, since there is no industry in the country and since the businesses are mainly in the hands of few individuals who, though Montenegrin subjects, are of Albanian or Turkish race.

Only the intellectuals, who are few (in the whole of Montenegro there is but one grammar school), given that they have preferably studied in Belgrade where they got soaked with the Pan-Serbian idea, embrace the union with Serbia. The very attempt of Radović to establish a Montenegrin Committee for that union after the Austrian occupation of the country, put into being a group of no more than a few intellectuals adherent to this idea, who got even more reduced in number when it became known, through a confession by Radović himself, that he had received "from Serbian benefactors" a lot of money, "administered by the Government of Serbia" to this aim.

Not even did Radović's appeal to Montenegrins living in America to come to Europe and form a Legion of Montenegrins to be sent to the eastern front of the war, have the effect he wanted. When the first who answered the call landed in Marseille, they learned that rather than the Montenegrin Legion under its own leaders and its own flag, they would have the same fate of those Montenegrin soldiers who had escaped from Bosnia and Herzegovina and, having reached Thessaloniki after the invasion of Montenegro by the enemy, they had been incorporated into the Army of Serbia. Hence, they refused to go into battle under the orders of the Serbs. The other Montenegrins who were still in the United States, refused to leave America after they learned from their companions about the real situation.

The latest wars waged jointly with the Serbs first against Turkey and then against Austria did not favour this brotherhood of the Montenegrins and the Serbs.

Montenegrins accuse the Serbs of abandoning them at the height of the siege of Skadar when, under the pressure of Austria, the London Conference made known to Belgrade and Cetinje that this city had to be incorporated into independent Albania. The Montenegrins continued alone the siege and they managed to seize the city, both because of the food shortages of the garrison that defended the city and negotiations conducted with Essad Pasha. But, in their minds remained the conviction that the Serbs had abandoned them because they themselves aspired to get into possession of Skadar; this belief was reaffirmed during the European War as the retreating Serbian Army wanted to take control of the place, although it had been previously occupied by Montenegrins.

During the European War, the Army of Montenegro remained under the Serbian control. Though it had its own Supreme Commander, General Serdar Janko Vukotić, all military operations were exclusively directed by the Serbian General Staff resided in Cetinje and commanded by Serbian General Janković and by Colonel Pešić. During the last Austro-German-Bulgarian offensive that threw Serbia into the hands of the invaders, General Janković was recalled to take command in his own country; Colonel Pešić remained as the Head of the General Staff in Montenegro to direct operations of the Montenegrin Army that fought to cover the retreat of the Serbian army that crossed Montenegro to reach Albania.

Colonel Pešić is the author of the famous letter that advised the Government of Montenegro on the conclusion of peace with the enemy. The letter is later than the fall of Lovćen but it had been written before King Nikola with the Court and a part of the Government left the country. In the hearts of Montenegrins remained the belief that this letter had been inspired by the Government of Serbia in order to misrepresent the Montenegrin Government in the eyes of the Allies and to triumph, in contrast, with the purity of the conduct of the Serbian government, which had rejected any negotiation on the separate piece with the enemy.

These feelings of the Montenegrins towards the Serbs did not change even after the liberation of the country through the effort of the Allies, because the Serbs offended the Montenegrins by occupying their land as conquerors instead of coming to their aid as brothers, imposing everywhere their will and arrogance, even with dishonesty and by force. There has already been another proof of this dishonesty: the decisions imposed to the Constituent Assembly in Podgorica, which was summoned to vote on the accession of Montenegro to Yugoslavia, but advocated instead the vote for the union with Serbia. The Serbs have made extensive use of the military arrogance, refusing to give food to those who did not adhere to such a union and jailing those Montenegrins who professed their determination to reconstitute an independent state.

Such Serbian abuses were the cause of the Montenegrin uprising in January, led by Jovan Plamenac. The incidents occurred here and there throughout the old Montenegro,

but the bloody battles were led chiefly in Nikšić due to the intervention that the family Petrović (siblings and grandchildren of King Nikola who resided there) did in favour of the insurgents, and in Njeguši, the mountain village near Cetinje and the birthplace of King Nikola himself. The other centres of the uprising throughout the country, as well as the phases in which it was carried out, are less known. On the other hand, the bloodshed that took place between Njeguši and Cetinje is known in details. While Cetinje was occupied exclusively by the Serbian troops, the Montenegrin insurgents sent envoys to Kotor to French General Venel asking the French, British, Italian and American troops to undertake the occupation of the capital. Having received no reply, they marched towards Cetinje. They were welcomed by the Serbs with fire from machine guns, which they placed on the premises of the Royal Italian Legation, located at the city gates, on the road coming from Kotor. The fighting lasted from 3 till 9 January. French general Venel with a company of French men went from Kotor to Cetinje but he stayed behind the line held by the Montenegrins. On the 7th, while the French general was re-entering Kotor, a Commission of Montenegrins stopped him and exhibited the following requests:

- 1) occupation of Montenegro by the Allies, with the exception of Serbian troops, under American general command;
- 2) new elections for Skupšina, monitored by the Allies.

General Venel declared himself incompetent to deal with these questions, which he promised to present to the Supreme General. Lacking ammunition and food, Montenegrins disbanded on the 9th, partly returning to their homes, and partly taking refuge in Kotor from where they emigrated to Shengjin and Italy.

The uprising failed because the Montenegrin insurgents were armed with old rifles and scarce ammunition and they lacked food while, on the other side, they fought against Serbian regular troops, well-commanded and well-equipped with modern weapons, cannons and machine guns. For the reasons yet not explicable, the insurgents also lacked clear directives from the head of the uprising Jovan Plamenac, who escaped to Italy and later to Neuilly near Paris, where he was appointed President of the new Council by King Nikola. The revolt was followed by new, even more bitter persecutions during which the Serbs imprisoned the most outstanding Montenegrin public figures who had not joined the Serbian cause. The old Turkish jails in Podgorica were jam-packed with political prisoners, including members of the very family Petrović, who were treated as soldiers without the promised trial that never actually took place.

An American delegation, composed of the Secretary of the US Embassy in Rome, Mr. Ronald Tree and the military attaché Mr. James Bruges, carried out an investigation in Cetinje and Podgorica and got the possibility to interrogate prisoners without witnesses. Even the visit of French Supreme General d'Espèrey who had earlier (after

the uprising) visited the two cities, was under the control of the Serbs who themselves asked Montenegrins the questions devised so as to tell the Supreme General if they were willing to join Serbia or not. On this occasion, the Serbs presented to the French Supreme General only the people who had joined the Serbian cause for some interest (the Serbs have spent several millions on this propaganda) or those who feared that they would have the same fate of those who dared to declare themselves in favour of the Montenegrin independence. However, I have the reason to believe that the American Mission had the possibility to see unaffectedly the true will of the people of Montenegro, and that the conclusions of their investigation led them to the same conviction to which I have come.

Of course, now the number of followers of the Serbian cause is increasing given the current conditions of the country left without the allied forces, except in the coastal area, while the Serbs are everywhere claiming, after the government in Belgrade proclaimed the state of SHS, to be Yugoslavs and no longer Serbs. It is only human that the one who has to choose between the dispossession, hunger and persecution on one hand, and the insured life for himself and his family, on the other, feels rather compelled to give up on his ideals.

But it is believed that this is a temporary renunciation, at least as regards the great deal of the peasantry. The danger lies in the attitude of people in charge who, if they cannot exert a great influence on the peasants, and if they lose the game and witness the restoration of Montenegro as an independent state, would be seriously compromised and would have to choose between leaving the country or compromising everything to save themselves from revenge.

An incident of 20 February confirms the mood of the Montenegrins. On that day, H. E. Head of the General Staff of the Royal Navy, Admiral Thaon di Revel, landed in Bar. In addition to the Italian flag, the ship displayed the admiral flag along the road leading to the dock, access to which was guarded by Italian sentries, Italian troops were deployed with music to make the due honours. The Montenegrin police, who could not see from the distance what was happening, ran to the barracks, took off the Yugoslav insignia and left the guns believing that King Nikola was the one who landed in Bar.

The most important symptoms of this episode occurred during the recruitment. The first call-up, for the young people aged between 19 and 21, who had to report to the captaincies, gave almost no results. Most of the young people affected by the call, took refuge in Shengjin and Italy. The second recruitment, conducted cunningly in the form of a census of men up to 45 and capable of bearing arms, also gave rise to a new emigration of those men that felt the threat of being called to serve the military service.

Those remaining at home were disarmed. They formed "Green Committees – komiti", who stayed away from populated centres, aiming to defend families threatened by

the Serbian persecution. The Serbs, being unable to extend their occupation to the villages and preferring to keep their troops grouped, conflicted with the "Green Committees – komiti" composed of independent Montenegrins, while the "White Committees – komiti" who were carrying out incursions and raids in the mountain villages proved to be hostile to Serbs. At the time when I left Montenegro the rumour spread about the arrival of the new Serbian contingents, called by Uskub to deal with the situation. Moreover, the Command ordered a battalion from Kotor to be deployed along the coast, between Bar and Bojana, so as to be prepared in the case the Montenegrins who emigrated to Shengjin would attempt a coup by penetrating the country.

Generally, the Serbian Command and all the officials and depending employees demonstrate a cold but, however, consistent fairness in relations with the Allies and with our Command and occupation troops. Even the troop soldiers obey the order to avoid incidents with our soldiers. Excluding the brotherhood of arms that they show for the French, there were no incidents to complain about, not even on a single occasion, precisely because of this reservedness which is mutual, although the Serbs know about the protection that we provide to the Montenegrins who come at our Command in order to escape Serbian persecution and to be sent to Shengjin or Italy.

This, however, did not prevent one Montenegrin from being killed in an ambush in unknown gunfire (Serbian or Serbophile) simply because he was seen earlier that day talking to an Italian. The Serbophile-Yugoslav animosity against us has another proof: the local authorities in Virpazar forbade Montenegrins to accept food from our garrison.

Talking about the relations between allies, there is sympathy between our commands and British ones, which stands also for our and their occupation troops. There is also apparent cordiality between our and French Commands, though limited because of French interference in favour of the Serbian politics and because of the difficulties made by the French themselves in claiming the aforementioned rights enjoyed by the *Bar Company* in Montenegro, despite the fact that these rights derive from regular concessions obtained by the Montenegrin government and approved by Skupština.

I will mention briefly the situation in our companies and management to highlight the line of conduct of the Serbs and of the French towards us.

The situation that I witnessed as regards navigation in Lake Skadar was as follows: from the very beginning, the Serbs had taken over all our vehicles (tugs and barges) that had been in possession of the Austrians during their occupation, declaring them war booty. They handed them over to the inter-allied Command (French) in Skadar, which refused to return them to us claiming them necessary for bringing provisions to the inter-allied detachments of the garrison stationed in that city. But, in fact, they were used for sailing along the Bojana River and even offshore, up to Shengjin. It was not possible to change this state of affairs. We were only able to send our protest note

to the Supreme Commander of the Eastern Army, while at the same time, we informed the Royal Government so as to have the case followed through diplomatic channels.

As for the railway that connects the port of Bar with Lake Skadar, its management was given to one of our detachments of the 6th Corps of Railway Engineers sent by the Royal Ministry of War that came with me to Montenegro.

As for the Port of Bar, we have been able to overcome the anarchy that had ruled the place, by sending a frigate-captain of the Royal Navy with the functions of Commander of the Naval Base and the Captain of the Port and appointing him the Commander of the Port of Bar.

There was some opposition of the French military authorities to this act of ours, but they became less frequent after General Tahon replaced General Venel at the Command of Kotor. They finally ceased almost completely when the inter-allied troops left the inland of the country.

Trieste, Easter 1919

Andrea CARTENY

**L'ITALIA, LA FINE DELLA GRANDE GUERRA E L'UNIONE DEL MONTENEGRO
CON LA SERBIA: ELEMENTI DALLA DOCUMENTAZIONE ITALIANA**

Sommario

Dalla documentazione dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore Esercito emerge la rilevante resistenza montenegrina all'unione con la Serbia all'indomani della fine del conflitto mondiale, e l'importanza del ruolo italiano nel tentativo del movimento anti-serbo di mantenere una presenza montenegrina autonoma sul territorio. I documenti italiani, diplomatici e militari, indicano il periodo di genesi della resistenza montenegrina all'unione con la Serbia e alla creazione della Jugoslavia tra l'assemblea di Podgorica (fine 1918) e la rivolta montenegrina del Natale (inizio 1919). L'Italia non è solo spettatore ma parte del gioco di competizione geopolitica con la Francia, che attraverso il rafforzamento della Serbia tende ad allargare il proprio spazio di influenza.

Parole chiave: Italia, Montenegro, Serbia, Prima guerra mondiale, resistenza montenegrina.

Андреа КАРТЕНИ

**ИТАЛИЈА, КРАЈ ВЕЛИКОГ РАТА И УЈЕДИЊЕЊА ЦРНЕ ГОРЕ СА СРБИЈОМ:
ПОЈЕДИНОСТИ ИЗ ИТАЛИЈАНСКЕ ДОКУМЕНТАЦИЈЕ**

Резиме

Документи Историјског одељења Генералштаба Војске сведоче о значајном отпору ког су Црногорци након завршетка рата пружали Унији са Србијом, те о значају који је Италија имала у покушајима антисрпских снага да задрже независну Црну Гору на овим просторима. Италијански документи, дипломатски и војни, односе се на период настанка црногорског отпора против заједнице са Србијом и стварања Југославије, од заседања Скупштине у Подгорици (крај 1918) до црногорске Божићне побуне (почетком 1919). У овим догађајима, Италија није само пуки посматрач већ има важну улогу у геополитичкој игри као конкуренцији Француској која, кроз јачање Србије, настоји да прошири своју област утицаја.

Кључне речи: Италија, Црна Гора, Србија, Први светски рат, црногорски отпор.

Stanislav SRETENović

**MEMORY OF THE BREAK OF THE SALONIKA FRONT:
AN ASPECT OF FRANCO-ITALIAN RIVALRY IN THE KINGDOM
OF SERBS, CROATS AND SLOVENES, 1918–1929***

Abstract: In this paper the author deals with the symbolic rivalry between France and Italy during the celebration of the 10 anniversary of the break of Salonika front held in Belgrade on 7 and 8 October 1928. The symbolic rivalry between the two „Latin sisters” in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the 1920’s was a part of the military, political, economic and cultural competition of the two allies-rivals in the Adriatic sea and the Balkans inherited from the period of the First World War. Italy tried to oppose its own memory of Salonika front to the Franco-Serbian memory regularly celebrated during the 1920’s among the Serbs in the context of the Kingdom SCS which national identity was under the construction. In fact, the stake of the symbolic competition between France and Italy in that period was the internal and external position of the weak and uncertain South Slav Kingdom.

Keywords: Salonika front, history-memory, war commemorations, France, Italy, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Introduction

On 7 and 8 October 1928, a solemn celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Allies’ break of the Salonika front was organised in Belgrade (15 September 1918). The break of the Salonika front led to the Armistice of Salonika (29 September 1918), the first such an event in the series of armistices leading to the end of the First World War. The festivities were conceived as the Allies’ celebration of the break of the enemy’s lines by the Franco-Serbian troops. They were organised with great pomp around the personality of *maréchal* Louis Franchet d’Espèrey, commander-in-chief of the allied armies on the Salonika front, who became the symbol of Franco-Serbian

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brotherhood in arms and friendship during the war and a promoter of Franco-Yugoslav friendship in construction efforts after the war. But, the first and the most numerous delegation among all Allies that came to Belgrade was the Italian delegation. Symbolically, the Italians wished to overshadow the French and insisted on their participation in the Salonika front. In fact, the memory of the break of the Salonika front became a stake in Franco-Italian rivalry in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS), a state newly created after the war, which had difficulties to constitute itself internally and internationally. In this paper we will explore the significance and measure the impact of the Franco-Italian symbolic conflict around the memory of the break of the Salonika front in the South Slavic Kingdom. Firstly, we will examine the French and Italian participation in commemorations of the First World War in the KSCS during the 1920s. Secondly, we will see how the ceremony of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front was organised in Belgrade and what was at stake.

Divided memories: Italian and Franco-Serbian memories of the break of the Salonika front, 1918–1928

Italian participation in the First World War from 1915 on the side of the Entente impacted on the organisation of the Allies' commemorations after the war. Italy was an ally of France and Serbia during the war, its navy contributed to the rescue of the Serbian army from the Albanian coast from October 1915, it accepted some Serbian students at its universities and participated in the Salonika front. However, Italy opposed the Serbian government's plans about the unification of South Slavs. After the war, Italy was a frustrated victorious power that did not obtain all the territorial gains promised to it by the Entente with the Treaty of London of April 1915. Italian nationalism in Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia opposed Croatian and Slovenian nationalism under the Yugoslav ideology supported by Serbia. On the ground, the Italian army occupied all the territories that were promised to Italy by the Treaty of London and additionally Fiume, the Italian city with the Croatian and Slovenian hinterland. Italian actions were contested by the Serbian army that had the support of the French Eastern Army. The proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on 1 December 1918 increased the Italian worry. Italy did not want to have a strong Eastern neighbour under the exclusive French influence. However, the Kingdom lacked national unity: it consisted of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with different cultures, religions and experiences of the war. National unity was to be constructed and war commemorations could serve this aim. French participation in commemorations could strengthen the discourse and images of national unity that should circulate within the society of the new country.

*Italy and the break of the Salonika front:
the battle of Dobro Polje and its consequences*

When the Franco-Serbian troops broke the lines of Bulgarian defence in Dobro Polje on 15 September 1918, the Italian units on the Salonika front received the order from the commander-in-chief of allied armies General Franchet d'Espèrey to exercise demonstrative actions in the sector of the river Crna (*Cerna*).¹ Italians acted on the west from the break of the front, and aimed to help the Franco-Serbian offensive towards the north, leading to the liberation of Serbia. In fact, from the landing of the 35th Italian Division under the command of General Carlo Petitti di Roreto in Salonika in August 1916 and the augmentation of the Italian contingent to 50,000 soldiers in autumn 1916, the French commanders-in-chief of allied armies from 1916 to 1918 (Sarrail, Guillaumat and Franchet d'Espèrey) assigned to them the role of supporting the main Franco-Anglo-Serbian troops. The Italians were not satisfied with such role. They contested the French commandment-in-chief on the Salonika front menacing to put their troops under the command of Italian troops in Albania and even to withdraw from Salonika. The Franco-Italian relations on the front did not change with the replacement of General Petitti di Roreto by General Ernesto Mombelli as the commander of Italian troops on the front in 1917. The problem of commandment over the Italian troops was part of the more complex question of the Franco-Italian alliance and rivalry in the Balkans during the war, with the Adriatic Sea as a stake.²

After the Salonika armistice on 29 September 1918, General Franchet d'Espèrey orientated the Italian troops from the Salonika front towards Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. General Mombelli became the commander of Italian occupation forces in Bulgaria and later in Constantinople. Once again, the Italian General expressed his dissatisfaction with the attitude of the French military command towards the use of Italian troops in occupation policy in the Balkans and asked from Italian diplomacy to act on the French: "Please interest this government to change the attitude of the French military authorities towards the Italian troops in Macedonia where they offered important services that were not recognised to them. They were committed to difficult and ungrateful tasks and they were not taken into account in the occupations arising from the fortunate military events to which they efficaciously contributed".³ The General's complaint was transmitted with the request of attention by Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sidney Sonnino to the Italian ambassador in Paris

¹ R. esercito italiano-comando supremo, *Il corpo di spedizione italiano in Macedonia, Venezia, Milano 1918–1919*, 21.

² Frédéric Le Moal, *La France et l'Italie dans les Balkans, 1914–1919*, l'Harmattan, Paris 2006, 407.

³ Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI), Sesta serie (6), Volume I (I), Sonnino to Bonin Longare, Rome, 21 November 1918, telegram.

Lelio Bonin Longare and to the ambassador in London Gugliermo Imperiali. Frustrated and unsatisfied, General Mombelli accused the French of supporting revolutionary movements with the aim to overturn the monarchy in Bulgaria, and asked for the “inter-allied military control which will put an end to the French intrigues”.⁴ The complaints of General Mombelli about the French military commandment immediately after the war were not isolated. The crisis in the Franco-Italian military relations occurred in the huge area from the Adriatic to the Black sea.⁵

Difficult integration of Italian memory of the Salonika front

About one month and a half after the end of the war, warmed with sentiments of the common victory at war, the Italian *chargé d'affaires* in Belgrade V. Galanti put the high Italian war decoration *Croce di Guerra* to the ruling prince Aleksandar in the name of King Vittorio Emmanuele III.⁶ The decoration was given to the ruling prince as a high commander of the Serbian army for its “glorious achievements” directed to the “liberation of Serbia and the fulfilment of its national ideal”. On that occasion, the ruling prince Aleksandar expressed his admiration with the Italian division in Macedonia which he called “the most beautiful of the Army of Orient” and praised its “highest value” and its “intimate brotherhood of arms” with the Serbian army.

But, among the Serbs, the Italian brotherhood of arms was in strong competition with the French one. The Serbian memory of war started to make exclusively the reference to France and its support to Serbia during the war. This attitude was seen with bitterness by the Italian diplomats in Belgrade. For them, the regular and solemn Franco-Serbian celebrations of the French National Day on 14 July and the Armistice Day on 11 November were the occasion to measure the French influence within the Serbian political elite and society. Immediately after the war, the symbol of Franco-Serbian brotherhood in arms not only at the Salonika front but during the whole war, become General Franchet d’Espèrey. His regular and pompous visits to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the 1920s attracted interest of Italian diplomats. In 1919, the Italian ambassador to Paris Lelio Bonin Longare observed the French General as “not benevolent” towards Italy because of his support to the Yugoslav propaganda in Paris.⁷ In Belgrade, the plenipotentiary minister count Borghese was afraid that the new Kingdom would have the “moral and possibly economic” support of France and criticised the command of the French Eastern Army

⁴ DDI, 6, I, Sonnino to Imperiali, Roma, 25 November 1918, telegram.

⁵ Frédéric Le Moal, op. cit., 299–339.

⁶ DDI, 6, I, Galanti to Sonnino, Belgrade, 23 December 1918, telegram.

⁷ DDI, 6, I, Bonin Longare to Sonnino, Paris, 5 January 1919, telegram.

for the declarations of “high cordiality” towards the new Kingdom.⁸ During the Paris Peace Conference and the Italo-Yugoslav conflict over the territories and borders, Italy withdrew count Borghese from Belgrade.

The liberal Italy sent a new minister Gaetano Manzoni to Belgrade only after the signature of the Rapallo Treaty of November 1920 and the resolution of the Italo-Yugoslav border dispute. During his stay in Belgrade from 1920 to 1922, Manzoni observed in detail the activity of General Franchet d’Espèrey who came to the Kingdom in February 1921 to give the French decoration of *Légion d’honneur* to the city of Belgrade for its courage during the war,⁹ and again in September 1921¹⁰ for the funeral of King Petar I Karađorđević.¹¹ The Prime Minister who was also in charge of foreign affairs Alexandre Millerand warned the French legation in Belgrade that the decoration of the city could be “badly interpreted” in Rome and that it could hinder the establishment of good relations between the Italians and Serbs – “the constant aim of our policy”.¹² In Belgrade, Franchet d’Espèrey was decorated as *vojvoda* of the royal army, the highest decoration of the army of the Kingdom SCS and after his return to Paris as *maréchal*, the highest French military decoration. Manzoni was convinced that the *maréchal* was working on strengthening of Franco-Yugoslav military relations from an anti-Italian perspective and on the maintenance of “special contacts” with the Serbian military circles. On his way to France in September 1921, to diminish the Italian suspicions, the French diplomacy insisted that the *maréchal* visit the Italian front. During the next trip of *maréchal* Franchet d’Espèrey to Belgrade in June 1922 on the occasion of the wedding of King Aleksandar I, a diplomatic incident occurred that implicated the high-level French and Italian diplomacy. At the wedding ceremony, the French *maréchal* presented himself to the duke of York and the infant Alfonso of Spain but not to the prince of Udine, the representative of the Italian ruling house.¹³ This was a serious offence to Italy that was resolved only at the highest diplomatic level between the president of the Republic and the Italian ambassador to Paris.¹⁴

With the arrival of the fascist regime to power in Italy in October 1922, the Italian observation of the Franco-Serbian commemorations in the Kingdom did not change although it became more impregnate with ideological criticism. The new Italian minister in Belgrade Lazzaro Negrotto Cambiaso saw the celebration of 14 July

⁸ DDI, 6, I, Borghese to Sonnino, Belgrade, 24 February 1919.

⁹ Ministero degli Affari Esteri Archivio Storico Diplomatico, Roma (MAE ASD), Affari politici 1919–1930, Yugoslavia, 1308, Manzoni to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Rome), Belgrade, 4 February 1921, telegram.

¹⁰ MAE ASD, Yug., 1306, Manzoni to Marchese della Torretta, Belgrade, 6 September 1921, secret.

¹¹ Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar I Karađorđević*, BIGZ, Beograd 1988.

¹² Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes (AMAE), Z-Europe 1918–1940, Yougoslavie 3, Millerand to chargé d’Affaires à Belgrade, Paris, 24 August 1920, telegram.

¹³ MAE ASD, Yug., 1307, Manzoni to Carlo Schanzer, Belgrade, 12 June 1922.

¹⁴ MAE ASD, Yug., 1307, Sforza to Poincaré, Paris, 14 July 1922.

in Belgrade as expression of “French propaganda” in the country.¹⁵ The context was the preparation of the vote in the French parliament on the credit of 300,000 francs for the armament of the Kingdom SCS, which provoked the Italian accusations of France for militarism. The French propaganda was supported in the country by the group of “francophiles”, representing the Serbian urban population educated in France. The pronounced discourses expressed admiration and gratitude to the French role during the war without mentioning other allies “for the blood poured in the fields of Macedonia for the liberation of Serbia”. The new arrival of Franchet d’Espèrey in the Kingdom on the fifth anniversary of the break of the Salonika front in September 1923 was, as previously, observed by the Italian diplomacy.¹⁶ This time he came to give the *Légion d’honneur* to the city of Monastir (Bitolj) in Macedonia, liberated during the war by the French, Italian and Serbian troops.

Italian steps to oppose the French symbolic monopoly among the Serbs

Italian diplomacy tried to break the French monopoly in the Kingdom over the memory of the Salonika front, acting among the Serbian diplomatic elite and the dynasty. When he got the information in 1922 that the city of Belgrade voted on the credit to build a monument to the French soldiers perished in Serbia during the war, the *chargé d’affaires* of the Italian legation in Belgrade Consalvo Summonte met the deputy director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs P. Gavrilović.¹⁷ Summonte protested against the attitude of the press that “wishes to ignore completely what the Italian soldiers did” for Serbia. He asked for Ministry’s intervention in regard to the press which generally expressed anti-Italian attitudes. Not without cynicism, he explained the ignorance of Serbian politicians and journalists of the Italian participation in the Salonika front by their absence from the front during the war and he gave arguments in favour of Italian soldiers. Summonte argued that the Italian expeditionary corps was the only among the allied armies who fought on the strip of the Serbian national territory around the meander of the Cerna River, between Monastir and the quota 1050, while the French, English and Serbs were mostly on the Greek territory; that the heroism of the 35th Italian Division remained legendary among the allied troops and that only in the attack of 9 May 1917, the Italians had more dead and wounded than the Serbs in the second period of the war, from the moment of creation of the Salonika front. Gavrilović did not show particular interest in the Italian arguments

¹⁵ MAE ASD, Yug., 1309, Negrotto Cambiaso to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Rome), Belgrade, 16 July 1923.

¹⁶ MAE ASD, Yug., 1309, Summonte to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Rome), Belgrade, 10 September 1923, telegram.

¹⁷ MAE ASD, Yug., 1307, Summonte to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade, 28 August 1922.

although he admitted that he was ignorant about them. Courteously, he promised that he would try to interest the public opinion in those facts.

In February 1924, after the resolution of the Fiume question by the Treaty of Rome,¹⁸ Italian diplomacy sent a new plenipotentiary minister Alessandro Bodrero to Belgrade. The choice was done with particular care and had to symbolise the new Italo-Yugoslav alliance. Bodrero described himself as a “soldier” and during the war he was assigned by the King of Italy to the personal staff of the future King Aleksandar I with whom he established a close personal contact.¹⁹ Because of such legacy of war, he was supposed to be well accepted by King Aleksandar I. Based on his excellent position within the court, his mission was also to strengthen the Italian propaganda in Yugoslavia, making references to the French and British support to the circles of friendship seen as a reliable and efficient means of development of the cultural and political propaganda.²⁰ The organisation of Italian propaganda in Yugoslavia was conceived as sending of Italian books and publications, and moral and material support to the Italian circles in the country. With this aim, it was proposed to the ministry of finance to reserve 100,000 lire by year. Italy was trying to obtain on the cultural level what it did not have on the symbolical level. The Italian cultural propaganda could count on the support of the local population in Macedonia which preserved the sentiment of sympathy towards the Italians. The presence of the Italian troops in 1918 contributed to greater admiration of Italy.²¹ In December 1925, the Consulate in Skopje informed the legation that anti-Italian propaganda was exercised by state officials in Macedonia.

Italian diplomacy wished to act at the symbolic level towards state officials and the population by recalling the Italian memory of the Salonika front in the capital Belgrade. The occasions were regular celebrations of the Armistice Day, every 11 November, at the allies’ war cemeteries in Belgrade. Traditionally, on 11 November every year, after the French war cemetery, the diplomatic corps, veterans and citizens went to the neighbouring Italian and Serbian war cemetery in Belgrade. During Bodrero’s stay in Belgrade, celebrations of the Armistice Day at the Italian war cemetery became more solemn than before and as important as the commemoration at the French cemetery. Bodrero also facilitated the construction of the monument to the fallen Italian soldiers in Serbia in the form of the cross in the central part of the Italian war cemetery. During his speech at the cemetery on 11 November 1926, in the name of the Italian government Bodrero expressed gratitude to the Serbian people for preserving the remains of Italian soldiers fallen for the liberation of Serbia.²² From the next year, on 2 November 1927, the Italian legation organised solemn commemoration of the Catholic All Souls Day at the Italian war cemetery in

¹⁸ Massimo Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia*, Edizioni B. A. Graphis, Bari 2006, 402.

¹⁹ National Archives London, 421/306, Young to Mac Donald, Belgrade, 28 April 1924, confidential.

²⁰ MAE ASD, Yug. 1318, General Direction Europe and Levant to the Prime Minister, Memorandum, Roma, 21 July 1925.

²¹ MAE ASD, Yug. 1318, Bodrero to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade, 9 December 1925, telegram.

²² *Celebration of 11 November in Belgrade*, Politika (12 November 1926) 5.

Belgrade.²³ The commemoration aimed at the not very numerous Italian and other Catholic community in Belgrade. The Belgrade press gave large publicity to this event and informed in detail the Serbian public opinion about the expressions of gratitude to the “brotherhood in sacrifice” of Italian soldiers and other soldiers who fought for the fatherland. With such commemoration at the Italian war cemetery, Italian diplomacy wished to take the symbolic possession of the important Catholic holiday in comparison to the laic France. Ten days later, Bodrero did not assist in the allies’ celebrations of the Armistice Day at the war cemeteries in Belgrade.²⁴ Nevertheless, the ceremony at the Italian cemetery was solemn and served to remember the Italian soldiers as “loyal allies” of the Serbs in the war.

Despite Bodrero’s activity to interest the Serbian ruling elite and citizens of Belgrade in the Italian memory of the Salonika front, Italy did not have the means to compete with the French “brotherhood in arms”. The preparation of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front in Belgrade on 15 September 1928 was the occasion for Italy to find its place among the Serbs.

Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front in Belgrade and its implications

The organisation of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front in 1928 occurred in the context of a serious internal crisis in the Kingdom SCS, provoked by the assassination of the three Croatian deputies in the Royal Parliament by the Serbian deputy from Montenegro on 20 June 1928. The deterioration of Serbo-Croatian relations reached its peak and diplomats spoke about possible disintegration of the country. In external policy, relations of the Kingdom SCS with Italy started to improve after they reached the lowest level after the signature of the Franco-Yugoslav Treaty of Friendship on 11 November 1927 and the Italian reaction by signing the Second Tirana Treaty a several days later. The celebration of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front could serve the royal government to show national cohesion at the moment of a serious internal crisis and the support of foreign powers to King Aleksandar’s endeavour to preserve the unity of the country.

Difficult organisation of the celebration

Initially, at the beginning of 1928, the Organisational Committee of the Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Break of the Salonika Front planned a modest celebration, dedicated essentially to the memory of the victorious Serbian peasant-soldier in the country with almost 90 per cent of agricultural population.

²³ Catholic All Souls, *Politika* (3 November 1927) 7.

²⁴ *The service for the Italian soldiers*, *Politika* (12 November 1927) 3; *En Yougoslavie*, *Le Temps* (13 November 1927) 3.

