

ISTITUTO PER LA STORIA DEL RISORGIMENTO ITALIANO  
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PERSPECTIVES

Vol. VI

# THE GREAT WAR

A European Commitment of Research and Reflection

EDITED BY

ANDREA CIAMPANI AND ROMANO UGOLINI



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*Romano Ugolini*

## Foreword

The last few years have seen many anniversaries, and much work has been done to refresh and renew study and research on various periods or various figures in our history, starting from the fruitful 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the constitution of the Kingdom of Italy. In this framework, the Great War has been considered as a new chapter of the great book of celebrations of national and international interest, a season that, like those preceding it, would trigger widespread interest and an ample harvest of studies.

Actually, it had to be admitted that studies about the Great War had been neglected for years in the public debate; it was not, therefore, a question of focusing on, or further investigating, a historiographical situation that was consolidated; to a certain extent it was more like breaking new ground, with criteria and interpretative canons to be laid down and constructed from scratch. There were certainly wide-reaching, numerous studies on the genesis of the conflict, as well as more far-reaching studies, especially internationally, on the consequences of that dreadful war; yet the 1914-1918 War in itself had not aroused any specific new attention. The usual thinking was that it had merely been a tragically long sequence of military actions, although it must be said that the military historians themselves have not dedicated much attention to the subject over the last thirty years. It is also unquestionably true that the war is virtually not touched upon in Italian high schools, partly because it was considered nothing more than a military event, and partly due to the fact that the rising wave of pacifism pervading our historical mindset after the second war meant that the Great War was considered more to be deplored and stigmatised than studied and investigated.

It must also be stressed that the “cult” of the Great War was considered a legacy from the fascist period: among the veterans and the families of the fallen that “cult” had taken root and given rise to an impressive number of

monuments and commemorative memorials found throughout the land; today they are for the most part forgotten or neglected, but present practically everywhere in Italy. After the Second World War, the repudiation of fascism was therefore linked to a rejection of the memory of the Great War which has come to signify the main factor leading to fascism and not what it really was, the instrument Mussolini used to increase and consolidate consensus for his Government. Having celebrated the bi-centenary of the births of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, and the already-mentioned 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reign of Italy and – a fact not to be overlooked – the setting of the birth of our national State at March 17 1861, it was no longer possible to pass in silence over the centenary of an event that had cost our country so much in terms of human lives with millions of dead and wounded, as well as in terms of enormous economic resources.

It was not an anniversary like the others: a new approach had to be found, taking into account such bereavements and loss as well as the successful achievement of our north-eastern borders (with the long-awaited cities of Trento and Trieste), but also the deep divisions between interventionists and neutralists before Italy's entry into war, divisions that were forgotten during the conflict but which resurfaced after the war to live long in the memory of Italian society, testifying to an open, festering wound. Soon enough the official celebrations were faced with the problem of the term to use in indicating the war period of 1915-1918: were we celebrating a victory or remembering and denouncing the terrible bloodshed? The terms most frequently used quickly became the more unemotional "memory" or "recollection", in view of the fact that, besides the factors mentioned above, a great part was played in such a choice by the rivalry non-existent anymore between the states of a century ago and the end of the legacy of the 1917 Revolution.

The commemorations having been down-toned underlining above all their historical features, a relevant historiographic topic came to the fore: did the long years of war form a sharp division between a 'before' that had vanished and an 'after' that had been generated during those years?

Should we therefore speak of a clean *break* between pre-war and post-war society, with an eye on elements such as customs and traditions (for example, the huge progress of the world of women) or technological innovation, or else of a substantial *continuity*, considering above all that in history "everything flows on" and that, more particularly, the issues of in-

ternational balance that were consigned to the conflict for a solution, not only did *not* find a solution, but were indeed aggravated and complicated to such a degree that a second, yet more horrific war became necessary to provide an answer? Between break and continuity, a new historiographic strand has recently emerged; a sort of half-way house between these two terms, a third comes forward, showing how all the pre-war social, economic and political phenomena are to be found in the post-war period as well, having undergone nothing but an *acceleration* in evolution during the conflict. Personally, I am of the opinion that the three options are all to be found in analysing the Great War without being mutually exclusive; however it is still fruitful to follow the discussion contained in this book for a full understanding of the various historiographic strands from which the three options I mentioned originate and ramify.

A further debate developing, or rather becoming more highly articulated, is that connected to the very term indicating the event under examination a century on: Great War, or First World War? Or else, on closer inspection, should we speak of a European civil war or of an inexorable *cupio dissolvi* of our continent? The term Great War certainly seems the most accurate: such a long conflict unbroken by seasonal interruptions was unprecedented; the quantity and magnitude of the contending sides and the numbers of men and vehicles used fully justify the term Great linked to War. However, taking part in that war with no marginal roles were the United States and Japan, hence the term Great War does not express sufficiently the truly novel reality featured by the conflict, that of being the very first world war.

The term had already been coined while the hostilities were under way, not as is often thought after the 1939-1945 events, although of course the second world conflict unquestionably imposed the use of ordinals – First, Second – thus also underlining the close connection between the two Great Wars.

It should be noticed that linking the specific term “world” only to the presence among the warring factions of the United States and Japan is somewhat misleading: it is important to assess with care the massive presence of servicemen reaching Europe from other continents, and I am not referring only to the significant number of Australians and New Zealanders. This book offers an interesting assessment of the phenomenon, which however deserves future study of the non-European presence on European



battlefields and on the repercussions undergone in their countries of origin through acquaintances and direct links made possible by the war, in terms that were both dramatic but intense and sincere to an equal degree.

We now come to a further element to be considered in reading this work, especially with regard to European historiographic situation. The conflict was based on the nineteenth-century, post-Napoleonic model as an “area” rivalry opposing single countries (France-Germany; Germany-Great Britain; Austria Hungary-Serbia; Italy-Austria Hungary; Greece-Ottoman Empire; Romania-Bulgaria etc.) without there being any immediate escalation. Italy, for example, declared war on Austria-Hungary, yet waited over a year before extending warfare to Germany, and then did so with regret, almost unwillingly; in turn Germany, while supporting its Austro-Hungarian ally in words and writing, undertook as little as possible for its ally on the battlefield especially on the Italian front, as if aware of an almost non-existent hostility. There are further examples of partial “disinterest”, that the reader will find in the various essays in the book: we will just mention one highly emblematic case not dealt with herein, and that is the fact that the United States declared war on Germany only in April 1917, and only in the following December, almost eight months later, did they look to Vienna as an enemy, after vainly making every diplomatic effort to limit the range of their intervention.

Therefore we have to see the conflict as a set of numerous fuses set alight on the traditional model, which thereafter amalgamated to break out into a novel Great War due to the alliance agreements already in place. Seen in this new light, the conflict forces us to distinguish a wide range of different shades in the friendship of the allies and in the hostility of enemies. Along this hazy friend-enemy borderline come into robust play the peoples themselves, the different nationalities present above all in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe.

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We underlined a number of the suggestions that appear in reading the first part of this book devoted to a historiographic analysis of the Great War carried out on fourteen European countries, Italy included in the same way as the other nations. These countries are France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Turkey, Great Britain, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Belgium, Spain and Italy itself. These are nations taking part, perhaps at

different times, in the two opposing Alliances, but also neutral countries such as – apparently – Spain, or else non-existent at the time, such as the intriguing case of Poland. Russia, as we know, is a case apart: having signed the Triple Entente, it betrayed its agreements by making a separate peace in preparation for the Revolution, which could not but have international relevance given the moment.

The first part of the book, therefore, fully satisfies its aim of looking again at the chosen topic of the Great War with fourteen historiographic approaches to provide the theme set for the Conference which gave rise to the volume of these Proceedings, and that is “a European commitment of research and reflection”, to which the chapter by Andrea Ciampani addresses specific considerations. It is believed that this task, undertaken by the authors of the essays with close attention to today’s situation in Europe, may give rise to the fruitful reflection which is our objective.

The Chapter opening the book deserves separate mention. It addresses the relationship between the institutions that later merged in the Institute for the History of the Italian Risorgimento - National Society for the History of the Risorgimento and National Committee for the History of the Risorgimento - and the Great War. It is not only a tribute to the Institution hosting the Conference, but an important new contribution on the historical sources dealing with the conflict. In fact it is not widely known that the National Society mentioned above took upon itself (and the fact was later recognized) the task of including the Great War from August 1915 in the work of identifying, obtaining and preserving the documentation on the conflict. The huge amount of material collected (papers, prints, photographs etc.) is still housed at the Central Museum of the Risorgimento of Rome and is one of the largest Archives in existence on the 1915-1918 war.

The second part of the volume looks at Italy’s entry into war and its commitment in the conflict. Unlike the first part, intentionally concentrated on the historiographic theme, the twelve authors of these essays (with respect to the preceding fourteen, for obvious reasons Italy is missing, as is Russia due to a last-moment absence) were left free to find a significant approach to illustrate the interest of each one’s country towards Italy and Italy’s intervention in the war. The outcome is an articulated picture of great interest due to the variety of such approaches. There is certainly the appreciation (and sometimes the disparagement) of Italy as a new European power as a result of the Risorgimento, an example to follow (or to

ridicule) for those nations of Central and Eastern Europe that have recently become independent states or that hope to achieve that status. The idea of the Risorgimento as a myth and model with international significance here once more proves its worth. It is important to underline that, above the contingent assessments on the policies of the Rome Government, it is absolutely clear that the main approach to our country is guided by the literary and artistic world of each one of the twelve nations taken into consideration. With affection by those who are among the allies, and with profoundly dramatic feelings on the part of those who would never have imagined hostility towards, and fighting against, the cradle of so much culture. Further suggestions are present, beyond the political and literary, in this second part of the volume; this part fulfils the “research and reflection” intent on which the original Conference was based. Italy is seen from Europe at an extremely crucial moment of its history, not in the traditional bilateral view of the relations between two countries, but within a picture that is closer to the reality of the present day. This is the reference we intended and is shown to be so pertinent.

*This work appears as the Proceedings of the International Conference held in Rome, in the Sala Verdi of the Vittoriano-the Victor Emmanuel II Monument from November 9 to November 11 2015 on the theme "The Great War: a European Commitment of Research and Reflection". The Conference was the first of four arranged by the Committee for the Anniversaries of national interest of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the occasion of the Centenary of the Great War under the organisation of the Institute for the History of the Italian Risorgimento together with of its Study Groups from France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Poland, Romania and Belgium.*

*The Conference was held under the aegis of the President of the Italian Republic and was greeted by Senator Franco Marini, President of the Committee for the Anniversaries of national interest of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.*

*The sessions were chaired in turn by representatives of the European cultural institutions present in Rome who actively collaborated in organising the Conference: the Hungarian Academy in Rome, Polish Academy of Sciences of Rome; British School at Rome, École Française de Rome; Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma; Romanian Institute of Culture and Humanities Research of Venice; Austrian Historical Institute in Rome; Belgian Historical Institute in Rome; German Historical Institute in Rome.*

*Our thanks go particularly to them, and to all those who have cooperated for the excellent success of the Conference which attracted the presence of a large audience and was broadcast live by Radio Radicale (to which go our thanks) with a significantly high number of listeners.*



*Franco Marini*

## Opening Address

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this prestigious international Conference, in the name of the Historical Scientific Committee for Anniversaries of national interest, set up at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. We are proud to have promoted this appointment made possible by the work and dedication of Professor Ugolini, the esteemed member of our Committee. This event is in every way a meaningful appointment in the historiographical reflection on the Great War.

Your Conference is the first of a series, and the next will be at the end of the month at Pescara, on the different aspects of the intervention movement in Italy. These Conferences have been arranged by the Committee for the purpose of enriching knowledge and understanding of that period, so tragic and decisive in our own history as well as in international history. As perhaps you know, my greeting was planned for yesterday, but another commitment then arose for an event promoted by the Committee, and determined by the fact that several members of the Government were available at that time; therefore I was not able to be with you.

Yesterday, in the area in front of the War Memorial of Redipuglia where one hundred thousand of the fallen in the Third Army are laid to rest, sixty thousand of them nameless, we inaugurated what has been rechristened the “Piazza of Stones of Italy”, a carpet of stones, 8,047, the number of the municipalities in Italy, to symbolise the unity of the country in their common sacrifice during the First World War. Apart from its symbolic meaning and unquestionable artistic value, the “Piazza” also reflects what so many of us are finding as we take part in events and encounters throughout the peninsula: the shared memory of an event that cost Italy so much and so greatly determined her very identity.

The Great War was an immense blood bath, a tremendous massacre that marked a break in the history of humanity. It is no wonder that “yesterday’s world” – as the *Belle Époque* was called – vanished in an instant. But to quote Benedict XV, this massacre was “the suicide of Europe”.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, to say “Europe” was to say “the world”. Not only for the territorial extension of its empires and states. One single model of civilisation existed, and it was European civilisation. The century of modernity presented itself as the century of Europe. In April 1900 at the Universal Exhibition of Paris, fifty million visitors wandered through the amazing pavilions of 58 countries. The Suez Canal had been inaugurated thirty years previously. Work went forward apace on the Simplon Tunnel, twenty kilometres under the mountains, the longest railway tunnel in the world until well on in the twentieth century.

These were the years of faith in scientific progress, rewarded by the discoveries and innovations in the widest possible range of fields, from medicine to engineering. Musicians, painters, poets, men and women in the world of entertainment performed and exhibited their own works in the great capitals and in lesser-known towns. The whole of Europe became a single stage (Florian Illies, 1913. *L’Anno Prima della Tempesta*, Venice, Marsilio 2014).

It was this Europe, however, that took the path to suicide between July and August of 1914. The French poet Paul Valéry thus expressed his feelings after the conflict: “We realise now that the abyss of history is large enough to hold us all. We feel that civilisation is as fragile as a life”. And Europe went up in flames. Armies marched to the front through crowd-lined streets amidst enthusiastic applause, in Berlin as in Paris, in London as in Vienna and Saint Petersburg. Artists, scientists, philosophers sang praises to the war as the myth regenerating consciences and the enfeebled spirit of the decadent, materialist years of the *Belle Époque*. Nothing could stop the so-called “last days of humanity”. But when, eventually, the curtain fell on the massacre, the real change was the loss of Europe’s centrality.

What would have happened to Europe without the First World War? If, as they say, history is not made up of ‘ifs’, we can still say that, beyond any other consideration, the Great War opened up the road to inhuman totalitarianisms which, less than thirty years afterwards, were to cause the second world disaster since, as some time ago the American historian Lawrence Sondhaus said, “perhaps the most horrifying legacy of the First World

War is its contribution to the inurement of millions of people to brutality, inhumanity, enormous massacres of war in the industrial age. This inurement made possible the still more gigantic slaughter of the Second World War and, properly considered, was its prerequisite”.

After August 1914 it was to be thirty one years before the breath of peace returned to European soil. And Europe had to wait for the appearance of certain great men, De Gasperi, Adenauer and Schuman, before it could start to think of itself as a common home; this is the dream of continental integration so that “never again” shall one European raise his rifle against another European.

This aim has in part been achieved. The “small peace”, as the historian Alberto Melloni calls it, “after the slaughter of two world wars, three genocides and a number of ethnic cleansings, has succeeded in not sending its youth to the front *en masse*, freeing them from a fate lasting so many generations, since the wars of religion to now”. But if we question ourselves on the “great peace” – which is not only the absence of conflicts more or less asymmetrical but also the existence of conditions favouring the inoffensive co-habitation of peoples, nations, ethnic groups – the answer cannot be so positive and reassuring.

The European Union, economic giant and cradle of the most solid liberal democracies, is forgetting its founding features on the international scenario. And not only far from our horizon. On our very threshold. In our Mediterranean. Crossed by rivers of women, men and children fleeing from the devastations of conflicts, but also from poverty, wretchedness, hunger and certain death. Europe is split in reacting to the humanitarian emergency, and Europe doesn’t seem to take the trouble to really confront the causes and reasons behind these dramatic biblical exoduses.

This scourge is not a contingent episode, a passing trauma, but a historic fact, a season to be taken into account today and tomorrow. In dealing with it, Europe is showing that it has lost its soul, the spirit in which it was envisaged, contrived and sent on its way by its Founding Fathers. In addressing Parliament, the former President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano recently recalled: “For many representatives of the countries of central and northern Europe, Europe and its responsibilities finish there, never reaching across to touch the Mediterranean and the Middle East, one of the focal points of the crisis that today pervades the world”. And Napolitano added: “As never before since 1989, this is perhaps the moment



in which the construction of a new world order is essential, a practical subject for reflection followed by commitment”.

At times – and you will excuse me for this national reference – there is the feeling that Europe, to paraphrase the great Italian actor and dramatist Eduardo de Filippo, is waiting “for the night to go by”. That is not the way it is. And in the meantime other phenomena are on the move; I am thinking of the physical “walls” that have gone up in the Balkans and the cultural “walls” that are growing everywhere with the bricks and mortar of fear: the fear of seeing the well-being we have achieved – whether great or small – put at risk. Fears and distress are not to be demonised. We have to come to terms with them. Let us not forget that the economic crisis is not a remote memory nor – may I add – have the authorities of the Union dealt with it by looking specifically at the needs and emergencies of the people. Indeed too often they have shown a formalistic excess of rigour in budget policies imposed on the single states which have contributed to the impoverishment and fragility of the single economies.

In conclusion, Europe needs a shake-up of courage and vision. The ability to see beyond the next few days, the next few weeks, to recover the founding idea of the common home and of itself as the instrument of peace, not only within its own community. To this end, which of course makes a claim first of all upon the responsibility of politicians, parliaments and governments, I am profoundly convinced that a contribution can be made by all those who, like yourselves in this Conference, are committed to understanding what happened and how it happened that, a hundred years ago, the light of Europe was extinguished.

*Andrea Ciampani*

## A European Perspective in the Historiography of the Great War

The recent development of the foreign Groups of the Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento, a network of scholars whose permanent research horizon is the European dimension of the “long Nineteenth Century”,<sup>1</sup> today brings together historians from twelve European Countries for a common reflection on the Great War under the High Patronage of the Presidency of the Italian Republic. This is certainly no ordinary encounter, made possible through the support of the Historical-scientific Committee for anniversaries of national interest of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and through the partnership of the Austrian Historical Institute in Rome, the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome, the British School at Rome, the École française de Rome, the Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma, the German Historical Institute in Rome, the Hungarian Academy in Rome, the Polish Academy of Sciences in Rome, and the Romanian Institute of Culture and Humanistic Research in Venice,

Thanks to the participation of all those involved in today’s study programme, through the interest of the institutions or personal scientific contribution, it was strongly felt that a Europe-wide research was needed for a new reading of the epoch-making conflict that left such a mark on the continent between 1914 and 1918. The public debate arising in Europe one hundred years after the start of the Great War, after the end of the Cold War and the rise of globalisation, contains issues and approaches that already orientate the narration of world conflicts and their cultural heritage. Multi-media tools and on-line access to documentation on the European experience of the war period, regarding the military fronts and the “internal

1. This is a historiographic approach recently retrieved recalling the historiographic tradition of the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, whose origins are well illustrated in ROMANO UGOLINI’s essay, *L’Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano e la Grande Guerra*, *infra*, pp.

fronts”, offer opportunities for the comparison and the fruitful sharing of topics for investigation, which synergies and research networks alone are able to. In correspondence with such dynamics, historiography can critically deal with certain paradigms as common as they are uncertain, outlining a European perspective in order to understand the roots of the First World War and its repercussions on the history of contemporary Europe.

## 1. Topics and tools for an Italian and European Centenary

In Italy as in Europe, the Great War Centenary was introduced into the public debate with topics and means of communication that begin to distinguish current collective thoughts from previous anniversary occasions, always revealing as to the sensitivity of their own time in their historiographic slants. A new balance has recently been achieved in the attention of historians and public opinion towards the economic interests brought into play by the war effort and towards the collective psychology of the masses with respect to military and political history as compared to previous times; now an overturn of the asymmetry could result in the detriment of the latter. Moreover, the time gap separating the younger generations from the witnesses of the First World War is one reason for the important narrative tension that corresponds to an essential attempt to explain if not to inform.<sup>2</sup>

Among the prevalent topics in the current Italian thought, we would point to the studies on population movement in combat areas, which posed new problems for the belligerent States in handling the territory.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in recent years attention has been more focused on the movement of military contingents among the different fronts on the basis of national and linguistic origins, opening the debate to common parallel views and

2. The cultural issues fuelling such dynamics are also mentioned by NICOLA LABANCA in the *Introduzione* of the *Dizionario storico della Prima guerra mondiale* he edited, Rome-Bari, Editori Laterza, 2014, pp. IX, XX, XXXI.

3. This interest was reflected in the recent international meeting *Profughi. Spostamenti di popolazioni civili nell'Europa della Grande Guerra 1914-1918*, held in Rovereto, November 4-6 2015, presenting events involving the European population of the Baltic Sea, Central Europe, the Alps and the Franco-German front.

opportunities to compare war experiences.<sup>4</sup> Repeatedly, attention has been directed to the damages (individual and collective) inflicted on a society impacted upon by violence.<sup>5</sup> Overall, in Italy too much public interest has concentrated on the repercussions of the conflict on the “internal front”, that is on the social experience of European peoples in the years of the Great War.<sup>6</sup> According to the scholars of contemporary history and international relations, an important tendency seems to appear reconnecting the links between domestic policy and foreign policy to draw up a new scheme of the great socio-political processes, reaction to the fragmentation of the limited analyses offered as specialisms.<sup>7</sup> This is a reminder not to mislay amid into the scientific debate the necessary work to reconstruct the dynamics of continuity and of change that permeated European society in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

In this context, it proved difficult for individual research to take into account all the ample material available on national participation in the Great War in Italy as well; this led to collective publishing initiatives.<sup>9</sup> Together with ever-widening access to historical documentation, this allows the develop-

4. MARCO MONDINI, *La guerra italiana. Partire, raccontare, tornare. 1914-1918*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2014. The movement of the Polish and Romanian soldiers and their memories were given ample space in contributions to the international meeting *Le sorti di una guerra. Memoria e oblio della prima guerra mondiale*, taking place in Rome November 12-13 2015 (now *La Grande Guerra e la Polonia in Europa*, ed. by Andrea Ciampani, Piotr Salwa, Rome, Accademia Polacca delle Scienze Biblioteca e Centro di Studi a Roma, 2016).

5. These topics were widely illustrated in the exhibition *Giù le armi! Impariamo dalla storia della Prima Guerra Mondiale. Pace tra realtà politica e utopia* inaugurated in Rome on October 7, 2014, by the Istituto Storico Austriaco.

6. For an up-dated historiographic overview please see the essay by ESTER CAPUZZO, *infra* pp.

7. Featuring this approach was the study seminar on May 13-14 2015 aiming to integrate the reconstruction of the diplomatic, institutional and socio-political process of Italy's entry into war between the summer of 1914 and the spring of 1915 with a long-term reading of the Italian links between mobilisation of the public and political decision-making: see now *Istituzioni politiche e mobilitazioni di piazza* Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2018 edited by Andrea Ciampani and Domenico M. Bruni. *Radioso maggio. Come l'Italia entrò in guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino 2015 by ANTONIO VARSORI is the result of the reflections of this historian on international relations.

8. Emphatic requests regarding this are found in the important volume *Prima della Tempesta. Continuità e mutamenti nella politica e nella società italiana e internazionale (1901-1914, Atti del LXVI Congresso di storia del Risorgimento*, ed. by Romano Ugolini, Rome, Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 2015.

9. See the items in the *Dizionario storico della Prima guerra mondiale* mentioned above, dealing with cultural, social and religious profiles as well as military and political history profiles in the transformation of the country.

ment of web site initiatives that collect and diffuse the ideas from historiography through public debate. I.T. platforms with timelines and chronograms contribute in the work of analytical presentation of episodes and dynamics in a cultural perspective of high circulation, to satisfy the need to restore some degree of unity to the fragmented account of the conflict.<sup>10</sup> In this way it was possible to support tendencies that in international circles have been started over the last few years and produced important initiatives in the run-up to the Centenary of the Great War.<sup>11</sup>

This is the case of the *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*<sup>12</sup> which introduces itself as an “English-language virtual reference work”. This is an encyclopedic work still underway, coming from a highly ambitious project: “the multi-perspective, open-access knowledge base is the result of an international collaborative project involving more than 1,000 authors, editors, and partners from over fifty countries. More than 1,000 articles will be gradually published”.<sup>13</sup> In the three-part structure of its on-line platform the reader is offered organised articles in the *Themes* and *Regions* sections, as well as the usual Timeline. The topics dealt with are structured in six defined macro-ambits: *Pre-war, Violence, Power, Media, Home Front, Post-war*.<sup>14</sup> The territorial dimension in turn is represented on the site through eleven regional areas: *Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, South-East Europe, Middle East, Africa, South and South-East Asia, East Asia, Australasia, North America, Latin America*.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the extreme flexibility and the helpful internal references making the work a *unicum* in the interna-

10. In this context we will only refer to a limited number among the very many initiatives, the site promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Council, <http://www.centenario1914-1918.it/it>, and that coordinated by the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Trento, <http://www.lagrandeguerrapiu100.it/>.