However, after the assassination in the Parliament, the government took the organisational relay and started to prepare a sumptuous celebration with participation of high-ranking allies' delegations, with the aim to show that beneath the internal crisis, the Kingdom did not lose its international prestige. But, the lack of coordination due to the ministerial crisis after the assassination made impossible the implementation of the decision on the celebration's date and sending of official invitations to foreign delegations.²⁵ On the French side, the royal government planned to invite maréchal Franchet d'Espèrey together with General Henrys, commander of the French Eastern Army on the Salonika front and representatives of the association of former combatants of *Poilus d'Orient*. Due to different points of view on organisation of the event between Royal Minister of Foreign Affairs Vojislav Marinković and members of the Organisational Committee, on 15 September 1928, the very day of the 10th anniversary, there was no official ceremony in the Kingdom SCS.²⁶ The date was fixed at 7 and 8 October with no particular symbolic importance. Other commemorations were officially organised around the country. The other problem was the choice of the allied countries to be invited. The government could invite only the missions of four countries whose troops participated in the battle of Dobro Polje (French, Italian, English and Greek). But, furthermore it invited the two members of the Small Entente (Romania and Czechoslovakia), Belgium and the United States whose delegation could not come.²⁷ Poland and Portugal were allied nations that were not invited without a plausible explanation. The question of the place to be held by mission chiefs threatened to disturb the organisation of ceremonies. The royal minister asked the plenipotentiary ministers to cede their places to mission chiefs during the ceremonies. Some ministers refused with the aim to prevent that Franchet d'Espèrey take the first position.²⁸ The problem was resolved and the French Maréchal took everywhere the first place: at the dinner offered by the King, by the Minister of War and during the review of troops. The French delegation did not include General Henrys as it was initially planned, but there was Admiral Fatou, the commander-in-chief of the French naval squadron which during the war in the Mediterranean Sea ensured the security of the ships bringing the supplies and reinforcement to the allies at the Salonika front.

Italian delegation and the proceedings of ceremonies

The Italian delegation was the most numerous among all the delegations and consisted of 12 members while the others had four–five members. The chief of the Italian mission was General Carlo Petitti di Roreto, commander of the 35th Italian Division on the Salonika front in 1916/17 and commander of the Division on the Italian front at the Piave river. After the war, he was governor of Trieste, commander-in-chief

²⁵ AMAEE, Z-E 18-40, Yug. 122, Dard to Briand, Belgrade, 11 July 1928.

²⁶ *The 10th anniversary of the break of Salonika front*, Politika (15 September 1928) 1.

²⁷ AMAEE, Z-E 18-40, Yug. 122, Dard to Briand, Belgrade, 10 October 1928.

²⁸ Ibid.

of *Carabinieri* and then the Senator of the Kingdom of Italy. He was accompanied by General Ernesto Mombelli, his successor as a commander of the 35th Italian Division in 1917/18 and of the Italian occupation corps in Bulgaria and Turkey in 1919. He then served in several military missions in Hungary, Istanbul and Cyrenaica. He was also member of the honorary personal staff of the King of Italy. The Italian mission also had two colonels who participated in the Salonika front. The Italian Delegation came by the *Orient Express* to the Belgrade railway station on 5 October 1928.²⁹ It came the first to Belgrade, but was immediately followed by the Belgian delegation that travelled independently on the same train. General Petitti di Roreto and his staff were warmly welcomed by the royal officials and citizens at the station, and then he gave an interview to newspapers. The next day, the Italian delegation visited the war cemeteries in Belgrade to lay flowers. Petitti di Roreto insisted to see the grave of *vojvoda* Mišić, with whom he was particularly close during the war. He honoured the Serbian *vojvoda* saying that he was “a brave soldier”, which was a compliment transmitted by the press.³⁰ King Aleksandar was very satisfied with the composition and appearance of the Italian military mission in which he found his old friends from the battlefield.³¹

The ceremonies started in the morning of 7 October by the *défilé* through the Belgrade centre of patriotic and folklore societies coming from all over the Kingdom and wearing regional traditional costumes.³² Croatian societies were absent, although the Serbs from Croatia sent their representatives. On 8 October in the morning, a great review of troops was organised at the Banjica military camp in the suburbs of Belgrade. It was the most remarkable part of the celebrations in presence of about 200,000 spectators, citizens, patriotic societies and war veterans. The arrival of 120 aircraft left a great impression on the spectators.

Franco-Italian rivalry during the festivities

The French and Italian missions were in competition during the festivities in Belgrade and after, during the visit of the former battlefields in Macedonia and in Salonika. Although impressed by the number of persons in the Italian delegation, the French plenipotentiary minister Emil Dard laughed at Petitti di Roreto's limited military appearance during the review of troops when he could not follow the King on the horse because of his obesity.³³ For Dard, the Italian mission isolated itself among the allies by putting garlands not only on the Italian and allied war cemeteries but

²⁹ *The coming of the foreign delegations*, Politika (6 October 1928) 7.

³⁰ *The Italians at the war cemeteries*, Politika (7 October 1928) 3.

³¹ DDI, 7, VII, Galli to Mussolini, Belgrade, 9 October 1928, telegram.

³² AMAEE, Z-E 18-40, Yug. 122, Dard to Briand, Belgrade, 10 October 1928.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

also at the cemetery of ex-enemies, the Germans. Nevertheless, the Italian mission was accepted everywhere in Belgrade in a perfectly correct manner. But Dard also measured the acceptance of Italians with coldness, which contrasted with the reception of the French delegation. For Dard, Franchet d'Espèrey was the hero of the celebrations in Belgrade and because of his success, the Italian mission excused itself from participation in the dinner given by the Maréchal. This absence made a sensation in the diplomatic circles, but the press did not report on that event.

On the other hand, the Italians felt the French rivalry in the matters of religion and education. For the French mission, the celebrations in Belgrade prolonged to 9 October. On that day, the French together with the royal authorities organised the inauguration of the boarding school of St. Joseph held by the French Catholic order of Assumption Sisters.³⁴ Dard wished to try to attract children from families belonging to the social elite of Belgrade with the aim to promote the French language. The inauguration was held in the presence of the royal minister of public instruction, maréchal Franchet d'Espèrey, whose arrival was applauded, and the veterans from *Poilus d'Orient*. In this inauguration the Italian plenipotentiary minister saw the French cultural propaganda with anti-Italian connotations in discourses pronounced by Franchet d'Espèrey and Dard.³⁵ Even if the Italian mission was representative, it could not compete with the French in Belgrade. The three days of celebrations in the capital contributed to reinforce the French influence, to maintain the sentiment of recognition towards France among the majority of Serbs and to increase the popularity of the French language.

However, was the situation such outside of Belgrade – in Macedonia where the Italian memory of the Salonika front was still alive among the local population? The Italian delegation left Belgrade earlier to precede the French mission in Skopje and Salonika. It arrived in Skopje three hours before the French in the morning of 10 October 1928.³⁶ Both Italian and French consuls tried to measure the success of their respective national missions. The Italian consul in Skopje admitted that the reception of the French mission attracted more people than the reception of the Italian one.³⁷ He explained this by the activity of the local Serbs of the city who were well organised in the French circles. The French consul observed that the local community spontaneously compared the French and Italian missions and estimated that the Italian mission did not lose in this comparison.³⁸ For him the reason was the rapidity of the French ceremony in Skopje and a lack of sufficient appearance in the public of the French officers. On 10 October in the evening the Italian mission arrived in Salonika again before the French which they did not meet. The ceremonies given by

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ MAE ASD, Yug. 1339, Galli to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Rome), Belgrade, 11 October 1928, telegram.

³⁶ *Vojvoda D'Espèrey in Skopje*, Politika (11 October 1928) 6.

³⁷ MAE ASD, Yug. 1339, Royal Consul to the Legation (Belgrade) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Rome), Skopje, 12 October 1928.

³⁸ AMAEE, Z-Eur. 18-40, Yug. 122, Guys to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Skopje, 14 October 1928.

the two delegations at the inter-allied military cemetery of Zeitenlik, and at the French and Italian cemetery were similar and full of courteous gestures.³⁹ After Salonika, the Italian mission went back to Belgrade, while the French mission continued to Split and Ljubljana. The trip of the French across the Kingdom SCS provoked new dissatisfaction of Italian diplomacy.

Beyond the festivities: the return of Italian influence among the Serbs?

As we saw previously, the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the break of the Salonika front occurred during the deep internal crisis of the Kingdom. The Peasant-Democrat coalition boycotted the celebrations.⁴⁰ In such a situation, on 8 October 1928, during the last day of celebrations in Belgrade, King Aleksandar signed the Nettuno conventions between Italy and KSCS.⁴¹ The Nettuno conventions consisted of 32 conventions signed in July 1925, which regulated economic, social, cultural and religious issues between the two countries, but which the Croats did not accept well because they thought the conventions served Italian interests. To become valid, the conventions had to be ratified by the Parliament of the Kingdom. But the radicals' government was constantly refused by the Croat deputies and the part of the Serbian opposition. The discussions over the Nettuno conventions in the Parliament caused constant mutual accusations and insults between the Serbs and Croats, going back to the break of the Salonika front and the price paid for the common state. After the assassination in the Parliament, the parliamentary system in the Kingdom was abandoned. Only the King had the power to ratify the conventions.

King Aleksandar informed the Italian plenipotentiary minister Carlo Galli, who arrived in Belgrade in early June 1928, about his signature of the Nettuno conventions during the dinner he gave at the end of the celebrations. He said that he chose the moment when the Italian mission was in Belgrade because he wished to give to his signature "greater solemnity and auspice".⁴² Speaking about the ceremonies, Galli expressed his dissatisfaction with the sobriety of the Belgrade press in writing about the Italian mission, and with the conference on the history of the break of the Salonika front by General Kalafatović who did not utter a word on Italian participation.⁴³ Galli took the act and the expressions of King Aleksandar with reserve and recommended patience. About a month later, the two governments exchanged in Rome the ratifications of Nettuno conventions.

³⁹ MAE ASD, Yug. 1339, De Angelis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, 20 October 1928.

⁴⁰ AMAEE, Z-Eur. 18-40, Yug. 42, Boissier to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zagreb, 9 October 1928.

⁴¹ DDI, VII, 7, Galli to Mussolini, Belgrade, 9 October 1928, telegram.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *The lecture about the break of the Salonika front*, Politika (8 October 1928) 5.

Italian diplomacy tried to explain the reasons for Franchet d'Espèrey's travels across the Kingdom SCS after the celebrations. For Luigi Petrucci, counsellor of the Italian legation, the reasons for Franchet d'Espèrey's visit to the Kingdom SCS on the occasion of ceremonies was the examination of positions of Belgrade, the south and north of the country and the Hungarian border from the point of view of defence.⁴⁴ The visit to Slovenia, on the Italian border, interested mostly the maréchal. During his visit to Ljubljana he discussed how to strengthen the French influence in this region.⁴⁵ There is no proof that the maréchal was in a secret mission linked to the armament or defence of the Kingdom from an anti-Italian perspective. In December 1928, Galli spoke about the disillusion of the Belgrade political circles about France because of the lack of promised financial support and the signs of their approach towards Italy.⁴⁶

In fact, the Belgrade celebration was the sign of the changing power relations in the Franco-Italo-Yugoslav relationship in the late 1920s. Once again, Italy confirmed that it was an unavoidable factor in Franco-Serbian relations. But Italy also showed the limits of its policy: it could not substitute France in the Kingdom SCS. The symbolic aspect of the celebration served all the three actors to compensate their incapacity to act independently and to obtain the maximum of gains. Nevertheless, France opened a new school and strengthened the "francophilia" of the majority of the Serbs, Italy obtained the signature of the Nettuno conventions and the opening of the new Italian cemetery in Belgrade,⁴⁷ and King Aleksandar ensured Italian support in the difficult moment of the Kingdom's internal policy.

⁴⁴ MAE ASD, Yug., 1339, Petrucci to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade, 20 October 1928, secret.

⁴⁵ AMAEE, Z-Eur. 18-40, Yug. 122, Emmanuel Neuville to Aristide Briand, Ljubljana, 21 October 1928.

⁴⁶ DDI, 7, VII, Galli to Mussolini, Belgrade, 14 December 1928, telegram.

⁴⁷ *Consecration and religious service at the Italian war cemetery*, Politika (3 November 1928) 9.

Stanislav SRETENOVIC

**LA MEMORIA DEL FRONTE DI SALONICCO:
UN ASPETTO DELLA RIVALITA FRANCO-ITALIANA
NEI REGNO DEI SERBI, CROATI E SLOVENI, 1918-1929**

Sommario

Inizialmente intesa come modesta celebrazione del decimo anniversario della rottura del fronte di Salonicco, la festa del decennale fu organizzata il 7 e l'8 ottobre 1928 a Belgrado, come una pomposa manifestazione franco-serba che celebrava la forza e l'unità del Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni. La celebrazione fu marcata dalla presenza del maresciallo Franchet d'Espèrey, il comandante supremo delle truppe alleate sul fronte di Salonicco, il quale tramite le sue visite periodiche nel Regno durante gli anni Venti, divenne il simbolo dell'amicizia franco-serba e franco-jugoslava. Tuttavia, la prima delegazione ad arrivare a Belgrado, e la più numerosa di tutte le delegazioni straniere, fu quella italiana. A guidarla era il generale Carlo Petitti di Roreto, comandante della 35° divisione italiana che aveva combattuto insieme ai serbi sul fronte di Salonicco. Gli italiani volevano così ricordare all'élite politica serba l'importanza che durante la guerra aveva rivestito l'alleanza italo-serba. L'Italia cercava di rinnovare la sua influenza sul Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni dopo la crisi nei rapporti tra i due paesi creatasi a seguito della firma del trattato di amicizia franco-jugoslavo dell'11 novembre 1927 e dopo la grave crisi interna causata dall'assassinio dei deputati croati in Parlamento, nel giugno 1928. Durante la commemorazione, gli italiani hanno ottenuto la firma delle convenzioni di Nettuno, che rafforzavano le relazioni tra i due paesi, mentre i francesi videro confermata la francofilia della maggioranza del popolo serbo.

Parole chiave: Fronte di Salonicco, la storia-memoria, commemorazioni di guerra, Francia, Italia, Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni

Станислав СРЕТЕНОВИЋ

**СЕЋАЊЕ НА ПРОБОЈ СОЛУНСКОГ ФРОНТА:
ЈЕДАН АСПЕКАТ ФРАНЦУСКО-ИТАЛИЈАНСКОГ РИВАЛИТЕТА
У КРАЉЕВИНИ СРБА, ХРВАТА И СЛОВЕНАЦА, 1918–1929.**

Резиме

Иницијално планирана као скромна и посвећена сећању на победничког српског војника-сељака из рата, прослава десетогодишњице пробоја Солунског фронта организована је 7. и 8. октобра 1928. у Београду као помпезна француско-српска манифестација у славу снаге и јединства Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца. Прославу је обележавало присуство маршала Франше Депереа, главнокомандујућег савезничких трупа на Солунском фронту који је својим редовним посетама Краљевини СХС током двадесетих година XX века постао симбол француско-српског пријатељства које је требало да прерасте у француско-југословенско пријатељство. Међутим, италијанска делегација је прва стигла у Београд на прославу и била је најбројнија од свих иностраних делегација. На њеном челу налазио се генерал Карло Петити ди Рорето командант 35. италијанске дивизије која се борила заједно са Србима на Солунском фронту. Италијани су желели да потисну искључиво француско-српско сећање на пробој Солунског фронта и да подсети српску политичку елиту на италијанско-српско савезништво из рата. У ствари, радило се о новој прерасподели односа снага између Француске, Италије и Краљевине СХС. Италија је тражила повратак свог утицаја у Краљевини СХС после кризе у односима између две земље изазване потписивањем француско-југословенског пакта пријатељства 11. новембра 1927. и у време када је Краљевина СХС запала у тешку унутрашњу кризу изазвану убиством хрватских посланика у парламенту јуна 1928. Током прославе, Италијани су извојевали потписивање Нетунских конвенција које су оптерећивале односе две земље од 1925, док су Французи потврдили франкофилију највећег броја Срба. Краљ Александар је, барем за извесно време, обезбедио подршку за своју политику од обе своје велике савезнице из Првог светског рата.

Кључне речи: Солунски фронт, историја – сећање, обележавање годишњице рата, Француска, Италија, Краљевина Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца.

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ACTIVITIES OF YUGOSLAV MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE TOWARDS ITALY 1918–1941*

Abstract: The article is based on records and data from the Military Archive in Belgrade, Official Military Gazette and literature. It attempts to reconstruct activities of the Yugoslav military intelligence service towards Italy in the period between WWI and WWII.

Key words: Military intelligence, Yugoslavia, Italy, military attaché, intelligence centres, espionage, agents, informants, 1918–1941.

Almost during the whole period between WWI and WWII, Italy presented the main threat and the most dangerous potential enemy in the field of foreign relations for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In accordance with its pretensions towards the Eastern Adriatic Coast and its hinterland, as well as the plans of establishing hegemony in the Balkans, Italy declared itself as an implacable opponent to the creation of the Yugoslav state. As the famous Serbian historian Branko Petranović pointed out, Italy became a political obsession of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the same way as it was the case with Austria-Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbia before WWI.¹ There were a lot of different elements that influenced great mistrust in the relationships between the two countries. The first was certainly the failure to enforce the provisions of the London Treaty in favour of Italy, followed by the presence of Italian troops on the territories which, according to the Rapallo Treaty, were to become part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Back in late 1918, the deputy chief of the Italian General Staff, Pietro Badoglio created a

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¹ Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, I, Nolit, Beograd 1988, 33–34.

secret plan with the aim to shake the foundations of the new-born Yugoslav state. The main idea of this plan was to use all means to promote and support internal conflicts in Croatia, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Slovenia and other territories within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. At the beginning of December 1918, this plan was approved by Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando and Foreign Minister Sidney Costantino Sonnino, who gave the signal to start the action among the Yugoslavs. The Fascist Party turn-over in Italy in 1922 caused great concerns in Yugoslavia, because it meant the conduct of an expansionistic foreign policy towards the Balkans, the Danube area and especially towards Albania. Yugoslavia's delay to ratify the already signed treaties regulating border and other open issues (Santa Margherita, Nettuno and Roma treaties...), caused by internal political reasons, and also the support that the Yugoslav public opinion gave to the Slovenian and Croatian irredentism in Istria, Venetia Julia and the Adriatic Isles gave the reason to the Italian side for suspicions and distrust towards Yugoslavia's ambitions. The Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini supported Albanian, Bulgarian and Hungarian revisionism towards Yugoslavia and gave support to extreme Croatian emigration headed by Ante Pavelić and Austrian fascists. The bilateral relations deteriorated especially in 1927 when the Yugoslav-French friendship pact was signed. The Italian side had the opinion that the main goal of the treaty was to re-secure both sides towards Italy. Italy supported the uprising of Croatian extreme nationalists (Ustaša) in the Lika province (1932), and, from the Yugoslav point of view, was to blame for the assassination of Yugoslav King Alexander I Karađorđević, committed in Marseille in 1934. It was only during the second half of the 1930s, after the Abyssinian crisis, that the relations between the two countries started to become closer, thanks to the engagement of Nazi Germany. The peak of this improvement was reached with the treaty of friendship between the two neighbouring countries, signed in 1937 by the Yugoslav government headed by Dr. Milan Stojadinović. Opposite to political, the economic relations were more than excellent during the whole period concerned. Since 1939 cooperation with Italy was especially of great importance for Yugoslavia considering its supply of armament and motor vehicles for the needs of rearmament and motorisation of three cavalry divisions of the Royal Yugoslav Army. New tensions started to rise after the Italian annexing of Albania (April 1939) and the Italian-Greek war. During that war Yugoslavia secretly supported Greece with the armament and, as a countermeasure, Italian forces bombed the Yugoslav city of Bitola (Monastir). The culmination of hostilities was reached with the Italian participation in the Axis attack on Yugoslavia in early April 1941.²

Given the above, one could point out that the Kingdom of Italy was seen as the main threat and most dangerous potential enemy on the international scene for

² See more: Bogdan Krizman, *Vanjska politika jugoslavenske države 1918–1941*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1975, 22–31, 38–43, 49–61, 92–116; Enes Milak, *Italija i Jugoslavija 1931–1937*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Beograd 1987; V. Petranović, *ibid.*; Чедомир Попов, *Од Версаја до Данцига*, Службени лист СРЈ, Београд 1995, 164, 216–222, 235–242, 328–335, 378–380.

the Kingdom of Yugoslavia until the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938. Yugoslavia and Italy shared 279 km of land border, 10.9 km of lake border and about 700 km of sea border. The Yugoslav land borderline towards Italy was especially unfavourable because all main spots of the strategic value (the Mangart massive, Možoč, Glatki vrh, Blegum, Ljubljansko Sedlo (height of 431), Snežnik and Veliki Pliš) were placed in Italian hands. Therefore, in case of war, Ljubljana would be exposed to fire of the Italian artillery from the first day, the Sava valley and Ljubljana basin would be taken by Italians within a few days, including the entire Carinthia province together with Karavanke Mountains.³ The sea border had to be defended with a strong fleet which did not exist at the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The only possible response was to engage the army to defend the hinterland, which meant the extension of the frontline for another 700 km. Italy also sized Cres, Lošinj, Lastovo islands and the bridgehead nearby Zadar (Zara), which meant that in case of war a full strategic initiative would be on the Italian side. So, the successful defence of the country depended on accurately and timely gathered relevant information on intentions of the opposite side. The Yugoslav military intelligence service had the main role in that respect.

The military intelligence service of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia was created as a successor of the Serbian military intelligence service upon which the organisational pattern was mainly based. It was engaged in intelligence collection, covert operations (offensive) and counterintelligence (defensive). At the time when it was most developed, the military intelligence service comprised the Intelligence Office of the Main General Staff and executive organs including several intelligence centres around the country and abroad.

The Intelligence Office consisted of four sections.

– 1st section was tasked with the offensive military intelligence towards foreign countries (mostly Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria).

– 2nd section was a counterintelligence section. It was tasked with monitoring and informing about suspected persons, anti-state and anti-army organisations, foreign deserters and activities of foreign military attachés and agents operating on home soil.

– 3rd section was tasked with analyses of the military-political situation in the country and abroad and the analyses of the domestic and foreign press.

– 4th section was tasked with encryption. It studied and created codes for secret military correspondence.

The so-called “M-section”, or the secret service of the Yugoslav military intelligence, started to work in 1937. On the terrain the main executives for collecting information were intelligence centres (Jesenice, Sušak, Maribor, Split, Dubrovnik, Osijek, Subotica, Pirot, Štip and Bern in Switzerland), military attachés and border guard units (72 companies with the commanding centres in Zagreb, Niš and Skopje). Territorial military commands were tasked with counterintelligence duties (six army districts, 16 division areas, all city commands, Gendarmerie and the Fortification

³ See more: Mile Bjelajac, *Vojska Kraljevine SHS 1918–1921*, Narodna knjiga, Beograd 1988, 181–183.

Headquarters from 1937 to 1941) and undercover counterintelligence centres in Zagreb, Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Ljubljana.⁴

The main institutions involved in the conduct of military intelligence measures towards Italy were the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome, intelligence centres in Split, Ljubljana and Sušak and territorial military commands of the 4th army district.⁵

The zone of intelligence work of the 4th army district (the Drava division area) was oriented to the 5th and 11th Italian Corps, which included the area on the Italian territory from the borderline to the line: Brunek – Feltre – Legnago – the lower course of the Adige River.⁶ Though the Drava division area was directly responsible for intelligence and counterintelligence measures towards Italy, there was no specially appointed intelligence officer for that purpose. These kinds of activities which mainly consisted of the preparation of weekly intelligence reports based on the information gathered through the engagement of the Gendarmerie, police and border guard troops were part of extraordinary duties of the division area's deputy chief of staff.⁷

Activities of Yugoslav military attachés in Italy

The first appointed Yugoslav military attaché in Italy was general staff Colonel Dušan J. Pešić. He was posted in Rome as a delegate of the Serbian Supreme Command in Italy in the period 1917–1920.⁸ After 1920 the War Army was reformed to a peacetime formation and personnel changes were carried out regarding the position of the military attaché in Italy too. The military attaché's post in Rome was just for a short time taken by general staff Colonel Mihajlo Jovanović⁹, followed by general staff Colonel Pantelija Ž. Jurišić, who entered office in December 1920.¹⁰ From 1923 to 1927 the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome was general staff Colonel Milan

⁴ Regarding the organisation and activities of the Yugoslav military intelligence service see more: Далибор Денда, *Војна обавештајна служба у Краљевини СХС/Југославији 1918–1941*, Војноисторијски гласник 2 (Београд 2010) (Dalibor Denda, *Military Intelligence Service in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia 1918–1941*, Војноисторијски гласник 2 (Belgrade 2010), 20–39.

⁵ *Упутство за организацију и обављање обавештајне службе*, издање Главног ђенералштаба, Београд 1932 (*Manual for Organising and Performing Military Intelligence*, issued by Main General Staff, Belgrade 1932), 10–11.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Military Archive Belgrade, Records of the Military Security Agency, register number 2 – 4.000.01, *Bivša jugoslovenska vojna obaveštajna služba (Ex-Yugoslav Military Intelligence Service)*, Elaborate, II, 80–89. (Further: MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 80–89).

⁸ M. S. Bjelajac, *Generali i admirali vojske Kraljevine SHS/Jugoslavije 1918–1941*, INIS, Beograd 2004, 241.

⁹ *Official Military Gazette of the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia*, page 664/1920, FAO.Br.153622, 12 April 1920 (Further: OMG 664/1920).

¹⁰ M. S. Bjelajac, *Generali i admirali vojske Kraljevine SHS/Jugoslavije 1918–1941*, 177–178.

I. Ječmeniċ.¹¹ He was replaced by general staff Brigadier General Milutin Đ. Nediċ who stayed in this position until March 1930.¹² The next two high-ranked Yugoslav officers who performed military attaché duties in Italy were general staff Colonels Radivoje Janković (1930–1932)¹³ and Źarko R. Popović (1932–1935).¹⁴ From 1935 onwards, the Yugoslav military representative in Italy, at that time general staff Lieutenant Colonel Stojadin T. Milenković, was appointed a military, air force and naval attaché.¹⁵ Artillery staff Major Radmilo S. Trajanović entered the military attaché's office in Rome in January 1937.¹⁶ The last Yugoslav military, air force and naval attaché in Italy who stayed in Rome until the April war of 1941 was cavalry general staff Colonel Velimir P. Ranosović who was appointed at the end of October 1939.¹⁷ From November 1925 the duty of a deputy military attaché in Rome was introduced too. It was performed over a 15-year period, firstly by 1st class Captain Stanko M. Brašić,¹⁸ then by artillery 1st class Captain Rudolf S. Ćeh. After them this post went to air force 1st class Captain Dragoslav Đ. Jungić¹⁹, and at the end to air force Major Gavro A. Škrivaniċ.²⁰

As seen in the above list, military attachés in Italy were all Serbs by origin, most of them battle-proven officers and persons who enjoyed high confidence in the military circles and at the Royal Court. All of them were general staff officers and presented real members of the Yugoslav military elite. The position of a military attaché in Rome was from the early days very highly ranked. In the period from 1920 to 1932, five colonels and one general were appointed. The importance of the post of a military attaché in Rome for the Yugoslav Army is testified by the fact that all five colonels who took that position were during their career promoted to the rank of general. After 1932, when political relations between the two countries deteriorated, the rank of a military attaché was degraded too. The officers who performed that duty were from then onwards mostly general staff lieutenant colonels, and during a short period (1937–1939) this duty was performed by a general staff major. It was only after the Nazi attack on Poland, in autumn 1939, that the importance of the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome started to grow again. The reason was not only the pact on friendship between the two countries signed in 1937, but also the Yugoslav necessity to secure shipments of war material from Italy for the needs of motorisation of Yugoslav cavalry divisions, including their equipping with armoured and other motor vehicles.²¹ This is why one general

¹¹ *OMG* 1758/1923, FA.Br.35843, 17 September 1923.

¹² *OMG* 28/1928, Ađ.Br. 886, 11 January 1928.

¹³ *OMG* No11, 22 March 1930. Ađ.Br.6733.

¹⁴ *OMG* 2335/1932, Ađ.Br.24550, 14 December 1932.

¹⁵ *OMG* No 5, 2 February 1935. Ađ.Br.2490, 28 January 1935.

¹⁶ *OMG* 114/1937, No 3, 30 January 1937. Ađ.Br. 1387, 22 January 1937.

¹⁷ *OMG* No 38, 28 October 1939, Ađ.Br.35866, 21 October 1939.

¹⁸ *OMG* 1758/1925, Ađ.Br. 35196, 6 November 1925.

¹⁹ *OMG* 2283/1936, Ađ.Br. 25833, 6 November 1936.

²⁰ *OMG* 2627/1939, Ađ.Br. 43716, 12 December 1939.

²¹ See more in: Д. Денда: *Моторизација Коњице у Краљевини Југославији*, Војноисторијски гласник 1, (Београд 2008) (Dalibor Denda, *Motorisation in Royal Yugoslav Cavalry Units*, *Војноисторијски гласник*, No 1 (Belgrade 2008), 38–65.

staff colonel from the cavalry was appointed to a position in Rome. Performing his duty in Italy, he was promoted to the rank of a brigadier general relatively soon, in September 1940.²²

After Italy annexed Albania in April 1939, Yugoslavia was in a permanent fear of the possibility of Italian aggression. Only after that event, a report by the military attaché in Italy, Lieutenant Colonel Trajanović, was sent to the Chief of General Staff with the suggestion of appointing one younger active or one reserve (retired) officer to a post of a civilian servant within the Yugoslav consulate in Trieste. The intention was that he should perform undercover military intelligence duties.²³ Soon after, air force Major Lazarević was sent to Trieste as a Yugoslav consulate servant. From then on, he started to send intelligence reports to the Intelligence Office of the Main General Staff.²⁴ During the interwar period the Office of the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome was situated at Via Serehio No 10 and the Consulate General in Trieste at Piazza Venetia No 1.²⁵

Yugoslav military attachés were until 1922 under the jurisdiction of the Army and Navy Ministry, and after that year they were directly subordinated to the Main General Staff. According to the *Manual for Performing Duties of Military Attachés* published in 1920, their main duties regarding intelligence work were to inform on an on-going basis the Army and Navy Minister of all military and military-political issues and events in the host country. Their duty was also to report to the Chief of the Main General Staff on the issues asked from them. In addition, they had to collect, process, evaluate and send necessary data about the military power of the host country. They collected information either directly by contacting the foreign War Ministry or General Staff, or through Yugoslav embassies and consulates, travelling around the country, making visits or using confidential persons and agents, etc. One report had to consist of the description of the host state, including assessments of political, military, naval, military geographic and statistical issues. The military attaché had to send the same examples of his reports to the Army and Navy Minister and to the chief of the Main General Staff.²⁶

The military attaché in Rome's area of intelligence covered the whole state territory of Italy, including those areas covered by intelligence activities of the Yugoslav secret intelligence centers.²⁷

²² M. S. Bjelajac, *Generali i admirali Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918–1941*, 262–263.

²³ MA, Collection – 17, Box – 135, File – 2, doc. No 3; Top Secret No 297, 31 May 1939. *Appointment of one our officer to our consulate in Trieste*; From the Army, Air Force and Naval Attaché of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Italy to the Chief of Main General Staff (for the Intelligence Office).

²⁴ Milan Zečević, *Vojna diplomatija*, VINC, Beograd 1990, 175–177.

²⁵ *Pregled adresa kraljevskih predstavništava na strani, Prilog Službenom vojnom listu* Br. 42 za 1931. godinu, Beograd 1931 ("An Overview of Yugoslav Royal Legacies Abroad", Addition to OMG No 42 for 1931, Belgrade 1931), 2, 5.

²⁶ *Упут за рад војних изасланика, издање Министарства војног и морнарице*, Београд 1920 (*Manual for Performing Duties of Military Attachés*), 4–5.

²⁷ *Manual for Organising and Performing Military Intelligence*, 11.

Most information regarding the work of Yugoslav military attachés in Rome that the author managed to collect are related to the period when Brigadier General Velimir P. Ranosović was appointed to this position. Besides Ranosović, air force Lieutenant Colonel Gavro Škrivanić was appointed with the Military Attaché's Office in Rome, as a deputy military attaché responsible for air force issues. 1st class Captain Josip J. Rijavec was also appointed and he dealt with encryption measures and was attaché's deputy responsible for the Army and other matters. According to estimates of the time, intelligence work of the Military Attaché's Office was very badly performed, without any plans, system or experience. The main sources for collecting information were other military attachés in Italy, especially those from friendly countries. The bulk of information was collected thanks to Americans. They had a very developed intelligence network all around Italy and also worked during the war to meet the needs of the British and French military intelligence. Besides Americans, general Ranosović established close relations and permanent cooperation with the Turkish military attaché and also cooperated with Bulgarian, Finish, Swedish and occasionally with the military representative of Switzerland. Intelligence information was usually exchanged during diplomatic receptions and dinners for the military diplomatic corps. Good relations were also established with the German military attaché in Rome, Colonel Pretzel.²⁸

A part of the information he needed, the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome gathered from the Yugoslav consulates on the Italian territory such as those in Trieste, Bari, Milano, Genoa, Potenza etc.²⁹ The consulates had their people of confidence and agents on the spot. They received directives directly from the Military Attaché's Office or used to send information collected on their own initiative.

The second method of collecting information was through confidential people and agents who worked directly for the attaché. Confidential people were mostly Yugoslav students, sailors and house maids mostly from the Venetia Julia province. Unofficial people of confidence working for the Yugoslav military attaché were also correspondents of the Yugoslav newspaper "Politika" – Grga Zlatoper and "Vreme" – Dr. Milenko Popović. They gained contacts with all foreign journalists and managed to collect very useful information and submit it to the military attaché.

The military attaché also used for intelligence purposes other Yugoslav citizens who officially travelled to Italy and had opportunities to note many things while visiting Italian cities. The Military Attaché's Office sent reports to the Military Intelligence Office of the Main General Staff regularly, every 14 days. In the case of obtaining very important or urgent data, they were sent immediately using coded telegrams. The intelligence operations of the Military Attaché's Office in Rome were shut down at the beginning of hostilities between Italy and Yugoslavia. After the joint

²⁸ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 157–159.