11. A project by the Historical Italo-Germanic Institute, started in 1913, set out fearing the marginalisation of Italian research in the context of the international initiatives; [http://isigfbk.eu/sites/isigfbk.eu/files/i\\_gm\\_progetto\\_triennale\\_scheda\\_tecnica\\_it.pdf](http://isigfbk.eu/sites/isigfbk.eu/files/i_gm_progetto_triennale_scheda_tecnica_it.pdf).

12. The work can be seen at <http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/home/>.

13. By November 2015 762 of the 1,635 entries planned for the work had been published. With the initiative's promoter, OLIVER JANZ, president of the German Foreign Group of the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, UTE DANIEL, PETER GATRELL, HEATHER JONES, JENNIFER D. KEENE, ALAN KRAMER, BILL NASSON are part of the scientific direction of the encyclopedia.

14. See <http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/themes/>.

15. As at <http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/regions/>.

tional historiographic scenario, a scientific evaluation of the project will be possible only when it is completed.<sup>16</sup>

The set-up of this publishing initiative, however, already makes it possible to offer considerations on the significant trends of international, European and national historiography. First of all, the editors of the international encyclopedia in their introduction underline that the conflict, causing over nine million deaths,<sup>17</sup> was from the very start defined as a world war since it was a conflict among European powers, states and empires dominating the world: “The term ‘world war’ was already occasionally in use before 1914, though it specifically connoted a war between the major European powers. The First World War was soon designated a ‘world war’ in this Eurocentric sense shortly after it began. This did not refer first and foremost to a ‘global war’, but rather to a ‘war of world-historical significance’. One therefore frequently simply spoke of the ‘Great War’, a designation that persists to this day in many countries. Historians adopted the term ‘First World War’ from contemporaries in its thoroughly ambiguous and Eurocentric meaning.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus the European character of the conflict is emphasised, at times blurred in public debate by the global dimension later featured in the military clash and its political, cultural and socio-economic consequences. Considering the factors (demographic, social and political, and geopolitical) of Europe at the height of its development on the eve of the vast

16. The working plan is already defined in its general outline: the entry *Italy* has not yet been published; likewise many further interesting entries are still awaited, such as that on *Centeneray 1914-2014*. However, some *chiaroscuro* areas have already emerged, as is inevitable in such initiatives; Labanca himself, declaring that the idea of his *Dizionario storico* is indebted to the German project, points to certain “severities and incomplete points” in the encyclopedia’s structure; *Dizionario storico* cit., p. XXX.

17. In Italy approximately six hundred thousand soldiers are estimated to have died and approximately nine hundred and fifty thousand were wounded, with the addition of up to seven hundred thousand civilian casualties; ANTOINE PROST, *War Losses, in 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer D. Keene, Alan Kramer, Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10271>. See also RUEDIGER OVERMANS, *Kriegsverluste*, in *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg*, ed. by Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, Irina Renz, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2003, p. 663; see also PIERLUIGI SCOLÈ, *I morti*, in *Dizionario storico* cit., pp.178-191.

18. *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction*, in *1914-1918-online* cit.

military mobilisation, as has long been known, telling the history of the First World War therefore also entails tracking the causes of “Europe’s weakening” compared to “competing” continents.<sup>19</sup> As seen in the animated interactive maps in the *Regions* section of the *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, in the Great War it is European territory that forms the determining “theatre”, a term semantically important in the work to introduce the global dimension of the conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Taking into consideration a number of recent historiographic profiles, it was decided to undertake a new approach within this scenario: “The encyclopedia aims to portray the First World War across its entire spectrum from a transnational point of view as a pan-European and global conflict that extended beyond the year 1918”.<sup>21</sup> This passage undoubtedly reveals certain distinctive, partly contradictory, features in the cultural panorama of public debate on this Centenary. The first such hint is the recourse to the term pan-European, used as of the end of the twentieth century to define socio-political scenarios including post-Communist Countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the transition marking the end of the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup>

Requests to join the European Union leading to its expansion at the beginning of the Millennium have changed its significance in a sort of Europe that rediscovered its deep roots over time. As the project launched in 2014 on the First World War<sup>23</sup> shows, while Russia is again spinning the web of its presence within European space before and after the 1917 revolutions, the term thus indicates the remodelling of paradigms that reached maturity at the time of the Cold War, offering distinct stratifications of the continent. An inclination, therefore, different from the transnational historiographic approach, which assumes comparisons among nations and re-

19. Already to be seen in PIERRE RENOUVIN, *Histoire des relations internationales, Tome VI, Le XIX Siècle, De 1871 à 1914, L'Apogée de l'Europe*, Paris, Hachette, 1955, pp. 13-14.

20. MICHELLE MOYD, *Extra-European Theatres of War*, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, cit., DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10318>.

21. *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit.

22. The recourse of the U.S. historians to a pan-European perspective is significant for a reading of Russian events, as indicated by GIOVANNA CIGLIANO, *La Russia nella Prima guerra mondiale: percorsi della storiografia russa e angloamericana sul fronte orientale*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII, new series (2015), n. 3, pp. 303-321.

23. *Rossija v Pervoj mirovoj vojne. 1914-1918. Enciklopedija v trech tomach*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2014, recalled in GIOVANNA CIGLIANO, *La Prima Guerra Mondiale nella recente storiografia russa, infra*, p.



gions but does not identify itself with them, rather proposing intersections and interdependencies.<sup>24</sup> It seems to connect more to suggestions from a global history fuelled by ideas connected to the socio-political upheavals following on 1989,<sup>25</sup> often superimposed on a more long-term criticism of a Eurocentric approach.

On the other hand, the penetration of an Anglo-American view of the historiographic debate emerges in the pages of a number of programmatic contributions to the encyclopedia, such as the essay *Historiography 1918-Today*, briefly presenting proposals already emerging in the sequence of different generations of historians of the First World War: "There have been four generations of historical writing about the 1914-1918 war. The first was composed of contemporaries who either fought in the war or helped run it, and spanned the period 1914-1939. Their focus was political and military. The second emerged in the 1960s, and focused on the history of societies. The third emerged in the later 1970s. Its emphasis was on cultural history, and turned to study the victims of war. The fourth generation is transnational; it studies war from a global, rather than a European perspective, reflecting the end of the bipolar standoff of the Cold War."<sup>26</sup>

Assuming a European (or even a pan-European) angle, there might be some discussion regarding the definition of the second generation as "fifty years on" or even the third, qualified as the "Vietnam generation". Above all, the "global outlook" featured in the fourth generation is hardly compatible with the transnational approach, considering that "the term 'global' describes both the tendency to write about the war in more than European terms and to see the conflict as trans-European, trans-Atlantic, and beyond".<sup>27</sup> Actually the encyclopedia entrusts the "comparative global design" with the aim of identifying "knowledge gaps and to thereby stim-

24. This historiographic approach is beginning to make its way in Italy too with implications yet to be adequately developed, as indicated in *National Identities and Transnational European Élités*, ed. by Andrea Ciampani, Rita Tolomeo, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2015, pp. 5-13.

25. See now *Storia internazionale, transnazionale, globale: una discussione*, ed. by Mario Del Pero and Guido Formigoni, monographical issue of *Ricerche di storia politica*, a. XIX (20016), n. 3.

26. So wrote JAY WINTER, editor of the three volumes of the *Cambridge History of the First World War* published in 2014, under *Historiography 1918-Today*, in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War* cit., DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10498>. Article last modified 22 October 2015. This generational approach, compared with the Italian story, is also dealt with in the *Dizionario storiografico* cit., pp. XXI.

27. J. WINTER *Historiography 1918-Today* cit.



ulate further research”.<sup>28</sup> The long-awaited solution to the historiographic clash between national and imperialist perspectives may thus paradoxically turn into an elusive “western” profile prolonging the segmentation of the European regional areas resulting after the Iron Curtain, still reflected in the *Regions* in which the encyclopedia somewhat uncertainly divides Europe.<sup>29</sup> Lastly, in this dynamic it is difficult to account for the interdependencies contained in the continental profile of the Great War, considered essential for an understanding of its reasons. Meanwhile, the risk is to open the way to repetitive, crystallised and uniform (if not homologated) readings, mortifying the increasing heuristic capacity of European historiographical cultures.

However, it is in the movement of concrete research that interest is shown towards a transnational reading of the dynamics – political, social, economic and cultural – that were European features on the eve of the Great War; they accompanied Europe on its path through the tragic war period, and they characterised post-war dynamics. Now at the Centenary, this path can benefit from the more mature awareness of an inter-regional Europe beyond the confines set by events involving the changing countries. Recognised also at Community level as a considerable part of “European” territory, this cross-border space could offer historical investigations, useful conceptual and instrumental resources to challenge the absence of a European perspective on the Great War in the research and innovation projects of the Union. Clearly on choosing such a point of view, an ample horizon opens out with further studies to gather the queries on the legacy of the war in Europe looming during the Centennial reflection. In order to take steps in that direction, however, we need to recover the profundity of the

28. *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit. The Editorial Board of the encyclopedia initially included over ninety experts from twenty different countries, with scholars predominantly from the U.S., Britain and Germany: there were six Russian scholars, five from France, Austria and Ireland, and four Italians (Antonio Gibelli, Nicola Labanca, Marco Mondini, Oswald Überegger).

29. In this sense it is revealing that the encyclopedia must necessarily distinguish between the definition of the European regions in the map of the globe on the home page, constructed on the 1918 geo-political situation, and the set-up of the present states in the pages on the same European regions, based on the current frontiers of the European countries. In such an uncertain context, for example, there is a singular absence of articles on Italy in the on-line map of *Western Europe*, and the positioning of the contributions on Poland is in doubt between *Eastern Europe* and *Central Europe*.

factors that led to the First World War and to emphasise the acceleration it brought to the “great transformation”.

## 2. Difficulties of a paradigm and the rediscovery of the nineteenth-century roots (not only pre-war)

A certain degree of blackout of the process leading to the outbreak of the Great War is connected to the intermittent reappearance in the public debate of the story of a “thirty-year civil war” started by the First World War and ended by the Second.<sup>30</sup> This reading, even recently, has been seriously questioned: “There is no doubt that the time of the world wars was the time of the most intensely violent political conflict in the history of modern Europe, marked by numerous civil wars, a multitude of great and small armed insurrections, and innumerable acts of political violence. Was it also the time of a lasting ‘European civil war’? If so, who were the contenders? It has been at times suggested that for Europe the two world wars were themselves civil wars, as some nations mobilised against others and all were part of a common culture, thus forming a civil war within that culture. Moreover, has the Second World War to be considered as a civil war between Fascists and anti-Fascists in each country?”<sup>31</sup> The paradigm of a *European Civil War* seems anything but solid although it remains an open

30. The first perception of a twentieth-century war, coming from those who knew the suffering of the conflict that started in 1939, was launched as a historiographic interpretation in the Eighties and presented as a paradigm with differing, even opposing, evaluations. An overall orientation on this question in *La Guerra civile europea dei trent'anni: una rivisitazione*, ed. by Guido Formigoni, Paolo Pombeni, monographic issue of *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII (2015), n. 2.

31. STANLEY G. PAYNE, *Una «guerra civile dei trent'anni in Europa»? Alcune considerazioni*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII (2015), n. 2, p. 145. A broader discussion in STANLEY G. PAYNE, *Civil War in Europe. 1905-1949*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Gabriele Ranzato's criticism is more radical: “The two definitions of the period encompassing the world wars, ‘the thirty-year war’ and the ‘European civil war’, whether taken singly or overlapping, do not seem able to summarise a full explanation of the tragic ordeals undergone by the populations over that period of time. And ultimately the former, which only underlines the continuity between the two wars without alluding to any common denominator relative to motives, remains in all its modesty more fitting than the latter; however evocative, the latter is not able to offer a convincing interpretation, not only for the entire period, but perhaps not even for the Second World War alone.” GABRIELE RANZATO, *La guerra dei trent'anni come ascesa e crollo dei nazionalismi aggressivi*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII (2015), n. 2, p. 157.

question,<sup>32</sup> involving First World War historians as well as those present in the international encyclopedia.<sup>33</sup>

However, the critical approach to the notion of a “European civil war”, as it was already perceived by “a number of the protagonists of the 1914 trench slaughter”, enables us to see how “the 1914 war (for Italy, the 1915 war) did not divide people’s native countries, initially it divided Europe”.<sup>34</sup> A new type of war seemed to cut across European society when the States started to portray themselves as bearers of an “irreconcilable clash between opposing nationalisms”: “nationalisms built on State competition countered and ripped up the differing parts of that common European civilisation that was the heritage of the continent’s distant tradition.”<sup>35</sup> We have already seen how the growing “spiral of violence” accompanying the outbreak of the First World War came as the “consequence of an exasperated struggle between the ‘élites and the institutions of the *Ancien régime*’ on the one hand, the supporters of a new order on the other”.<sup>36</sup> In the same view of a “civil war” between Bolshevism and National Socialism, it has been pointed out how both contenders played upon an “idea of Europe”: Hitler, the “destroyer of the European liberal bourgeois imposed by Versailles”, apparently intended to aim at the destruction of “bourgeois Europe since it was the designated victim of Communism”.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the need to understand the period between the two wars requires an in-depth investigation into long-term processes to get to the roots of a changed conception of the relations between society and State on the part of European decision-making groups.<sup>38</sup> A recent study on the connection

32. On Italy, see the new proposition by E. TRAVERSO, *A ferro e fuoco. La guerra civile europea 1914-1945*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007.

33. Jay Winter himself, for example, focused his Yale lessons on *Europe in the Age of Total War, 1914-1945*.

34. GUIDO FORMIGONI, PAOLO POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945? Note introduttive*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII (2015), n. 2, p. 130.

35. *Ibidem*.

36. Recalling ARNO MAYER, CHRISTOPH CORNELISSEN stresses this in *La guerra civile europea dei trent’anni. Riflessioni su un topos storico-politico*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII (2015), n. 2, p. 139.

37. GIAN ENRICO RUSCONI in the *Presentazione* to ERNST NOLTE, *La Guerra Civile europea 1917-1945. Nazional socialismo e Bolscevismo*, Milan, BUR, 2008, (first Italian edition Sansoni, 2004), p. XX.

38. Today’s sensibility shows a widespread unawareness of European society in the road undertaken on the eve of the Great War; CHRISTOPHER CLARK, *I sonnambuli. Come l’Europa si avviò alla Grande guerra*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2013.

between social order and international order in Europe, focusing on the dynamic relationship between liberalism and the materialisation of the Leviathan State, has highlighted the watershed separating the system of the Congress of Vienna from the Bismarck era: “The period 1866-1871 was an important turning point in European history. In a short time the balance of power on the European continent changed radically”.<sup>39</sup> While a “condition guaranteed by law” withered away accompanied by “a lack of respect for the positive right of the treaties”, the monarchic-constitutional states proceeded towards greater control over collective and individual life: “The nation state had become not only the cornerstone of the international politics, but also the all-determining factor in domestic politics. It dominated all spheres of social life and claimed the right to deploy all citizens in furthering its goals. In the time of war, it controlled even the life and death of its subjects through a process of militarization, including the introduction of personal conscription. The State was seen as both the source of law and the true conscience of the nation.” It is understandable therefore that such a reading might project the process found in the second half of the nineteenth century across the first half of the twentieth: “The Leviathan had arisen from beneath the waves and was preparing for the starring role it would later play in the fascist and communist utopian states”.<sup>40</sup>

Recalling also the work *Wo ist Europa's Zukunft?*, published in 1871 by the Gustav Von Blome defined by De Gasperi as “bel tipo d'européo”, the study underlines how the idea of Europe was coming to a crisis in that transition.<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to note that this recent international perspective is singularly confirmed in works that were remote in time and cultural set-up, such as Croce's *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono*. Writing in the inter-war period, Croce recalled that “the extension” of the idea of freedom among European people (contained in the process affirming the request

39. EMIEL LAMBERTS, *Het gevecht met Leviathan. Een verhaal over de politieke ordening in Europa (1815-1965)*, Amsterdam, Bert Bakker/ Prometheus, 2011; the citation now from the English volume, ID., *The Struggle with Leviathan. Social Responses to the Omnipotens of the State 1815-1965*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2016, p. 113.

40. *Ivi*, p. 114.

41. *Ivi*, pp. 179-180 and 320. A believer in the tradition of nobility, Count Gustav von Blome (1829-1906) was born in the Danish duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, converted to Catholicism, entered Habsburg diplomacy and was in Vienna, Petersburg, Paris, Hamburg, Bremen and Munich; leaving his diplomatic career in 1866, he was then a protagonist of conservative European networks, living in Austria, Switzerland and Italy.

for constitutions and national independence) already in the mid-nineteenth century achieved an outline of a sort of “United States of Europe”. Following various “stops and deviations” and “definitively after 1870”, that idea “joined the utopias, so that it was either no longer spoken of by serious-minded people, or it caused mirth, sometimes as *a naïve, vanished dream of youth, at other times*, scathingly, as a childish idea”.<sup>42</sup> At last, after “certain perfecting touches by the state on the principle of nationality”, when “the start of imbalance in European balance” became apparent in the “dispute between Germany and England”, it seemed difficult for Bismarck’s heirs to contrast the *Weltpolitik* “without reneging on its example and teaching, without deserving the sarcasm of its bitter realism”.<sup>43</sup>

Renewed doubt on the transformations and the destiny of European liberalism emerges in full force: “From the second half of the nineteenth century, the centralised nation state would be the most common expression of liberal statism”.<sup>44</sup> At the turn of the century a new debate arose on what was happening to society, what was happening to the nations and what was happening to the State, essential for a political tradition intended to maintain the centrality of the freedoms of the rule of law and, at the same time, to choose routes to strengthen the liberal institutions. All in all, we find ourselves once more back at an important juncture for contemporary historiography, related to the dynamics that changed liberal-national aspiration into nationalistic affirmation, reducing the spaces for freedom of civilian society in the domestic policy of European states and fuelling their expansionistic tendencies in foreign policy.<sup>45</sup>

A reconstruction of the profile of the international relations among European states also confirms the needful examination of the historical depth of the factors in the run-up to the war. In fact, although there is no

42. BENEDETTO CROCE’s book, *Storia d’Europa nel secolo decimonono*, Bari, Laterza, was published in 1932; the quotations refer to the fifth edition of 1942, pp. 323-324. In a singular analogy to Croce’s remarks, Lamberts underlines how Von Blome was taunted by his diplomatic colleagues for his attitude, the antipodes of Bismarck’s approach, as an “interesting eccentric”; E. LAMBERTS, *The Struggle with Leviathan*, cit. p. 98.

43. B. CROCE, *Storia d’Europa* cit., pp. 328-332.

44. E. LAMBERTS, *The Struggle with Leviathan* cit., p. 13.

45. This is a question permeating the whole of that European political society that reached the First World War, impacting on the entire continent from north to south, keeping pride of place even for the neutral countries, as shown in the interventions of the historiography of Belgium and Greece by DUMOULIN and GUIDA, in our discussion, *infra*.

need to highlight the importance of the nineteenth-century evolution of the Triple Alliance, we cannot fail to recall that the Triple Entente was the result of a process that took form from the Franco-Russian agreements of the last ten years of the nineteenth century and the bilateral Anglo-French agreements of the first ten years of the twentieth century. As we know, the origin of the world war is attributed by some to the Moroccan crises, by others to the war in Libya, by others again to the Balkan wars: we therefore need to place “the war’s conventional periodization into perspective. The First World War was not only a global war, but also an especially long one. In many respects, the war already began before 1914, primarily in the Balkans and in peripheral colonies like Libya.”<sup>46</sup>

Projecting the “long nineteenth century” onto the first twenty years of the twentieth (far from being simply an “ante-war” account) is a determining factor to understand the first world conflict and the criticism of the possible interpretative key of the “Thirty-Year War”. In fact, it represents an invitation to carefully reconsider the complex stretches of land, physical and mental, of that “first” of a Europe that would never be the same again after the conflict.<sup>47</sup> The Great War thus retrieves suitable identity as a field for study, focusing on an overall interpretation of contemporary Europe and delving more deeply into the great post-war transformations, at times so isolated from the past and busy in predicting later historical events to make us forget its pre-war roots.<sup>48</sup>

### 3. The profound post-transformation as the outcome of the “great acceleration” of the end-of-century processes

Having recuperated the particularity of the Great War thanks to a long overview of the history of a Europe overwhelmed by a “total war among Na-

46. 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit.

47. Also in the opinion of EMILIO GENTILE, *L'Apocalisse della modernità. La Grande Guerra per l'uomo nuovo*, Milan, Mondadori, 2008.

48. In this aspect, of interest is the shadow cone thrown by the October Revolution on the First World War and the immense transformation of the tsarist empire, not in Russian historiography alone; as well as STEPHEN M. NORRIS, *A War of Images. Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945*, Dekalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 2006, p. 162, see the thoughts of G. CIGLIANO, *La Russia nella Prima guerra mondiale* cit., pp. 305-311.

tion-States and the stakes being their own survival or their own ‘victory’“,<sup>49</sup> it becomes easier to identify the directions of its post-war period. Without this approach, the swarm of quakes – wartime, socio-political – following the climax of the shake-up becomes incomprehensible (or ignored): “even without a more extensive definition, the year 1918 did not signify the end of hostilities, for numerous additional wars and armed conflicts followed that were directly related to the war and which to some extent continued through the early 1920s. The list of these violent conflicts is long. It extends from the Russian Civil War, which cost more lives in the region than the First World War, to the many conflicts after 1918 in East-Central Europe and to the Greco-Turkish War, which did not come to an end until the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923”.<sup>50</sup> This is an observation prompting careful consideration on the confines of European space in the Twenties, in which the Mediterranean Sea (from the Adriatic to the Aegean to the Tyrrhenian Sea) maintained its major importance. At the same time, this connection throws light upon the rising European crisis of the nineteenth-century State, not only in the vanishing Empires but also in the Nations victorious in the conflict, in the reconstructed States such as Poland, or in totally new ones, such as Czecho-Slovakia, making us wonder whether the post-war period can be intended as “a peak of ‘European modernity’” and “a sign of its contradictions or of its (irreversible?) crisis”.<sup>51</sup> In any case, as we know, the outcome of the war provided Wilson’s proposal with a chance to reformulate criteria to legitimise European states and to offer their relations an order in stability and safety: after the conflict “the European project is absorbed in a universal plan” that brought into light the decline of Europe.<sup>52</sup>

As for the decades previous to the Great War, therefore, any understanding of the post-war years assumes an interpretative horizon connecting international dynamics and European socio-political development. Again, recently an international history manual underlined how the First World War was a “a break as radical as it was dramatic both in the domestic events of numerous nations and more in general in international relations”; at the same time, it recalled how “political, social and economic phenomena

49. G. FORMIGONI, P. POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?* cit., p. 131. See also GIAN ENRICO RUSCONI, *1914. Attacco a Occidente*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2014.

50. 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit.

51. G. FORMIGONI, P. POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?* cit., p. 135.

52. P. RENOUVIN, *Histoire des relations internationales* cit., pp. 161-162.



arising between the end of the nineteenth century and 1914 came to a head or were considerably accelerated during the conflict”.<sup>53</sup> The need to express this idea, in effect, illuminates the very features of the change caused by the Great War.

There is no doubt that the social transformation processes starting in the second half of the nineteenth century had a relevant role in the post-war period: “the circulation of information, the emancipation of the female population and of the masses, the intensification of the networks and means of communication, technological progress, the incremental growth in availability of consumer products, the development of social assistance networks, are some of the phenomena too well known to require further explanation”.<sup>54</sup> The Great European War did not suppress the dynamics in act just before. It handed them on, changed, to the post-war period, consistently with the generational and psychological fact of the survivors of the fronts. “When today we read what was printed in German books, leaflets and newspapers between 1912 and 1914, we get the impression of already being at war”. In these words, written in 1931, Croce already saw at the beginning of the twentieth century the exaltation of “the moralising virtue of war and blood, the selection it makes of the strongest and the best, the regeneration of wearied peoples through that cruel baptism of blood, the civilisation that war only can promote, the strength it alone possesses to save humanity from stagnation, from ‘being tamed’”.<sup>55</sup>

It is often recalled how in the post-war period the “myth of ‘decadence’”, already “so strong in the Europe of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century” was listed “among the causes that made the governing classes of the time undertake the adventure of war”. The experience of the first world conflict, however, “did not bring about that ‘rebirth’ expected by those seeing war as the midwife of civilisations”, it rather strengthened “a culture of human fragility and the weaknesses of political systems against which the utopias (of right and left) will indeed rise up yet without actually succeeding in showing a retrieval of faith in the ‘positive’ virtues proposed in the nineteenth century”.<sup>56</sup> It has been

53. ANTONIO VARSORI, *Storia internazionale. Dal 1919 ad oggi*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2015, p. 19.