²⁹ In 1931, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had on the Italian territory the consulates general in Milano and Trieste, consulates in Bari, Zara (Zadar), Fiume (Rijeka), Catania, Venice, Florence, Palermo and Napoli and the honourable consulate in Genoa. According to: *An Overview of Yugoslav Royal Legacies Abroad*, Addition to OMG No 42 for 1931, Belgrade 1931, 2.

attack of the Axis powers on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in April 1941, staff of the Military Attaché's Office together with the staff of Yugoslav legacy in Rome was evacuated to Great Britain.³⁰

Through the Military Attaché's Office in Rome, the Yugoslav state performed legal military intelligence activities towards Italy. On the other hand, secret intelligence centres and their agents on the spot were in charge of undercover collection of information.

Intelligence centre in Split

The area of responsibility of the intelligence officer in Split referred to the territory of the 24th and 23rd division of IX Italian Corps which included the area: Visso – Rieti – Piedimonte – Melfi – Taranto – Santa Maria di Leuca and the territory of Zadar (Zara). The Yugoslav intelligence officer in Split was subordinated to the Yugoslav 2nd army district command (later the Adrian army district command) which was physically separated by the sea from the above mentioned Italian territory, which is why intelligence in that area was mainly performed by the Yugoslav military attaché in Rome.³¹ Therefore, we can conclude that Split as a centre of military intelligence played a minor role in the field of collecting intelligence information from the Italian territory. This conclusion confirms the lack of any sources testifying to the centre's work in regard to Italy.

Intelligence centre in Ljubljana

The intelligence centre in Ljubljana was one of the oldest and most active intelligence centres of the Royal Yugoslav Army. The area of responsibility of the intelligence centre in Ljubljana covered the territory of V and XI Italian Corps, i.e. from the borderline to the line: Brunek – Feltre – Legnago – the lower course of the Adige River.³² The first chief of this centre who carried out duty for a long time was Lieutenant Colonel Viktor Andrejka (an ex-Austro-Hungarian officer). He was later replaced by Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Branko Plahk, who headed the centre until May 1940. His successor who performed this duty until April 1941 was the ex-chief of the intelligence centre in Sušak, Captain Dragutin Slehovec. Slehovec was replaced short before the April war by Major Predrag Stefanović, who previously took

³⁰ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 160–163.

³¹ *Manual for Organising and Performing Military Intelligence*, 11.

³² *Ibid.*

the position of the chief of the Fortification Headquarters' Intelligence Section. The Ljubljana centre performed intelligence towards Istria, Gorizia and Austria. The best achievement of the centre was obtaining the formation of artillery units of the whole Italian operational army. This achievement was made thanks to an Italian reserve officer, Yugoslav by origin, who copied it during his duty as a deputy commander of a border artillery battalion in Trieste. This result was obtained in the period when Lieutenant Colonel Andrejka headed the centre. Yet, during his duty in the centre one great failure happened too. Italians managed to reveal some of his agents in Gorizia and Istria, which resulted in the conviction of a large number of members of the Yugoslav minority in Italy. After this failure, Andrejka applied for retirement and instead of him Major Branko Plahk was appointed. During the time when Plahk headed the Ljubljana centre, its Office was situated in Gajevo Street No 6 in Ljubljana. Plahk lived at the same address. Besides Plahk, only one more person worked at the centre until 1938 – the military clerk Jože Rožanec. After 1938 Plahk got Captain Vladimir J. Simončič as an associate. The main Plahk's agent in the field was certain Josip Zelen. From the other side, Simončič established connections with certain Rudolf Flak who worked in the "Drščica" hotel. Flak played the role of a double agent, working also for the Italian intelligence. Thanks to him, Plahk and Simončič managed to obtain data from the Italian intelligence centre in Gorizia. The second agent who worked for Simončič was certain Tomažič who worked together with agent Viki Bobek. Tomažič was originally from Trieste and Bobek from the vicinity of Ilirska Bistrica. Tomažič's reports were mostly related to military issues including the Italian fortification works on the Snežnik strategic spot. His best achievement was the collection of important data on the Italian Navy, which was of great value for the Yugoslav side. Tomažič managed to collect data through the shipyard in Monfalcone (Tržič). The other part of information on the Italian Navy was gained by the Yugoslav military intelligence through the intelligence centre in Sušak, and additional data thanks to certain Frol – a costumer clerk who was a refugee from the Slovenian coast and had a lot of relatives in Trieste, Ajdovščina and Vipava on the Italian side of the border. Thanks to his connections, he managed to obtain a lot of data on the build-up and movements of Italian troops on the border. This achievement presented also one of the greatest successes of the intelligence centre in Ljubljana. Besides the above agents, personnel from the Ljubljana centre also engaged some other informants and part-time agents who were not so successful.

For the needs of counterintelligence on the territory under the jurisdiction of the intelligence centre in Ljubljana, Plahk used six agents, two of whom worked as police officers, and additional four as administration personnel within the centre. Apart from their regular duty, they had to assist in the monitoring of suspicious persons and foreign agents.³³ With the approaching of Yugoslav entrance into WWII, the number of officers involved in the work of the Ljubljana centre grew. In the middle of 1939 Captain Jože Lesjak was appointed to the position within the Ljubljana centre

³³ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 167–170.

and at the beginning 1940 Captain Berto Ilovar was appointed too. Lesjak was responsible for the southern sector – towards Italy, and Ilovar for the northern sector towards Italy and Germany. The address at which the Ljubljana intelligence centre was housed at the time was Gledališka Street No 7. After personnel reinforcement, Simončič was additionally tasked with the processing and evaluating of collected information regarding the Italian fortifications built on the borderline towards Yugoslavia. His duty was to inform personally the Main General Staff thereof he travelled regularly to Belgrade.

Yet, just before the war, personal relations among the Ljubljana intelligence centre personnel were very poor. They were marked with jealousy and resentment between Plakh and Simončič, the two persons who headed the centre. After sudden control, carried out by chief of the Military Intelligence Office of the Main General Staff, General Borivoje Josimović, the situation in the centre was assessed as very bad. The main objections made by General Josimović were related to the inadequately developed network of agents and informants and the abuse of expenditures from the so-called “emergency fund”. Soon after, military investigators found a lot of evidence of embezzlements committed by those two intelligence officers. As a result of investigation, Plakh was resettled to Serbia and Simončič redeployed to a lower position into the advanced intelligence centre in Jesenice. After that, in May 1940 Major Dragutin Slehovec was appointed to the position of chief of the Ljubljana intelligence centre. Slehovec was tasked by Belgrade with the reorganisation of the intelligence centre in Ljubljana and better organising of the intelligence network towards Italy and Germany. The main tasks of the centre were connected with the observation of movements of German and Italian troops in the border area and their redeployment towards Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. At that time, the Ljubljana intelligence centre sent to the Main General Staff valuable information that German troops, wearing tropic uniforms, were moved through Brenner towards South Italy with the intention to join the expeditionary forces in Africa. This information was unfortunately denied from the Main General Staff with the claims that it was all just about shipments of armament and supplies for the Italian army in Africa. It was later proved that the information received from Ljubljana was totally reliable.³⁴ This centre was dissolved in 1941, after the Yugoslav defeat in the short-lasting April war.

Intelligence centre in Sušak

The intelligence centre in Sušak was headed from its establishment by General Despot Damjanović, followed by Colonel Luka Jestrović and then, from July 1937, by Major Dragutin Slehovec. Slehovec stayed on the position until May 1940,

³⁴ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 172–175.

when he was replaced by Captain Savo Janković.³⁵ The area of responsibility of the intelligence centre in Sušak referred to the territory of the 17th and 18th Italian division of the VI Italian Corps including Zadar (Zara), i.e. from the borderline to the line: Legnago – Ciento (north-western from Bologna) – Faenza Rocca – Visso and the 12th and 15th Italian division of the V Italian Corps, i.e. the whole Istria including the islands and lower course of the Soča and Tagliamento Rivers, southern from the line Postojna – Gorizia – Oderzo – San Dona di Piave.³⁶ This centre mostly engaged three permanent agents (one of them was the above mentioned Josip Zelen, the other one a peasant from the vicinity of Sušak, and the third one a naval captain from the city). These agents used all available familiar, business and friendship relations to collect useful information. From 1937 onwards they were mainly tasked with the collection of data related to organisational changes within the Italian army and the navy.³⁷ The intelligence centre in Sušak maintained a network headed by four main agents who were superiors to several subgroups of permanent and part-time agents available on the Italian territory. The main secret intelligence centres on the Italian territory were situated in Fiume (including advanced centres in Pola and Trieste), Ilirska Bistrica, Klana and Venice.

The main Yugoslav secret intelligence centre on the Italian territory was situated in Fiume (Rijeka). The centre was housed in the office of a naval trading agency, whose chief worked for the Yugoslav intelligence voluntarily and on a patriotic basis. He maintained friendships with many Italian officers. Personally he required no finances for himself except for the money he needed to pay the informants. The main task of this agent network was to collect data on the Italian navy, naval air force and coast artillery. This network worked successfully using the agents infiltrated within the Italian navy and different shipyards on the Italian territory and supplying the Yugoslav military intelligence with necessary data.

The head of the secret intelligence centre in Ilirska Bistrica was a barber and chief of the local orchestra, Czech by origin. He established his own network of informants on the line Trieste – Postojna – Klana. His task was to collect information about fortification works on the sector Javornik – Klana, and data related to the description of possible battlefields on the Italian side of the border (the communications situation, garrison deployment, barracks etc.). The Yugoslav military intelligence, thanks to the engagement of this centre, managed to get a lot of photos of Italian fortifications.

The secret intelligence centre in Klana was managed by owners of the local sawmill. Their task was to inform of fortification works in this sector and of results of training of Italian troops in shooting, because the main Italian polygon was situated in Klana for this kind of military training for the needs of garrisons in Fiume, Ilirska Bistrica and other smaller garrisons in the vicinity. This intelligence network was based on part-time agents and informants and worked just occasionally, supplying the

³⁵ Ibid, 188.

³⁶ *Manual for Organising and Performing Military Intelligence*, 11.

³⁷ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 181.

Yugoslav military intelligence with information mostly of smaller value in comparison with the neighbouring Ilirska Bistrica centre.

The Yugoslav intelligence agent in Venice was a captain of the Italian merchant fleet engaged by Major Slehovec for financial reasons. He managed to supply the Yugoslav military intelligence with draft plans of Italian submarine bases in Venice.³⁸

Of great value for Yugoslav military intelligence activities was the patriotic organisation "Istria refugees". The main coordinator for cooperation with members of this organisation was the secret agent Josip Zelen. His task was to organise secret sections among the Yugoslav minority youth on the Italian territory, with the purpose of preventing their national self-determination and defence against fascism. He supplied these sections with literature prohibited in Italy, organised stalking of those minority members who collaborated with Italian authorities, and provided material support to those Yugoslav youth members who studied at Italian universities. The Yugoslav youth within the sections were also tasked with collecting of intelligence in favour of Yugoslavia. Members of this organisation entered Italian bunkers, stole weaponry and submitted it through Josip Zelen to the intelligence centre in Sušak. That was the way to collect information about the quality and construction of Italian weaponry. They also made photos of Italian fortifications from the start to the end of the building process. The biggest intelligence success of the organisation "Istria refugees" was supplying the Yugoslav military intelligence with 80 copies of draft plans of Italian airports which were to be used in case of war against Yugoslavia. They managed to seize these secret data thanks to one of their members who served as an Italian soldier in the Air Force Headquarters in Bologna. "Istria refugees" were so well-organised that the intelligence centre in Sušak received from them every evening maps consisting of information on movements and relocations of different Italian units. Zelen's associates in the organisation of the intelligence network among the "Istria refugees" members were the academic painter Ljubo Ravnikar and a teacher from Ribnica or Kočevje.³⁹

As already mentioned, the last chief of the intelligence centre in Sušak was Captain Savo Janković who burned all files and documentation just before the capitulation of the Royal Yugoslav Armed Forces in April 1941.⁴⁰

This paper elaborates on some significant successes of the Yugoslav military intelligence service in the field of obtaining secret information from the Italian side. As it is obvious from the presented facts, its main tools for intelligence work towards Italy were numerous members of the Yugoslav minority settled in Istria and Venetia Julia provinces. Thanks to them, the Yugoslav military intelligence could much more easily achieve its goals than its Italian counterpart that could not count on such a large number of Italian minority members on the Yugoslav territory.⁴¹ One should

³⁸ MA, MSA, 2 – 4.000.01, Elaborate II, 181–184.

³⁹ Ibid, 186–187.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 189.

⁴¹ According to official statistics, there were only 12,553 native speakers of Italian in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or 0.11% of the whole population. (Љубодраг Димић, *Историјски атлас*, Београд 1997, 91.)

mention that the Italian side was not without success in the field of military intelligence towards the Kingdom of Yugoslavia either. One of the biggest scandals that shocked the Yugoslav General Staff and the country's public opinion was connected with the work of the Italian military intelligence. Namely, in August 1928, thanks to a Russian emigrant employed as a technical clerk within the Yugoslav Main General Staff, the Italian military attaché managed to obtain all existing Yugoslav military codes. The Russian used the inadvertence of Yugoslav officers, especially of Lieutenant Colonel Đorđe B. Vujić (chief of the IV section of the Military Intelligence Office) and compromised all three dictionaries for secret correspondence (published in 1917, 1922 and 1927). In addition, thanks again to Russian emigrants, the Italian side also managed to obtain all data on Yugoslav industrial potentials in case of war.⁴²

Although the Yugoslav military intelligence service achieved some great successes, we may conclude that the Yugoslav intelligence network was poorly developed on most of the Italian territory. Its activities were mostly focused on the Italian border zone (province Venetia Julia), settled by the Yugoslav minority population. In addition, the service supported Croatian and Slovenian irredentism on that territory. The Yugoslav military attaché in Rome also collected intelligence information mostly using as sources the members of the Yugoslav minority and Yugoslav citizens working on the Italian territory. He also obtained information from foreign military representatives, with a friendly attitude towards Yugoslavia, whose countries had much more finances and a much better-developed network of agents and informants on the Italian territory. The greatest successes of the Yugoslav military intelligence towards Italy were achieved particularly thanks to the engagement of Yugoslav minority members, infiltrated at the time in all cells of Italian society. This testifies once more that in this case one could speak of a financially poorly supported intelligence service with an inadequately developed network of agents and informants.

⁴² M. S. Bjelajac, *Vojska Kraljevine SHS/Jugoslavije 1922–1935*, INIS, Beograd 1994, 170–171.

Dalibor DENDA

**L'ATTIVITA DEI SERVIZI D'INTELLIGENCE MILITARI JUGOSLAVI
VERSO L'ITALIA DAL 1918 AL 1941**

Sommario

Sulla base della documentazione e dei dati dall'archivio militare di Belgrado, della Gazzetta Ufficiale Militare e della storiografia, il presente articolo tenta di ricostruire le attività del servizio di informazione militare jugoslavo verso l'Italia, nel periodo tra le due guerre mondiali. L'autore ritiene che la rete di intelligence jugoslava fosse sviluppata su gran parte del territorio italiano. I suoi organi principali erano gli addetti militari a Roma e i centri di intelligence segreti a Spalato, Lubiana e Sušak, appoggiati dalla rete di agenti e informatori sul suolo italiano. Le attività di spionaggio jugoslave erano per lo più concentrate sulla zona di confine, nella Venezia-Giulia, dove esisteva una minoranza jugoslava. Inoltre, il servizio sosteneva l'irredentismo croato e sloveno su quel territorio. I più grandi successi dei servizi militari jugoslavi in Italia furono ottenuti soprattutto grazie all'impegno dei rappresentanti della minoranza jugoslava, infiltrati in quel momento in tutte le cellule della società italiana.

Parole chiave: Intelligence militare, Jugoslavia, Italia, addetto militare, centri di intelligence, spionaggio, agenti, informatori, 1918-1941.

Далибор ДЕНДА

**АКТИВНОСТИ ВОЈНИХ ОБАВЕШТАЈНИХ СЛУЖБИ ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ
ПРЕМА ИТАЛИЈИ У ПЕРИОДУ 1918-1941**

Резиме

Чланак на основу грађе из Војног архива у Београду, Службеног војног листа и доступне литературе покушава да реконструише активности југословенске Војне обавештајне службе према Италији у периоду између два светска рата. Аутор закључује да је југословенска обавештајна мрежа била недовољно развијена на највећем делу италијанске територије. Њени главни органи на терену били су војни аташе у Риму и тајни обавештајни центри у Сплиту, Љубљани и Сушку који су се ослањали на мрежу агената и доушника на италијанском тлу. У раду је такође реконструисан целокупан списак југословенских војних изасланика у Риму у датом периоду.

Активности југословенске Војне обавештајне службе биле су углавном фокусиране на гранично подручје (покрајина Венеција Ђулија), које је у великом броју насељавала југословенска мањина, док је служба подржавала хрватски и словеначки иредентизам на тој територији. Највеће успехе југословенска Војна обавештајна служба у својој делатности према Италији постигла је углавном захваљујући труду представника југословенске мањине, инфилтрираних у све ћелије италијанског друштва.

Кључне речи: Војнообавештајна служба, Југославија, Италија, војни аташе, обавештајни центри, шпијунажа, агенти, обавештајци, 1918-1941.

Vasilije DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ

**INFLUENCES OF ITALIAN FASCISM ON THE IDEOLOGY
AND POLITICAL PRACTICE OF THE ORGANISATION
OF YUGOSLAV NATIONALISTS (ORJUNA)***

Abstract: The goal of this paper is to show in which segments and to what extent Italian fascism influenced the establishment of the fundamental ideology and political practice of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA). Responses to these questions would contribute to placing of the emergence of the extremist right-wing ideology into a general context of ideological trends in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s and point to some, until recently little known, sources of ideological influence from Europe.

Keywords: fascism, Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists, integral Yugoslavianism, working class, corporate state, terror, dictatorship, Yugoslav National Movement Zbor.

The period between the two world wars was characterised by the onset of extremist right-wing movements and in certain countries (Italy, Germany and Spain) their concepts were adopted as the official ideology of the ruling regimes. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS), which experienced all political and economic turmoil as other parts of continental Europe, was not excluded from the presence of extremist movements on the political scene.

The goal of this paper is to show in which segments and to what extent Italian fascism influenced the establishment of the fundamental ideology and political practice of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA). Responses to these questions would contribute to placing of the emergence of the extremist right-wing ideology into a general context of ideological trends in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s and point to some, until recently little known, sources of ideological influence from Europe.

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The socialist renegade Benito Mussolini went through a complex process of ideological and political metamorphosis in his rise to the position of an undisputed ruler of Italy. Seeking his way to the Italian masses, by skilfully combining different ideas and approaches, he created an ideological system of fascism, a paradoxal synthesis of the extreme left wing and extreme right wing, of anachronous and modern, rational and irrational, individual and collective.

Mussolini's joining the movement of Italian interventionists which advocated Italy's participation in World War I on the side of the Entente would prove to have the greatest influence on the development of Yugoslav-Italian relations. During his engagement with this movement, Mussolini came into contact with ideas of Enrico Corradini, an ideologist of the right-wing movement of the Association of Nationalists. This party promoted nationalism, militarism and creation of an Italian empire by annexing large territories in North Africa and the Balkans.¹ After the war ended, the opinion of the Italian public that territorial gains were not proportional to the invested war efforts led to a drop in popularity of the interventionists. Seeking wider support in the people, Mussolini turned to extreme nationalism fuelled in Italy by Gabriele D'Annunzio's conquering of Rijeka. Using the national frustration caused by the failed realisation of the London agreement and annexing of Dalmatia to the Kingdom of SHS, Mussolini presented his vision of national politics, where Italy was a direct successor of the Roman Empire, the main goal of which in foreign politics was to turn the Mediterranean into an Italian lake. Mussolini capitalised many times on his fickle support to D'Annunzio's short-lived adventure in Rijeka by managing to gather around himself all the political elements which supported D'Annunzio.²

After the march to Rome and taking over power in October 1922, Mussolini gradually stripped the Parliament of power by January 1925 and introduced totalitarian dictatorship with physical support in the form of a military and police apparatus and fascist squads reorganised within the voluntary fascist militia. In the political area the main support of the regime was the Fascist Party which, through its presence in corporations and other state bodies and institutions, controlled completely the economic and political life in Italy.³

Italian politics in the Balkans and its resonations in the Kingdom of SHS

Considering that he gained power with the help of the nationalistic rhetoric and support to the foreign policy programme of the Association of Nationalists (which

¹ J. Weiss, *The Fascist Tradition*, New York 1967, 36–37.

² Љубинка Тошева-Карповић, *Идејна и програмска оријентација Данунцијевог похода на Ријеку*, Ријека 1980, 110–111.

³ Ignazio Silone, *Fascism, Its Origination and Development*, Zagreb 1935, 67–150.

merged with the Fascist Party in 1923), Mussolini's foreign policy had an extremely anti-Yugoslav character. The Kingdom of Italy conducted, even before the march to Rome, a series of obstructions in the process of establishment of the Kingdom of SHS. The Italian pre-fascists governments occupied Dalmatia, supported the creation of an Albanian separatist organisation – the Kosovo Committee, provided arms and training for Albanian kachaks and financed their political wing, i.e. the party Jemiet, encouraged the separatist uprising in Montenegro on 6 January 1919 (the so-called Christmas rebellion), assisted financially the organisation of the Montenegrin army in exile, supported the Austrian Heimwehr in an undeclared Yugoslav-Austrian war on Kорушка and granted quiet support to D'Annunzio's adventure in Rijeka.⁴ This multinational coalition of anti-Yugoslav forces which Italy created at the end of World War I was further supported by the new fascist regime so that it continued with its endeavours during the entire period between the two wars. The anti-Yugoslav policy of Rome, coupled with a series of internal political difficulties, such as a danger from a Bolshevik revolution (due to great success of the Communist Party at the elections in 1920) and clashes between unitarian and federalist constitutional concepts, led to the creation of a new political entity in the form of ORJUNA. Since it originated as a form of resistance to anti-Yugoslav politics of Italy and its Balkan satellites, ORJUNA itself represented an ideologically and ethnically heterogeneous coalition which gathered intellectuals from Dalmatia and Slovenia, members of paramilitary formations from Southern Serbia, Yugoslav refugees who had to leave Julijska krajina and Dalmatia due to fascist terror, as well as members of numerous veteran and patriotic associations from the entire territory of the Kingdom of SHS. Apart from resistance to Italian expansionism, the cohesive factor of these diverse elements was the ideology of the pre-war Yugoslav youth movement.⁵ The core of that ideology was integral Yugoslavianism, i.e. the belief that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes represented three tribes of the same Yugoslav people. At the moment of its establishment, the movement did not have a clear ideology and leaned on a vague vision of a centralised authoritarian state, with a strong nationalist note reflected in the ideology of integral Yugoslavianism. On these foundations and under the influence of Italian fascism, the ideology of ORJUNA gradually acquired, during the period from 1921 to 1929, more defined forms. By analysing the programme texts in the printed media of ORJUNA, it was possible to detect several common features with the ideology and political practice of Italian fascism, such as absolutisation of the state and people's unity, anti-Communism, authoritarianism, anti-clericalism, expansionism, relation with the workers' issue, theory of nationalist revolution, aggressive propaganda activities and use of terror in the fight against political opponents.

⁴ Енес Милак, *Италија и Југославија 1931-1937*, Београд 1987, 19–31.

⁵ Ivan Bošković, *ORJUNA: Ideologija i književnost*, Zagreb 2006, 90.

Relation towards the working class

In his theory of the corporate state, Mussolini started with the premise that liberal capitalism as the economic doctrine experienced a downfall and that it was unable to ensure further regular functioning of the economy and society. The root of the crisis of this economic system was found in uneven distribution of wealth and its inability to resolve the conflict between work and capital, the escalation of which led to the Bolshevik revolution. In order to prevent such a scenario, the Fascist Party began during 1921 with the establishment of party unions which had the goal to separate the working class, as the most productive and the most dynamic part of the nation, from the influence of the Bolshevik nationalist propaganda and harmonise its interests with other classes of the Italian society. As a former socialist, Mussolini skilfully made some demagogical moves with the goal of winning over Italian workers. He supported strikes and social unrest and accused international capitalism of destroying the strength of the Italian nation by exploiting the Italian working class. Mussolini used a part of the Italian working class which joined the fascist unions in his political fight as strike breakers to crush the strikes organised by the Socialist Party and, on the other hand, he also used them as strikers as a means of pressure on the regime and Italian industrialists who financed the opponents of the Fascist Party. Mussolini offered corporatism to the workers who joined fascism as a new economic-political system which was supposed to annul the class differences and lead to an agreement between work and capital with the intervention and control of the state. The basis of this system consisted of corporations which represented associations of employers' and employees' unions within one branch of the economy.⁶ In that way, the former Marxist Mussolini transformed the unions from the class struggle tools into the bodies which simultaneously protected the interests of the working class and harmonised cooperation of working masses with other social life actors. The state held the key role in this system as a mediator and arbiter both between the employers and employees within corporations, and also between corporations themselves.⁷ All corporations selected their representatives who joined the National Council of Corporations which managed the state together with the Great Fascist Council. As a system, corporatism had a goal to harmonise the interests of all social groups in order to strengthen the unity of the nation as a whole.

By analysing numerous articles in ORJUNA papers on the social and political position of the working class in the Kingdom of SHS, it may be concluded that leaders of ORJUNA dedicated great attention to this matter, based upon the model of the Italian fascists. Articles like "Workers' Misery"⁸, "Lawlessness Towards Trade

⁶ Бенито Мусолини, *О корпоративној држави: говори, доктрина и законодавство*, Београд 1937.

⁷ Danilo Gregorić, *Italijanski korporativizam*, Београд 1940, 141.

⁸ Anonymous, *Workers' Misery*, Zagreb Orjuna, yr 1, no. 2 (25. 4. 1923).

Assistants”⁹ and “Nationalists to Yugoslav Workers”¹⁰ warned the relevant authorities about the difficult economic conditions that Yugoslav workers lived in. By following the ideological matrix of fascism, ORJUNA tried to profile itself as a protector of the working class and the only political organisation which was able to tear off the working masses from the anti-state communist propaganda. In order to approximate their ideology to the working class and out of the necessity of aligning the interests of all classes of the Yugoslav society for the good of the nation, the ORJUNA ideologists turned, according to Mussolini’s recipe, their criticism of capitalism towards foreign capital which was, thanks to the support from great forces and corruption of state officials, ruthlessly exploiting Yugoslav workers. This tendency is most evident in articles such as “A Blow to the Yugoslav Working class in Dalmatia”¹¹ and “State Against the People”¹² and “Let us Free Ourselves.”¹³ Already during 1922 and 1923, workers’ sections were formed as part of ORJUNA and within them unions and workers’ cooperatives. The former socialist Ivan Bornemisa, who worked on the establishment of ORJUNA unions in the territory of Croatia, played a prominent role in gaining workers for the movement.¹⁴ ORJUNA had most success with service workers, seafarers and miners from the territories of Slovenia and Dalmatia. Just like Italian fascists, ORJUNA also used the workers who were members of their unions as a tool of pressure on government bodies and members of national minorities by sparking protest strikes during the arrests of ORJUNA leaders and by organising strikes in factories and companies whose owners were members of Italian, German and Hungarian national minorities.

In spite of many similarities in ideological and organisational sense regarding the workers’ issue of Italian fascism and ORJUNA, after analysing the texts from ORJUNA’s newspapers one comes to the conclusion that ORJUNA stayed at a rudimentary level compared to Italian fascism with regard to its segment of planning the political and social role of the working class. Namely, ideologists from ORJUNA remained faithful to the democratic parliamentarism and did not follow the matrix of their transformation into the National Council of Corporations. One of the possible reasons is the fact that during the 1920s fascist corporatism itself was in the process of constituting and thus could not be an adequate role model.

Terror as a means of dealing with political opponents

Even though terror, as a means of dealing with those with opposing views, was present in practice since the start of political life among people, fascism managed

⁹ Anonymous, *Lawlessness Towards Trade Assistants*, Југославија, ур 2, no. 17 (2. 1.1928).

¹⁰ Anonymous, *Nationalists to Yugoslav Workers*, Будућност, ур 2, no. 4 (27. 1. 1923).

¹¹ Anonymous, *A Blow to the Yugoslav Working Class in Dalmatia*, Победа, ур 5, no. 48.

¹² Anonymous, *State Against the People*, Југославија, ур 1, no. 13 (20. 11. 1927).

¹³ Anonymous, *Let us Free Ourselves*, Југославија, ур 4, no. 37 (24. 9.1925).

¹⁴ Бранислав Глигоријевић, *Организација југословенских националиста ОРЈУНА*, Историја 20. века, Зборник радова V, Београд 1963, 371-373.

to turn it into its distinguishing mark. After World War I ended, Mussolini found himself in political isolation, surrounded by merely a hundred of his followers and the reputation of a national fighter which he accomplished by taking part in the war and by journalistic support of the war efforts of Italy and D'Annunzio's adventure in Rijeka. On the other hand, the Italian Socialist Party was on the rise. It controlled the masses and aimed to rule Italy entirely, by joining the government or mounting a revolutionary coup. Faced with the possibility of a Bolshevik revolution, former D'Annunzio's legionnaires joined the Mussolini movement, as well as demobilised officers and ardites, the elements from which the first fascist squads were created in 1919. With the enthusiasm of one renegade, Mussolini directed these elements against his former comrades-in-arms, and one of the first actions of the fascist squads (in April 1919) was to demolish the offices of the paper "Avanti" – the main paper of Italian socialists.¹⁵ In the period from 1919 to 1922, Mussolini's supporters imposed themselves as a counter-movement and the main opponent to Italian socialists. They used systematic brutal violence as the main element of their fight against the "Bolshevik threat", which led Italy to the state of an undeclared civil war. In his speeches and articles Mussolini glorified violence and with his brutal rhetoric he encouraged the squadristi to step up their activities. Fascist violence was primarily directed at socialists and communists, but members of other Italian parties were not spared either. The heaviest blows of fascist violence were suffered by Yugoslav and German national minorities. In the period from 1919 to 1922, the fascists undertook a series of the so-called punishing expeditions in the areas of South Tirol, Gorizia, Istria and Trieste. Large formations of the squadristi would force their way in German and Yugoslav settlements and demolish schools, cultural institutions, newspaper offices, break into private homes and murder local people, often with a silent support of Italian authorities¹⁶. The fascist squadristi from the regions on the border between Italy and the Kingdom of SHS would often break into the Yugoslav territory and cause conflicts there with border guards and the local people.

Just like the Italian fascists, the ideologists of ORJUNA believed that their movement must use *negative actions and destructive methods*, i.e. *physical force of its members with the goal of eradicating all enemies of the state and ensuring national unity*.¹⁷ Along these lines, in 1922 ORJUNA established its own armed formations called *Action squads*, whose members wore uniforms and were armed with cold arms and firearms purchased on the black market.¹⁸ Each action by a squad was commanded by its head (*čelnik*). Squads were organised in divisions and battalions and the commander of all action squads held the title of the great head. It is not possible to determine precisely the exact power of a great head (*veliki čelnik*), but at a great ORJUNA gathering in Belgrade in 1925 information was launched that ORJUNA

¹⁵ Ignazio Silone, *Fascism, Its Origination and Development*, Zagreb 1935, 70.

¹⁶ Idem, 108–115.

¹⁷ Anonymous, *From the Statute and programme of Orjuna*, Будућност, yr 2, no. 16 (21. 4. 1923).

¹⁸ Historical archive of Slovenia AS 1931, 935-600-12.

had 21 battalions with a total number of ten thousand fighters at its disposal. These squads fought against all elements which the leaders of ORJUNA perceived as enemies of Yugoslavianism. Unlike Italy, where socialists and communists featured as the main opponents, the main enemies of ORJUNA members (who, after the Proclamation was passed in 1921 no longer considered communists a relevant political factor) were the so-called tribal separatists, i.e. supporters of those parties which negated the ideal of integral Yugoslavianism such as the People's Radical Party, Croatian Peasant Party, Slovenian People's Party, Yugoslav Muslim Organisation and Jemiet. The ORJUNA press, just like the fascist media, designated their political opponents with derogative terms such as *deadly bacilli*¹⁹ and *anti-Yugoslav animals*²⁰ and threatened them with *new Sicilian vespers*.²¹ Action squads attacked political rallies of these parties, burned their headquarters, blew up the offices of party media and used physical terror to prevent their members from voting in the elections. Just like the Italian fascists, the action squads of ORJUNA conducted physical terror over the members of German, Hungarian, Italian and Albanian national minority whom they (with justified reason in most cases) accused of irredentism and active support to anti-Yugoslav revisionist plans of their parent states. By copying the squadristi methods, ORJUNA squads demolished cultural institutions of the minorities and offices of the papers published in minority languages and also broke up party gatherings of the minority parties. In violent acts against their political opponents and minority irredentists, ORJUNA action squads often came into conflict with the Yugoslav police which protected with dedication the public order and personal and material safety of all citizens. In such cases, the ORJUNA media accused the regime and security services of leading the anti-state policy and threatened with a military coup and civil war.²²

Responding to provocations of Italian fascists in border areas, the ORJUNA action squads raided the Italian territory on several occasions and conducted attacks on the Italian army and fascist militia barracks there. As a response to aggressive positions of the surrounding countries, ORJUNA formed its secret organisations in the territories of Italy, Austria and Hungary. ORJUNA newspapers published texts openly advocating the annexation of the neighbouring countries' territories. A characteristic example is a card of the ORJUNA paper *Vidovdan* intended for the royal family on the occasion of birth of the heir to the throne which ended with: *Long live the future Yugoslav tzar, the only ruler of Istria, Gorizia and the Adriatic*.²³ The most famous among the ORJUNA border organisations was ORJUNAVIT, established in 1925 in Julijska krajina. Its members were recruited from the ranks of the Yugoslav minority and Italian anti-fascists and spread the anti-fascist propaganda, gathered intelligence

¹⁹ Anonymous, *Plague in Yugoslavia*, Победа, yr 1, no. 3 (4. 8. 1921).

²⁰ Anonymous, *Blood shall be Shed*, Будућност, yr 2, no. 6 (10. 2. 1923).

²¹ Anonymous, *The Last Mohicans*, Будућност, yr 2, no. 2 (13. 1. 1923).

²² Anonymous, *People Rebel with Arms*, Видовдан, yr 2, no. 13 (6. 2. 1923); Anonymous, *Destruction of the Royal Serbian Government*, Будућност, yr 2, no. 13 (31. 3. 1923).

²³ Видовдан, yr 2, no. 82 (8. 9. 1923).

data of military and political significance and conducted sabotage acts of military facilities and the transport network. In these tasks ORJUNAVIT cooperated with the organisation of the German national minority Andreas-Hofer-Bund – an illegal organisation of the Austrian fascist movement Heimwehr, which acted in the area of South Tirol.²⁴

Even though, in terms of their organisational form and methods of conducting terror against political opponents, there were great similarities between the armed squads of Italian fascism and ORJUNA, their accomplishments and final fate were diametrically opposed. While the squadristi managed, with their violent actions, to neutralise the resistance of their political opponents and public security services and conduct a successful coup in the form of a march to Rome, ORJUNA action squads suffered a complete failure in these areas. The reason for the lack of success should be sought in large numbers and good organisation of ORJUNA's political opponents (many of whom had party paramilitary formations at their disposal) and in the fact that the security services of the Kingdom of SHS did not allow at any time that the public and constitutional order be jeopardised.

Conclusion

Even though numerous parallels may be drawn from the above mentioned examples between the fascist and ORJUNA ideologies and methods of practical actions in political life, their degree of political success may not be compared. While Italian fascism managed, in three years of its existence, to come into power and completely bring in the next twenty years the Italian state and society to its ideological form, ORJUNA on the other hand was, after relative success in the first five years of its actions, pushed to the political sidelines and disappeared after the introduction of the monarchy dictatorship in 1929. The main reason for such development is the fact that ORJUNA remained in its organisational form at the level of fascism from 1919, i.e. it represented a loose confederation of ideologically diverse patriotic associations without a centralised organisation and a strong leader. While Mussolini managed, by exploiting the national idea, to gather around fascism the majority of Italian political parties, ORJUNA managed, by preaching the uncompromising integral Yugoslavianism, to alienate all the relevant political and economic forces in the Kingdom of SHS.

The disappearance of ORJUNA from the political scene of the Kingdom of SHS in 1929 did not mean the disappearance of ideological influences from the Apennine peninsula. The reception of ideas of Italian fascism in Yugoslavia was first continued through former members of ORJUNA who joined the dictatorship regime and formed an ideological and intellectual core of the regime of the Yugoslav National Party. Once the regime started to feel the need for a wider social base, former

²⁴ Historical archive of Slovenia AS 1931, 935-600-12.

ORJUNA members renewed their work through the movement of the Yugoslav Action, established in 1930. In 1934, after the crash of the monarchy dictatorship, this movement merged with several other right-wing organisations into the Yugoslav National Movement Zbor, and its main ideologists such as Velibor Jonić, Danilo Gregorić and Juraj Korenić were to assume important positions in the organisational structure of YNM Zbor and remained the main advocates of taking over the conceptual solutions of Italian fascism.²⁵ In that way, the ideological concepts of Italian fascism remained present on the Yugoslav political scene as the foundation for further development of right-wing extremism in Yugoslav areas during the 1930s and 1940s.

²⁵ Ратко Парезанин, *Други светски рат и Димитрије В. Љотић*, Београд 2001, 142–153.

Vasilije DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ

**L'INFLUENZA DEL FASCISMO ITALIANO SULL'IDEOLOGIA E LA PRATICA
DELL'ORGANIZZAZIONE NAZIONALISTA JUGOSLAVA (ORJUNA)**

Sommario

L'organizzazione dei nazionalisti jugoslavi (ORJUNA) è stata creata come risposta di una parte dell' intelligentsia jugoslava alle sfide della politica estera e interna del Regno di Serbi, Croati e Sloveni negli anni Venti del Novecento. Analizzando i testi programmatici e la stampa dell'ORJUNA è possibile individuare diversi punti in comune con l'ideologia e la pratica politica del fascismo italiano, di cui i più tipici sono l'utilizzo della violenza fisica come mezzo di lotta politica e la sollecitazione della classe operaia con il ricorso al corporativismo. Basandosi sul concetto di jugoslavismo integrale e sotto l'influenza del fascismo italiano, l'ideologia dell'ORJUNA si stava lentamente formando nel periodo 1921-1929. La scomparsa dell'ORJUNA dalla scena politica del Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni, provocata dall'introduzione della dittatura del re nel 1929, non significò la fine dell'influenza ideologica del fascismo italiano sulla Jugoslavia. Gli ex-membri dell'ORJUNA si avvicinarono al nuovo regime monarchico dittatoriale, creandone la base intellettuale. In questo modo, la concezione ideologica del fascismo italiano è rimasta presente sulla scena politica jugoslava, come base per l'ulteriore sviluppo dell'estremismo di destra nel territorio jugoslavo negli anni Trenta e Quaranta del Novecento.

Parole chiave: fascismo, organizzazione dei nazionalisti jugoslavi, jugoslavismo integrale, classe operaia, stato corporativo, terrore, dittatura, Movimento nazionale Zbor.

Василије ДРАГОСАВЉЕВИЋ

**УТИЦАЈИ ИТАЛИЈАНСКОГ ФАШИЗМА НА ИДЕОЛОГИЈУ И ПОЛИТИЧКУ ПРАКСУ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈЕ ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКИХ НАЦИОНАЛИСТА (ОРЈУНА)**

Резиме

Организација југословенских националиста (ОРЈУНА) настала је као одговор једног дела југословенске интелигенције на изазове у домену спољне и унутрашње политике са којима се суочавала Краљевина Срба Хрвата и Словенаца током двадесетих година двадесетог века. Анализом програмских текстова у штампаним гласилима ОРЈУНЕ могуће је детектовати неколико додирних тачака са идеологијом и политичком праксом италијанског фашизма

од којих су најкарактеристичније употреба физичког терора као легитимног средства у политичкој борби и покушај придобијања радничке класе пропагирањем идеја из домена корпоративизма. Ослањајући се на идеју интегралног југословенства и под утицајем италијанског фашизма идеологија ОРЈУНЕ је током периода од 1921. до 1929. године полако стицала све издефинисаније облике. Нестанак ОРЈУНЕ са политичке сцене Краљевине СХС увођењем монарходиктатуре 1929 године није значио и престанак идеолошких утицаја са Апенинског полуострва. Рецепција идеја италијанског фашизма у Југославији настављена преко бивших чланова ОРЈУНЕ који су пришли режиму диктатуре чинећи његову интелектуалну базу. На тај начин идеолошке концепције италијанског фашизма остале су присутне на југословенској политичкој сцени као основа за даљи развој десног екстремизма на југословенском простору тридесетих и четрдесетих година 20. века.

Кључне речи: фашизам, Организација југословенских националиста, интегрално југословенство, радничка класа, корпоративна држава, терор, диктатура, Југословенски национални покрет Збор.

Miljan MILKIĆ

**DIPLOMACY THROUGH CULTURE:
YUGOSLAV CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN ITALY 1947–1954***

Abstract: This article analyses Yugoslav cultural policy towards Italy in the period since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 until solving of the Trieste crisis in 1954. This period is characterised by a political crisis between Yugoslavia and Italy. One of the ways in which the Yugoslav government was trying to achieve its foreign policy goals in this period was the popularisation of Yugoslav culture in Italy. The article is written on the basis of unpublished documents from the Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade, Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, published documents from the Archive of Yugoslavia and the relevant literature in Serbian, Slovenian, English and Italian languages.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Italy, propaganda, cultural policy, Trieste crisis.

During the first decade after World War II, Yugoslav-Italian relations evolved in complex international circumstances and were burdened with many unresolved issues. Signing of the Treaty of Peace with Italy on 10 February 1947 formally regulated the basis for the restoration of political, economic and cultural relations, but, in fact, the implementation of provisions of the Treaty of Peace represented a major obstacle for the development of bilateral cooperation.¹ The border line in the area of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the territorial status of Trieste were the most difficult problem in Yugoslav-Italian relations.² The two governments were expressing their

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¹ Владимир Дедијер, *Париска конференција*, Библиотека „Тридесет дана“, Београд 1947. Edvard Kardelj, *Sećanja. Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944–1957*, NIRO Radnička štampa, Državna založba Slovenije, Beograd, Ljubljana 1980.

² Janko Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje po Drugi svetovni vojni, (tri faze diplomatskega boja)*, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1961. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste 1943–1954*. Editions de l'Institut de sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles 1966. Bogdan C. Novak, *Trieste*

territorial claims on the Free Territory of Trieste and trying by their diplomatic moves to influence the great powers to adopt such a solution.³ A very negative campaign and propaganda were present in the public opinion of both countries.⁴

Yugoslav cultural policy after World War II glorified the National Liberation Struggle and a new communist government in order to transform the society through culture.⁵ In the period from 1945 to 1952 a special organ of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia named the Propaganda and Agitation Department (Agitprop⁶) made decisions regarding Yugoslav cultural policy.⁷ The Federal Ministry of Culture often changed its name.⁸ First, there was the Commission for Education (Povereništvo za prosvetu) from November 1943 to 7 March 1945, when the Ministry of Education was founded. Instead of the Ministry of Education, the Committee for Culture and Arts was formed on 8 February 1946. The Ministry of Science and Culture was established in December 1948, and the Council for Science and Culture on 24 May 1950. One of the tasks of federal agencies for education and culture was also to establish and maintain contacts with relevant national authorities, scientific, educational institutions, art associations abroad and foreign scientists and artists. During the first years after World War II, Yugoslav culture was influenced by Soviet culture and international cultural cooperation was the most intensive with the Soviet Union and other communist countries. After the ideological conflict with the Soviet Union in 1948, Yugoslavia gradually left its former foreign policy orientation and

1941–1954, *the Ethnic, Political and Ideological Struggle*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago – London 1970. Miljan Milkić, *Tršćanska kriza u vojno-političkim odnosima Jugoslavije sa velikim silama 1943–1947*, INIS, Beograd 2012. Миљан Милкић, *Југославија, Велике силе и питање статуса Јулијске крајине 1943–1945*, Ослобођење Београда 1944. године, (уредник: Александар Животић), ИНИС, Београд 2010, 282–296. Miljan Milkić, *Jugoslovensko-italijanski odnosi i stvaranje Balkanskog pakta 1953. godine*, Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961, Institut za noviju istorije Srbije, Beograd 2008, 602–616.

³ Darko Bekić, *Jugoslavija u hladnom ratu (Odnosi s velikim silama 1948–1955)*, Globus, Zagreb 1988. Massimo De Leonardis, *La "diplomazia atlantica" e la soluzione del problema di Trieste (1952–1954)*, Edizione Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli 1992. Dragan Bogetić, *Jugoslavija i Zapad 1952–1955, Jugoslovensko približavanje NATO-u*, Službeni list SRJ, Beograd 2000. Jože Pirjevec, *"Trst je naš!" Boj Slovencev za morje (1848–1954)*, Nova revija, Ljubljana 2008. Nevenka Troha, *Chi avrà Trieste? Sloveni e italiani tra due Stati*, Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, Trieste 2009. Miljan Milkić, *Yugoslavia and Italy, 1945–1947: Yugoslav Policies and Strategies in the Trieste Crisis*, Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th–20th Century), (Edited by Vojislav G. Pavlović), Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade 2014, 267–279.

⁴ Paolo Emilio Taviani, *I giorni di Trieste. Diario 1953–1954*, il Mulino, Bologna 1998.

⁵ Бранка Докнић, Милић Ф. Петровић, Иван Хофман (уредници), *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, Зборник докумената, књига 1, Архив Југославије, Београд 2009, 8. (hereinafter: *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, 1).

⁶ Agitprop is a portmanteau derived from the words "agitation" and "propaganda".

⁷ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Agitprop kultura. Agitpropovska faza kulturne politike u Srbiji 1945–1952*, Beograd 1988.

⁸ *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, 1, 11.

rotated towards Western countries. On 30 January 1950 a counselling was held in Belgrade about the propaganda on cultural and artistic fields abroad, and it was noted that the presentation of Yugoslav culture in the world was very important for the promotion of Yugoslavia.⁹ In March 1950, for the first time since the inaugural session in 1945, the Yugoslav delegation participated in regular activities of UNESCO.¹⁰ The part of the government budget allocated to culture was increased from 2.6% to 4% in 1952, and the biggest part was spent on visits abroad.¹¹ The year 1950 was a turning point in increasing Yugoslav cultural cooperation with Western countries, even though the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at the Sixth Congress in 1952 formally and finally renounced the idea of socialist realism and decided to introduce liberalism in culture.¹² By 1953 around 300 Yugoslav cultural institutions established cooperation with 650 relevant institutions in Western countries.¹³

Italian cultural policy was essentially different from Yugoslav. After World War II, state regulations regarding the field of culture followed the Western European democratic trends. The Italian Constitution of 1947 specifically provided for the protection of cultural heritage (Article 9), freedom of thought and artistic expression (Article 21) and the promotion of cultural development (Article 33).¹⁴ Unlike Yugoslavia, in Italy mass support to culture was not a priority and the arts were reserved for a small number of people, while the means of mass communication – film and television were widely developed. Italy was recognised as a country of film, different media, fashion, poetry and drama.¹⁵

Strict centralism on which Yugoslavia based its cultural policy also included special planning of international cultural cooperation. Cultural cooperation between Yugoslavia and Italy was rebuilt after the establishment of diplomatic relations and followed political and economic relations. It was not possible to establish direct cooperation between Yugoslav and Italian organisations, so cultural exchange took place via the Yugoslav Legation¹⁶ in Rome and the Yugoslav press attaché who was in charge of propaganda activity.¹⁷ The mechanism of decision-making in relation to cultural cooperation with Italy was such that the first press attaché contacted the

⁹ Мирослав Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура – Југославија преломна 1950*, Институт за новију историју Србије, Народна библиотека Србије, Београд 2013, 33. (hereinafter: М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*).

¹⁰ *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, 1, 31.

¹¹ *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, 1, 39.

¹² *Културна политика Југославије 1945–1952*, 1, 8.

¹³ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 43.

¹⁴ <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/italy.php> (2 August 2014).

¹⁵ Zygmunt G. Baranski, Rebecca J. West (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

¹⁶ *The Yugoslav diplomatic representative office in Rome was raised to the level of Embassy on 4 December 1954*, *Službeni list FNRJ* 48 (1954) 676.

¹⁷ Миљан Милкић, *Југословенско посланство у Риму 1947–1951*, Југословенска дипломатија 1945–1961, (уредник: Слободан Селинић), ИНИС, Београд 2012, 115–134.

Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and information was then forwarded to the Directorate for Information. The final decision regarding concrete cooperation was made by the Ministry of Science and Culture.

Propaganda activities of the Yugoslav Legation in Rome

When we talk about Yugoslav cultural influence in Italy in the period since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 till solving of the Trieste crisis in 1954, we refer primarily to a culture that had a propaganda goal. The Yugoslav Legation in Rome performed propaganda activities through informative newsletters that were published three times a month, then through the purchase of various books and magazines, and translations of Yugoslav communist publications.¹⁸ According to data of the Yugoslav Legation in Rome from August 1947 the production of newsletters, publications, translations and a promotional window for a period of three months cost 750,000 lire (\$ 1,250).¹⁹ In March 1948 the Legation translated the article by Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo "Six Years of the Yugoslav Army" ("Šest godina Jugoslovenske armije") and worked on the translation of the book written by Josip Broz Tito.²⁰ The organisation of artistic and cultural programmes among workers in industrial centres was very important. In September 1947, the Legation bought the movie tone sound system for the projections of films during meetings at the Legation "and film projections in consultation with various Italian democratic organisations".²¹ The Yugoslav government gave substantial funds for propaganda and financing of "certain associates", as well as the so-called "democratic and progressive circles" in Italy. Artists were most often engaged from these circles and advice was received with a view to enhancing propaganda effects of Yugoslav cultural events in Italy.²² The Yugoslav Legation in Rome secretly financed the activities of Francesco Ferrareto who was a member of the "Italian Youth Association for cultural relations with Yugoslavia".²³

In January 1948 the Yugoslav Legation hired the "democratic institution" "Libertas Film" which was in "hands of the Italian Communist Party" and which should have processed, translated and released the Yugoslav art movie "This Nation Will Live" („Živeće ovaj narod") in cinemas in Italy.²⁴ Due to the lack of funds, on 12 March 1948 the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanoje Simić, informed the Legation

¹⁸ Diplomatic Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, Political archive, 1947, box 49, No. 415625. (hereinafter: DA, MFA, RS, PA).

¹⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 49, 415587.

²⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 46748.

²¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 66, 418967.

²² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 66, 418967.

²³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 48808.

²⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 44805.

in Rome that the film should be used in its current form and its translation and copying should be stopped.²⁵ In January 1948, the Yugoslav press attaché participated in organising the “Democratic Front of Culture” in Rome which was supposed to join Italian writers, artists and scientists.²⁶ The “Democratic Front of Culture” should have been the basis for forming the “Association for Cultural Relations”. In early February 1948, the Yugoslav government approved 100,000 lira per month to fund the “Association Italy-Yugoslavia” in Milan and worked on organising the same association in Rome.²⁷ At the beginning of April 1948 the “Initiative Committee for Establishment of the Italian Association for Friendship with Yugoslavia” was formed in Rome. At the same time, the “Committee for Promotion of Cultural Relations with Yugoslavia” was active in Milan. In the boards of these associations there were a few Italian writers, politicians from communist and socialist parties (socialists Rodolfo Morandi, Antonio Borgoni, communists Eugenio Reale, Emilio Sereni, Celeste Nergavile, Antonio Gioliti and the writer from Milan Tito Rosa). The Yugoslav Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Rome Mladen Iveković proposed on 11 April 1948 that the work of the “Italian Association for Friendship with Yugoslavia” should have been organised on a wider base and that the Yugoslav government should finance with 3,000,000 lira the establishment of the organisation and help with 500,000 lira per month the functioning of associations in Milan and Rome.²⁸ The “Italian Association for Friendship with Yugoslavia” was to be supplied with material, newspapers, books, photographs, films and exhibitions. On 13 May 1948 the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs Simić informed the Legation in Rome that the loans were approved based on the Legation’s proposal and emphasised the necessity of caution and finding of suitable forms for aid payment.²⁹ He also asked the Legation to prepare detailed data about all people who would be hired to work for the Association.

Owing to the promotion by the “Committee for Promotion of Cultural Relations with Yugoslavia” on 7 April 1948 the exhibition of photographs was shown in Milan, mounted on 30 panels, 2.8 meters wide, titled “Yugoslavia – People’s Democracy Country” („Jugoslavija zemlja narodne demokratije“). The same exhibition was presented on 10 April in Rome, promoted by the “Initiative Committee for the Establishment of the Italian Association for Friendship with Yugoslavia”. The Yugoslav government financed the organisation of these two exhibitions with 500,000 liras.³⁰ At the exhibition in Rome, a bomb was thrown, and Italian authorities did not reveal the perpetrator.³¹ In order to learn about the life of “the Italian masses”, the Yugoslav Envoy in Rome Mladen Iveković and the press attaché Josip Defrančeski visited Florence, Milan, Turin, Genoa and Livorno from 12 to 18 May 1948. Defrančeski stated

²⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 46676.

²⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 43881.

²⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 63, 43627.

²⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 410101.

²⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 412551.

³⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 41582.

³¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 65, 411780.

that he set a task to get in touch with people who would help and support the Yugoslav Legation's efforts regarding the affirmation of Yugoslavia among "the Italian masses".³² After the Resolution of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties on 28 June 1948 and an ideological conflict with the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav government was no longer able to count on the support of Italian communists and "Italian masses".³³ The cooperation between the Italian Communist Party and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was renewed in the mid-1950s.³⁴

At the beginning of 1951 the Yugoslav Legation in Rome financed 34 magazines in Italy.³⁵ During a meeting with an Italian journalist in Rome on 28 May 1952, the Yugoslav press attaché Fortić was arrested on charges of espionage and detained by the police.³⁶ At the end of 1953, the Yugoslav Legation cooperated with ten Italian journalists.³⁷ In the budget proposal of the Yugoslav Legation in Rome in 1951 from total 46,673,000 lira, 22,670,000 lira were earmarked for propaganda.³⁸ Total budget for 1952 was 2,805,500 lira, of which 1,050,000 lira were planned for propaganda.³⁹ The advisor at the Yugoslav Legation Fortić suggested on 25 January 1953 that 5,500,000 lira should be approved to the Legation for the purpose of propaganda during 1953.⁴⁰ In the second half of 1953, in the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Belgrade, the prevailing opinion was that the system of direct propaganda had cost a lot and had not brought about satisfactory results. At the beginning of December 1953, the abandoning of direct propaganda was discussed in a meeting and it was decided to cancel the propaganda magazine "Yugoslavia", which was published by the Legation in Rome.⁴¹

After solving the political crisis over the status of the city of Trieste and Friuli-Venezia Giulia by signing the Memorandum of Understanding in London on 5 October 1954, relations between Yugoslavia and Italy normalised.⁴² On the day of signing the Memorandum of Understanding in London, the Italian and Yugoslav Legations exchanged letters about the work and head offices of Slovenian cultural organisations in Trieste and Italian cultural organisations in the area that was annexed to Yugoslavia. In the cultural sphere, this meant an increase in cultural exchange, but also the continuation of Yugoslav propaganda activities in Italy according to new circumstances

³² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 414781.

³³ Saša Mišić, *Yugoslav Communists and the Communist Party of Italy 1945–1956*, Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th – 20th Century), (Edited by Vojislav G. Pavlović), Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences And Arts, Belgrade 2014, 281–291.

³⁴ Saša Mišić, *Obnavljanje odnosa između Saveza komunista Jugoslavije i Komunističke partije Italije 1955–1956. godine*, Tokovi istorije 2 (2013) 121–145.

³⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 36, 420024.

³⁶ Archives of Yugoslavia, box 836 (KMJ), I-3-b/350.

³⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, 36, 4347.

³⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 36, 420024.

³⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 414987.

⁴⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 415429.

⁴¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, 36, 4347.

⁴² J. Jeri, *Tržaško vprašanje po Drugi svetovni vojni, (tri faze diplomatskega boja)*, 290–302.

and goals. In a meeting at the Yugoslav Legation in Rome on 9 October 1954, Bora Stojadinović, a press attaché in the Consulate General in Milan and Luka Soldić, a press attaché at the Legation in Rome discussed their experiences and perspectives in propaganda activities.⁴³ They concluded that Yugoslav-Italian relations had good contours. Italian culture magazines became more open to authors from Yugoslavia, and again the idea of forming Yugoslav-Italian cultural societies became popular. Noting that Italy in the last few years was almost an untouched area for Yugoslav propaganda, Stojadinović and Soldić analysed activities in the field of culture only in the context of Yugoslav propaganda activities. They thought that the sector of cultural propaganda would provide easier opportunities for further activities. They also thought that with creating a new positive climate it would be possible to open a Yugoslav radio station, increase the number of translated Yugoslav books in Italian, and improve cooperation among writers, painters, musicians, actors and filmmakers. What was new comparing to previous practice was that Stojadinović and Soldić's proposal sent to the Yugoslav Secretary for Foreign Affairs advocated direct contact of Yugoslav cultural organisations with similar organisations in Italy.

Performance of Yugoslav artists in Italy

The institutionalisation and politicisation of cultural cooperation was apparent in Italy. A characteristic example is the Venice Biennale in 1948. In late 1947 individual Yugoslav artists began to receive invitations to participate in a music festival in Venice, and the Yugoslav government demanded that the Legation in Rome investigate the character of the festival, the organisers and enquired about the Legation's opinion of Yugoslavia's participation in the festival.⁴⁴ The press attaché informed the Information Department on 25 February 1948 that "he contacted friends of Yugoslavia in Italy" and that he found out that the music festival was organised as the initiative of the Municipality of Venice as part of other festivals.⁴⁵ The attaché thought that Yugoslav artists should participate in the festival because the communist Giovanni Battista Gianquinto was Mayor of the Venice Municipality and because of the "democratic character" of the festival. Yugoslav artists were invited as a part of the Venice Biennale in 1948 to participate in the exhibition of cinema and arts. The Yugoslav attaché stated that there were two important facts regarding Yugoslav participation in the art exhibition: 1) the best works in the world of art would be presented at the festival and 2) the Soviet attaché also asked his Ministry to send an exhibition.⁴⁶ Italians did their best to ensure that Yugoslav artists would have a

⁴³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, 36, 413639.

⁴⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 426295.

⁴⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45537.

⁴⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 46732.

successful presentation at the Biennale. During preparations for the art exhibition, the Italian government allowed free import of all work and materials that would be presented.⁴⁷ Besides that, the Italian government offered, at its expense, to restore the Yugoslav Pavilion, whereas the Yugoslav government was to finance the painting of the Pavilion.⁴⁸ Hence, the Yugoslav Legation in Rome suggested to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that restoration works on the Yugoslav Pavilion should be performed by a group of “democratic artists” from Milan, which was recommended by “Yugoslav Friends”.⁴⁹ On 21 April 1948 the Yugoslav government accepted an invitation to participate in all festivals, and in cooperation with the Italian government began preparations to repair and restore the Yugoslav Pavilion in Venice.⁵⁰ However, at the end of March 1948, the Yugoslav press attaché forwarded information that the Soviet government decided not to participate in festivals in Venice and as one of the reasons stated the members of the jury, who, in the opinion of the Soviet representative in Rome, were “totally influenced by Italians, and via them by Americans”.⁵¹ In a telegram of 14 April, sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Yugoslav envoy Iveković repeated the Soviet reasons, and stated that Yugoslavia should participate “because its intentions are different”.⁵² The Yugoslav Foreign Affairs Minister Simić informed on 4 May 1948 the Legation in Rome that Yugoslavia would not participate in the 14th International Exhibition of Fine Arts in Venice.⁵³ The official explanation was that Yugoslav representatives were prevented from participating due to technical reasons.

Cooperation with the Biennale continued in the following years. The opening of the Biennale on 8 June 1950 was attended by the Yugoslav envoy Iveković and cultural adviser Lapčević. In a detailed report sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Yugoslav envoy pointed out that the Biennale represented in the West a very important event in terms of art.⁵⁴ It is characteristic that the envoy Iveković criticised the Yugoslav exhibition and believed that it was presented in a partisan and Soviet manner. The opening of the Biennale in 1952 was attended by the new Yugoslav envoy in Rome, Vladimir Velebit, who in his report stated that the exhibition exposed works of “a few” Yugoslav sculptors and painters.⁵⁵

Yugoslav culture was present in Italy through music, films, theatres, Slavic seminars, paintings and translations of literary works. Yugoslav artists at the beginning of September 1947 were invited to participate in a music festival in Perugia.⁵⁶ Due to previous commitments, the Department of Cultural Affairs within the Committee of

⁴⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 410245.

⁴⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45609.

⁴⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45609.

⁵⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 47141.

⁵¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 48011.

⁵² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 410131.

⁵³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 411927.

⁵⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 412462.

⁵⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 48358.

⁵⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 49, 418062.

Culture and Arts rejected the invitation that was sent to Yugoslav pianists to participate in the First International Piano Competition in Genoa from 24 to 30 May 1948.⁵⁷ At the beginning of March 1950 the Opera House in Rome accepted a visit of the National Theatre in Belgrade with the ballet “The Legend of Ohrid”.⁵⁸ In the same month, the opera singers from the Belgrade National Theatre Nikola Cvejić and Aleksandar Marinković were guests in Milan.⁵⁹ On 24 March 1950 the Secretary at the Yugoslav Legation Čedomil Veljačić agreed upon cooperation with the representative of the “International Agency for Concerts in Rome”.⁶⁰ As an example of successful presentation of Yugoslav music artists in Italy was a performance of Zinka and Božidar Kunc, Aleksandar Marinković and Nikola Cvejić on 24 March 1950 in Milan in front of about 600 spectators.⁶¹ The report of the Yugoslav Consul in Milan stated that the success of the concert was great and it was aimed “to break the ice” regarding public opinion in Milan towards Yugoslav art. In July 1952 the composer Ilija Lakešić was in Rome for specialisation purposes as a scholar of the Ministry of Science and Culture of the People’s Republic of Montenegro.⁶² The Italian Legation in Belgrade informed the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 December 1952 that the “Italian Institution for Young Musicians” (“Istituzione Giovani Musicisti Italiani”) opened a department for foreigners at the College of Music in Rome.⁶³ During 1953, the Yugoslav Legation achieved successful cooperation with the College and the Music Academy “Santa Cecilia”.⁶⁴ Poor cooperation with the Italian radio RAI culminated on the Republic Day in 1952 when a representative of the Yugoslav Legation was informed that there was no place for Yugoslav music on the Italian radio.⁶⁵ The Italian police prevented the performance of the Yugoslav Folk Dance Ensemble on 7 and 8 January 1953 in Genoa with the explanation that the Ensemble did not have a working permit.⁶⁶ Tickets for the performance of the Ensemble were released for sale on 6 January, but the police prevented the performance three hours before the concert. The Yugoslav Ensemble had a scheduled performance in Turin as well, but it was forced to leave Italy. After a diplomatic note which the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to the Italian Legation in Belgrade, they received the answer that the Ensemble had to obtain a permit before performing in Genoa.⁶⁷

Two Yugoslav films about World War II – “The Youth Constructs” (“Mladina gradi”) and “Coal Miners of Idria” (“Rudari Idrije”) were forbidden to be shown at the “International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art” in Venice in September 1947 with

⁵⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 48806.

⁵⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 45040.

⁵⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45051.

⁶⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 47155.

⁶¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 43987.

⁶² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 410246.

⁶³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 416759.

⁶⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁶⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁶⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁶⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 40, 45828.

the explanation that they spread propaganda about Trieste.⁶⁸ The films were shown after the protest of the Yugoslav Legation to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The international jury of the festival praised the films and rewarded them with a certificate and medal.⁶⁹ For unsuccessful attempts to obtain a film co-production in 1952, the Yugoslav attaché Fortić blamed in his report the ambiguous attitude of Yugoslav companies, noting that only “Bosna film” accepted negotiations about co-production.⁷⁰ From 1951 to 1954, the Yugoslav film industry had a delay in the production of films for the foreign market.⁷¹ The modest achievements in Yugoslav cinematography are indicated by the fact that in 1953 the Yugoslav press attaché planned that “at least one Yugoslav film should be shown in Italy”.⁷²

The Yugoslav government was trying to expand Yugoslav cultural influence in Italy through Slavic seminars at universities. The Ministry of Science and Culture sent books that were supposed to help Italian students of Slavic studies to get familiar with Yugoslav literature. Jovan Vukmanović, assistant chief in the Press Department of the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs, submitted to the Committee for Culture and Arts on 10 February 1948 the list of books that the press attaché at the Legation in Rome during his stay in Zagreb chose and ordered for the Slavic seminars at Italian universities.⁷³ Erih Koš from the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 February 1948 that the selection of books was very bad and it would be best that the Department of Information Technology created a new book list.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Science and Culture organised in Sarajevo from 15 July to 15 August 1951 the Summer Course for Slavists, where nine Slavists from Italy were present, besides those from Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, France, England, Holland, Sweden, Germany and Austria.⁷⁵ In 1952 the Slavic Seminar in Zagreb was attended by seven students from Italy at the expense of the Yugoslav government, while 15 visitors from Italy had relief during their stay.⁷⁶ The Bibliographic Institute of Belgrade in 1953 supplied about 50 Slavic Seminars in 15 countries with Yugoslav books – the most interested were Slavists from Germany, Italy (especially from Milan) and the United States.⁷⁷ During 1951 and 1953, negotiations were conducted to set a Serbo-Croatian language and literature teacher at universities of Milan and Florence.⁷⁸ Despite the positive attitude of both universities, language and literature teachers were not appointed due to opposition

⁶⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 66, 416998.

⁶⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1947, 66, 420500.

⁷⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁷¹ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 67.

⁷² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁷³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 43361.

⁷⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 64, 44915.

⁷⁵ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 71.

⁷⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 48874.

⁷⁷ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 72.