54. G. FORMIGONI, P. POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?*, cit., p. 135.

55. B. CROCE, *Storia d'Europa*, cit., pp. 334-335.

56. G. FORMIGONI, P. POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?* cit., p. 131.



noted that the nationalisation of the masses itself (with all its accompanying political, cultural, social and paramilitary mobilisation), was “a process which antedated the 1914-1918 conflict but which accelerated radically thereafter”.<sup>57</sup>

All in all, the processes that were already present before the conflict reappeared as changed after the war; in this sense it is quite true that “the world war not only accelerated the process of nation-building, but also encouraged the radicalization of ideologies”.<sup>58</sup> This is a very broad statement, not limited to introducing the establishment of Bolshevism, Fascism or Nazism; it rather means the abandonment in the post-war period of the liberal Risorgimento structure and the materialisation of the Leviathan-State, altering the modernity/barbarity<sup>59</sup> relationship and leading to the secularisation of the public sphere in the totalitarian ambition to penetrate the private sphere.<sup>60</sup>

The Great War brought “to light a new political cycle, in which the tradition of European constitutionalism was challenged by the irruption onto the public stage of the masses, the widespread acceptance of a political model indebted to the war experience and disposed to apply wide-scale violence to achieve its own aims, and in general a radicalisation of the clashes which would lead to new authoritarianisms.”<sup>61</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century there was a widespread idea that the State crisis was due to a centrifugal social dynamic which should be inverted to restore dedication to the state to the centre: in Italy as well, corporative ideas were fuelled by reading an “antithesis between State and society”, caused by “communities which, in order to achieve their own interest, did not hesitate to inflict a death wound on those conditions that are essential for the

57. Thus J. WINTER, *Historiography 1918-Today* cit., p. 10, recalling that the work by GEORGE MOSSE, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*, New York, Howard Fertig, 1975, had in France inspired studies on the *culture de guerre*.

58. 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit.

59. Besides the texts mentioned, see also ANGELO VENTRONE, *La seduzione totalitaria: guerra, modernità, violenza politica (1914-1918)*, Rome, Donzelli, 2003.

60. As well as Lamberts, see also the perspective by CHARLES S. MAIER, *Leviathan 2.0. Inventing Modern Statehood*, Cambridge (Ma.), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014, formerly part of the work *A World Connecting 1870-1945*, ed. by Emily S. Rosenberg, Cambridge (Ma.), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012.

61. G. FORMIGONI, P. POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?* cit., p. 133.

health and the life of the State”.<sup>62</sup> Again Croce pointed out that at the end of the nineteenth century the political government looked no longer at the people but at the “masses”, a “conglomeration, blind and impulsive, or docile towards impulse, of the crowd, a beast that applauds or yells, a beast that anyone may adopt to his own intent”. Nationalists and imperialists, had thus hypocritically dealt with liberal ideology just as they had with Catholicism, that is “as Catholic atheists”, as “liberals and humanitarians unscrupulous of liberty and humanity”.<sup>63</sup> It is in this context, not only Italian but European, that the most profound meaning of today’s acknowledgement may be found: “Extreme nationalism, however, also spread and became more radicalized in many Countries due to the war. [...] While these trends certainly existed before the war, the conflict nonetheless accelerated and consolidated these processes decisively”.<sup>64</sup>

Often used to introduce the post-World War I period, the reference to the “great acceleration” actually takes on an essential role in seeing the First World War as a factor of profound change in European society. The latter underwent pressure from the contraction of time and the intensity of the events that marked collective and personal experience during the Great War at all levels, socio-economic, cultural and formative. The recurrent emphasis on process acceleration, which altered the significance of processes in altering their development rates, ends up by revealing something that ultimately constitutes a decisive feature of the First World War. It thus becomes possible to provide European history with occasionally forgotten connections between the post-war period and the *fin du siècle*, and to set a better focus on “at what points and under what circumstances the people of the time undertook the road towards the abyss of the Second World War”,<sup>65</sup> when the world Powers still reckoned on “what an addition to Europe the North American Republic is”<sup>66</sup> in what, with hindsight, we may call a magnificent misconception. With this readjustment to the basically European nature

62. Thus Vittorio Emanuele Orlando in 1910, now in PIER LUIGI BALLINI, *La riforma elettorale del 1912 in Parlamento: “la necessità parlamentare delle transazioni”*, in *Prima della Tempesta* cit., p. 377.

63. B. CROCE, *Storia d'Europa* cit., pp. 338 and 346.

64. 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit.

65. C. CORNELISSEN, *La guerra civile europea dei trent'anni. Riflessioni su un topos storico-politico* cit., p. 144.

66. B. CROCE, *Storia d'Europa* cit., p. 344.

of the Great War, taking into account the enormous influential legacy of national historiographies so long in conflict among themselves, and the gigantic shadow of 1917 before and after the historiography educated by the Cold War,<sup>67</sup> today we find ourselves facing the absence of “a European historiography” on the world war.

4. Political necessity and obscured reality of a European perspective; ideas for a transnational historiography of the Great War

The public debate accompanying national, bilateral and multilateral initiatives of the countries that had experienced the First World War<sup>68</sup> indicates some difficulty on the part of the European Union in facing the memory of the conflict; this difficulty arose in an exceptional historical process until recently featuring successive requests to join from the Countries of the continent.<sup>69</sup> On the approach to the present anniversary, the European Parliament held a working session to recall that peace, security and stability cannot be taken for granted once and for all.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the outset of the community path has repeatedly been set within a process aiming to “put an end to the frequent bloody wars between neighbouring

67. Above all now, the observations on the Forgotten War (Zabytaja vojna) and the Patriotic War (Otečestvennaja vojna) from G. CIGLIANO, *La Prima Guerra Mondiale* cit., infra, pp.

68. Consider the plans to rebuild bridges and heal injuries, such as that of the Italian government at the memorial monument of Redipuglia, July 6 2014 with the performance of Verdi's *Requiem* by Riccardo Muti, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, the Presidents of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, and Croatia Ivo Josipovic, and the President of the Austrian Federal Council Ana Blatnik: <http://www.centenario1914-1918.it/it/2014/07/06/concerto-di-muti-redipuglia-le-vittime-di-guerra>. With reference again to initiatives promoted in Italy, see the photo-documentary exhibition on *I Romeni e la Grande Guerra*, opened in Rome in December 2014 at the wish of the Romanian Embassy in Italy, curated by the Istituto Rumeno di Cultura e di ricerca umanistica di Venezia, in recognition of the Romanian Legion constituted within the Italian army; likewise the meeting promoted by the Istituto storico austriaco in Rome on “*Sacro egoismo*” o “*fellonia senza pari*”? *Austria e Italia nella prima guerra mondiale*, held in Rome, May 27-29 2015.

69. Croatia became the twenty-eighth member state of the Union in 2013; however, as this piece is being written there is the prospect of a British exit from the EU in 2019.

70. The debate in the European Parliament was held on April 16 2014; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/it/news-room/content/20140415STO44548/html/Centenario-della-Prima-Guerra-Mai-considerare-pace-e-stabilit%C3%A0-come-acquisita>.

countries that culminated in the Second World War”.<sup>71</sup> Is not possible to avoid perceiving in these words a certain distance not only with the scientific research, but with the feelings of European public opinion as well. We are warned that the fear of war was not enough to stop the “sleep-walkers” who plunged into the drama of the 1914 summer. Already in the 1990s “it became apparent that to understand the integration of Europe at the end of the 20th century, you had to understand the disintegration of Europe at its beginning”.<sup>72</sup>

In Trieste, one of the city-symbols of twentieth-century Europe, questions were asked regarding the silence among the establishments of Brussels on the First World War, as if the issue was to be ignored with “a tacit agenda”, “for fear of annoying” one or another of the Countries still at war.<sup>73</sup> The theme of political responsibility for the war, featured in the first historiographic production from the European States on the conflict, in fact seems to loom silently over the considerations of the European leaders, while elsewhere it is discussed openly; *The Great WWI Controversy: Who Was to Blame?*<sup>74</sup> Clearly, a return to the question of the origins of the conflict isolated from an overall view of the history of European society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will do nothing but rekindle old disputes among the States: “One central focus of this first of four generations of historical writing on the Great War was war origins. This is hardly surprising, given the explosive nature of the Allied claim in article 231 of the Peace Treaty of 1919 that Germany bore sole responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Many historians saw it as their patriotic duty to

71. See the official site of the European Union, in the essential information on the EU: [http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index\\_it.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index_it.htm).

72. J. WINTER, *Historiography 1918-Today* cit., p. 11,

73. PAOLO RUMIZ, *Europa. Viaggio sui fronti degli altri*, participating in the cycle *Lezioni di storia – Guerra 1914-1918*, held at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste on April 26 2015, now in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoWJQN2rdLk>. The distinguished journalist wrote a book on sites in memory of the Europeans who fell in the Great War, following the traces of the odyssey of people from the Trento and Giulia regions called to fight for the Austro-Hungarian Empire; PAOLO RUMIZ, *Come i cavalli che dormono in piedi*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2015.

74. This was the presentation of the debate held on November 24 2014 at the CES of Harvard University: “The origins of the First World War have aroused deep controversy for decades. On the centennial of the war, there is renewed interest in revisiting its origins. Was Germany to blame? Did Europe’s statesmen sleepwalk to war?”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTUSqcz1YE4>.

justify the peaceful intentions of their nation in the war crisis of 1914”.<sup>75</sup> Distinctly ‘acquittal’ profiles or generic co-responsibilities of the European states, relieving any political embarrassment or possible tension, may be of interest for globalist or fragmented historiographic approaches, which however do not satisfy the need now arising to understand the historical reasons for the Great War in an overall vision of Europe as a whole.

The idea of following itineraries of committed European partnerships in support of historical research today seems practicable: this would appear from the experience of the *Europeana Collections 1914-1918*, an important project financed by the European Union. Thanks to a network of libraries in eight European countries, since 2014 this project, in digital form on an I.T. platform, has made available an extraordinary amount of material and sources on the history of the Great War.<sup>76</sup>

However, moving from the collection of materials to their fruition through research, unexpected difficulties crop up. Thus, taking part in the financing line *Reflective-5.2025. The cultural heritage of war in contemporary History* of the praiseworthy framework program for research and innovation *Horizon 2020*, you may happen to be told, regarding the controversial profiles of European collective memory, that “the WW1 memory is not always a matter of international memory conflicts chiefly because some of the war participants ceased to exist”.<sup>77</sup> Apart from the unfortunate expression, it is not difficult to see that the programme referent has paid greater attention to dynamics between states than to the experience of the European society. Just when a Europe retrieved after the end of the Iron Curtain seems to gather a perceptible identity from the mobility of people, students and workers, we see a “weakness in memory” within the institutions of the Community,<sup>78</sup> remote from the teaching of Croce according to which “nations are not natural data but states of consciousness

75. J. WINTER, *Historiography 1918-Today* cit., p. 4.

76. For Italy, it was the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche (ICCU), that coordinated the Italian digital contents supplied, among others, by the Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina and by the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano; cfr. <http://www.14-18.it/>.

77. See <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/reflective-5-2015.html>

78. P. RUMIZ, *Europa. Viaggio sui fronti degli altri*, cit.

and historical formations”.<sup>79</sup> The promotion of wider European research could favour common awareness of the dynamics through which the Great War transformed socio-political territories and the cultural horizons of the whole of Europe.<sup>80</sup>

With the retrieval of the historical depth of events, the encounter and mixture among European peoples constitute the field of a widespread sensibility of comparative research, illuminating the cultural and social itineraries of populations, whether in movement or resident in local multi-ethnic cross-borders networks, it is highlighted a complex play of national identities and individual and collective solidarity. The reconstruction of the cult of memory may come to mind; it has fuelled collective initiatives “which treated the Great War as a transnational catastrophe”.<sup>81</sup>

This leads us to understand how a transnational historical interpretation of the Great War cannot be confined to one single reading of one frontier area, even the French-German area (which has produced initiatives such as those involving Anglo-American scholars); nor can it continue to be used instrumentally to resolve partial aspects of the war experience, such as those, however interesting, relating to refugees. If it is true that the transnational approach “includes making a comparison between the participating nations and regions, as well as considering their diverse entanglements and interdependencies”,<sup>82</sup> its dimension on multiple levels prevails over its comparative character. “Transnational history does not start with one state and move on to others, but takes multiple levels of historical experience as given, levels which are both below and above the national level”.<sup>83</sup> Only in this sense, in clarifying the terms of the passage to be undertaken with respect to international and global history, may we say that if “diffusion and multiplication of knowledge and comparative research could lead to

79. Thus B. CROCE, *Storia d'Europa* cit., p. 358, for whom the Neapolitans had become Italians, as the French and the Germans “will rise to being Europeans”.

80. P. RUMIZ, *Europa. Viaggio sui fronti degli altri* cit.

81. We may think of JAY WINTER, *Designing a War Museum. Some Reflections on Representations of War and Combat*, in *Memory, Mourning, Landscape*, ed. by Elizabeth Anderson, Avril Maddrell, Kate McLoughlin, Alana Vincent, Amsterdam - New York, Rodopi, 2010, pp. 1-20.

82. 1914-1918-online. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War. Introduction* cit., p. 6.