⁷⁸ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 73.

from the Italian government.⁷⁹ The Yugoslav Legation in Rome had a good cooperation with universities in Rome, Florence and Naples, and in 1952 five Yugoslav students got scholarships at the University of Perugia.⁸⁰ Dr. Ivo Frangeš from Zagreb worked as a lecturer in Cultural History, Yugoslav Literature and Language at the Faculty of Political Science and Faculty of Philosophy in Florence in 1954.⁸¹

The Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs answered affirmatively when the Legation in Rome was informed on 3 May 1948 that the “Italian Encyclopedia” asked for data about some Yugoslav writers.⁸² The Yugoslav press attaché attended the opening of an exhibition of children’s literature in Florence from 12 to 15 April 1949.⁸³ The Envoy Iveković travelled from 8 to 10 May 1951 to the Book Fair in Sardinia, where Yugoslavia had its own stand.⁸⁴ In 1950 Italy was a country with the most translated literary works from Yugoslavia.⁸⁵ The publishing house “Marzocco” published “Cyan-Blue Seagull Brotherhood” (“Družina sinjeg galeba”) by the Slovene writer Tone Seliškar and the tale by the Serbian writer Laza Lazarević “The First Matins with My Father” (“Prvi put s ocem na jutrenje”), the publishing house “Colombo” published the Anthology of Slovenian Prose and the publishing house “De Carlo” published the novel “County’s Child” (“Opštinsko dete”) by the Serbian writer Branislav Nušić. In 1952 the novel “Return of Philip Latinović” (“Povratak Filipa Latinovića”) by the Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža was translated in Italian. In June 1953 the Slavicist from Milan Alda dall Alba finished the translation of the drama “Messrs. Glembay” by Miroslav Krleža and started the translation of his drama “In agony” (“U agoniji”).⁸⁶ Another Slavicist from Milan Prof. Maver di Sara had a good cooperation with the Yugoslav Consulate in this city.⁸⁷ In the traditional annual trade fair in Milan, held from 12 to 27 April 1953, together with an exhibition on cultural life of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia, Yugoslav books translated into Italian were presented.⁸⁸

On 3 May 1948 the Italian Legation informed the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the “International Museum of Ceramics” (“Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche”) in Faenza asked Yugoslavia to send copies of Yugoslav ceramic art that would be exhibited at the permanent exhibition.⁸⁹ In 1950, 1952 and 1954 paintings by over 40 artists from Yugoslavia were presented.⁹⁰ An exhibition of Slovenian graphics was held in Milan in 1951.⁹¹ In January 1953 six Yugoslav painters

⁷⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁸⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁸¹ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 73.

⁸² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 411926.

⁸³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1949, 46, 47547.

⁸⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1951, 36, 46482.

⁸⁵ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 67.

⁸⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 40, 47736.

⁸⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 40, 47839.

⁸⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 40, 4947.

⁸⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 514696.

⁹⁰ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 84.

⁹¹ М. Перишић, *Дипломатија и култура*, 63.

had exhibitions in Rome (Miloš Bajić, Aleksandar Božičković, Gordan Zuber, Aleksandar Kumrić, Đorđe Popović and Miodrag Protić).⁹² The Yugoslav envoy in Rome, Vladimir Velebit thought that the two of them, Božičković and Zuber, did not want to return to Yugoslavia because they were looking for a job in Rome and wanted to travel to the United States.⁹³ During the conversation which he had in the Yugoslav Council for Culture on 16 July 1952, the Italian cultural attaché said that the Italian government was very interested in the development of cultural cooperation between Yugoslavia and Italy.⁹⁴ Such attitude of the Italian government refutes the facts stated in the annual report of the Press Department, which on 21 April 1953 the press attaché Fortić sent to the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs.⁹⁵ The report stated that the Italian government was directly or indirectly trying to interrupt the cooperation and efforts of popularising Yugoslav culture in Italy. The Italian Directorate General for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries prevented the realisation of every major Yugoslav cultural event during 1952. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded that the Yugoslav Legation should request permission to organise any cultural event. Italian authorities indirectly prevented the exhibition of Yugoslav folk art in Venice, Yugoslavia did not get an invitation to the International Conference on Cultural Cooperation of the Mediterranean Countries, and the already agreed concert of the Yugoslav violinist Ozim was prevented.⁹⁶ During 1953 the Yugoslav Legation had good cooperation with the Italian Commission for UNESCO and with a few Italian film production companies.⁹⁷ With the Department of Theatre and Events of the Presidency of the Italian government it was agreed to exchange actors and to include the play "Leda" by Miroslav Krleža in the repertoire of a theatre. The conclusion of the Yugoslav Legation in Rome from November 1953 was that cultural exchange and cooperation were weak and that something should be done.⁹⁸ The specificity of Yugoslav-Italian relations was also visible through the writing manual for the annual report which the Yugoslav Secretariat of Foreign Affairs submitted to the Legation in Rome on 4 December 1953.⁹⁹ In addition to various issues that had to be written in the report, the manual stated the thesis of "not accepting the offer, bullying and difficulties in cultural and artistic activities".

Performances of Italian artists in Yugoslavia

Centralism in the management of cultural policy and political affiliation were present during the organisation of Italian artists' performances. The Yugoslav

⁹² M. Perišić, *Дипломатија и култура*, 87.

⁹³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 40, 4778.

⁹⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, 39, 410592.

⁹⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁹⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁹⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 45515.

⁹⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 416350.

⁹⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, 39, 416289.

government was making an annual plan about the number of foreign artists who could perform in Yugoslavia. At the end of 1947, the Ministry of Culture refused several proposals for the performances of Italian artists.¹⁰⁰ The President of the Italian “Society for Theatre Play Exchange” (“Ente italiano per gli scambi teatrali”) tried in February 1948 to connect to institutions in Yugoslavia via the Yugoslav Legation in order to exchange performing arts, literature and concerts.¹⁰¹ The Assistant Secretary of the Department of Information at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jovan Vukmanović was informed about this proposal and then he informed the Committee for Culture and Arts of the Yugoslav government.¹⁰² On 30 April 1948 the Committee for Culture asked from the Legation in Rome to deliver data about the owner of the “Society for Theatre Play Exchange” and to investigate if it would be possible to cooperate with that Society.¹⁰³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed on 5 April 1948 the Italian Legation in Belgrade that the Committee for Culture and Arts could not accept the offered performance of the Italian pianist Alfred They due to a busy schedule.¹⁰⁴ Also, a characteristic example is the participation of three delegations of cultural workers leftists from Rome and Milan at the “Festival of cultural life of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia”, which began on 18 March 1948 in Rovinj. The approval for the arrival of the delegation was given by Milovan Đilas, who was the head of the Yugoslav party department responsible for the control of cultural activities (Agitprop).¹⁰⁵ The head of the delegation which had eight members (an ethnologist, three writers, a painter, psychiatrist, legal writer, director and theatre critic) was the writer Francesco Jovine.¹⁰⁶ Members of the delegation had a meeting with Josip Broz Tito. The festival character in Rovinj is testified by the fact that the Italian envoy in Belgrade rejected the invitation to participate in the festival.¹⁰⁷ According to instructions of 29 March 1948 that Minister Simić sent to the Legation in Rome, the arrival of the delegation was used in Italy for propaganda purposes.¹⁰⁸ On 11 April 1948 Jovine published articles about Yugoslavia in newspapers *Repubblica* from Rome and *La Voce* from Naples. Also, in Rome, Jovine had a lecture entitled “Intellectuals in an advanced democracy” (“Intellettuali nella democrazia progressiva”), which according to information from the Yugoslav Legation in Rome, was attended by over 1,000 people of various professions.¹⁰⁹ The press attaché of the Yugoslav Legation in Rome thought that the delegation was satisfied with the journey and that all members would personally

¹⁰⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 49037.

¹⁰¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 43811.

¹⁰² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 43811.

¹⁰³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 412173.

¹⁰⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45338.

¹⁰⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 45465. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Aleš Bebler informed Iveković on 28 February 1948 that Đilas agreed with the arrival of a group of cultural workers.

¹⁰⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 46897.

¹⁰⁷ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 65, 49464.

¹⁰⁸ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 48279.

¹⁰⁹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 410100.

make an effort to form a “Friendship Society with Yugoslavia”.¹¹⁰ In mid-March 1948 a group of 24 metalworkers from Torino were in Yugoslavia as guests of the Yugoslav Trade Unions.¹¹¹ Participation of students from Milan in the Belgrade university student’s festival in April 1950 was marked by the lack of organisation from the Yugoslav side. The University Committee in Belgrade decided that it could accommodate only ten students. Branko Karađole, the Consulate General of Yugoslavia in Milan, protested against this decision on 7 April.¹¹² He informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that in Milan they organised a group of 35 Italian students from various universities and “because of the political moment they should be all unconditionally accepted”. After a group of 38 students finally arrived at the festival, there was another oversight – the Yugoslav news agency TANJUG did not announce their arrival. On 18 April the Envoy Iveković expressed his astonishment about this oversight in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and suggested that it would be good to use this visit as a propaganda advantage especially because at that time there was a strong anti-Yugoslav campaign in Italy.¹¹³ In April 1950 Branko Karađole made successful contacts with representatives of the University in Milan and planned their visit to universities in Yugoslavia.¹¹⁴ In September 1950 Karađole organised a trip to Yugoslavia for nine cultural workers from Milan.¹¹⁵ In June 1948, the Committee for Culture and Arts asked the Legation in Rome to find two teachers for solo singing who would go to work in Yugoslavia.¹¹⁶ In addition to teachers’ expertise, their political orientation was important, so attaché Defrančeski said for professor Skollari from Florence that he “has skills and politically is not bad”.

Politically the most sensitive issue in the field of cultural cooperation between Yugoslavia and Italy was the opening of reading rooms (cultural centres) in Belgrade and Rome. The sensitivity of this issue was reflected in the fact that the reading rooms should have represented diplomatic representations of the Italian government in Belgrade and the Yugoslav government in Rome. Although mutual discussions were led from 1950, the opening of cultural centres did not occur in the period that is the subject of our research.

Conclusion

In the period since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 and solving of the Trieste crisis in 1954, the Yugoslav government had a foreign policy goal which was achieved through cultural influence in Italy. The promotion of

¹¹⁰ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 412844.

¹¹¹ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 63, 46731.

¹¹² DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 47363.

¹¹³ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 48330.

¹¹⁴ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 48754.

¹¹⁵ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1950, 35, 418234.

¹¹⁶ DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1948, 66, 417169.

Yugoslav culture in Italy was expected to make an impact on the Italian public opinion and thereby to strengthen diplomatic efforts. When we talk about the effects of Yugoslav cultural influence in Italy, we can conclude that it was accomplished with limited resources. Having in mind the fact that Italian culture in many segments was one of the most developed in Europe, Yugoslav culture had an impact on a relatively small number of Italian citizens. The Yugoslav government had its associates in Italy, but that was limited to individuals and groups of pro-Yugoslav oriented socialists and communists. As most Yugoslav associates were communists and socialists, it was logical to establish the best cooperation with cultural workers from the industrial centres of northern Italy, especially Milan. Yugoslavia financed the activities of Italian cultural institutions that were willing to popularise Yugoslav culture in Italy. After several years the Yugoslav government realised that the effects of direct financing of propaganda were very small. Through the analysis of Yugoslav cultural policy towards Italy we can see the process of de-Stalinisation in Yugoslav society and the official turning of Yugoslavia towards Western political and cultural values. Even though the Yugoslav government tried through its cultural policy and its propaganda activities to impose its cultural values on Italy and primarily to influence the public in Italy to change their political attitude towards Yugoslavia, this process was certainly mutual. The performance of Yugoslav artists in Italy and the performance of Italian artists in Yugoslavia led to a breakthrough of Western culture to Yugoslavia. Mutual cooperation in the field of culture was better from 1950, but with a period of stagnation in the coming years. The limited reach of Yugoslav cultural influence in Italy was negatively affected by the fact that it was impossible to achieve direct cooperation between Yugoslav and Italian cultural institutions. Yugoslav centralism in the management of cultural policy significantly slowed the establishment of cultural relations and mutual exchange of artists. After the resolving of the political crisis in October 1954, the opinion began to prevail among Yugoslav political decision-makers that it was necessary to establish direct contacts between Yugoslav and Italian cultural organisations.

Miljan MILKIĆ

**DIPLOMAZIA ATTRAVERSO LA CULTURA:
L'INFLUENZA CULTURALE DELLA JUGOSLAVIA IN ITALIA, 1947-1954**

Sommario

Nel primo decennio dopo la Seconda guerra mondiale, le relazioni italo-jugoslave facevano parte di un complesso di circostanze internazionali gravate da molte questioni irrisolte. Il Trattato di Pace del febbraio 1947 definì la base per il ripristino delle relazioni politiche, economiche e culturali, ma l'attuazione delle sue disposizioni rappresentava un grave ostacolo per lo sviluppo delle relazioni bilaterali. La cooperazione culturale tra la Jugoslavia e l'Italia seguì il ripristino delle relazioni politiche ed economiche. Lo scambio culturale avveniva attraverso Lagazione jugoslava a Roma, cioè attraverso il lavoro dell'addetto stampa incaricato delle attività di propaganda. Nel periodo che va dal rinnovo delle relazioni diplomatiche nel 1947 alla fine della Crisi di Trieste nell'ottobre 1954, lo scambio culturale era legato alle esigenze della propaganda. Lagazione jugoslava a Roma esercitavà attività di propaganda attraverso il bollettino informativo pubblicato tre volte al mese, attraverso la diffusione di libri e riviste e la traduzione delle pubblicazioni jugoslave. Alla promozione della cultura jugoslava contribuivano anche dei comunisti italiani filo-jugoslavi. Di particolare importanza era pure l'organizzazione di programmi culturali per gli operai dei centri industriali. Il governo jugoslavo stanziò ingenti fondi per la propaganda e per il finanziamento dei cosiddetti "circoli democratici e progressisti" in Italia. Di solito si impiegavano gli artisti di questi circoli per la realizzazione di eventi di promozione culturale. La cultura jugoslava era presente in Italia tramite mostre d'arte, musica, cinema, teatro, seminari di slavistica e opere letterarie. A causa del centralismo nella gestione della politica culturale, la cultura jugoslava ebbe un impatto limitato, che interessò un gruppo sociale piuttosto ristretto. Solo dopo la fine della crisi politica nel mese di ottobre del 1954, il governo jugoslavo decise di consentire il contatto diretto tra artisti jugoslavi e italiani. Da quel momento, la promozione della cultura jugoslava in Italia smise di avere un'impostazione propagandistica.

Parole chiave: Jugoslavia, Italia, propaganda, politica culturale, Crisi di Trieste.

Миљан МИЛКИЋ

**ДИПЛОМАТИЈА КРОЗ КУЛТУРУ:
ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКИ КУЛТУРНИ УТИЦАЈ У ИТАЛИЈИ 1947–1954.**

Резиме

У периоду током прве деценије након Другог светског рата, југословенско-италијански односи одвијали су се у сложеним међународним околностима и били су оптерећени многобројним нерешеним питањима. Одлукама Уговора о миру фебруара 1947. регулисане су основе за обнову политичких, економских и културних односа, али је имплементација одредби Уговора представљала велику сметњу за развој билатералних односа. Културна сарадња Југославије и Италије пратила је у својим главним цртама обнову политичких и економских односа. Културна размена одвијала се преко југословенског посланства у Риму, односно југословенског аташеа за штампу који је био задужен и за пропагандну делатност. Када говоримо о југословенском културном утицају у Италији у периоду од успостављања дипломатских односа 1947. до решавања Тршћанске кризе октобра 1954. године, говоримо пре свега о култури која има пропагандни значај. Југословенско посланство у Риму остваривало је пропагандну делатност преко информативног билтена који је објављиван три пута месечно, затим кроз набавку различитих књига и часописа, преко превођења публикација југословенских комуниста, као и преко утицаја на пројугословенски оријентисане италијанске комунисте. Од посебног значаја било је организовање уметничких и културних програма међу радницима у индустријским центрима. Југословенска влада издвајала је значајна средства за пропаганду и финансирање такозваних „демократских и напредних кругова“ у Италији. Из тих кругова су најчешће ангажовани уметници и добијана је саветодавна помоћ у остваривању пропагандних ефеката културних манифестација. Југословенска култура била је присутна у Италији преко ликовних изложби, музике, филма, позоришта, славистичких семинара и превођења књижевних дела. Због централизма у руковођењу културном политиком и онемогућавања директне сарадње југословенских и италијанских културних институција, југословенски културни утицај оствариван је на релативно малој циљној групи. Након решавања политичке кризе у октобру 1954. југословенска влада је одлучила да омогући директан контакт југословенских и италијанских уметника. Презентовање југословенске културе у Италији више није имало изражен пропагандни карактер.

Кључне речи: Југославија, Италија, пропаганда, културна политика, Тршћанска криза.

Saša MIŠIĆ

**NORMALISATION OF POLITICAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY AFTER
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OF 1954***

Abstract: The text analyzes the course of normalization of political relations between Yugoslavia and Italy in the second part of the 1950s. On the basis of the available archive sources and relevant literature, the author attempts to identify and describe the factors influencing this process. The author particularly points to numerous controversies and disputes in bilateral relations which hampered and slowed down the political rapprochement of Belgrade and Rome, while not neglecting the Cold War context in which the above process was unfolding.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Italy, Cold war, open issues, foreign relations, Alberto Folchi.

When Yugoslavia and Italy, together with the United States of America and the United Kingdom, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the London Carlton House on 5 October 1954, this ended almost a decade-long and at moments very dramatic Trieste crisis. Although the achieved solution regarding the division of the Free Territory of Trieste to the Yugoslav zone B and Italian zone A seemed to a certain extent provisory, making the numerous unsolved “open” issues the stumbling block in their relations for the next twenty years, the MoU nevertheless *de facto* marked the end of the disputes between the two states and the start of a new period in the development of bilateral relations.

Already since October and particularly during November 1954 both parties attempted to normalise their relations and manifest it in public. The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia Aleš Bebler in his talks with the US chargé d'affaires

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in Belgrade Woodruff Wallner spoke about a new period resulting from the MoU,¹ while the Italian Prime Minister Mario Scelba in his speech on the occasion of the Remembrance Day on 4 November in Trieste spoke about a new direction of Italian politics towards Yugoslavia and its efforts to develop friendly relations with this state.² Attempting to normalise the relations Italians made practical steps as well, so that in early November they initiated the upgrading of diplomatic missions in Belgrade and Rome to the embassy level, which Yugoslavs accepted.³ They were lenient in all negotiations carried out after the MoU.⁴ They also attempted to show the new course towards Belgrade through the changed attitude of diplomatic officials in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – known as Palazzo Chigi – particularly after Gaetano Martino took over the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, i.e. after Vittorio Zoppi left the position of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵ All the above was clearly visible during the reception in the Yugoslav Embassy in Rome organised on 29 November 1954 on the occasion of celebration of the Republic Day. The state leadership, led by the Prime Minister Scelba, Vice President Giuseppe Saragat and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Gaetano Martino with almost complete army general staff stayed unusually long at this reception, obviously wishing to show in that manner the importance which Italy paid to the Yugoslav state in the changed circumstances after the MoU. All this made the Yugoslav Ambassador in Rome Pavle Gregorić say that “today’s Italian government, and particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs Martino, really carry out the politics of creation of the best possible relations with our country”, i.e. that Scelba’s government was the “most suitable” for Yugoslavia and that such situation should be used for resolving all the remaining issues of bilateral relations deriving from the treaties, both the MoU and the Treaty of Peace of 1947.⁶ Gregorić thought that Scelba’s government “really wanted” the normalisation of relations in such a manner as to resolve all open issues of bilateral relations during its first phase, in order to initiate – in the second phase – the political

¹ Gianpaolo Valdevit, *Trieste 1953–1954. L'ultima crisi*, OTE Spa-MGS PRESS Sas, Trieste 1994, 70.

² *L'Unita*, 5 November 1954; Diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Political Archives (hereinafter AMIP, PA,) year 1955, box 26, doc. No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

³ Yugoslavia accepted the Italian initiative and on 10 November passed the decision to upgrade its mission to the rank of an embassy, AMIP, PA, 1954, f. 36, doc. No. 414871.

⁴ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

⁵ Poor relations of Yugoslavia with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the signing of the MoU were related to the work of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vittorio Zoppi and “the whole high bureaucracy which has gathered there (in the Ministry – note S.M.) since the times of the fascist regime”. Zoppi was replaced at the position of the Secretary General by Alberto Rossi-Longhi. AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 26, No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

⁶ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

and military cooperation of the two states.⁷ The normalisation of relations would open “perspectives for political initiatives towards the Balkans” for Italy.⁸ All the above was crowned by the new Italian Ambassador in Belgrade Gastone Guidotti during a ceremonial meeting with the State Under Secretary Srđa Prica in the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late April 1955. On that occasion he said that signing of the MoU was “the third historic opportunity to set the relations between the two neighbouring nations onto the sound grounds”.⁹

When since mid-December 1954 Yugoslavia and Italy started to sign a whole set of economic and financial agreements, it seemed that this time the two states would not miss the historic opportunity which Guidotti spoke about.¹⁰ However, very soon it turned out that intensive cooperation in the economic sphere – above else in the field of trade relations – which was based on geographic connection, common border, close markets and traditionally complementary economic structures needed not to be accompanied with simultaneous normalisation in other fields of bilateral cooperation, particularly the political one.

Judging by the initiatives whose main promoter was the United States of America, it seemed that the military relations would become the main field of cooperation besides the economy. Although by concluding the Balkan Pact Yugoslavia already became indirectly involved in the Western defence alliance, to the state leadership in Belgrade it very soon became clear that the main intention of the USA was to entirely “incorporate” Yugoslavia into its defence system after the achievement of the Trieste agreement, i.e. to connect it as strongly as possible to the NATO pact, for the defence of the strategically important Ljubljana direction.¹¹ One of the ways to indirectly bind Belgrade to the Western military alliance was to establish Yugoslav-

⁷ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Archive of Yugoslavia, Cabinet of the President of the Republic, fund No. 837 (hereinafter AJ, KPR), I-5-b/44-2, Note about the talks of comrade Srđa Prica, State Under Secretary, with the Italian Ambassador Gastone Guidotti on 29 April 1955. The previous two historic opportunities were the treaties between Yugoslavia and Italy signed in Rapallo in 1920 and Rome in 1924.

¹⁰ The signing of an Agreement on 18 December 1954 on the definite regulation of all mutual obligations of economic and financial character deriving from the Peace Treaty and the successive agreements – which solved the issues of war reparations, restitution, social insurance, civil and military pensions, property, outstanding private obligations and many others – was followed on 31 March 1955 in Rome by signing of an entire set of agreements pertaining to the regulation of trade exchange. The National Archives, London, Foreign Office (hereinafter TNA, F.O. 371), folder No. 118024, doc. No. RY 10322/8.

¹¹ Already in mid-September 1954, on the eve of signing of the MoU, the Deputy Under Secretary of the State Department and the person in charge for particularly sensitive operations Robert Murphy visited Belgrade. In several talks with the state leadership headed by Tito he attempted to convince Yugoslavs of benefits from signing the agreement with Italy for solving the Trieste issue. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-25, Reception of the Deputy Permanent Under Secretary of the State Department Robert Murphy, 17 September 1954.

Italian military cooperation which became possible after the signing of the MoU removed the largest obstacle on that road.¹² Yugoslavs did not reject the possibility for military cooperation with Italy, but kept emphasising that this was “the most delicate” issue which first requested the creation of an “atmosphere of mutual trust”, that this process had to be “incremental” and realised through “direct contact”.¹³

In October 1954 the US Ambassador James Riddleberger also spoke about this topic with Tito. Although, in his own words, he brought no precise instructions from the consultancies in the USA, he nevertheless presented an entire set of “possibilities” for connecting Yugoslavia with the NATO, i.e. Italy in the military sphere. The Ambassador started his presentation with a proposal for Yugoslavia to join the NATO, which both collocutors rejected as an impossible solution. Then he presented a set of other possibilities, such as the cooperation of the Balkan Pact and the NATO, i.e. the Italian membership in the Balkan Pact. Upon proposing that Yugoslavia and Italy should start direct bilateral talks, Tito agreed that it would be “the best solution”, with a note that this should be done gradually “with contacts, exchange of opinions, consultancies”.¹⁴ When Riddleberger finally proposed the preparations for subsequent serious talks about military issues between Yugoslavia and Italy to start by visits of low-ranked officials, Tito – with a smile – replied that the cooperation with Italians should nevertheless start with contacts in the field of culture.¹⁵

The Western effort after the resolution of the Trieste issue to “fill the gaps in the Western defence system and attempt to incorporate Yugoslavia therein”¹⁶, through encouraging and even rushing the military contacts between Yugoslavia and

¹² This initiative became even more obvious after the visit of Harold Stassen, Director of the US Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), another American envoy who came to Belgrade at the end of October. Stassen noted to the Assistant State Secretary Aleš Bebler that the solution to the Trieste issue “opens a perspective for the development of relations with Italy in the field of the economy and “security” while he offered Tito the mediation of the US Government in order to start the talks about military issues. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-28, Reception of Harold Stassen, the FOA Director, 26 October 1954.

¹³ Ibid. After the Belgrade talks, Harold Stassen submitted a memorandum to the US President Dwight Eisenhower advocating for the USA to encourage Yugoslav-Italian talks about common defence of the Ljubljana gate in the presence of the big powers – USA, Great Britain and France – but without the NATO auspices. (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Volume VIII, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean (hereinafter: FRUS, Vol. VIII), Document 711, Memorandum by the Director of the Foreign Operations Administration (Stassen) to the Secretary of State, 1 November 1954, available at: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v08/d711> (visited on 18 May 2014).

¹⁴ AJ, KPR, I-3-a,/107-29, Reception of the Ambassador Riddleberger, 16 October 1954. The same idea was presented by Edvard Kardelj in the talks with the British Ambassador Frank Roberts. TNA, F.O 371, 118024, RY10322/1.

¹⁵ AJ, KPR, I-3-a,/107-29, Reception of the Ambassador Riddleberger, 16 October 1954; FRUS, Vol. VIII, Document 714, the Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Riddleberger) to the Department of State.

¹⁶ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

Italy, clashed with the final phase of the process of normalisation of relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Thus, in fact, the normalisation of relations with Italy went in parallel with the normalisation of relations with the East, and in case of the Yugoslav-Italian talks about military cooperation the improvement of relations with Soviets made Belgrade to lose interest in military cooperation with its Western neighbour. Although the Italians through Guidotti as well as through the British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery – who visited Belgrade on several occasions – attempted during 1955 and 1956 to pose the question of bilateral military talks to the Yugoslavs, this was not met with understanding.¹⁷ Moreover, with increasingly better relations with Soviets and the socialist camp, Yugoslavs started to perceive these endeavours of the West and Italians with increasing suspicion that their background was hiding the old aspirations of Rome for the establishment of domination over the Balkans and Yugoslavia, all under the auspices and on the account of the West.¹⁸ Thus the requests for military cooperation started to be ignored.¹⁹

The failure to start bilateral talks on security issues negatively influenced the normalisation of political relations, which were also relieved with difficulty from the burden of the “unpleasant residuals of the past”.²⁰ As the British diplomacy correctly observed, the Yugoslav-Italian relations were a “sensitive plant” which required a permanent care.²¹

The major obstacle on the road towards a faster normalisation of political relations – besides the general Cold-War climate – was the entire set of unsolved bilateral issues related to the fulfilment of all provisions of the treaty which the two states concluded after World War II. The Peace Treaty and the MoU did not solve all the disputable issues between Yugoslavia and Italy. On the contrary, many issues were left pending and waited to be resolved in the coming period. The largest portion of them pertained to the territories which were annexed to Yugoslavia after World War II or to the borderland between the two states. They were divided into two groups. The first one consisted of the issues deriving from the contractual obligations: final definition and demarcation of the border; the problem of ethnic minorities visible through an unregulated minority status at both sides of the border; restitution

¹⁷ On his meeting with Montgomery in January 1956, Tito definitely emphasised that that kind of talks with the Italians was not possible. TNA, F.O, 371, 1956, 124 286, RY 10322/25G, Secret.

¹⁸ AMIP, PA, 1957, f. 40, No. 44347, Relations Yugoslavia-Italy, 27 February 1957. Italy's intention to establish military cooperation with Yugoslavia directly or through joining the Balkan Pact was observed through the prism of attempts of this state to take over the control over the Pact in cooperation with Turkey. (AMIP, PA, 1957, b. 40, doc. No. 413789, Italian foreign policy in Martino's time.)

¹⁹ Increasingly obvious suspicions of Yugoslavia warned the British who in the beginning were also the advocates of the idea about the Yugoslav-Italian military talks, to discourage in a certain manner the intention of the Italian state leadership headed by the Prime Minister Antonio Segni and the Minister of Defense Paolo Emilio Taviani in mid-1956 to send the Italian Chief of Staff to Yugoslavia. TNA, F.O, 371, 1956, 124 286, RY 10322/25G, Secret.

²⁰ AMIP, PA, 1968, b. 67, doc. No. 441592, Yugoslav-Italian relations, 29 December 1967.

²¹ TNA, F. O. 371, 1955, 118024, RY10322/1.

of cultural-historical and artistic heritage; some unresolved issues of the optants. Another group consisted of non-contractual obligations: property-financial issues from the annexed territory and the former B zone; conclusion of a consular convention and legal aid conventions; conclusion of a cultural convention and many others.²²

The most disputable issue of the bilateral relations was the demarcation. The border line which went from the tripoint of Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria to the Trieste Gulf, about 216 km long, was by its legal character and the diversity of international instruments it was based upon, divided into several sectors: the north sector, from the tripoint of Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia to the tripoint of Yugoslavia, Italy and the former FTT; the part of the border between the former A zone and Yugoslavia; the border between the former A and B zones and the border in the territorial waters and in the Trieste Gulf. The first two sectors were regulated by the Peace Treaty. In these sectors several disputable points remained non-demarcated: Colovrat, Monte Sabotino, Collio and Gorizia. On the other side, the border between the former A and B zones was regulated by the MoU, whereas the demarcation of the territorial waters and the Trieste Gulf had not been resolved by any treaty whatsoever.²³

Apart from the demarcation, a key issue of bilateral relations that had to be solved pertained to the regulation of the status of the national minorities. This particularly pertained to Slovenes in Italy. The specificity of this minority community was that it lived in the territories of three Italian provinces (Trieste, Gorizia and Udine) and their status was regulated in different manners depending on their place of residence. Trieste Slovenes enjoyed the most of rights, since they were under protection of the Special Statute of 1954 which was annexed to the MoU, those living in the territory of Gorizia enjoyed certain rights envisaged by the Italian legislation, while the minority members who lived in the Udine province were in the worst position as the Italian state had not recognised the minority status at all. Yugoslavia attempted to resolve an entire set of issues related to the status of its minority members and deriving from the provisions of the MoU and the Special Statute. This covered numerous issues in the field of education, introduction of bilingualism and bilingual sign-boards, giving Slovenes a possibility for obtaining public functions, return of Slovene cultural centres, opening of the Slovene credit bank in Trieste, granting assistance to Slovene cultural institutions and many others.²⁴

Entirely different was the situation with the Italian minority in Yugoslavia. Since the end of World War II there was an ongoing process of its depopulation, with permanent emigration from the territories which under the Peace Agreement and the Memorandum were annexed to Yugoslavia. The largest number of people

²² AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-15, Reception of the Ambassador Alberto Berio, 5 March 1960.

²³ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-46, Discussion material for the visit of the President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat to the SFRY in October 1969.

²⁴ More on this: Nevenka Troha, *Položaj slovenske narodne skupnosti v Italiji in italijanske v Sloveniji med letoma 1954 in 1990*, Na oni strani meje. Slovenska manjšina v Italiji in njen pravni položaj: zgodovinski in pravni pregled 1866–2004, Zbornik radova, Knjižnica Annales Majora, Koper 2004, 141–166.

emigrated during the so-called “Big Exodus”, but this process continued after the signing of the MoU as well. Thus out of several hundred thousand people in the mid-1950s, their number was reduced to only around 30 thousand, with the tendency of a further decrease.²⁵

Italians also had their requests in relation to their minority in Yugoslavia; among the most complicated ones was the resolution of the property issue. As mentioned before, the Agreement of 18 December 1954 solved the largest part of mutual obligations of economic and financial character deriving from the Peace Treaty and the successive agreements. The December agreement also resolved the issue of restitution of the immovable property of the Italians who opted for Italy and offered their property for sale. Pursuant to the decision of the Yugoslav state authorities of January 1955, this property became the ownership of Yugoslavia.²⁶ There remained, however, an important issue of the so-called Italian free assets, i.e. the property which was not offered to Yugoslavia for purchase by its owners.²⁷ The same problem appeared with the property of Italians who emigrated from the former B zone. The MoU stipulated that the Italians who wanted to move to Italy and take Italian citizenship could sell their property in the territory of the former B zone within a two-year deadline. However, many of them did not manage to sell their property within the prescribed deadline due to a huge offer and low demand. Besides the above mentioned property, another problem pertained to the property which had not been encompassed by various restrictive measures (nationalisation, confiscation, agrarian reform).²⁸

The task of dealing with the national minority problems was assigned to the mixed Yugoslav-Italian committee for the ethnic groups’ issues, stipulated by the Special Statute of 1954. The Rule of Procedures of this committee was drafted already in February 1955, and the government in Belgrade ratified it on 28 June of the same

²⁵ About the exodus of the Italians from Yugoslavia: *Darko Dukovski, Dva egzodusa: hrvatski (1919–1941) i talijanski (1943–1955)*, *Adrias*, no.15 (December 2008) 145–165; Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l’esilio*, BUR, Milano 2006.

²⁶ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-2, The issue of execution of the agreement with Italy of 18 December 1954.

²⁷ On the basis of the agreement between the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) and the Italian Republic about the regulation of certain issues pertaining to the options, as well as the Agreement on the transfer of optants’ funds between the FPRY and the government of the Republic of Italy of 23 December 1950, it was regulated that Yugoslavia should purchase all free immovables i.e. the assets not under the regime of confiscation or nationalisation by the Yugoslav state (which its owners-optants for Italy offered for purchase through the Italian government). The number of such assets exceeded 5,000. However, there were Italians from the territories annexed to Yugoslavia who did not want to sell their property. Their number amounted to more than 3,000. AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-2, Letter to the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of 26 April 1955.

²⁸ The value of this property in the former B zone according to the assessment of the Yugoslav side amounted to five million dollars. These were large objects such as farms, industrial plants and hotels. AJ, KPR, I-5-b I-5-b/44-6. The unresolved issues between Yugoslavia and Italy which might be the subject of future negotiations, DSIP, Belgrade, 17 December 1958.

year.²⁹ However, the Italian government prolonged its approval, which caused doubts among the Yugoslavs that Rome was not interested in the constitution thereof and that the reason for this was the ever smaller number of Italians who lived in the former B zone and who had to be encompassed by the Special Statute.³⁰

Some important issues of bilateral relations bearing a strong political importance were nevertheless resolved. This above else pertains to the Agreement on local border traffic signed in August 1955 – known under the name of the Udine Agreement – which regulated the movement of people and goods in the area around Trieste and in the borderland. Both sides were satisfied with the results of this agreement since it functioned without major problems and thanks to it more than seven million border crossings were registered in both directions until the end of 1956. Another agreement was the Fishing Agreement. This agreement *per se* belonged to the domain of economic relations, however having a large political importance, particularly for the government in Rome as it enabled a part of the Italian population that dealt with fishing on the Adriatic coast to get a job.³¹ Since the first Fishing Agreement of 1949 was valid for only a year, after its expiry Yugoslavia often confiscated Italian fishing boats which continued to hunt in its territorial waters. The confiscation of the fishing boats caused political disputes as well, so the Italians were very eager to conclude a new agreement. In order to attract Yugoslavs, the same as in the time of signing of the first fishing agreement, Italy linked its signing to the realisation of an important credit-investment agreement which Yugoslavia and Italy had already negotiated and which was important for Belgrade. Finally, on 1 March 1956, after months of painful negotiations, the two states signed three treaties: the Special Delivery Agreement, Technical Cooperation Agreement and Fishing Agreement.

Both Belgrade and Rome were satisfied with the achieved agreements as an important step in consolidation of their bilateral relations which should expand the economic cooperation and be a decisive moment in the process of normalisation of political relations.³² The agreements had a broader value which exceeded their bilateral importance. Namely, the beginning of 1956 was marked by signing of a set of economic agreements between Yugoslavia and the USSR, i.e. the socialist states of Eastern Europe, worth several million dollars.³³ This economic link of Belgrade to

²⁹ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 27. doc. No. 416668, Note for the talks between Srđa Prica and the Italian Ambassador Guidotti, 10 December 1955.

³⁰ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 29, doc. No. 414329, Office of the FPRY representative in Trieste on 21 October 1955. Str. Pov.br. 73/55 /strictly confidential/.

³¹ Under the Fishing Agreement Yugoslavia granted a concession to Italy for fishing of Italian fishermen in Yugoslav territorial waters in return for remuneration. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-46, Discussion material for the visit of the President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat to the SFR Yugoslavia in October 1969.

³² In words of the Deputy Prime Minister Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, the agreements should not only expand the economic relations but also “deepen” the political cooperation. (TNA, F. O. 371, 124 320, RY 11322/6.) Like the Yugoslavs, Italians were “extremely” satisfied with the achieved agreements. Ibid, RY 11322/2.

³³ TNA, F. O. 371, 124320, RY 11322/4.

Soviets upset the Western countries, so in that sense the March agreements were perceived as a kind of restoring the balance in the Yugoslav foreign policy.³⁴

However, the Italians became disappointed very quickly. Namely, within the framework of the improvement of relations with the USSR and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia started the normalisation of its relations with Western European communist parties. On the eve of his visit to Moscow for a meeting with Khrushchev in June 1956, when party relations with Soviets were established, Josip Broz met with the leader of the Communist Party of Italy Palmiro Togliatti in late May in Belgrade.³⁵

In Italy, where there was a strong interest for the renewal of relations between the Yugoslav and Italian communists, the state authorities showed no understanding for this act because Togliatti was considered an “enemy No. 1” of the Italian government, so the Yugoslavs received the leader of the Italian communists in an official visit before any other Italian politician from the ruling parties. They also pointed to the fact that the visit took place in the time of intensive attempts of the government in Rome to work on the improvement of bilateral relations and that this would challenge the sincerity of the Yugoslav politics towards Italy.³⁶ Since Togliatti’s visit and throughout the coming period, many Yugoslav contacts with Italian opposition leftist parties were a permanent obstacle to the establishment of political cooperation between the two states.³⁷

In an aim to counter the objections that Belgrade was developing relations with the Italian opposition only, the Yugoslav political elite extended an invitation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Martino to visit Yugoslavia. The attempt to reach the exchange of visits of high state officials was aimed at establishing contacts with the leading Christian Democratic Party and other parties which participated in the government, with which there was no cooperation until then. Finally, in the background of the invitation to Martino there was Belgrade’s opinion that full normalisation of political relations and a resolution of open bilateral issues require a meeting of high-level officials. The Italian government did not accept the invitation for the Minister Martino to visit Belgrade. The Yugoslav contacts with Italian communists, who were not only the opponents to the government but also to the Italian political system, were only one of the reasons for which the official Rome approached the issue of establishment of political relations with a lot of caution and distrust. The

³⁴ The Italian representative in the NATO Alessandrini informed the NATO members of signing of the agreement at the meeting held on 7 March 1956. Alessandrini thought that agreements had a broader importance and that they would help the Yugoslav President to maintain the balance between the East and West, particularly because of Tito’s forthcoming visit to Moscow. TNA, F. O. 371, 124320, RY 11322/3; Minutes from the NATO Council meeting available at: http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/2/6/26332/C-R_56_10_ENG.pdf (visited on 7 May 2014).

³⁵ Togliatti was the first leader of a communist party which after 1948 paid an official visit to Yugoslavia without being a member of a state delegation.

³⁶ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 37, doc. No. 49575, Note about the talks of Berislav Žulj with Orlandi in Rome on 30 May 1956.

³⁷ Already in autumn 1956 Yugoslavia was visited by a high delegation of the ICP headed by the Vice President of the Party Luigi Longo.

reasons were in fact numerous: negative experience from the recent past, relations of Yugoslavia with the USSR, and the socialist camp, different social systems between the two countries. To all this, one should add a very negative mood against Yugoslavia which prevailed in Trieste and in the border area, which the ruling structures in Rome used as a good excuse for postponing political initiatives of Yugoslavia which during 1956 started to arrive from Belgrade. Hence upon the request of Yugoslavia to establish contacts at the political realm, messages from Rome said that the conditions for such high-level meeting did not mature yet, and they proposed a start from a lower level, with a visit of Albert Folchi, one of the Under Secretaries in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁸ The rejection to realise Martino's visit was very badly received by the highest Yugoslav state officials who were "disappointed, and even insulted" by such Italian gesture.³⁹ Consequently, the full normalisation of political relations had to be waited for a while.

In early 1957 Yugoslavs became more and more skeptic about the establishment of political relations, so that the emphasis, as before, was placed on further development of economic cooperation. In the field of politics, the old suspicions about the intentions of the Western neighbour did not disappear. The opinion of the Yugoslav State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (DSIP) was that Italy, regardless of the changed international circumstances after World War II, did not yet divest itself from "some tendencies" which stemmed from the period when the official Rome considered that Italy should have a dominant role in the territory which Yugoslavia belonged to.⁴⁰ The main reason was the bloc affiliation of Italy, most obvious in its consistent attempts to start with military cooperation with the aim of "approaching" and "incorporation" of Yugoslavia into the military-strategic concepts of the West. The ultimate goal of the Italians was further enhancement of the influence and affirmation of this state as an "important, if not the decisive factor in the balance of powers in the eastern Mediterranean".⁴¹ The main obstacle for the Italians on that road was the socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore the DSIP's attitude was that there were no "particularly favourable perspectives" for the development of political relations.⁴² Nevertheless, in March 1957, Belgrade resumed the issue of Martino's visit,⁴³ and next month it started to probe the ground for the visit of an Italian parliamentary delegation to Yugoslavia.⁴⁴

³⁸ AMIP, PA, Italy, 1956, b. 37, doc. No. 48337, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 27 May 1956; *Ibid.*, doc No. 411415, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 14 July 1956; *Ibid.*, doc. No. 412818, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 6 August 1956.

³⁹ TNA, F. O. 371, 124304, RY 1051/20.

⁴⁰ AMIP, PA, 1957, b. 40, doc. No. 44347, Relations Yugoslavia-Italy.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-5, Note about the talks of the Under Secretary of State Mladen Iveković with the Ambassador Guidotti on 13 March 1957.

⁴⁴ The initiative came from Antun Vratuša after his visit to Italy in February 1957 (AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-5). The idea was conveyed to Italians by the Under Secretary Iveković in the talks with the Ambassador Guidotti in April the same year. *Ibid.*

Although the two states in principle agreed that the visit of the parliamentary delegation should be realised in October that same year, the unstable interior situation in Italy, crisis and fall of the Segni's government hampered the realisation of this idea. Considering that in the new government, led by the Prime Minister Adone Zolli, Pella replaced Martino on the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Yugoslav opinion was that the new minister should not be extended an invitation to visit Belgrade.⁴⁵ There were no changes in the issue of the visit of the Italian parliamentary delegation as well. Besides internal instability in Italy and the beginning of electoral campaign for parliamentary election that was to be held in May 1958, one of the reasons for postponing the parliamentary visit was the Yugoslav recognition of East Germany, which led to colder relations between Yugoslavia and Italy and served Rome as an excuse to postpone the talks about the visit of the parliamentary delegation.⁴⁶

That the establishment of political relations was to a high extent depending on and conditioned by the actual foreign political position of both countries – particularly Yugoslavia – is even more obvious from the opening of the issue of installing missile bases in Italy which marked the first days of spring 1958. Namely, after the speech of the Italian Minister of Defence Paolo Emilio Taviani in previous December and the wording of the Italian press, it became obvious that Italy would allow the building of launching pads for missiles with nuclear warheads in its territory, on 21 March 1958. Yugoslavia addressed an *aide-memoire* through its Ambassador in Rome Darko Černej, expressing its strong protest against such an act.⁴⁷

Belgrade motivated its protest against the installation of missile bases in the Italian territory, particularly in its northeastern part close to the Yugoslav border, for numerous reasons. It seems that the least intention was to disturb the improved overall bilateral relations – particularly the economic ones – which in Yugoslavs' opinion would not be seriously damaged by this move, having in mind that only a few weeks before it was publicly emphasised on several occasions that they were very good.⁴⁸ Besides the obvious concern for its own security, Yugoslavia also had in mind its overall foreign political position, as well as the desire to play a more significant role in the bipolar world by raising its voice against such an act which led to the bloc division of the world and emphasising the importance of hearing the voice of the non-bloc countries as well.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report on the visit to Yugoslavia of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi held between 11 and 14 November.

⁴⁶ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 46, doc. No. 421156, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 4 September 1958.

⁴⁷ For the text of the *aide-memoire* see: AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-6.

⁴⁸ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 47661, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 28 March 1958.

⁴⁹ In the opinion of the US Embassy in Belgrade, Italy could have only been a "scapegoat" in such Yugoslav politics, whereas the actual aim was that Yugoslavia as a "neutral" country should receive more space in a debate between the East and West about the bases and missiles by directly

The Yugoslav *aide memoire* provoked a vigorous reaction of the state leadership of Italy, particularly of its Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella. At the same time, indignation because of interference into the interior issues of Italy was mixing with the fear of Rome that Belgrade would, for the reason of strengthening its own security, itself resort to the purchase of nuclear weapons which in that moment it could get only from the East, i.e. from Soviets. This was a pessimist impression of the Ambassador Guidotti as well, and he got it after a set of meetings he had held with the leading people of the Yugoslav DSIP, including the State Secretary Koča Popović.⁵⁰

The fears that Yugoslavs might return to the Soviet orbit were dispelled by the events at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia held in late April 1958, which resulted in an open break-up with the USSR.⁵¹ When it became entirely clear that the relations between Yugoslavs and Soviets again fell into a crisis, Belgrade attempted to re-establish good relations with Italy. These attempts of Yugoslavia were also influenced by unofficial messages from the Palazzo Chigi which underlined that out of all Western countries Italy was able to do the most to help Yugoslavia and that it also felt indirectly threatened by the most recent pressure on Yugoslavia. Thus it was suggested that the moment was mature for strengthening the friendly relations between the two countries. Such statements made Ambassador Černež to conclude that Italy “attempts to use the opportunity to act as much as possible as Yugoslavia’s link with the West”.⁵² Until then reserved Italian press started to write more positively about Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav party did not want to “owe”, so in the leading article in *Borba*, published in early June on the occasion of the Italian Republic Day, no single word mentioned the missile bases issue; instead, it emphasised that the relations between the two countries were “an extraordinary example of practical implementation of the active coexistence principle” and their border as “one of the most open in the world”.⁵³

However, the pre-electoral situation in Italy, the parliamentary election held in May 1958 and the post-electoral combinations disabled the starting of particular initiatives for the establishment of political cooperation until the formation of the new government in Rome. Already after the news that the government was formed

involving one NATO member into the dispute, in order to “win the main event ticket”. FRUS, 1958–1960, Vol. X, doc. 121, Despatch from the Embassy in Yugoslavia to the Department of State, 10 March 1958, available at: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p2/d121> (visited on 20 May 2014).

⁵⁰ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-6, Note about the talks of the State Secretary Koča Popović with the Italian Ambassador Guidotti, held on 9 April 1958.; On Guidotti’s impressions after the talks with the DSIP Under Secretary Srđa Prica see: TNA, F.O 371, 136821, RY 10322/1 and RY 10322/2.

⁵¹ For more details about the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR see: Dragan Bogetić, *Drugi jugoslovensko-sovjetski sukob. Sudar Titove i Hruščovljeve percepcije politike miroljubive koegzistencije*, Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961, ed. Slobodan Selinić, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Belgrade 2008, 49–65.

⁵² AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 411621, telegram from Rome No. 406 of 14 May 1958; Ibid, b. 46, doc. No. 414222, telegram from Rome No. 453, 12 June 1958.

⁵³ *Borba*, 3 June 1958.

on the first day of July 1958, headed by the Christian Democrat Amintore Fanfani (who kept the foreign affairs department as well) and with participation of the Social Democratic Party of Italy, Yugoslavs thought that the new government, "the most leftist in the last ten years", was ready to establish political contacts with Belgrade. This opinion was enhanced after the exposé of the new Prime Minister who put Yugoslavia among the neutral countries together with Austria and Switzerland⁵⁴, as well as during the first meetings of Yugoslav diplomats in Rome with Fanfani who kept emphasising that he was strongly committed to do everything to bring the bilateral political relations to the level of a "sincere friendship".⁵⁵ Therefore already after mid-July the manner of establishing political contacts between the two states started to be carefully considered. The plan envisaged a series of bilateral visits which had already been on the agenda but never occurred. Above else this pertained to the visit of the Italian parliamentary delegation, i.e. the visit of the Under Secretary Folchi which he himself offered in order to commence the political cooperation.⁵⁶ These visits should have been an introduction into a broader political cooperation which would imply the visits of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two states. The visit of the Yugoslav President to Italy should be the culmination. The visits would not only mark the establishment of cooperation at the political level but, in the opinion of the DSIP, they would lead to faster resolution of certain unresolved issues of bilateral relations.⁵⁷

In the opinion of the Embassy in Rome, it was possible to organise Folchi's visit already in autumn. In contrast to the previous period, Folchi became more acceptable for Yugoslavs as a person who could establish political relations, because a large number of votes he won at the May election significantly improved his reputation in the Christian Democratic Party. Moreover, in the new government he was the only political Under Secretary in the Italian MFA so he was believed to take over the leadership over this department, particularly because of his close relations with the President of the Republic Gronchi. Finally, Folchi was the only one in the highest ranks of the Palazzo Chigi whose view about the relations with Yugoslavia was positive and who advocated their improvement.⁵⁸ Josip Broz also agreed with the plan to realise Folchi's visit, which would lead towards the visits of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, i.e. Presidents of the two states. In the talks with the ambassador Černej he stated that it was "desirable and possible, in addition to the development of economic relations, to improve and enhance the exchange of views about political issues and check the possibility for closer cooperation in the issues in which it is possible to obtain an agreement".⁵⁹

⁵⁴ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 416654, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 11 July 1958.

⁵⁵ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 46, doc. No. 419225, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 10 August 1958.

⁵⁶ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 416454, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 5 July 1958.

⁵⁷ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 419080, Note about the envisaged bilateral political visits between the FPRY and Italy of 19 August 1958.

⁵⁸ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report on the visit to Yugoslavia of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi held between 11 and 14 November.

⁵⁹ AJ, KPR, 1958, I-5-b/44-6, Note from the talks on the occasion of reporting of the comrade Ambassador Černej to the comrade President on 2 September 1958.

Even when it seemed that there were no obstacles on the road towards the definite establishment of political cooperation, they nevertheless appeared. This time it was not about complex international circumstances or internal instabilities, but again about unresolved bilateral issues. First during the month of October the Italians started to condition Folchi's visit by signing of the new Fishing Agreement, whereas Yugoslavs responded by the request for resolution of a set of economic-political issues such as the beginning of trade negotiations and resolution of issues important for the position of the Slovene minority in Italy, i.e. the building of the Slovene Cultural Centre in Trieste, opening of the Trieste Credit Bank and many others. When the new Fishing Agreement was signed on 20 November⁶⁰, the bilateral relations became seriously aggravated by the resumption of the criminal proceedings against the members of the so-called Beneš squad.⁶¹ On the eve of the trial scheduled for December 1958 in Florence, Yugoslavia in the last days of November addressed a protest note to the Italian side pointing to serious consequences which the trial might entail for bilateral political relations. An aggressive news campaign started at the same time and the DSIP received a large number of letters in which citizens and organisations expressed their disagreement with the Italian act.⁶² The dispute further deepened in early 1959 and Slovenes particularly insisted on the hard-line Yugoslav attitude.⁶³ This problem soon put on hold all the attempts to start the cooperation at the political realm.⁶⁴ The trial against the members of the Beneš squad was carried out at the time of one of many internal crises in Italy, which ended in mid-February with the fall of the Prime Minister Fanfani and the formation of the new Christian Democratic government headed by Segni and Pella as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although Belgrade assessed Segni's government as more right-wing oriented than the previous one, changes of politics towards Yugoslavia were not expected, but a delay and more

⁶⁰ Dragan Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956–1961*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Belgrade 2006, 302.

⁶¹ The trial against the group of about 50 Italian partisans from the former Beneš squad, mostly of Slovene nationality, for the crimes committed during World War II started already in mid-1955, but Yugoslavia, through pressure on Italy, managed to prevent its holding until December 1958. In the same time, it persistently requested the application of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty which envisaged amnesty for this type of acts.

⁶² AMIP, PA, 1959. b. 50, doc. No. 414 358, III Dept., Note of the Head Slavoljub Petrović about the talks with Farache on 23 May 1959.

⁶³ In the words of Italian diplomats in Belgrade, Slovenes exercised strong pressure on the Belgrade government and prevented the newly appointed Ambassador in Rome Mihaljlo Javorski to take over the duty before the dispute was resolved. At the same time, they unsuccessfully attempted to make Kardelj issue a public statement on this occasion. TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/3.

⁶⁴ In January 1959 the Speaker of the Italian Parliament Giovanni Leone opened the issue of the visit of an Italian parliamentary delegation to Yugoslavia, while the Ambassador Javorski spoke on this same issue with the President of the Senate Cesare Merzagora. The message from Belgrade, however, was not to start the issue of the visit before the end of the trial to the Beneš squad. AMIP, PA, 1959, f. 50, doc. No. 41969; doc. No. 41969; doc. No. 42753.

sluggish resolution of the open bilateral issues.⁶⁵ Since the first days of the new government it was obvious that there was an intention to start with the establishment of political contacts with Yugoslavia. Besides public statements, such as Pella's in his presentation before the parliament, the newly appointed Yugoslav Ambassador in Italy Mihajlo Javorski could see this well in his talks with the Prime Minister Segni, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella and the administration of the Palazzo Chigi.⁶⁶ All of them emphasised the need for the closest possible cooperation with Yugoslavia and the desire for establishment of political contacts. The climate improved further with the final signing of the Protocol on trade exchange on 24 March, which made significant concession to Yugoslavia in the field of liberalisation of Yugoslav exports to Italy.⁶⁷

In spite of steps forward in the economic sphere, the issue of the trial to the members of the Beneš squad and the unresolved issues of bilateral relations still had a negative influence. In the last days of March they were aggravated by the resumed issue of installing the missile bases in Italy. Upon the news that Italy decided to implement the agreement with the USA on building the missile bases, the Yugoslav public reacted fiercely and the DSIP gave a statement as well.⁶⁸ Minister Koča Popović spoke about the problem of the missile bases in Italy and its negative influence on the development of cooperation between the two states at the joint session of both houses of the Federal Assembly on 13 April.⁶⁹ Although Italians objected through the Ambassador Francesco Cavalletti against the re-opening of this issue, this did not prevent Yugoslavs to address to the government in Rome in late April a new aide-memoire, as in March the year before, with the warning of the Yugoslav President Tito that the unwanted building of missile bases would "deteriorate the relations between Italy and Yugoslavia which had recently improved a lot".⁷⁰

The problem caused by Italy's decision to start building the missile bases was additionally enhanced after the visit of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to Albania in the late May 1959. The unusually long and secret visit was the Soviet reply to the Western and US acts regarding the building of missile bases in Italy and Turkey, i.e. the announcement that the same might happen in Greece as well. By this act Khrushchev wanted to show his interest in developments in the Balkans and Mediterranean and on that occasion he advocated the creation of the non-nuclear

⁶⁵ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 44629, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 18 February 1959.

⁶⁶ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 44963, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 20 February 1959; *Ibid*, doc. No. 410338, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 15 April 1959; *Ibid*, doc. No. 411997, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 30 April 1959.

⁶⁷ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 305.

⁶⁸ Statement of the DSIP representative at the regular press conference held on 3 April 1959. *Borba*, 4 April 1959.

⁶⁹ *Borba*, 14 April 1959.

⁷⁰ Josip Broz wrote these words on the margins of the instruction which the DSIP sent to the Ambassador Javorski in Rome. AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44/7.

zone in the Balkans.⁷¹ Regarding Belgrade, his statement was reconcilable and the Soviet leader invited Yugoslavia to join the idea about the non-nuclear zone.⁷²

Upon the news of Khrushchev's visit to Albania, the Italian side reacted very fiercely, both because of concern for its position in Albania and because of the influence this visit might have on the relations between Belgrade and Moscow. The Italian-Albanian relations which since the mid-1950s recorded good results, particularly in the economic sphere,⁷³ were shaken in the second half of 1958 precisely due to the information that Italy would install launching ramps for missiles with nuclear warheads.⁷⁴ Rome also feared the information that Soviets had installed their bases for nuclear missile weapons in this country. As far as Yugoslavia was concerned, they were worried about the possibility that the reconcilable Khrushchev's statement might mean the reconciliation of Belgrade with Soviets, particularly because of the rumours which started in diplomatic circles about a possible meeting of Tito and Khrushchev. Already in the Palazzo Chigi it could be heard that the Yugoslav horizon was blurring again, and that Yugoslavia was making a political turn re-approaching the Eastern bloc. Thus in numerous talks with the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Rome they attempted to learn Belgrade's attitude towards Khrushchev's initiatives and the actual moment in Yugoslav-Soviet relations. In doing this, everybody, starting from the Minister Pella, assured Yugoslavs that the missile bases in Italy would not be installed near the Yugoslav border and that they were no threat for Yugoslavia's security whatsoever.⁷⁵ On the basis of the instructions received from the DSIP, Javorski attempted to assure Italians that there would be no approaching to the USSR and underlined that Yugoslavia remained on its non-bloc foreign political course.⁷⁶ However, the speech of the Yugoslav President in Smederevo on 8 June in which on the one hand he spoke positively about the Soviet proposal for the non-nuclear zone in the Balkans while on the other hand he addressed a lot of sharp words on the account of Italy because of its decision to allow the building of missile bases in its territory, additionally worried and disturbed Italians who invited Cavalletti to consultancies in Rome.

Upon returning to Belgrade in late June, Ambassador Cavalletti not only requested to be received by the Minister Koča Popović but also by Vice President Edvard Kardelj, with an explanation that he brought "positive" news from Rome. To

⁷¹ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 226.

⁷² Ibid, 227.

⁷³ In mid-December 1954 the two states signed a trade agreement, the first that Albania concluded with a Western country. This was an introduction into a series of other agreements which culminated in signing of the peace treaty in 1957. Luca Micheletta, *La tacita alleanza: le relazioni tra Italia e Albania durante la guerra fredda. Una proposta interpretativa* in Aldo Moro *L'Italia Repubblicana e i Balcani*, ed. Italo Garzia et. al, Besa Editrice, Nardò 2011, 169; Aleksandar Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile (1945–1961)*, Arhipelag, Belgrade 2011, 599.

⁷⁴ A. Životić, op. cit., 605.

⁷⁵ On the talks of Javorski with the Minister Pella, MFA Under Secretary Folchi and the Palazzo Chigi administration on the topic of missile bases see the documents in the AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 416067; Ibid, b. 50, doc. No. 415678; Ibid, doc. No. 416182; Ibid, doc. No. 415456.

⁷⁶ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No 415767, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 7 June 1959.

the Yugoslav state leadership he conveyed the message of the leading Italian politicians that they had “full confidence” in the independent foreign policy of Belgrade as well as the desire for “further development of economic and political relations”.⁷⁷ Yugoslavs accepted the readiness of Segni’s cabinet to continue the policy of good neighbourhood and cooperation carried out by the previous Fanfani’s government, of which the Ambassador Cavalletti could be assured in the talks with Koča Popović and particularly Edvard Kardelj.⁷⁸

The Cavalletti’s meeting with Popović and Kardelj was followed by two acts which in practice showed the Italian effort to accelerate the establishment of political relations with the Eastern neighbour. First, the decree of the President Gronchi of 14 July about the general amnesty for all who committed political crimes in the period from 1943 to 1946 encompassed the members of the Beneš squad, removing in that manner the problem which kept spoiling the bilateral relations for years.⁷⁹ Only a day later, another agreement on special deliveries was signed in Belgrade, granting Yugoslavia an extremely favourable loan of 50 million dollars for the payment of goods imported from Italy.⁸⁰

Although the road for the establishment of political relations was clear, the former distrust in the sincerity of Italian politics towards Yugoslavia was still there. For Yugoslav diplomacy it was without doubt that Italy this time neither carried out its independent politics towards Belgrade, but acted in “full agreement with major Western powers”,⁸¹ and that in fact it was only a conductor of the politics created by the USA and the NATO. Moreover, in that sense it was awarded a special role to keep Yugoslavia on the positions so far taken towards the Soviet Union and the camp.⁸² This conclusion was in accordance with the opinion of many Yugoslav diplomats that Italians were the most ready to cooperate with Yugoslavia in the moments when Belgrade’s relations with the East were stagnating or aggravating, and that these situations always yielded their most responsible and most positive statements.⁸³ Besides the above, in the enhanced interest of Italy for political cooperation, Belgrade saw the contours of ever present “national” and traditional politics towards the Balkans.

⁷⁷ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Note about the talks of the State Secretary Koča Popović with the Italian Ambassador Cavalletti on 27 June 1959.

⁷⁸ Cavalletti and the Palazzo Chigi administration were particularly satisfied with the talks with Kardelj. (AMIP, PA; 1959, Italy, b. 50, doc. No. 419094, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 14 July 1959.) Minister Pella also expressed satisfaction with the attitudes which the two Yugoslav officials presented to the Ambassador. Ibid, doc. No. 419217, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 15 July 1959.

⁷⁹ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/3D.

⁸⁰ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, 1959, Agreement on special deliveries concluded between the FPRY and Italy in Rome on 15 July 1959; D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 305–306.

⁸¹ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Italy, 1959, Remark by Koča Popović with the note about the talks with the Ambassador Cavalletti of 27 June 1959.

⁸² AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, March 1960.

⁸³ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 415922, Report of the Embassy in Rome, str. pov. No. 60/59-1, of 13 June 1959.

Belgrade thought that one of Italy's motives to make a final decision about the establishment of political relations with Yugoslavia in 1959 was to enhance its own positions in the immediate neighbourhood, at the time when its relations with Austria started to get seriously aggravated due to problems about the German minority in the South Tyrol region.⁸⁴ Having in mind that Yugoslavia as well at that time had serious disputes in its relations with Austria because of the aggravated position of the Slovene minority in Carinthia⁸⁵, it was obvious that Rome was looking for a "natural ally" in its eastern neighbour, for a joint action against Austria.⁸⁶ This conclusion is corroborated by the remark of the Ambassador Cavalletti in his talk with Kardelj that Italy and Yugoslavia should make joint steps because of the "resurrection of Austrian nationalism".⁸⁷

Italy started the long postponed establishment of political cooperation, however with remaining doubts and reserves about the sincerity of the non-bloc position of Yugoslavia. Therefore its relation with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp was always under a magnifying glass.⁸⁸ At the same time, the cooperation of Yugoslavs with the opposition parties kept causing suspicions. Although unofficial objections continued to arrive from different sides, it seems that they were lesser than during 1956. Certainly the reason was more cautious and tactical approach of Belgrade to the contacts with Italian opposition parties than it had been the case a couple of years before.⁸⁹ On the other hand, the remark of the Italian diplomacy to Belgrade was that it developed relations with the opposition at the expense of

⁸⁴ After the agreement between the Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi and Karl Gruber, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria in 1946 about the creation of the autonomous region of Trento-Alto Adige within Italy, the issue of the status of the German minority in South Tyrol had not been topical until the second half of the 1950s when it was opened again. After a series of protests of the citizens of this area – including bomb attacks – requesting separation from the existing region and obtaining an autonomous status, the crisis deteriorated in 1959 when the Austrian state supported the South Tyrol requests for autonomy.

⁸⁵ From October 1958 to April the next year, Yugoslavia addressed several protest notes to the Austrian government for discrimination against the Slovene minority in the field of education in the province of Carinthia. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Material about Alberto Folchi's visit to Yugoslavia.

⁸⁶ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, March 1960.

⁸⁷ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Material about Alberto Folchi's visit to Yugoslavia.

⁸⁸ The elaborate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy about the Yugoslav foreign and domestic policy from 1965 states that the approaching of Belgrade to Moscow in the time of Khrushchev – in spite of occasional ups and downs – was permanent. Archivio Centrale dello Stato Roma, Carte Aldo Moro, 1965, busta 78.

⁸⁹ A good illustration of such approach was postponing of the meeting of Edvard Kardelj with the head of the Socialist Party Pietro Nenni which should have occurred in Italy upon return of the Yugoslav leader from the official visit to Scandinavia. The postponing of the meeting was made exactly in consideration of the official Italy. (AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Talks of the SSRN Secretary General Edvard Kardelj with the member of the Directorate of the Socialist Party of Italy Gentile on 15 May 1959) Nenni visited Yugoslavia in December 1959 and Belgrade took care that this visit should not take place before or at the same time of the Alberto Folchi's visit.

contacts with ruling parties, particularly with the dominant Christian Democratic Party. Yugoslavs already noted this flaw in their relations with Italy and the damage it inflicted to the bilateral political relations. The reports of the Embassy in Rome, particularly during 1959, underlined the importance of establishment of contacts with Christian Democrats for the development of bilateral political cooperation.⁹⁰ Broader goals were also kept in mind. Close relations of Christian Democrats with the Vatican could help in the normalisation of Yugoslavia's relations with the Holy See and in return contribute that the Vatican cease to be an obstacle to the development of cooperation with Italy.⁹¹ Yugoslavs, however, noticed that the influence of the Vatican on the politics of Christian Democrats, as well as the ideological differences between the two parties, limited the possibilities for cooperation. Namely, it turned out that the ideological barrier which separated the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from the Christian Democratic Party was too high to be crossed at that moment. Belgrade's attempts to establish contacts with the Christian Democratic leadership met with no reply from this party. Although the party considered the possibility to establish contacts, an opinion prevailed that the time for such kind of cooperation did not mature yet.⁹² Belgrade was therefore assured that the Christian Democratic Party did not want cooperation and that it "condemns the entire Yugoslav political-economic system as godless, materialistic, communist".⁹³ Although Christian Democrats did not want to establish party relations with Yugoslav communists at that moment, the government which was composed exclusively of the members thereof decided in summer 1959 to start political cooperation with the Eastern neighbour, for the purpose of which the previously planned visit of Alberto Folchi should be realised.

Finally, after all the details about the visit were defined during the early autumn, Alberto Folchi arrived in Yugoslavia on 11 November 1959.⁹⁴ Besides the talks in the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, he met with some members of the Federal Executive Council and other prominent politicians, and on 13 November Tito received him on Brioni Islands.⁹⁵ The hosts did their best to welcome the Italian delegation, while the press followed its stay in Yugoslavia with a lot of attention and affinity.⁹⁶ However, this did not mean that their four-day stay in Yugoslavia was without disagreements. They were caused by the different interpretation of the

⁹⁰ On the attitude of the Embassy in Rome about cooperation with the Christian Democrats see: AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 415922, Minutes from the consultation held on 8 and 9 May 1959 in the Embassy in Rome.

⁹¹ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 427 144, Report of the Embassy in Rome str. pov. 87/59 of 15 October 1959.

⁹² AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, Monograph about Italy, October 1959.

⁹³ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 427144, Report of the Embassy in Rome str. pov. 87/59 of 15 October 1959.

⁹⁴ For the material about Folchi's visit see: AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, as well as: AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50.

⁹⁵ Minutes from the talks between Josip Broz and Alberto Folchi in: AJ, KPR I-3-a/44-12, Reception of Alberto Folchi, 13 November 1959.