83. Thus J. WINTER, *Historiography 1918-Today* cit.

rethinking and maybe even new opinions, the future of the history of the Great War passes through the narrow gateway of transnational history”.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, in its complex nineteenth-twentieth century historical identity, it is Europe itself that is the field of choice for transnational investigation for the scholar interested in the huge transformation of the First World War. The Inter-regional and Euro-regional dimensions are today so obvious as to have been reflected since the 1970s in the set-up of European programmes and the initial steps to join the Community institutions. The sensibilities of the socio-political debate and the results of historical sciences are again reflected in a centennial anniversary; we therefore find ourselves facing the challenge of a virtuous connection between the laborious promotion of research at community level and the need for an innovative European perspective on the Great War. Working practically on the terrain of the history of transnational European reality, we are forced to stress “the ‘European’ traits typical of the national contexts”, concentrating attention “on the dynamics of interdependence of a decision-making process which is invariably local and at the same time national and European”.<sup>85</sup>

In this way it appears possible to start on a “European re-comprehension of the profound dynamics of rising national States and permanent European particularities”, without forgetting that it is in fact the processes of socio-economic governance of globalisation that recall us to the importance of a political reading as the capacity to accompany the growth of a complex society. At the same time, it appears possible to set up “transnational research networks, whose activity in serious, rigorous research appears to be fuelled by a permanent European scope, still recognisable in the context of cultural production and of international scientific cooperation”.<sup>86</sup>

84. N. LABANCA, *Dizionario storico della Prima guerra mondiale* cit., p. XXVI.

85. *National Identities and Transnational European Élités* cit., p. 7.

86. ANDREA CIAMPANI, *Storiografia e profili transnazionali in Europa*, introduction to the meeting at the University of Babeş-Bolyai of Cluj-Napoca on February 21 2014, (now in *Imperi e nazioni nell'Europa centro-orientale alla vigilia della Prima Guerra Mondiale*, ed. by Ion Cârja, Rome, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, 2016, p. VII).



Romano Ugolini

## The *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano* and the Great War

The *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*\* possesses the largest and most important collection of documents on the Great War, at least in Italy, thanks to unceasing work begun since 1915<sup>1</sup>. Italy's heroic period came between 1859 and 1861 with the unification process wherein converged diverse revolutionary movements and the diplomatic and institutional policies of the Piedmont government. In spite of numerous difficulties, this convergence had held together until 1870 when the aim of making Rome the capital was accomplished. When "current" policy replaced grand idealist dreams and the great protagonists disappeared one by one, the Risorgimento so recently achieved suddenly appeared remote in time. Inaugurated on April 26 1884 with a huge pavilion dedicated to the Risorgimento, the *Esposizione Generale Italiana* in Turin triggered the appearance of many local museums which collected, housed and exhibited the tangible signs of that unique heritage on which the nation could depend. Later on, central organisations were created in order to guarantee long-term scientific and operative support to keep memory alive.

In 1906 the *Regio Decreto* n. 212 dated May 17 instituted a national Committee to: "*raccogliere, preparare ed ordinare i documenti, i libri e tutte le altre memorie che interessano la storia del Risorgimento italiano e di*

\* The name used in the title of the present paper, *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*, is the present one, while, as we will see, the two original roots had slight differences in their respective names, one calling itself "*Comitato*" and the other "*Società*", followed by the same "*per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*". In 1934 the *Società* took over the *Comitato*, and in 1935 it became an *Istituto*, within the *Giunta Centrale per gli studi storici*.

1. All the documentation is today housed in the *Museo Centrale del Risorgimento* (henceforth MCR), *Fondo Guerra*; the *Fondo* contains the "*Fondo caduti*" with approximately 350 files; 250,000 photographs in the "*Sezione fotocinematografica*"; the "*Fondo documentario del Comitato*" with about 25 miscellaneous files; the "*Fondo Pittori-soldato*" with about 450 paintings and drawings.



*prepararne e facilitarne lo studio*". Emblematically set up on September 20, thirty-six years after the taking of Rome, this Committee was made up of 15 members of whom seven were to be residents of Rome, and was to be based in the Victor Emmanuel Monument then under construction, that great tribute to the first King of Italy. For the time being, the Committee was to meet, also in Rome, in the Vittorio Emanuele National Library where it would also be delivered the local Risorgimento collection<sup>2</sup>. The "*Fondo Risorgimento*" immediately began to acquire many new items and was the first nucleus of what would become the *Museo Centrale del Risorgimento*<sup>3</sup>.

On November 9 of the same year, 1906, the *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* was formed in Milan at the conclusion of the first *Congresso storico del Risorgimento italiano*, within the events linked to the great international Exhibition organised in the Lombardian city. With 20 members on its central Council, the *Società* was a nationwide structure founded on the widespread participation of its members and was open to local initiative; besides the Congresses, it arranged important initiatives to popularise Risorgimento values, which underwent a notable boost for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Unification of Italy.

It was in fact with the celebrations for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Reign of Italy together with the events of the 1911-1912 war between Italy and Turkey that Risorgimento ideals were no longer directed only at archive and library tasks. First the collection of material referring to the "irredentist" lands was enlarged, then later, in the wake of the "earthquake" that came about in the Balkans and Turkey from 1912 on, the idea was set in motion once more of completing national unity along the lines traced by Mazzini in the "Manifesto" of the *Giovine Italia*: it is therefore misleading to ascribe to the nationalists both the national *Comitato* and the members of the national *Società per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*: the person-

2. The decision was not appreciated by Domenico Gnoli, then *Prefetto* of the Library. He did not wish to give up custody of the important collection. The issue was even presented as a parliamentary question and was settled with an additional decree, R.D. n. 730 dated November 22 1906, which laid down that the *Comitato* was to take delivery of the Risorgimento assets only after the move to the Victor Emmanuel Monument, and that Domenico Gnoli was to be appointed as the sixteenth member of the *Comitato* itself.

3. MARCO PIZZO, *Visita al Risorgimento. Il Museo Centrale del Risorgimento di Roma*, Roma, Gangemi, 2005, pp. 8-10. In this work, a more detailed history of the Museum and its acquisitions may also be found.

alities involved were for the most part no longer young, they were mindful of their own past experience and were therefore aware of the possibility that the unrest present in international relations might renew the positive opportunities of 1859-1860, and that the Reign of Italy, following the steps of the Reign of Sardinia half a century before, might obtain the completion of national unity. I may add that many of those personages toyed with the plan, clearly of a Garibaldian stamp, of freeing the nations oppressed by Austria and Hungary, while it has proved impossible to find anything concerning plans detrimental to non-Italian-speaking populations.

With decree n. 537 dated March 21 1914, the *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* was set up as a non-profit body and its Statute obtained State recognition. These two institutions, later to merge in today's *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano* between 1934 and 1935<sup>4</sup>, were those which faced the first Great World War. Once the conflict had started, both the *Comitato nazionale* and the *Società nazionale* sided with the intervention front albeit with great caution and somewhat prudently, given the relations that many members of the two institutions had with Giolitti, and in view of the possibilities of achieving their objectives without entering the war.

Both were aware that the events looming would be of exceptional historical relevance for Italy and for the world, and there was also a conviction even in the vehement pre-war debates of 1914 that, quite

4. RDL n. 1226 dated July 20 1934, converted into Law n. 2124 on December 20 1934, created the *Giunta centrale per gli studi storici*, the *Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* and the *Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea*; the decree included the *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, set on a par with the two previous Institutes, which was to take over the *Museo Centrale del Risorgimento*. The *Comitato nazionale* was disbanded and its duties passed to the *Società*. The last law was the R.D. of June 20 1935 which changed the name of the *Società* to today's *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*. The new premises within the Victor Emmanuel Monument were inaugurated that same year, to accommodate the *Istituto* and eventually the Museum. On this topic, see MASSIMO BAIONI, *La "Religione della Patria". Musei e istituti del culto risorgimentale (1884-1918)*, Quinto di Treviso, Pagus, 1994; ROMANO UGOLINI, *L'organizzazione degli studi storici*, in *Cento anni di storiografia sul Risorgimento*. Atti del LX congresso di storia del Risorgimento italiano (Rieti, 18-21 October 2000); Roma, Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 2002, pp. 83-176. ID., *I Musei del Risorgimento: conservazione, memoria, appartenenza*, in *Il Museo del Risorgimento dell'Archivio di Stato di Cagliari*, edited by Carla Ferrante, Cagliari, Arkadia, 2012, pp. 15-20; ID., *Il Risorgimento diventa storia. La genesi dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*, in *La storia della storia patria. Società, Deputazioni e Istituti storici nazionali nella costruzione dell'Italia*, edited by Agostino Bistarelli, Roma, Viella, 2012, pp. 45-57.

apart from pro-intervention or neutral decisions, the event would prove decisive for the completion of national unity and consequently for the completion of the Risorgimento expectations. It is no coincidence that many Italians, however not fully appropriatedly, viewed and remembered the conflict as the “fourth war of independence”. With such pre-conditions, the *Comitato* and the *Società* were tireless in their labour of cultural and ideal support.

After May 24 1915, entry into war halted the two organisations’ many doubts regarding action; in agreement with each other, they undertook an original initiative on which we will pause analytically. On one hand the *Comitato* and the *Società* would continue to take action to safeguard the memory of the past by acquiring, conserving and classifying documents and relics, and handing down to younger generations the facts and values of a time that felt “closed” and remote. On these arguments there was in any case a deep-seated agreement among all parties in the two organisations.

On the other hand, the desire was to aid the war effort without raising or stimulating the previous months’ disagreements between interventionists and neutralists: the work on the library, archives and valorisation of Risorgimento memory was amplified to include on-going events, carefully adapting planning of tactics and methods to create an effective memory within a Risorgimento framework of present and future happenings. With this novel structure, the immediate outcome achieved the aims desired without creating contrasts or disagreements: collecting documentation and holding conferences went steadily ahead. While collection work continued and intensified, the authentically Risorgimento roots of the war started to emerge without let or hindrance, with its purpose of reaching and completing the nation’s frontiers to Trento and Trieste. An admirable unity of intentions was reached on these plans, not only within each of the two organisations, but also between the two, the *Comitato* and the *Società*. The *Comitato* worked hard to obtain material, both national and international, that would contribute to establishing the memory of the Great War firmly and indelibly, so that the terrible catastrophe would not risk dissolving rapidly into a “*fascino auratico che avvolge le epoche remote*”. The *Società*, being associative in character, supported the collection mainly at local level and dealt with the dissemination of Risorgimento ideals, as support for the troops and their families. A considerable number of records was thus put together. Following an itinerary to be examined later, this

documentation eventually entered today's collections at the *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*.

Before pausing to analyse the operation undertaken by both the *Comitato* and the *Società* during the Great War, I wish to stress that it in no way nullifies the work then under way to preserve and valorise the “heroic” period of the age of the Risorgimento. It ran separately but alongside such work; in the opinion of the protagonists of the initiative it was as if there were two Risorgimentos, one “completed” and the other in progress. The efforts made by both organisations during the war and also post-war years today enables the *Istituto*, in this long Centenary, to offer scholars and the younger generations the unaltered heritage of papers and pictures that bear almost daily witness to the events of those four years that changed the world.

The national *Comitato* had met for the first time in the inaugural session on April 4 1909; Giuseppe Biancheri had been appointed as the first president by the members, but he died on October 28 1908 before taking office. He was replaced in the first session by Gaspare Finali by Government appointment<sup>5</sup>; the latter remained in office until his death on November 8 1914, in spite of becoming paralysed in 1912, after which he was no longer able to follow institutional activities. During the war period we see Paolo Boselli as president of the *Comitato*. He took office on March 5 1915 and, importantly, he even maintained the post between June 19 and October 30 1917 when he headed the Italian Government<sup>6</sup>, although we need to remember that after the gathering on April 10 1916, the *Comitato* was only to meet once more on June 21 1918. One of the vice-presidents of the *Comitato* since June 30 1909, Boselli had also been the promoter of the institution decree of 1906 in his then role of Minister of Public Education in the short Sonnino Government.

During the period of time we are dealing with, the vice-presidents were Ferdinando Martini and Luigi Rava, general secretary Tommaso Casini, secretary Ettore Zoccoli. As to the other members, the *Comitato's* Yearbook

5. By Decree n. 793 dated December 27 1908, the president was to be appointed by the Government on the suggestion of the Minister of Public Education. The appointment had previously been made by the *Comitato* itself.