⁹⁶ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145 125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November; AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, Belgrade, March 1960.

character of the visit, which was the most clearly expressed in drafting of the final communiqué. While the hosts wanted it to be of a working character and to yield results in resolving certain bilateral issues, Italians primarily attributed a ceremonial character thereto and focused on the exchange of opinions about current international developments.⁹⁷ The official part of the discussions mostly concerned the current international issues, but the Yugoslavs also insisted on the talks about bilateral issues hoping that on that occasion they would solve some of the major issues which remained open even since the time of signing the Peace Treaty and the MoU, such as the definitive demarcation. Although upon insisting of the Yugoslav side the topics of bilateral relations were also discussed, the Italian representatives refused to include the borderland issues into the final communiqué, justifying this by expressive instructions not to do so, received on that occasion from the Prime Minister Segni and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella.⁹⁸ Yugoslavs, on the other hand, insisted that the communiqué should include this subject matter as well, particularly the national minority and demarcation issues. The communiqué issue led to severe conflicts so after a lot of tensions the document was completed in early morning hours of 13 November.⁹⁹ It was a kind of compromise, since it only mentioned the disputable bilateral issues, however without entering into details. Yugoslavs were nevertheless the more satisfied side, as they managed to include all these issues into the communiqué and in that manner force the Italian side to publicly declare that their resolution was necessary.¹⁰⁰

The visit of Alberto Folchi to Yugoslavia was much more than a visit of an Italian State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a neighbouring country. It was the first and decisive step in the establishment of political cooperation which had been waited for since the end of World War II.¹⁰¹ The Yugoslav press announced the birth of a new epoch at the Adriatic while the Italian press, otherwise not particularly inclined to Yugoslavia, did not save the praises.¹⁰² Folchi brought an

⁹⁷ The hope that the visit might resolve some of the disputable issues of bilateral relations was reinforced by Italians themselves. Thus on the eve of Folchi's visit, Rome after several years of silence started the talks about demarcation in the Trieste Gulf. This made Yugoslavs to conclude that Italy was ready to start negotiations about the final demarcation. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Reception of Alberto Folchi, 13 November 1959.

⁹⁸ AMIP, PA, 1959. b. 50, No. 430269, IV dept. of the DSIP unit for Italy, 21 November 1959. In the words of Carlo Marchiori who was one of the members of the Italian delegation, the communiqué should not mention anything related to borders, minorities, restitution and property-financial issues from the borderland.

⁹⁹ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November.

¹⁰⁰ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, No. 429739, Telegram from Veljko Mićunović's cabinet sent on 17 November 1959 to the Embassy in Rome – Javorski.

¹⁰¹ This was the manner in which the visit was seen by the foreign diplomats in Belgrade. On British attitude see: TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November.

¹⁰² Ibid.

invitation to the State Secretary Koča Popović to visit Italy, which he accepted. Popović's visit occurred already next year, to be followed by a series of meetings of political officials of both states.¹⁰³

By the establishment of political cooperation with the neighbouring country with which it had a lot of disputes in the past, Yugoslavia wanted to act on two fronts. On the one hand, it had broader foreign political goals: it attempted to break a kind of isolation in which it came due to poor relations with the states of both blocs and to practically affirm its politics of "peaceful active coexistence" through the cooperation with an ideologically different state and a NATO member.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, it hoped that political cooperation with the Adriatic neighbour would accelerate the resolution of all remaining border-wise issues. However, the manner in which it was treated during the visit, and particularly the Italian insisting on the temporal and provisory territorial solution achieved by the MoU brought concerns among the Yugoslavs since it showed that the thesis about a provisory solution to the Trieste issue was not advocated only by certain circles not inclined to Yugoslavia, but that it was the attitude of the Italian state, and that these unsolved issues would continue to be the source of crises and a permanent threat for stable development of bilateral political relations. As much as a decade and a half had to be waited for until the signing of the Treaty of Osimo in 1975 to finally relieve the bilateral relations of this burden.

¹⁰³ On the eve of Popović's visit to Italy, in late June 1960 an Italian parliamentary delegation led by the head of the parliamentary committee for public works Salvatore Aldisio finally visited Yugoslavia. During 1961 Yugoslavia was visited by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy Antonio Segni while next year Aleksandar Ranković visited Rome. However, the highest-rank visits had to be waited for several more years. First in November 1969 President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat paid an official visit to Yugoslavia and Josip Broz came to official visit to Italy in March 1971.

¹⁰⁴ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report about the visit of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi to Yugoslavia held between 11 and 14 November.

Saša MIŠIĆ

**LA NORMALIZZAZIONE DEI RAPPORTI POLITICI TRA L'ITALIA E LA JUGOSLAVIA
DOPO IL MEMORANDUM D'INTESA DEL 1954**

Sommario

Dopo la firma del Memorandum d'Intesa nel mese di ottobre del 1954, con il quale è stata risolta la crisi di Trieste, si riteneva che i rapporti politici tra l'Italia e la Jugoslavia sarebbero migliorati rapidamente. Tuttavia, restavano ancora numerosi ostacoli da superare. I più grandi di questi ostacoli erano legati alla realizzazione degli articoli del Trattato di Pace del 1947 e del Memorandum d'Intesa, come la definizione dei confini e la regolamentazione delle minoranze nazionali in entrambi i paesi. Inoltre, lo sviluppo dei rapporti politici era in gran parte dipendente dal clima della Guerra fredda, che aveva rallentato il processo di riavvicinamento politico. L'Italia aveva dubbi e riserve sulla posizione della Jugoslavia e teneva costantemente sotto osservazione i suoi rapporti con l'Unione Sovietica. D'altra parte, Belgrado riteneva che l'Italia non agiva autonomamente verso la Jugoslavia, ma seguendo una politica decisa dagli Stati Uniti e dalla NATO.

Ci sono voluti ben cinque anni dalla firma del Memorandum d'Intesa perché entrambe le parti finalmente riconoscessero la necessità e i vantaggi dello sviluppo dei rapporti bilaterali. Il passo decisivo in questa direzione avvenne nell'autunno del 1959, con la visita in Jugoslavia del sottosegretario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri italiano, Alberto Folchi. Nonostante gli sforzi di Belgrado per raggiungere un'intesa, la visita non risolse nessuno dei problemi esistenti. Tuttavia essa diede l'avvio alla normalizzazione dei rapporti bilaterali.

Parole chiave: Jugoslavia, Italia, guerra fredda, questioni aperte, relazioni estere, Alberto Folchi.

Саша МИШИЋ

**НОРМАЛИЗАЦИЈА ПОЛИТИЧКИХ ОДНОСА ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ И ИТАЛИЈЕ НАКОН
МЕМОРАНДУМА О САГЛАСНОСТИ 1954. ГОДИНЕ**

Резиме

Након потписивања Меморандума о сагласности октобра 1954. године, којим је *de facto* решена Тршћанска криза, очекивало се да ће врло брзо доћи до успостављања политичких односа између Југославије и Италије. Показало се, међутим, да је то био дуготрајан процес током кога су морале бити превазиђене бројне препреке. Највећу препреку представљао је читав низ нерешених билатералних питања везаних за испуњавање одредаба Уговора о миру из 1947. године и Меморандума о сагласности, попут дефинитивног разграничења и регулисања статуса националних мањина са обе стране границе. Поред наведеног, успостављање политичких односа било је у великој мери зависно од хладноратовске климе која је уносила додатно неповерења у међудржавне односе, те отежавала и успоравала политичко приближавање. У Италији су биле присутне сумње и резервисаност у искреност ванблоковског положаја Југославије, па су стално под лупом били њени однос са Совјетским Савезом и земљама лагера. Са друге стране, у Београду су сматрали како Италија не наступа самостално, већ према Југославији спроводи политику креирану од стране Сједињених Америчких Држава и НАТО пакта.

Требало је да прође пуних пет година од момента потписивања Меморандума о сагласности да се обе стране коначно усагласе око неопходности и корисности успостављања билатералних политичких односа. До одлучујућег корак у том правцу дошло је на јесен 1959. године када је у званичну посету Југославији дошао подсекретар италијанског министарства иностраних послова Алберто Фолки. Мада његова посета није решила ни једно од крупних међудржавних проблема упркос настојањима званичног Београда да бар нека – попут разграничења – буду скинута са дневног реда, ипак се може рећи да су политички односи од тог момента били у потпуности нормализовани и подигнути на ниво двеју влада.

Кључне речи: Југославија, Италија, Хладни рат, отворена питања, међународни односи, Алберто Фолки.

Roberto SCIARRONE

**ITALY AND SERBIA'S EUROPEAN UNION CANDIDACY:
PERSPECTIVES FOR COOPERATION
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract: On 5 June 2006, the Republic of Serbia, the successor state of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, was proclaimed, following the declaration of independence of Montenegro, on 3 June 2006. The state union of Serbia and Montenegro was established on 4 February 2003; it was a successor state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, founded after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, following the succession of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. The current Constitution of the Republic of Serbia considers as the country's integral part also Kosovo, which, on the basis of the UN Resolution 1244 of 1999, had been administrated by a UN mission (UNMIK) until 17 February 2008, when it declared independence, which Belgrade, however, has not yet recognised. In April 2007, Serbia signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union, while in December 2009 visa requirements were abolished for Serbian citizens travelling to European Union Schengen Area countries.

In the same month of December 2009, Serbia submitted its application for EU candidacy and about a year later (October 2010) the European Council forwarded the application to the European Commission, which, on 12 October 2011, expressed a favourable opinion in this regard. Since 1 March 2012, Serbia has had the status of a candidate country to the European Union. On 28 June 2013 the European Council assessed positively the progress of Belgrade in harmonisation of local legislation with the *acquis communautaire*, and, in the context of dialogue with Priština in the normalisation of relations with Kosovo, and decided to open negotiations for Serbia's accession to the European Union by January 2014. Accession negotiations started on 21 of the same month.

Keywords: European Union, Serbia, economic development, Palazzo Italia, Italian Embassy in Belgrade, Italian Cultural Institute in Belgrade

In 1991, Yugoslavia reached the zenith of its internal institutional crisis.¹ Due to a policy unable to contain the strong centrifugal forces, the country found itself having to cope with the secessions of Slovenia and Croatia.² The inevitable consequences of the separation led the federal leaders to establish, in the spring, a

¹ See: S. Bianchini, *L'enigma jugoslavo. Le ragioni della crisi*, Franco Angeli, Milan 1989.

² Cfr. J. Pirjvec, *Le guerre jugoslave. 1991–1999*, Einaudi, Turin 2002.

“small Yugoslavia”, formed only of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro. In parallel, Serbian politicians relied on Slobodan Milošević, who approved the idea of a “Greater Serbia”, capable of uniting minorities that remained outside the new borders.³ This policy involved the country in the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia. The first few months after the proclamation of the new Yugoslav state were distinct by violent clashes with the armed forces in the Croatian Krajina and Slavonia, especially near Vukovar. On 18 November 1991, federal troops were able to get an important victory over the defenders of the city, which was besieged during the campaign for the control of Slavonia. The political and military effort, born in those months, created multiple difficulties to the establishment of Belgrade, which provoked a split between the Serbian top officials and the population, with many cases of desertion and draft evasion. At the same time, a democratic opposition started to rise, represented by the Democratic Movement of Serbia (DEPOS), in which also the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) of Vojislav Koštunica participated, following his removal from positions of the Democratic Party (DS) of Zoran Đinđić.⁴ The high economic and political expenses caused by the operations in Slavonia made Milošević accept the proposal put forward by Cyrus Vance, which provided for the deployment of UN forces in the disputed territories. The Resolution 721 of the Security Council of 27 November authorised Vance to prepare the necessary diplomatic steps for the deployment of UN peacekeepers. The fragile armistice signed at the beginning of 1992 between the Croatian and Yugoslav troops saw, in parallel, the beginning of the conflict between the central Bosnian government and the local Bosnian Serb community, supported by the federal forces in the process of dissolution. The subsequent Resolution 757 of the Security Council of the United Nations (1992) brought further sanctions on Yugoslavia, with serious consequences for the economy, manifested since 1993. The deterioration of the social situation caused by the isolation of the country was a source of great discontent among the public, manifested through several protests against Milošević in Belgrade, even though the majority of the population continued to support the government. On 27 April 1992, the birth of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was announced and about a month later (31 May) early elections were held, won by the Socialist Party of Slobodan Milošević, favoured, with no doubt, by the boycott of the Serbian Democratic Movement. The socialist leader, thus, leaned on the choice of a personality of great popularity such as Dobrica Ćosić for the presidency of Yugoslavia, elected on 15 June 1992.⁵ The new federal president, in consultation with the Chair of the Federal Council, Milan Panić, worked for a better image of the country abroad, countering undoubtedly the personal power of Milošević, who, worried about the political actions of the two federal political leaders, used his personal control on the media, marginalising, finally, the two opponents. The distinct feeling of contrast in the political climate of Serbia took place when in London a conference was organised to

³ L. Silber, *A. Little Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, Penguin Books, London 1997, 34.

⁴ See: <http://www.ds.org.rs/istorija>.

⁵ See: N. Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics, and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle, 1944–1991*, Central European University Press, Budapest and New York 2007.

discuss the difficult situation that was created in Serbia between Panić and Milošević. At the same time, the Orthodox Church took up a position by attacking hard – and publicly – the positions taken by the government on the Bosnian conflict, calling for the resignation of Milošević, who, faced with the risk of losing the leadership, replaced promptly the Federal President Ćosić with Zoran Lilić. Vuk Drašković, distinguished for the strong criticism of the government, was arrested, while the internal crisis of DEPOS brought the party to the natural epilogue: the dissolution. Several scandals involved some government officials – trafficking and money laundering – leading to the arrest of two ministers in March 1993.⁶ In the same year, Milošević reached an agreement with Bosnia and the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman about the creation of three different state entities, ethnically homogeneous and integrated into a confederal Bosnia, which, according to the intention of the two leaders, had to pave the way for the creation of a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia. Meanwhile, the troops on both sides formed a coalition against the Muslim forces and the partition plan failed due to the increasing favour shown by the international community towards the Bosnian Muslims. The situation was deteriorating for the Bosnian Serb forces and the growing isolation of Yugoslavia pushed Milošević to become a spokesperson of the petitions for peace made by the international community, taking a more moderate tone, supported in this even by the President of Montenegro Momir Bulatović.

Later, the request for the deployment of a small contingent of peacekeepers on the border between Bosnia and Yugoslavia was accepted; this decision led, in the month of September (1994), to the partial suspension of sanctions against Belgrade. The turning point – for the Yugoslav government – came after the Dayton Accords of November 1995 (the General Framework Agreement for Peace, GFAP), where it was provided: the transition or rather the return of Eastern Slavonia to Croatia, which belonged until the end of the war to Serbia; two well-defined entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were officially recognised: the Muslim-Croat Federation, which held 51% of the Bosnian territory and the Republic of Srpska (49%).⁷ Another important point of this agreement was the possibility of refugees to return to their countries of origin. The defeat of any project of Great Serbia being sanctioned, the new position taken on by Milošević, on the Bosnian issue, appeared timely in Serbia where there was a strong opposition from ultranationalist exponents supported by the Church.

In the mid-nineties, the Serbian political scene was characterised by the domination of the Socialist Party, which had the full control of the state apparatus, being able to use also the support of the Communist Party led by Mirjana Marković, the wife of Slobodan Milošević. The Montenegrin area of the Federation was increasingly influenced by the political will of Belgrade, despite frequent autonomist calls, which rose in that delicate period. Moreover, the presence of the Democratic Party of Socialists, allied to the party of Milošević, brought a complete alignment of Montenegrin politics with the Serbian one.

⁶ S. Damiani, *Jugoslavia: genesi di una mattanza annunciata*, (prefazione di F. Cardini) Cooperativa Settegiorni editore, Pistoia 1993, 45–67.

⁷ See: http://www.oscebih.org/dejtonski_mirovni_sporazum/EN/.

The economic situation was difficult because of the costs that the country had to pay to support the neighbouring conflicts; there was also the pernicious problem of refugees from Krajina and Bosnia, which hardened the already precarious situation of the Serbian economy, redirected towards the regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo – the Serb area in which the Serbs found themselves in difficulty in regards to the dynamics of the population growth of the Albanian community – with the aim to balance the ethnic composition of the area for the benefit of the Serbs. There was a dangerous increase in tensions between the two ethnic groups, in which the government in Belgrade used its own resources to the detriment of the Albanian majority. In 1996, the EU suspended economic sanctions against Serbia and the situation seemed to improve, albeit partially. The following year started with yet another political crisis exacerbated by the Montenegrin upcoming presidential elections. These were held in the same year and saw the affirmation of the former Prime Minister Milo Đukanović to the detriment of the outgoing president and his party colleague Momir Bulatović. The tensions between the two contending politicians went alongside that between Montenegro and Serbia, supported fervently by Đukanović, who adopted a line decisively contrary to that of Milošević – whom he defined as “a political leader who has done his time” – while his rival signed an agreement on collaboration with the federal president intended to strengthen the relations between the two constituent republics of Yugoslavia.

Starting from 1998, the direction of American politics regarding the Yugoslav crisis recorded a change in the approach. In fact, the White House took away its political support to Milošević, now seen as the main “problem”. The change of direction can be explained through some alterations during the course of those years, from weakness and inactivity of Europe, which had left for a long time to Washington the full freedom of movement, to the possible excessive presence of some European countries in the Balkans. The American presence was realised first through the international legitimation of the forces related to the internal opposition, subsequently deploying the armed forces to overthrow the authoritarian and nationalist regime of Milošević. During March 1999, the Western governments attempted to negotiate in Rambouillet, France, but the failure of the negotiations caused the military “humanitarian” intervention by the NATO aviation, which in the night between 24 and 25 March struck hard military and logistics centres in Kosovo and in Serbia.⁸

On 10 June Milošević agreed to withdraw the troops from Kosovo and allow the control of the territory to the UN mission, maintaining the inner power with serious repercussions on the economy. At the same, at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague (Netherlands) accusations against the Serbian leader had been formalised.

The Serbian internal opposition began to get organised around Vojislav Koštunica and some former members of the party of Milošević, student movements,

⁸ See a comprehensive article by N. Chomsky: <http://www.oikos.org/politica/chomskypace.htm>.

such as the one called "Otpor" (*Resistance*), groups of intellectuals (G-17) and a team composed of experts of economy. The attitude of the Serbs towards Milošević began to change, resulting in an escalation of increasingly palpable discontent among the population; in spite of this, the leader of Serbia did not take at least into consideration the possibility of resigning. The inconsistency of the democratic opposition to the political power of Milošević was, however, affirmed at the elections held in September 2000. On that occasion, a special alliance between seventeen political parties, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), was formed, directed at the election of the federal presidency of Koštunica.

On 12 April 2005, the European Commission recommended the opening of negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro, recognising a progress – especially the economic one – towards the fulfilment of the Stabilisation and Association Process, thanks to the cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).⁹ For Belgrade, however, the open issues remained thornier. The first obstacle was the full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal to capture the wanted Bosnian Serbs Radovan Karadžić (arrested on 21 July 2008 by the Serbian security forces) and Ratko Mladić (arrested on 26 May 2011 after 16 years on the run). In particular, for the latter Belgrade was accused of the lack of cooperation on the part of the police to find the location of the former Bosnian Serb general. Then there was the situation created with Kosovo by the Resolution 1244 of the Security Council of the United Nations, the real key to understanding the politics of Serbia and Montenegro. On 10 June 1999, in fact, this Resolution gave a mandate of military administration to the United Nations in the territory of Kosovo – United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and authorised the international military presence of the Kosovo Force (KFOR).¹⁰

At the first municipal elections of 28 October 2000, with the boycott of the Serbian community, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) of Ibrahim Rugova imposed itself against the political formation of the former commander of the Ushtria Çlirimtare and Kosoves (KLA) Hamis Thaci, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK).¹¹ In November of the following year, the general elections confirmed the consensus for Rugova's party with 46% compared to the PDK (25%). The provisional institutions of self-government had been established by the Constitutional Framework of Kosovo in May, and organs such as the Assembly, the President of Kosovo and the government then formally received their powers from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). In the regional perspective, in June 2004, the European Council approved the partnership with Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, in the framework of the Resolution 1244. After controversial vicissitudes of domestic politics also Kosovo proclaimed itself independent on 17 February 2008.

⁹ See: <http://www.icty.org/>.

¹⁰ Cfr. <http://www.unmikonline.org/pages/default.aspx>.

¹¹ See: <http://digilander.libero.it/46brigata/missionejointguardian.html>.

Political and economic relations between Serbia and Italy

On 5 June 2006, the birth of the Republic of Serbia, the successor of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro was proclaimed, which was dissolved following the declaration of independence of Montenegro on 3 June 2006. As already stated, the union of Serbia and Montenegro was established on 4 February 2003 as the successor state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which was founded in 1992 after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia following the secession of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. The current Constitution of the Republic of Serbia considers as the country's integral part Kosovo, which, on the basis of the UN Resolution 1244 of 1999, had been administered by a UN mission (UNMIK) until 17 February 2008, when it declared its independence, which Belgrade, however, has not yet recognised. In April 2008, Serbia signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) and in December 2009 visa requirements were abolished for Serbian citizens travelling to EU Schengen Area countries. In the same month of December 2009, Serbia submitted an application for candidacy to the EU and about a year later (October 2010), the European Council forwarded the application to the European Commission, which, on 12 October 2011, expressed its favourable opinion in this regard. Since 1 March 2012, Serbia has enjoyed the status of an EU candidate country. On 28 June 2013, the European Council assessed positively the progress of Belgrade in harmonisation of local legislation with the *acquis communautaire* and in the context of dialogue with Priština in the normalisation of relations with Kosovo, and decided to open negotiations for Serbia's EU accession by January 2014 (the negotiations started on 21 of the same month).¹²

After the dissolution of the union of Serbia and Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia became the successor to the ownership of international agreements, both bilateral and multilateral, and in March 2012, Serbia was granted the status of an EU candidate country: it consolidated the framework of stability and pushed a reform process that favourably influenced the issue. The first bilateral agreement between Italy and Serbia was signed on 11 September 2006 in Belgrade; on that occasion an agreement on visas was approved, which made easier the issuing of Schengen visas for certain categories of Serbian citizens. Three years later (13 November 2009) in Rome the first intergovernmental summit between Italy and Serbia was held, during which the following agreements were made:

1. Joint Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between Italy and Serbia;
2. Agreement of Cultural Cooperation and Education between Italy and Serbia;
3. Protocol for the Implementation of the Agreement on Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation between the Ministries of Interior (carried

¹² See: <http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/aree/Serbia/La-Serbia-candidato-UE-113106>.

out from Article 19 of the Agreement of 18 September 2007 between the European Community and the Republic of Serbia on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation);

4. Agreement on the Training of Staff at the Military Bodies of the Ministries of Defence of Serbia and Italy;

5. Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Field of Infrastructure and Transport;

6. Agreement on Production and Sale of Renewable Energy and the Development of Networks;

7. Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Guarantees of Origin of the Production Systems of Renewable Energies;

8. Joint Declaration on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection;

9. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Agricultural Sector.

Other arrangements have been established in the field of scientific and technological cooperation through the agreement signed in Rome on 21 December 2009, concerning the conversion of driving licenses, by exchange of notes, implemented in Belgrade on 12–14 July 2011 and in the field of energy cooperation on 25 October 2011 in Rome.

Overview of commercial and economic relations between Italy and Serbia

According to data available from the Serbian Institute of Statistics, during 2013 Italy consolidated its market position (it was already the second largest trading partner of Serbia in 2012), becoming the first trading partner of Serbia, with trade amounting to about 2,000 million euros, with a surplus to Italy of about 22 million euros (Italian exports amounted to 1,049 million euros, plus 28.9% compared to the same period of 2012, and imports totalled 1,026 million euros plus 128.4%).¹³ Italy is also the first foreign investor in Serbia with about 500 companies, a share of invested capital of around 2 billion euros and a turnover of around 2.5 billion. There are more than 20,000 workers employed by Italian companies, about 2% of the Serbian labour force, a fact explained by the attention given by the Serbian part to the presence of Italian companies on its territory. The opportunities for investment aimed at developing the capacity of Italian companies are plentiful due to the favourable tax conditions and access to emerging markets. Italy is a leader in banking – thanks to the group Banca Intesa-San Paolo (the first bank in the country) and Unicredit, in the insurance sector – Delta Generali and Fondiaria-SAI, and in the manufacturing sector.¹⁴

¹³ Cfr. <http://www.agenzianova.com/a/52ef6ca08f9163.14676005/752685/2014-02-03/serbia-italia-istituto-statistica-di-belgrado-roma-principale-partner-commerciale>.

¹⁴ See: <http://www.unicreditbank.rs/?jez=EN>.

In this context, the operation FIAT is included.¹⁵

In December 2009 in Kragujevac an important agreement between the Fiat group, ZASTAVA and the state of Serbia was signed, with respectively 67% and 33% of the shares, for the establishment of a joint venture (Fiat Automobiles Serbia) that launched in 2012 the production of a new model – *Fiat 500L*. It is an investment of over 1 billion euros, which meets important needs of supply and infrastructure of the automotive industry and has developed a broad range of activities, particularly among Italian companies that provide goods and services. Production was initiated in the summer of 2012 and the vehicle has been on the market since September 2012. The Kragujevac plant currently produces about 110,000 cars yearly, with significant growth opportunities. Looking at other areas of development, there are significant prospects for future investments in the energy sector. The potential – in particular hydropower – of the territory of Serbia and the priorities formulated by the Belgrade authorities to increase and diversify domestic production of energy open up prospects of great interest to build and operate in Serbia generating plants that produce energy for local markets or for export.

Thanks to the funding arranged by the World Bank, EIB, EBRD and the European Commission, the field of road and rail infrastructure is in strong development, in particular the active presence of Italferr, the partner of Railways of Serbia in the work of modernisation of its national network and the participation of several Italian companies in the main projects such as the construction of the bridge *Žeželj* of Novi Sad, the modernisation of sections of the rail network in Vojvodina and along the line Belgrade-Niš and the interest in the development of the line Bar-Belgrade.¹⁶ Also noteworthy is the opportunity in the food industry, especially in Vojvodina: the need for technological modernisation combined with excellent production possibilities of the territory and exports with zero duties in emerging markets such as Russia offer a significant opportunity for investors. In Serbia, a textile centre is affirming itself that supplies and contributes to the presence of companies such as Pompeia, Golden Lady, Calzedonia and Fulgar, in addition to heavy investment of the Benetton Group (2011) in major production (six million garments per year) located in the town of Niš.

In addition, the footwear industry has been enriched through an arrangement between Geox and the Republic of Serbia for the opening of a manufacturing plant in Vranje in southern Serbia (2012). Another area that is constantly rising is air transport for which there are significant opportunities due to the growth in economic and trade relations and the liberalisation of tourist visas for Serbian citizens travelling to Europe since the beginning of 2010. Among the factors that contribute to the interest of Italian investors are the central position of Serbia in the logistics network and infrastructural connections of the region. The country, thanks to the extensive network of trade agreements with the partners of the former Yugoslavia, with Russia and Turkey, is a privileged gateway to these markets.

¹⁵ Cfr. <http://www.fiatsrbija.rs/>.

¹⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/serbia/ipa/2009/4_zezelj_bridge.pdf.

Cultural cooperation

With the opening of Palazzo Italia in 2006, the new centre of the Institute of Culture, the promotion of Italian culture in Serbia has entered a new phase, with the ambition to offer services and events of high cultural level. Palazzo Italia has become the “showcase” of Italy in Serbia and is a centre of services and information available to the public.¹⁷ The Embassy of Italy together with the Italian Cultural Institute promotes the teaching and dissemination of Italian in the university sector, the emergence and activities of the departments of Italian studies at major Serbian universities.¹⁸ In Belgrade, where there is a lectureship at the Department of Italian Studies, Department of Philology, there were more than a thousand enrolments, which made Italian the second most taught language after English; in Novi Sad – where a lectureship has been established – the teaching of Italian has reached a four-year duration and the number of enrolled students has exceeded two hundred. In 2009 the teaching was also introduced at the University of Kragujevac. In the sector of middle and upper secondary schools, significant progress has been achieved; Italian has been included in the curricula of primary and secondary schools among the main languages of instruction, equal to the so-called “universal languages”.

Then newly created bilingual Italian-Serbian section at the prestigious Third Belgrade High School needs to be especially mentioned; it now receives applications for enrolment twice bigger than places available. In the field of language courses organised by the Institute of Culture, the steady growth in membership needs to be emphasised; there are currently about 400 members, plus 30 students of the postgraduate programme at the Diplomatic Academy, and other 200 at the Military Academy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of Serbia. All courses are planned with regards to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and are divided into levels (A1 to C2).

The Institute of Culture, in addition, encourages the training of teachers, with the organisation of courses in collaboration with major Italian universities for foreigners for the attainment of the CEDILS diploma, with the lectureship at the Department of Italian Studies at the University of Belgrade, and with the ministries of education and sport of Serbia and the Association of Teachers of Italian in Serbia. The courses have been organised continuously since 2001 and are based on new teaching approaches used in Italy for language acquisition.

The Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Italy and Serbia – signed by Minister Franco Frattini and Deputy Prime Minister Đelić in Rome on 21 December 2009 – has contributed to cooperation in the field of research

¹⁷ http://www.ambbelgrado.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Belgrado/Menu/1_rapporti_bilaterali/Cooperazione+culturale.

¹⁸ http://www.iicbelgrado.esteri.it/IIC_Belgrado.

projects, programmes of study and exchange of teachers and students, organisation of joint seminars and conferences. On the basis of this agreement, on 9 July 2013, in Belgrade the First Protocol of Executive Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the period 2013–15 was signed, which includes fifteen projects for the exchange of researchers and seven major projects in the areas of biomedicine and biotechnology; agriculture and food technology; energy and environmental protection; mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology; nanotechnologies and new materials; information and communications technologies (ICT); technologies applied to cultural heritage.

The first half of 2013 showed a slight recovery in GDP (2.1% in the first quarter and 0.7% in the second quarter compared to the same periods of 2012) according to data of the National Bank of Serbia (NBS) for 2013. The IMF expected growth of 1.5% in 2012 after a year in which it recorded a decline of 1.7% in regards to the previous year. The slight increase is due to the growth in industrial production and exports. According to estimates by the central government, 1% of the country's GDP is directly due to the investment of FIAT – a company that exports a lot from Serbia – with a value of approximately 840 million euros in the first seven months of the year according to statistics of the Ministry of Finance. The two main reasons for concern that remain are the unemployment rate (24.1% in the first half of 2013) with highpoints of 600 thousand and the level of public debt: the public debt/GDP ratio has in fact greatly exceeded the statutory limit of 45%, reaching the value of 60.6% during the first half of 2013. The constant process of socioeconomic growth of Serbia and a progressive approach to the EU in recent years have led to the initiation of a policy of *phasing-out* of Italian cooperation from Serbia, to concentrate on the available resources in areas and countries of priority. Serbia remains a partner of the Italian Cooperation that, in the last decade, has allocated to the country aid of approximately 150 million euros in different fields. In particular, the Italian Cooperation has contributed to the promotion of the regional dimension of development and promotion of small and medium entrepreneurships, starting in 2011 a second line of credit to support SMEs and municipal enterprises in Serbia (30 million euros), after the success of the previous credit line of 33 million euros. In the field of social policies, various measures were initiated, including an initiative carried out by UNICEF (one million euros) in the context of social inclusion policies and de-institutionalisation, aimed at improving the quality of protection of disabled children residing in Serbian shelters and orphanages and a decentralised cooperation programme implemented by the region of Emilia Romagna aimed at decentralisation of social services and the development of policies for children in Serbia (about one million euros). The Italian Cooperation plays an important role in the protection of cultural heritage, financing the Serbian Institute for restoration (one million euros), based on the analogue Italian model.

The main ongoing initiatives funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

A local fund to support vulnerable children and adolescents was launched on 15 June 2012. The NGO *Naša Srbija* has been active since 2000 in the organisation of

the summer school called the *School of Friendship*, which involves the participation of around 800 people. The first phase of the school, the project *Days of Friendship*, was held from 1 to 10 July 2012, with the participation of 200 children of eight different nationalities and had as its objective the promotion of greater integration and understanding of cultural diversity through fun, educational and sportive activities. Each year, this project is carried out in collaboration with a friendly country where cognitive activities are organised and in 2012 that country was Italy. The contribution of the Italian Cooperation to promote greater public awareness on the issue of disability in Serbia assists in the process of re-integration of children with disabilities and encourages greater integration among children of different nationalities in Serbia.¹⁹

The Welfare and Health Cooperation in the Balkans (WHCB), launched on 1 January 2009 and headed by the Molise region – along with Puglia, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Sardinia, Abruzzo and Sicily – aims to strengthen the system of planning and management of health and social services and, consequently, to develop the progressive integration between health and social sectors.²⁰ The project aims to intervene in the strengthening of the welfare system from the point of view of programming and the creation of services and recovery of the vulnerable population through the strengthening of local structures of care and hospital facilities as well as through paths of rehabilitation and social and work reintegration.

The project *Infrastrutture Culturali & Territori*, launched in 2009, aims to achieve cultural infrastructure which will improve and strengthen the cultural cooperation already established between Italian and Balkan museums, libraries and universities with the aim to strengthen cultural relations already initiated by individual regions with partner foreign countries. In geographical terms, the ICT project is directed at cultural institutions in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia and consists of an integrated system of six sub-projects aimed at strengthening cultural cooperation, which has already been established between Italian and Balkan museums, theatres, libraries and universities. When it comes to environmental policies, since 1 January 2010, environmental monitoring has been underway in highly critical areas, including technical assistance for the preparation of plans and programmes for the protection, preservation and enhancement of natural resources in polluted sites (PRIMA). The *Progetto Integrato*, led by the region of Basilicata, together with Puglia, Emilia Romagna, Veneto, Piedmont, Abruzzo, Sicily and Sardinia, provides for cooperation between Italian regions and Bosnian and Serbian institutions for the implementation of environmental researches and characterisations in highly critical areas, aimed at the elaboration of the master plan for the protection, preservation and improvement of the quality and quantity of natural resources from polluted sites.

Finally, the Italian-Serbian Chamber of Commerce stressed the good cooperation with the Embassy of Italy in Serbia and the National Institute for Foreign

¹⁹ <http://nasasrbija.rs/en/portfolio/school-of-friendship-nasa-srbija/>.

²⁰ <http://www.hwcb.org/moodle/>.

Trade and is located in the prestigious building of Palazzo Italia that houses the Italian Cultural Institute, Embassy – Local Technical Unit (LTU) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – General Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DGDC), as well as the representative office of the Italian Ministry of Environment.

It represents the starting point for all Italian and Serbian entrepreneurs interested in business cooperation. Going back to the negotiating process for Serbia's entry into the EU, in recent months the monitoring of Chapter 35, which concerns the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Priština, has been underway, together with the negotiations on Chapters 23 and 24, relevant for strengthening the rule of law, justice, freedom and security. Tanja Mišćević, the main negotiator for Serbia, has made it clear that in the course of 2014, around 50 monitorings and analytical reports on compliance with the "Community acquis" are expected and each chapter would be followed by a European Commission report on the monitoring that will define the principles on which to begin negotiations for each chapter. Finally, a recent Gallup poll, ordered by the European Commission, showed that 55% of respondents in Serbia support the process of European integration, while 39% are against.

Roberto SCIARRONE

**L'TALIA, LA SERBIA E L'UNIONE EUROPEA:
PROSPETTIVE PER LA COOPERAZIONE E LO SVILUPPO ECONOMICO**

Sommario

Secondo i dati dell'Istituto serbo di statistica, nel corso del 2013 l'Italia ha consolidato la propria posizione sul mercato serbo. Essendo già stata nel 2012 il secondo partner commerciale della Serbia, nel 2013 è diventata il suo primo partner straniero con scambi pari a circa 2.000 milioni di euro, con un surplus per l'Italia di circa 22 milioni. L'Italia è anche il primo investitore straniero in Serbia, con circa 500 imprese, una quota di capitale investito di circa 2 miliardi di euro e un fatturato di circa 2,5 miliardi. Ci sono più di 20.000 lavoratori impiegati nelle aziende italiane, ovvero circa il 2% della forza lavoro serba. Le opportunità di investimento volte allo sviluppo della capacità delle aziende italiane sono abbondanti, grazie alle condizioni fiscali favorevoli ed all'accesso ai mercati emergenti. L'Italia è anche presente nel settore bancario (con il gruppo Intesa-San Paolo e Unicredit), sia nel settore assicurativo (Delta Generali e Fondiaria-SAI), così come nel settore manifatturiero. Con l'apertura del Palazzo Italia, nel 2006, la nuova sede dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura, la promozione della cultura italiana in Serbia è entrata in una nuova fase, con l'ambizione di offrire servizi ed eventi di alto livello culturale. L'Ambasciata d'Italia con l'Istituto Italiano di Cultura promuove l'insegnamento e la diffusione della lingua italiana nel settore universitario, seguendo la nascita e le attività dei dipartimenti di studi italiani presso le principali università serbe. A Belgrado, dove esiste un Dipartimento di Italianistica presso la Facoltà di Filologia, ci sono state più di mille iscrizioni, il che ha reso la lingua italiana la seconda lingua più insegnata dopo l'inglese. A Novi Sad - dove è stato istituito un dipartimento universitario - l'insegnamento della lingua italiana ha raggiunto la durata di studi quadriennali e il numero di studenti iscritti ha superato i duecento. Nel 2009, l'italianistica è stata introdotta anche all'Università di Kragujevac. Nel settore delle scuole secondarie, medie e superiori, sono stati compiuti progressi significativi e l'italiano è stato incluso nei programmi scolastici tra le principali lingue di insegnamento.

Parole chiave: Unione europea, Serbia, sviluppo economico, Palazzo Italia, Ambasciata italiana a Belgrado, Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Belgrado

Роберто ШАРОНЕ

**ИТАЛИЈА И КАНДИДАТУРА СРБИЈЕ ЗА ЧЛАНСТВО У ЕВРОПСКОЈ УНИЈИ:
ИЗГЛЕДИ ЗА САРАДЊУ И ЕКОНОМСКИ РАЗВОЈ**

Резиме

Према доступним подацима Српског института за статистику, Италија је 2013. године учврстила своју позицију на тржишту Србије. Будући већ у 2012. други трговински партнер Србије, 2013. је постала њен први инострани партнер са разменом од око 2.000 милиона евра, уз суфицит за Италију од око 22 милиона (италијански извоз је износио 1.049 милиона евра, 28,9% више него у истом периоду 2012. године, док је увоз износио 1.026 милиона евра, више од 128,4%). Италија је, такође, највећи страни инвеститор у Србији, са око 500 компанија, акцијским капиталом од око 2 милијарде евра и прометом од око 2,5 милијарде. Више од 20.000 радника запослено је у италијанским компанијама, што чини око 2% радне снаге Србије, чињеница која се објашњава пажњом коју Србија даје присуству италијанских компанија на својој територији. Инвестиционе могућности усмерене на развој капацитета италијанских компанија су многобројне захваљујући повољним фискалним условима и приступу новим тржиштима. Италија је такође лидер и у банкарском сектору - захваљујући групи Banca Intesa-San Paolo (прва банка у земљи) и Unicredit, у осигуравајућем - Delta Generali и Fondiaria-SAI, као и у производњи. Са отварања Палате Италија 2006. године, новог седишта Италијанског института за културу, промоција италијанске културе у Србији ушла је у нову фазу, са амбицијом да нуди како услуге, тако и догађаје високе културе. Палата Италија је постала „излог“ државе Италије у Србији и центар услуга и информација доступних јавности. Амбасада Италије са Институтом за културу промовише учење и ширење италијанског језика у универзитетском сектору, и прати оснивања и активности одељења за италијанистику на већим универзитетима у Србији. У Београду, где постоје академске студије на Одељењу за италијанистику Филолошког факултета, било је више од хиљаду уписаних, што је довело до тога да италијански постане други најраспрострањенији страни језик после енглеског. У Новом Саду – где су на Универзитету отворене италијанске четворогодишње студије - број уписаних студената је премашио две стотине. У 2009. години, италијански језик је такође уведен на Универзитету у Крагујевцу. У области основношколског и средњошколског образовања учење италијанског језика постигло је значајни напредак и италијански је укључен у програм као један од главних страних језика, на равној ноzi са такозваним „светским језицима“.

Кључне речи: Европска унија, Србија, економски развој, Палата Италија, Амбасада Италије у Београду, Италијански институт за културу у Београду

Biljana VUČETIĆ

AN OVERVIEW OF SERBIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY ON SERBIAN-ITALIAN RELATIONS*

Abstract: This paper aims to give an overview of Serbian historiography on Serbian-Italian relations from the first contacts between Serbia and Italy in the 19th century until Serbia's entry into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It thus also represents a short outline of Serbian-Italian relations in that period. Although there is no comprehensive monograph on Serbian-Italian relations, numerous papers of historians Ljiljana Aleksić Pejković, Dragoljub Živojinović and Andrej Mitrović create the picture of political, diplomatic and cultural links between the two states.

Key words: Serbia, Italy, historiography, Serbian-Italian relations.

Relations between Serbia and Italy in modern times have not been a frequent subject of Serbian historiography. In contrast, relations of the Serbian medieval state with Italian states, the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Naples, have been thoroughly studied by Serbian medievalists.¹

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¹ Only several selected papers are listed below: Ружа Ћук, *Србија и Венеција у XIII и XIV веку*, Београд 1986; Ibid, *La Serbia e Venezia nella prima metà del XV secolo: personaggi e commerci*, Glas – Académie serbe des sciences et des arts CDIV, Classe des sciences historiques 13 (2006) 137–148; Sima Ćirković, *I Serbi nel Medioevo*, Milano 1992; Ibid, *Importazione di tecnologie dall'Italia ed esportazione di maestranze dalla Serbia*, Glas – Académie serbe des sciences et des arts CDIV, Classe des sciences historiques 13 (2006) 73–83; Momčilo Spremić, *Dubrovnik e gli Aragonesi (1442–1495)*, Palermo, Accademia nazionale di scienze lettere e arti, 1986; Ibid, *Il despota Giorgio Branković e Venezia*, Glas – Académie serbe des sciences et des arts CDIV, Classe des sciences historiques 13 (2006) 119–135; Ibid, *Србија и Венеција (VI–XVI век)*, Београд 2013.

This paper represents an overview of Serbian historiography on relations between Serbia and Italy in the 19th and 20th centuries, from the first serious contacts to the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This overview also represents an outline of Serbian-Italian relations in the specified timeframe.

A comprehensive overview of Serbian-Italian relations has not been presented in any separate monograph. Liaisons and relations between the two countries have been covered mainly by studies on international relations and papers on specific issues. The first and only complete monograph dealing with Italy's policy towards Serbia in the 19th century is *Политика Италије према Србији до 1870. године* ("Italy's Policy Towards Serbia until 1870") by historian Ljiljana Aleksić Pejković.²

Serbian historiography has focused on several topics regarding relations with Italy.

The first topic concerns similarities and differences between **the Serbian national movement and the Risorgimento**. Serbia found its place in Italy's foreign policy back at the time of the 1848/1849 revolution, as a potential ally against the common enemy Austria. The aim of Italy's foreign policy was to create a chance for a diplomatic solution to Italy's unification through the movement among the Balkan peoples. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and in light of Austria-Hungary's aspiration to penetrate the Balkans, the Italian government showed the intention to support the creation of an independent South Slavic state headed by Serbia and its Prince Mihailo, which would be an obstacle both to Germanism and Pan-Slavism.

On the other hand, Serbia tried to use the predecessor state of today's Italy – the Kingdom of Sardinia, as an ally in its struggle for independence and national unification. Sardinia entered the Concert of Europe after the Crimean War, in 1856, as a protectress of Turkey's integrity. The Serbian government aimed to arouse France's interest in circumstances in the Balkans also through Italy. According to the Principality of Serbia's foreign policy, Italy was, among the Great Powers, one more ally inclined towards Serbia. Italy's liberation and unification served to Serbia as a lesson and guidepost for action.³

The main features of the Italian movement – the struggle against Austria, creation of a constitutional parliamentary monarchy and Mazzini's activity, became an example for the United Serbian Youth in terms of the national struggle and political life and as a synonym for everything progressive and democratic. Mazzini's faction advocated Italy's unification through the struggle against Austria, adherence to the nationality principle and cooperation with South Slavs. The other Italian faction, headed by Count Cesare Balbo espoused a diplomatic solution to the Italian question, recognising the existing balance of powers in Europe, i.e. through a compromise with Austria.

Substantial contribution to this subject was given by Nikša Stipčević, a literary historian and professor of Italian studies. He believed that the Italian interest in Serbs and Serbia in the mid-19th century was not a consequence of the government policy in Italy, but that it fitted into the concept of the Risorgimento. Giuseppe Mazzini

² Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Политика Италије према Србији до 1870. године*, Београд 1979.

³ Ibid, 345.

and Niccolò Tommaseo were the forerunners of cultural and political curiosity towards the Slavs.⁴ Up until the late 1860s, Italy and Serbia pursued anti-Austrian policy, which made them closer to one another. However, when Italy moved closer to Austria-Hungary, its attention turned to Montenegro.

Exploring the activity of Giuseppe Mazzini and Vladimir Jovanović, Stipčević concluded that their similarities were only political and by no means ideological.⁵ Mazzini advocated “managed” democracy, where the intelligentsia would mediate between “God and people”. Vladimir Jovanović was probably not even familiar with Mazzini’s writings. Mazzini’s religious ideology was contrary to the positivistic ideology of Vladimir Jovanović whose spiritual father was John Stuart Mill. Jovanović’s merit lies in the creation of the first modern political movement – the United Serbian Youth, in 1866, following in the Mazzini’s footsteps who founded in Italy the first modern Republican Party. Serbian liberals, headed by Vladimir Jovanović, embraced Mazzini’s ideas, and the United Serbian Youth was established upon the model of the Young Italy. On the other hand, Cesare Balbo believed that Italy’s interest lay in the creation of an Austro-Slavic empire that would drive Austria to another direction.

One of the main consequences of the Italian example of the Risorgimento was strengthening of the myth about Serbia as the Piedmont of South Slavs, the myth that would contribute to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, through the publication of the Serbian newspaper *Пијемонт (Piedmont)* from 1911 to 1915.

Another topic of Serbian historiography on Serbian-Italian relations is **Italy’s attitude towards Serbia in regard to the Eastern Question**. The main contribution in this field has been given by Ljiljana Aleksić Pejковић.

From 1848/49 to 1866, Italy’s policy was benevolent towards Serbia. In her treaties titled *Уједињење Италије и национални програм Кнежевине Србије* (“Italy’s Unification and National Programme of the Principality of Serbia”) and *Међусобни утицај италијанског и српског националног покрета (до 1878)* (“Mutual Influences of Italian and Serbian National Movements Until 1878”), Ljiljana Aleksić argues that Mazzini himself was also familiar with the Serbian political programme – *Нацртаније*. Italy supported Serbia’s aspiration to internal autonomy, but opposed a radical solution to the Eastern Question. In 1861–1862, Italian volunteers were ready to join the rebels from Herzegovina. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Italy in principle decided to support the Serbian-South Slavic state, with Serbia as its Piedmont and Prince Mihailo its ruler.⁶

⁴ Н. Стипчевић, *Србија и Италија у XIX веку*, Глас Српске академије наука и уметности ССCLXXVII, Одељење језика и књижевности 16 (1995) 27.

⁵ Н. Стипчевић, *Ђузепе Маџини и Владимир Јовановић*, Прилози за КИФ XXXVIII, 3–4 (1972) 163–201.

⁶ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Међусобни утицај италијанског и српског националног покрета (до 1878)*, in: *Идејна и политичка кретања код југословенских народа, Чеха и Словака у другој половини XIX века*, Зборник радова, Београд 1987, 109–121; Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Уједињење Италије и национални програм Кнежевине Србије*, in: *Споменица др Данице Милић*, Београд 2013.

Analysing Serbia's policy towards Italy's unification in the Belgrade and Vojvodina press of 1865–1866, Ljiljana Aleksić Pejковић concludes that the victory of the nationality principle in Italy provoked enthusiasm among the Serbian public and gave rise to the hope that the same would happen in the Balkans provided the Balkan peoples came to an agreement. Nonetheless, the Serbian public did not show unity in terms of the manner of making an agreement and as to the tactics of solving the Eastern Question. Official circles in Serbia upheld a cautious and partial solution, along with reliance on European diplomacy. Others favoured an agreement and joint action of all Balkan peoples. The first option prevailed, succeeding in the banishment of the Turks from Serbian towns, with the support of European diplomacy.⁷

In regard to the Eastern Crisis (1876–1878), together with its allies from the Triple Alliance, the Italian government put pressure on Serbia and Montenegro not to send arms to rebels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In her paper *Италија и српско-турски ратови 1876–1878* ("Italy and Serbo-Turkish Wars 1876–1878"), Lj. Aleksić Pejковић shows that Italy supported not a single request of Serbia at the Congress of Berlin, apart from the request for independence, whereas Visconti Venosta, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, believed that the Eastern Question had been opened too early as it would be best for Italy if it remained unopened for another ten years.⁸ In the Eastern Crisis, Italy adhered to Balbo's policy – Austria-Hungary's expansion to the East meant concessions for Italy in the West.

Italy's position during the Serbo-Bulgarian War (1885) was exceptionally complex as Italy was under the Austro-Hungarian influence. Italian politicians held the position that any change in the balance in the Balkans in favour of Austria-Hungary entailed compensation. After the period of strong sympathies, relations between Serbia and Italy were marginalised in both countries. Serbia was under full economic dependence of Austria-Hungary (1881) and the Serbian market was distanced from Italy which fostered its Mediterranean policy, which is why mutual relations died away. Italy aimed to preserve the situation in European politics after the Congress of Berlin. Italian diplomacy was not surprised with Serbia's reaction to Bulgaria's unification with Rumelia, and it assessed Serbia after the Timok Rebellion as a weak and uneducated country.

In the spirit of the Risorgimento, the Italian public opinion sided with Bulgaria. Ljiljana Aleksić Pejковић explains such policy by Italy's fear of being drawn into something that would bolster the position of Austria-Hungary or Russia in the Balkans, i.e. something that would breach the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin.⁹ Italian diplomacy manoeuvred between its opponents in the Balkans – Austria-Hungary and Russia, with Russia considered a greater danger. The German Chancellor,

⁷ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Српска штампа и ратови за ослобођење и уједињење Италије 1859–1866. године*, Историјски часопис XX (1973) 251–306.

⁸ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Италија и српско-турски ратови 1876–1878*, Историјски часопис XXXII (1985) 153–186.

⁹ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Италија и српско-бугарска криза 1885–1886. године*, Историјски часопис XLII–XLIII (1995–1996) 124–145.

Otto von Bismarck had inclination towards Italy, which strengthened its positions within the Triple Alliance. Moreover, Article 8 of the Reinsurance Treaty of 1887 recognised to Italy its special interests in the Balkans, i.e. its right to compensation in the event of Austria's advancement in the Balkans.¹⁰

The period of the 1890s has not been covered separately in terms of Serbian-Italian relations. Analysing the episode of the Diplomatic Strike in 1903–1906, Lj. Aleksić Pejковић proves that Serbian diplomacy, headed by its envoy in Rome Milovan Milovanović, strove to involve Italian diplomacy in mediations with England. Italian diplomacy availed of the crisis to vacillate between the two blocs. Furthermore, with its engagement it partly contributed to Serbia's siding with the Entente.¹¹ An attempt at penetration of Italian capital in the Balkans took place also through the construction of railways in 1908. Namely, Italy participated in the Adriatic railways project and thus drove close to France.¹²

According to Lj. Aleksić Pejковић's research, Italy's foreign policy towards Serbia until World War I underwent three stages. The first was the "Eastern" stage, implying the process of national liberation and unification from 1848 to 1870, and commitment to the *status quo* in the Eastern Question. The second was the Mediterranean-colonial stage, marked by entry into the Triple Alliance in 1882, and adoption of the albanophile policy as a counterbalance to Austria's pressure. The last stage until 1914 was Eastern-Tripolitan, resulting in the collapse of colonial policy in Africa and shifting the focus back to the Adriatic.¹³

The third group of questions regarding Serbian-Italian relations that has been covered by Serbian historiography includes **Italy's policy towards Serbia in World War I**, its attitude towards the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Adriatic Question.

Ljiljana Aleksić Pejковић underscores that in the first three war months of 1914, the Italian government avoided negotiations with Serbia, under the pretext of its neutral position and Serbia's status as a warring party. It was only San Giuliano (Antonio, Marquis di San Giuliano), Italy's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who considered absurd Italy's aspiration not to allow to the Balkan states an exit to the sea, and its pretensions to Slavic countries.¹⁴ During World War I, the Italian press assessed war events relating to Serbia from the viewpoint of Italy's own interests in the balance on the Adriatic, including the balance of power among the warring parties in terms of their significance.¹⁵ The

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Допринос Италије обнављању српско-енглеских односа (1903–1906)*, Историјски часопис XVIII (1971) 429–449.

¹² Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Италија и Јадранска железница*, Историјски часопис XXXIV (1987) 255–270.

¹³ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Српско питање у стратешким опредељењима балканске политике Италије у 19. веку*, Глас САНУ CDXX, Одељење историјских наука 16 (2012) 295–318.

¹⁴ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Ратни напори Србије у 1914. години и политика Француске и Италије*, in: Научни скуп Колубарска битка: ратни напори Србије 1914 године, Београд 1985, 169–186.

¹⁵ Љ. Алексић Пејковић, *Италијанска штампа о Србији и Црној Гори и југословенском питању*, in: Научни скуп Србија 1916 године, Београд 1987, 251–259.

Bissolati–Sonnino group¹⁶ upheld the Mazzini programme: destruction of Austria, creation of Yugoslavia and anti-German policy. The Orlando–Boselli¹⁷ group supported Germany's *Drang nach Osten*, occupation of Dalmatia, pushing Serbia to the inner parts of the Balkans, and was explicitly against the unification of Serbia and Montenegro.

Professor Dragoljub Živojinović has dealt the most with Serbian–Italian relations during World War I. As he concludes, at the beginning of the war, Minister San Giuliano pursued cautious policy, advocating Italy's greater presence in the Balkans through trade, banking, education and the construction of railways. His successor Baron Sidney Sonnino was in favour of new territories and domination on the Adriatic. The Treaty of London (April 1915) brought about a conflict between Italy and Serbia over the Yugoslav policy of the Serbian government and Sonnino's pretensions to Albania, Montenegro and Dalmatia. Strong resistance of the Italian government to the unification of Montenegro and Serbia brought about the occupation of the Bay of Kotor, Budva, Bar, Virpazar and Ulcinj. The unification remained unrecognised until the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo (November 1920).¹⁸ Živojinović argues that Italy's war objectives were of limited and local character. The Corfu Declaration (20 July 1917) formulated Serbia's war objectives, i.e. objectives of Yugoslav unification, which met with the lack of understanding by the great powers and provoked Italy's open enmity, as such objectives directly contravened its own interests. The conflict concerned Albania, Montenegro and Dalmatia.¹⁹

Dragoljub Živojinović's monograph, in Serbian and American edition, contributed to the revision of attitudes about the role of US President Woodrow Wilson in solving of the Adriatic Question (Dragoljub Živojinović, *Amerika, Italija i postanak Jugoslavije 1917–1919*, Beograd 1970; Dragan R. Živojinović, *America, Italy and the Birth of Yugoslavia (1917–1919)*, New York 1972). In numerous talks held with President Wilson, Italian representatives did not give up on provisions of the Treaty of London although Wilson was prepared to grant great concessions to Italy and ensure economic possibilities for its penetration into the Balkans (border at Brenner and in Istria). Professor Živojinović appeals for caution in attempts to emphasise Wilson's pro-Yugoslav orientation. Wilson's primary goal was to preclude a new war if the expansion included areas not essentially belonging to the Italian territory, i.e. areas not allocated under the nationality principle.²⁰

¹⁶ Ex-Socialist Leonida Bissolati advocated Italy's turning to the Triple Entente, and Sidney Sonnino, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs during the WWI, signed the secret Treaty of London in 1915.

¹⁷ Paolo Boselli was the Italian Prime Minister from June 1916 till October 1917, and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando was his successor in office till June 1919.

¹⁸ Д. Живојиновић, *Сан Ђулијано и италијанске претензије на Јадрану на почетку Првог светског рата 1914–1918*, Историјски часопис XX (1973) 307–317.

¹⁹ D. Živojinović, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije i Italija (1917)*, *Istorija XX veka* 1 (1983) 9–23.

²⁰ Д. Живојиновић, *Јадранско питање у периоду између потписивања примирја са Аустро-Угарском и почетка Париске мировне конференције 1919. године*, *Зборник Филозофског факултета* 10 (Београд 1968) 431–456.

Dragoljub Živojinović has also dealt with American-Italian relations from April 1917 to April 1919, which is a real novelty in research since historians have generally dealt with exploration and explanation of the nature of the Italian-Serbian or Yugoslav dispute on the Adriatic.²¹ Italian politicians believed that territories promised by the Treaty of London (Dalmatia, Tyrol, Istria, Rijeka) would bring predominance on the Adriatic. Živojinović explains the insistence on Italy's maximum territorial programme, which also implied the implementation of the Treaty of London and annexation of Rijeka upon the conclusion of the war, instead of accepting the Wilson's plan, by utter confusion among the Italian lines. Save for respecting the nationality principle, the discord between Italy and the US was also shown in maritime operations on the Adriatic, when the Italian admiralty refused proposals of American maritime forces. The final split-up between Italy and the US took place in April 1919, when talks were launched in Paris about Italian territorial pretensions. Wilson was a conservative Presbyterian with strong moral principles and found it extremely hard to acquiesce to the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy. A decisive role in formulating the American policy at the Peace Conference and the attitude towards Italy was played by American maritime officers (Admiral William S. Benson), who provided information on the situation in the field, abuse of power in the Italian zone and their interference in the American and French zone. Only when all negotiation possibilities were exhausted did President Wilson resort to financial pressure on the Italian government.²²

Dragoljub Živojinović has recently collected and published his selected treatises and studies on Italy's policy in the Balkans, titled *У потрази за империјом: Италија и Балкан почетком XX века* ("Searching for an Empire: Italy and the Balkans in the Early 20th Century").²³ His research has also included Italy's policy towards Montenegro and Dalmatia, as the strategic points of Italian influence in the Balkans. Italy aimed to ensure positions that would guarantee its full security in the region of the Adriatic Sea and the Alps, where it clashed with the interests of Austria, Serbia and Montenegro. Italian admiral Paolo di Revel and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sonnino wished to pull out Italy from its inferior position relative to Austria-Hungary. On the other hand, Italy's pretensions aimed to ensure maritime and military domination in the Adriatic region.²⁴

²¹ Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *Amerika, Italija i postanak Jugoslavije 1917–1919*, Beograd 1970; Dragan R. Živojinović, *America, Italy and the Birth of Yugoslavia (1917–1919)*, New York 1972.

²² "The Americans in this period were a moral and political force which no contending side dared to irritate beyond certain limits. The Yugoslavs always tried to avoid any trouble and to keep the American authorities on their side in the dispute with Italy. In this they completely succeeded, helped by Italian shortsightedness, lack of wisdom and aggressiveness", D. Živojinović, *America, Italy and the Birth of Yugoslavia*, 305.

²³ Драгољуб Р. Живојиновић, *У потрази за империјом: Италија и Балкан почетком XX века*, студије и расправе, Београд 2013.

²⁴ Д. Живојиновић, *Улога адмирала Паола Таона ди Ревела у формулисању италијанске политике на Јадранском мору 1914–1919*, in: Д. Живојиновић, *У потрази за империјом: Италија и Балкан почетком XX века*, 51–118.

One of the first historians who opened the Adriatic Question was professor Andrej Mitrović, who believed that secret diplomacy (with the Treaty of London as an example) as an instrument of international policy contributed to the outbreak of the world conflict. The proclamation of public diplomacy from Moscow and Washington was a signpost showing an exit from the crisis. However, solving of the Adriatic Question relied again on secret diplomacy among the great powers, with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes consulted only at times. Italy's Prime Minister Nitti was the first to try to establish direct contact with the Yugoslav government (22 June 1919), thereby bringing an end to Sonnini's policy of ignoring the new neighbour.²⁵ Mitrović concludes that Italy, though sided with the victorious powers, had several weak points: it failed to secure any significant military victory, it faced an internal political crisis and opposition to the nationality principle. Italy worked to incite external and internal difficulties of the Yugoslav state – it helped King Nikola and Bulgarian komitadji, and conducted propaganda against the new state in Sofia, Budapest, Bucharest and Vienna.²⁶

Over the last two decades, the publication of archive records has stepped up, shedding more light on relations between Serbia and Italy. These are, principally, *Документи о спољној политици Краљевине Србије 1903–1914* ("Documents on Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia 1903–1914") – a seminal publishing project of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, carried out for several decades. Recently, the Archive of Serbia has been publishing records from the Consulate General of the Kingdom of Serbia in Trieste from 1884 to 1914, prepared by Miroslav Perišić, Svetozar Rajak and Jelica Reljić.²⁷

As a result of cooperation of Serbian historians with their colleagues from Italy, France and Bulgaria, the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts has issued the collection of papers – *Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th–20th Century)*.²⁸ The editor Vojislav Pavlović highlighted the following: "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

²⁵ Андреј Митровић, *Тајни контакти Нитијеве владе са југословенском делегацијом у јулу 1919. године*, Зборник Филозофског факултета VIII (Београд 1964) 733–771.

²⁶ Andrej Mitrović, *Italija i stvaranje Jugoslavije 1918. godine*, in: Naučni skup u povodu 50-godišnjice raspada Austro-Ugarske monarhije i stvaranja jugoslavenske države, Zagreb 1969, 263–273.

²⁷ *Generalni konzulat Kraljevine Srbije u Trstu: 1884–1914*, prepared by Miroslav Perišić, Svetozar Rajak, Jelica Reljić, Beograd, Arhiv Srbije, 2009; (*Consolato generale Delregno di Serbia a Trieste: 1884–1914*, redazione di Miroslav Perišić, Svetozar Rajak, Jelica Reljić, Belgrado, Archivio della Serbia, 2009).

²⁸ *Italy's Balkan Strategies (19th–20th Century)*, edited by Vojislav G. Pavlović, Belgrade, Institute for Balkan Studies of the SASA, 2014.

not identical stages".²⁹ The edition covers topics from the Italian Risorgimento, through the activity of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the role of the Balkans and Serbia in Italian foreign policy until World War I, the Adriatic Question, to interwar relations between Italy and Yugoslavia, occupation of Greece and Albania, and the issues of post-war cooperation between Italy and the SFRY.³⁰

The topic of Serbian-Italian relations has not been exhausted and certainly offers new lines of research. A number of papers of contemporary historiography are dedicated both to political and cultural and other links between Italy and Yugoslavia in the period between the two world wars and after World War II.

²⁹ Ibid, 7–10.

³⁰ We point out to the papers of Ljiljana Aleksić Pejčević, *The Serbian Question in Italy's Balkan Policy until the First World War*, 81–102, Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *The War Aims of Serbia and Italy (1917)*, 137–158 and Dušan T. Bataković, *Essad Pasha Toptani, Serbia and the Albanian Question (1915-1918)*, 159–180.

Biljana VUČETIĆ

LA STORIOGRAFIA SERBA E I RAPPORTI TRA LA SERBIA E L'ITALIA

Sommario

La politica estera italiana verso la Serbia fino alla Prima guerra mondiale ha attraversato tre fasi: Orientale (liberazione nazionale e unificazione 1848-1870), Mediterraneo-coloniale (Triplice Alleanza del 1882 e albanofilia per controbilanciare la pressione dell'Austria) e Orientale-tripolitana (fine della politica coloniale in Africa e ritorno all'Adriatico, 1914). D'altronde, la politica estera del Principato serbo vide nell'Italia un possibile alleato. In alcune situazioni, la mediazione dell'Italia ha apportato alla Serbia risultati favorevoli (mediazione italiana per la tregua della guerra serbo-turca del 1876, ruolo mediatore dell'Italia nel boicottaggio diplomatico della Serbia nel 1903-1906, assistenza durante la Guerra dei Maiali del 1910, sostegno al principio "i Balcani ai popoli balcanici"). Tuttavia, la politica italiana si trovava a volte in contrasto con gli interessi della Serbia, come quando si oppose all'accesso al mare Adriatico per Belgrado, nel 1912, oppure quando si pronunciò contro l'unificazione jugoslava.

La storiografia serba si è soffermata su diversi argomenti della storia delle relazioni tra i due paesi. In primo luogo c'è l'analisi delle affinità e delle differenze fra il movimento nazionale serbo ed il Risorgimento italiano. Un altro tema molto discusso è l'atteggiamento dell'Italia in merito alla Questione d'Oriente. Il più grande contributo storiografico in proposito rimane quello di Ljiljana Aleksić Pejković. Un terzo filone di studio sulle relazioni serbo-italiane riguarda la politica dell'Italia nei confronti della Serbia nella Prima guerra mondiale, il suo atteggiamento verso la creazione del Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni e la questione adriatica. Il maggiore contributo allo studio di queste questioni è quello di Dragoljub Zivojinović e Andrej Mitrović. Ciononostante, numerosi episodi delle relazioni serbo-italiane rimangono ancora da studiare e approfondire.

Parole chiave: Serbia, Italia, storiografia, rapporti serbo-italiani.

Биљана ВУЧЕТИЋ

ПРЕГЛЕД СРПСКЕ ИСТОРИОГРАФИЈЕ
О ОДНОСИМА СРБИЈЕ И ИТАЛИЈЕ

Резиме

Спољна политика Италије до Првог светског рата према Србији, прошла је кроз три етапе: источну (национално ослобођење и уједињење 1848–1870, кад се опредељује за *status quo* у Источном питању), медитеранско-колонијалну (Тројни савез од 1882, албанофилија као противтежа притиску Аустрије) и источно-триполитанску (крах колонијалне политике у Африци и враћање ка Јадрану, до 1914). Спољнополитички програм Кнежевине Србије видео је Италију као још једног савезника међу великим силама, наклоњеног Србији. У појединим ситуацијама посредовање Италије донело је Србији повољне исходе (посредовање Италије за примирје у Српско-турском рату 1876, ангажовање Италије на страни Србије у дипломатском штрајку 1903–1906 године, помоћ током Царинског рата 1910, подршка принципу „Балкан балканским народима“). Међутим, италијанска политика налазила се и на страни супротној интересима Србије, рецимо спречила је излаз на Јадранско море 1912. године и противила се југословенском уједињењу.

Српска историографија се усмерила на неколико тема у оквиру проучавања односа Србије са Италијом. Прво је питање сличности и разлика српског националног покрета и Ризорђимента. Друга тема у оквиру српске историографије посвећене српско-италијанским односима је став Италије према Србији у оквирима Источног питања. Највећи допринос овој проблематици дала је Љиљана Алексић Пејковић. Трећа група питања српско – италијанских односа којима се бавила српска историографија је политика Италије према Србији у Првом светском рату, њен однос ка стварању Краљевине Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца и Јадранско питање. На многа питања из ове групе одговорили су Драгољуб Живојиновић и Андреј Митровић. Тема српско – италијанских односа није исцрпљена и пружа нове правце истраживања.

Кључне речи: Србија, Италија, историографија, српско-италијански односи.

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