6. Boselli remained at the head of the *Comitato* until his death on March 10 1932. Succeeding Luigi Rava in 1907, Boselli also became president of the “Società nazionale Dante Alighieri” and remained in this post as well until his death.

published in 1933<sup>7</sup> lists them according to their date of appointment. At the induction session, besides Boselli, Martini and Casini, we find Ettore Pedotti, Francesco Pais-Serra, Raffaello Giovagnoli, Matteo Mazziotti, Domenico Gnoli, Giuseppe Pitrè, Emilio Visconti Venosta, Luigi Cavalli, Ernesto Nathan, Giustino Fortunato and Giuseppe Cesare Abba; thereafter Alessandro D'Ancona (April 6), Felice Napoleone Canevaro (April 8), Giuliano Bonazzi (June 8), Henry Nelson Gay (March 11 1910), Pietro Lacava (March 20 1912), Paolo Carcano (February 5 1913), Bonaventura Zumbini (March 5 1915), Alberto Dallolio (March 5 1915), Camillo Montalcini (March 5 1915), Attilio Hortis (December 11 1915). After this date there were no new entries until June 1918. At the date of Italy's entry into war, the following were already deceased: Abba (November 6 1910), Lacava (December 26 1912), D'Ancona (November 8 1914), - the same day, as we have seen, of Gaspare Finali's death -, Visconti Venosta (November 28 1914), Gnoli (April 12 1915). During the war, the deaths also occurred of Giovagnoli (July 15 1915), Zumbini (March 21 1916), Pitrè (April 10 1916). Secretary general Casini died on April 16 1917, but he was not replaced<sup>8</sup>; lastly, Carcano died on April 6 1918.

In its double issue of July-October 1915<sup>9</sup> when Italy too was at war, the journal of the *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, the *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, printed the introduction to the Minutes of the previous March 5 meeting of the *Comitato nazionale per la Storia del Risorgimento*<sup>10</sup> when president Boselli took office, thus showing the shared intents of both institutions. The session was opened by the Minister of Public Education, Pasquale Grippa, who dwelt on the importance of Paolo Boselli's appointment as head of the *Comitato* since he was then also president of the *Consiglio superiore degli Archivi* and of the *Istituto storico italiano*; Grippa said that "*lo studio critico della nostra storia, nella complessità delle sue vicende, potrà giovare di una sapiente unità di direzione*". The Minister also recalled the tasks of the *Comitato* in safeguarding,

7. *Annuario del Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento 1933*, Bologna, Nicola Zanichelli Editore, 1933, pp. 33-35.

8. *Ivi*, p. 33.

9. A. II, fasc. IV-V.

10. *Ivi*, pp. 702-712. The complete minutes are housed in the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 34, 1915.

collecting and cataloguing historical heritage, but also doing “*opera di dottrina*” and “*opera di educazione*”. After the usual thanks, like the Minister before him, Boselli also mentioned “*le amarissime perdite che afflissero il nostro Comitato*”: the deaths of Finali, Visconti Venosta and D’Ancona, and he greeted the new entries, Dallolio, Montalcini and Zumbini. Boselli went on to mention the tasks of the *Comitato*, the activity carried out and the interventions planned; he also dwelt on the “*pratiche in corso per la sistemazione del Museo, dell’Archivio e della Biblioteca del Risorgimento nelle aule del Monumento a Vittorio Emanuele II in Roma*”; no mention was made of the war raging beyond the nation’s frontiers. The *Comitato* met again a few days later on March 12<sup>11</sup>; topics regarded primarily organisation and procedures, but certain new acquisitions were also discussed. On that occasion the vice-president was elected: Rava received 6 votes, Pedotti 3 and Carcano 2; Luigi Rava was therefore appointed. The war continued to seem a remote event.

Italian intervention however involved the *Comitato* straight away, as seen from the circular letter signed by Boselli and dated “Rome, August 1 1915” and published by the *Rassegna* under the above-mentioned Minutes of March 5<sup>12</sup>. The circular had been agreed with the Government and approved by the competent Ministries, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, War and Navy, and it received a wide political response.<sup>13</sup> The heading of the letter as well as its purpose was “*Raccolta di testimonianze e di documenti Storici sull’attuale Guerra Italo-Austriaca*”. No mention of the fact that Italy was part of a coalition, rather a *trait d’union* with the recently-past Risorgimento for the liberation of the territories under Franz Joseph’s Austria, and ignoring the recently cancelled alliance of more than thirty years’ standing with the historical enemy. Continuing the gist of his speech on taking office, Boselli recalled the tasks, aims and results of the *Comitato*, before adding: “*Ora il Comitato nazionale ha deliberato che la valida organizzazione tanto proficuamente sperimentata per le ricerche storiche relative al periodo della nostra indipendenza sia messa a profitto anche per la raccolta di testimonianze e di documenti riflettenti l’attuale impresa italiana per la compiuta liberazi-*

11. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 35, 1915.

12. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. II, fasc. IV-V, pp. 713-716.

13. The circular is fully described by M. BAIONI, *La “Religione della Patria”* cit., see in particular pp. 168-169. Baioni however focuses above all on the intervention and nationalist aspect.



one d'Italia"<sup>14</sup>. Continuing along the same lines, Boselli recalled that the Comitato had always followed: "*con animo fatto vigile dalla speranza, la traccia luminosa delle vicende e delle aspirazioni italiane nelle terre irredente*", collecting works and writing, news and accounts "*che hanno oggi il valore e il significato di una magnanima anticipazione*".<sup>15</sup> He was even more explicit in the passage: "*La continuità e la tenace unità di propositi che collega gli albori del nostro Risorgimento alla piena consapevolezza dell'odierna impresa redentrice deve avere specchio fedele in testimonianze storiche gelosamente raccolte e custodite*".<sup>16</sup>

In effect, in his circular Boselli asked public and private institutions and his own correspondents to send in: "*materiale comunque storicamente notevole rispetto all'azione italiana di terra e di mare, o la indicazione di tracce che possano, comunque, essere seguite con profitto nelle ricerche*"<sup>17</sup>, touching on specific points<sup>18</sup>, concerning writing, biographies, bibliographies, patriotic actions, political and diplomatic public documents; posters, meeting agendas, leaflets, popular songs; diaries and correspondence, iconographic material, Italian newspapers, foreign publications and newspapers; documentation on assistance for civilians. For the moment the president excluded documents on military action, partly for security reasons but also because he was certain that the High Command's Historical Office would be dealing with that.

Boselli's speech, however, should also be seen in its political and persuasive aspects; his call for efforts to collect material was upheld by the idea of victory, for he spoke of the "*svolgersi diuturno delle gloriose vicende*", and of the "*giorno solenne del loro compimento*", and also of a "*nuova pagina delle fortune della patria*". Yet the situation at the front was highly uncertain; the first attacks by Cadorna were paying the penalty for incomplete mobilisation, inexperienced troops and insufficient familiarity with the terrain, but the adversary had not seemed invulnerable to a "heartly shove", however insignificant. The last paragraph of the circular opened with "*Ed ora all'opera!*" addressed to historians and the "*volenterosi*" but implicitly to the soldiers; the message was to "*far correre parallela alla storia vissuta*

14. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. II, fasc. IV-V, p. 714.

15. *Ibidem*.

16. *Ibidem*.

17. *Ibidem*.

18. *Ivi*, p. 715.

*la raccolta delle testimonianze che la significheranno luminosamente nel più lontano avvenire*"<sup>19</sup>.

There was a very good though not uniform response to the circular, both from Italy and from abroad; in the three and a half years of conflict and in later years, the *Comitato* managed to collect an enormous quantity of documentation. The task Boselli undertook in the name of the *Comitato* from 1915 on was institutionalised with the R.D. n. 1985 dated October 9 1919; one article of which laid down that: "*Alle funzioni demandate con l'art. 1 del R. decreto 17 maggio 1906, n. 212, al Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento si aggiunge quella di ricercare, raccogliere ed ordinare, per facilitarne lo studio e diffonderne la conoscenza, il materiale documentario, bibliografico ed archivistico riferentesi alla guerra 1915-1918, materiale che andrà a costituire un archivio, una biblioteca ed un museo centrali di guerra. Alla organizzazione, al coordinamento ed alla sistemazione scientifica di quegli Istituti costituenti la sezione contemporanea del Comitato, saranno preposti due delegati generali da nominarsi, su proposta della presidenza del Comitato stesso, a norma dell'art. 4 del R. decreto 17 maggio 1906, n. 212*".

In the first year of hostilities the *Comitato* created a "*speciale divisione per ricercare e raccogliere materiale*" in agreement with the *Presidenza del Consiglio*, the relevant ministries and the military high command<sup>20</sup>. The work was shared between the *Comitato*'s secretary, Ettore Zoccoli, and the general delegate for the war zone<sup>21</sup>, Libero Fracassetti, in order to maintain coordination between Rome headquarters and military operations. Libero Fracassetti was at that time a teacher of juridical sciences at the *Istituto tecnico* in Udine, where his home became the reference point for those arriving for reasons connected to the war in course. Fracassetti was a well-known personage, highly cultured, an enthusiastic scholar of economy, law, literature and history, and also a member of the "Dante Alighieri" and other associations; between 1906 and 1907 under the Giolitti Government, he had been at the head of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Public Education with Luigi Rava. A fact not to be forgotten was that his father Giusto, from the Veneto region, had been a patriot and fighter in 1859. A curriculum, therefore, in logistics, relations, competence and reliability that

19. *Ivi*, p. 716.

20. MCR, b. 18, f. 8

21. *Ivi*, b. 21.



made Fracassetti the right person for that important appointment<sup>22</sup> which he carried out tirelessly and with immense enthusiasm, and for which he was thereafter repeatedly commended.

In the meeting of December 11 1915 Boselli was already in a position to give an account of the work done in collecting documents on the war under way; he thanked Fracassetti and the Rome committee of the *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* under the presidency of Senator Mazziotti for “l’azione svolta con competenza e zelo”<sup>23</sup>. There was already a nascent network of contacts with other public and private structures for the widest possible collection of material. In the same meeting Dallolio announced that Countess Cavazza, “*presidente dell’ufficio informazioni di Bologna, ha deliberato di offrire a suo tempo al Comitato tutto il materiale amplissimo raccolto*”, underlining the importance of this collection. Lina Bianconcini Cavazza had organised a central office in Bologna which in the end numbered 350 volunteers, with branches in other cities also. It acted as the intermediary between soldiers’ families and the military commands and collected all possible information on the troops in the war.<sup>24</sup>

The meeting of the national *Comitato* on April 10 1916, the last one before June 1918, was almost a celebration of the work on collecting war documentation, but it is also a detailed account of all that had been done in very few months<sup>25</sup>. Boselli’s report states that all the State or town libraries had promised their best collaboration; a number had already sent in lists of publications on the continuing conflict, and others were also

22. On Fracassetti, today almost forgotten, see Luigi Rava’s commemoration, *Un grave lutto per la “Dante”: Libero Fracassetti (1930)*, in LUIGI RAVA, *Discorsi e scritti per la “Dante” (trenta anni di propaganda) 1900-1931*, Roma, Società nazionale Dante Alighieri, 1932, pp. 379-383. More generally on the “Dante Alighieri”, see the works of BEATRICE PISA, *Nazione e politica nella Società “Dante Alighieri”*, Roma, Bonacci, 1995, and of PATRIZIA SALVETTI, *Immagine nazionale ed emigrazione nella Società “Dante Alighieri”*, Roma, Bonacci, 1995.

23. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 36, 1915.

24. PAOLA GROSSON BARONCHELLI, in her work *La donna della nuova Italia. Documenti del contributo femminile alla guerra (maggio 1915 - maggio 1917)* (Milano, R. Quintieri, 1917), recalled Cavazza’s work, stating that the “Ufficio centrale” of Bologna housed a general catalogue for the whole Reign “*il quale a guerra finita sarà consegnato al Museo Nazionale del Risorgimento*” (p.148). On this lady see also SERENA BERSANI, *101 donne che hanno fatto grande Bologna*, Roma, Newton Compton, 2012.

25. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 37, 1916.

willing to send any duplicates. On the subject of the “*azione patriottica remota e prossima spiegata da privati e da società a favore della Guerra*”, regarding the “remote” part, he explained that it would be necessary to await the documentation of the “Dante Alighieri”, the Naval League and the Touring Club; such documentation could only be completed after the war had ended. For the “*prossima*” part, Boselli felt that the *Comitato* already had sufficient material to write the history of the “*preparazione civile della guerra*”. The many committees for civilian preparation that had sprung up in numerous towns in Italy had already sent the *Comitato* their Articles of Association and manifestos, and were still sending information on their work in progress. As regards the political and diplomatic part, the *Comitato* had already gathered the parliamentary acts, Ministries’ bulletins, statistical reports and also the diplomatic “books” of the countries at war and the transcriptions in various languages of the Italian *Libro verde*. The dispatch of posters, competition announcements, proclamations etc. also continued. The president added that the collection of popular songs had been remarkable, as had the diaries and correspondence of the military offered by their families. Pride of place, however, went to the collection of the personal dossiers of the decorated and the fallen. As to the foreign press, the *Comitato* already held about eighteen thousand excerpts. Moreover the collection of material on the economic repercussions of the war had already commenced. Boselli concluded by thanking Fracassetti who had devoted himself to the collection “*delle pubblicazioni effimere nelle rispettive edizioni originali*”, mementos, Austrian documents and a wealth of written material, not to mention the agreements he had reached for the further increase of acquisitions. During the session other possible acquisitions and institutional activity were discussed. The *Comitato*’s labour seemed tireless regarding both the Risorgimento and the on-going war, which is perhaps why Rava made the proposal to the *Comitato* to “*far conoscere al Paese l’opera propria mediante una particolareggiata relazione sulla propria attività*”. This proposal was immediately approved and the report, signed by Boselli, soon appeared and was published on June 15<sup>26</sup>. It was a particularly

26. The report was published in press: MINISTERO DELL’ISTRUZIONE. COMITATO NAZIONALE PER LA STORIA DEL RISORGIMENTO, *Relazione presentata dal presidente on. Paolo Boselli sull’opera svolta dal Comitato dall’inizio dei suoi lavori (4 aprile 1909) al 15 giugno 1916*, Roma, Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1916.

significant moment: the outcome of the war was more uncertain than ever, the notorious *strafexpedition* had begun on May 15, to which the Italian army had reacted without much result; it had been a humiliation and a bloodbath, and these events brought down the Salandra Government, to be replaced by Boselli himself soon after, on June 19.

In his report Boselli recalled the setting up of the *Comitato*, the members in office in June 1916<sup>27</sup>, a number of speeches, the financial situation, the premises issue, the activity undertaken. An ample section was expressly on the “*Raccolta di documenti e testimonianze sull’attuale guerra italo-austriaca*”, mainly repeating what he had previously said, obviously having the publication of the speech in mind. He therefore set out from the beginning, from the August 1 1915 circular, through to the implementation of the programme, regarding which he wrote: “*Dopo un anno di lavoro, si può affermare, non solo che l’organizzazione compiuta risponde appieno all’intento ma che il programma delineato si viene svolgendo senza lacune*”<sup>28</sup>. Repeating what he had said in the April 10 meeting, he stated that the personal dossiers collected numbered about five thousand, the foreign papers amounted to twenty-two thousand, while the photographs topped four thousand. Criteria for the classification and ordering of the material according to typologies were then being studied. The circular concluded with a number of attachments giving the Royal Decrees that pertained to the life of the *Comitato* and with an interesting list of member-correspondents from a great many provinces throughout national territory.<sup>29</sup>

The *Comitato* did not meet again until June 21 1918. The war went on; in the last few days the final great Austrian offensive had started, later referred to as the Battle of Solstice, yet another slaughter. It did, however, see a decisive and effective response from the Italian troops, later considered

27. In June 1916 the *Comitato* members were: Paolo Boselli ( president), Ferdinando Martini and Luigi Rava (vice-presidents); other members: Giuliano Bonazzi, Felice Napoleone Canevaro, Paolo Carcano, Tommaso Casini (general secretary), Luigi Cavalli, Alberto Dallolio, Francesco D’Ovidio, Giustino Fortunato, Harry (named as Henry in the text) Nelson Gay, Attilio Hortis, Matteo Mazziotti, Camillo Montalcini, Ernesto Nathan, Francesco Pais-Serra, Ettore Pedotti. (*ivi*, p. 9).

28. *Ivi*, p. 76.

29. The list of member-correspondents given in appendix F runs to 5 pages (pp. 97-101), and, importantly, is divided into regions. Significantly, among those included are the illustrious names of Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile and Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. See the full list in the appendix to the present paper.

to be the turning point in operations. Since October of the previous year, Boselli no longer headed the Government which had fallen at the end of a long crisis and above all after the disastrous Austrian breakthrough at Caporetto.

The Minister of Public Education of the Orlando Government Agostino Berenini was present at that meeting; he spoke in praise of Boselli although only in the context of his activity in the *Comitato*. He highlighted the main task carried out in those years: the “*cospicua raccolta, in via di continuo incremento, dei documenti della attuale Guerra*”<sup>30</sup>, a collection that gained increasing significance as – perhaps for the first time – the outcome of the conflict seemed to veer towards victory. Rava intervened with regard to the Minister’s compliments; he did not miss the chance of underlining one issue that was to come to the fore after the war, i.e. that the *Comitato*’s work would have been much easier if the Government “*non avesse creato o lasciato sorgere*” other groups with the same tasks, referring in particular to the Historical Office, of which we shall speak later.

To stress how tasks piled up one on the other, Rava mentioned the “*opera veramente solertissima e benemerita*” of Fracassetti as the *Comitato*’s general delegate in the war zone. This issue was also the focus of the next meeting on October 10. Boselli was on the one hand satisfied with the collection of material that was, he said, in quantity and importance over and above any similar initiative, yet he was not pleased with the “competition” with other initiatives which in his opinion could not be justified. This was a further reference to the Historical Office which was to have limited its research to documents regarding industrial mobilisation but had in fact extended it to all aspects of the war. Nathan proposed an agreement between the two organisations to avoid competition and achieve one single, truly national collection; Boselli replied that he had made a number of attempts to do this with no result. The problem of consulting the material collected then came up for discussion since, as Boselli said, many such requests had already arrived. It was Nathan who remarked that perhaps it was not wise to allow the documentation to be viewed until the collection was complete and set in order; quite apart – we would like to add – from

30. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 38, 1918.

the fact that the war was still going on; Nathan's remarks were shared by the whole *Comitato*.

In spite of the problems – the war not yet over, disagreements with the other “initiatives” – the *Comitato* continued its work;<sup>31</sup> the war library was completely catalogued while the mountain of documents, a staggering pile, had been given a provisional, mainly administrative, order. Once the war was over and the clerks back from the front, the archive was to be arranged in a more scientific manner according to criteria then under study. The idea was to place the whole collection in the attics of the Victor Emmanuel Monument.

The *Comitato's* activity in those years was summed up in the second report Boselli had printed for the years 1916-1918<sup>32</sup>; as in the first report, the president expressed his complete satisfaction with the results achieved, given the scarcity of personnel available and limited funding. Highest praise again went to Ettore Zoccoli, ably assisted by Professor Emilia Formiggini Santamaria, and to Fracassetti, accorded a whole paragraph. To give some idea of the commitment of the *Comitato* and its employees, Boselli also recalled that the work of collecting had resulted in a correspondence of over 70,000 letters and about 80,000 circulars. The “*Archivio della Guerra*”, then being put together, had a central nucleus of personal dossiers on the fallen and the decorated, with birth and death certificates, portraits, biographical notes and mementos of military action. Boselli already had more than 13,000 complete dossiers and 12,000 still to finalise, a number corresponding almost exactly to the present size of the *Fondo caduti* which holds about 350 envelopes with more than 25,000 personal files. In the 1918 report the photographs accumulated – 9,500 donated and 2,500 reproduced at the *Comitato's* expense – amounted to 12,000, but on this count the collection was only just starting: today the *Museo Centrale del Risorgimento* houses more than 250,000. He also spoke of much fruitful collaboration with many bodies and individuals, and above all with the Government and the single Ministries which had deposited or promised a great deal of material, Italian and foreign newspapers above all. For all of

31. *Ivi*, n. 39, 1918, meeting on October 10.

32. MINISTERO DELL'ISTRUZIONE. COMITATO NAZIONALE PER LA STORIA DEL RISORGIMENTO, *Relazione presentata dal presidente on. Paolo Boselli sull'opera svolta dal Comitato dal 15 giugno 1916 al 15 giugno 1918*, Roma, Tipografia operaia romana cooperativa, 1918.

which the President was able to say: “*il nostro Istituto, mercè una operosità fattasi più alacre a mano a mano che si procedeva nelle ricerche, sia oggi in possesso della più cospicua raccolta italiana di documenti relativi alla nostra guerra, tra quante altre ne sono state iniziate sul nostro esempio da enti pubblici e da privati; e come sia in grado - se saranno fino all'ultimo seguiti rigorosamente i capisaldi sistematici da cui mossero le nostre indagini - di mantenere questo ambito primato, che sarà alto titolo di onore per il nostro Istituto, e che darà modo agli studiosi venturi, anche se prossimi, di volgersi alle nostre collezioni documentarie con certezza di potervi sempre rintracciare la più ricca documentazione della grande e gloriosa impresa nazionale che oggi viviamo*”<sup>33</sup>.

The work of the *Comitato* did not cease at the end of the war, which finished with Italy's victory and signing of the armistice on November 3 with effect the following day. At the end of November there had been new acquisitions<sup>34</sup> regarding the work of assistance and charity for soldiers and civilians, and precious documentation had arrived from different associations; the collection of satirical and commemorative war medals had begun, 18 of which were German and Austrian, while the Mint and other specialised firms had been contacted regarding Italy. New contacts abroad were also made; Boselli said: “*Si è avuta promessa dal Leblanc, fondatore del Museo francese della guerra (ora passato allo Stato) che egli donerà al Comitato tutti i duplicati che riguardano l'Italia*”. This was an important contact; Henri Leblanc had spared no effort in obtaining complete documentation on the war; over a short period he had gathered thousands of books, booklets, documents, pictures and objects regarding France but also other warring countries; he donated his collection to the country in 1917<sup>35</sup>. This impressive amount of material was published in a series of books which began to appear while the war was still on and continued until the Twenties, under the general title *Collection Henri Leblanc donnée à l'État le 4 août 1917, La Grande Guerre. Iconographie, Bibliographie, Documents divers* (Paris, Émile-Paul Frères Éditeurs). Added to this was the “*documentazione*

33. *Ivi*, pp. V-VI.

34. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 40, 1918, meeting on November 29.

35. For a summary of Leblanc's initiative see JEAN-JACQUES BECKER, *La Francia e la memoria della Grande Guerra: il lutto o i musei?*, in *La Grande Guerra in vetrina. Mostre e musei in Europa*, in *Memoria e Ricerca. Rivista di storia contemporanea*, January-June 2001, pp. 39-47.



*completa del Teatro del Soldato al Fronte, promosso e attuato dalla Società degli Autori.*" Lastly, following guarantees already given, the undersecretary for Propaganda Abroad<sup>36</sup> had begun to send the *Comitato* the magazines of other countries, "friends and enemies".

During the war, then, the *Comitato* continued its institutional work on the one hand; the minutes of the meetings show how the founding task of collection, conservation, scientific research and dissemination on the whole Risorgimento period had continued, albeit slackening somewhat in the darkest years, 1916-1917, and in spite of financial difficulties. On the other hand, the presidential mandate published in the 1915 circular went ahead for the collection of documentation that would provide a complete, objective reconstruction of the Great War. The *Comitato's* work on this and the approval it received is shown by the new members among whom were the prominent names of General Diaz and Admiral Thaon di Revel.<sup>37</sup>

The *Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* was also active in building memory of the Great War. In 1911, the year of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Reign of Italy, the *Società* had moved the central committee's offices to Rome where it also held the annual Congress; at that time General Ettore Pedotti became the second president after Bassano Gabba, holding that appointment throughout the war until his death on January 6 1919. In this case too it is to be remembered that Pedotti kept his post, but when Italy entered the war he took command of the IV Army Corps and was temporarily replaced by Matteo Mazziotti. The latter became the full president from 1920 to 1923. Mazziotti was also responsible for the formal establishment of the *Società* in 1914.

1914 was an important year for the *Società* also because publication began of its review *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento* to replace *Il Risorgimento italiano. Rivista storica*, first published in 1908<sup>38</sup>. Scientific in character,

36. Undersecretary for Foreign propaganda and the press was then Romeo Gallenga Stuart, in office from November 1 1917 to January 4 1919.

37. See in reference to this the minutes of the November 29 meeting, 1918 (MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 40, 1918).

38. *Il Risorgimento italiano. Rivista storica. Organo della "Società Nazionale per la Storia del Risorgimento italiano"*, was in turn a transformation of the *Rivista Storica del Risorgimento italiano*, published from 1896 to 1898, and resumed by the *Società Nazionale*. On the formation of what was to become today's Comitato di Torino dell'Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, see the accurate work by M. BAIONI, *Cento anni di storia e memoria risorgimentali 1895-1995. Il*

the new journal was intended to give the outcome of original research on the Risorgimento period. Since it started its journey on the eve of the conflict, it is interesting to see how it developed during those years. Initially a two-monthly, primarily scientific periodical, the *Rassegna* played this role throughout the war with very few incursions into what was happening. In 1915 the third issue of May-June printed on the frontispiece the words: “*I soci e tutti i nostri Lettori perdoneranno il ritardo nella distribuzione dei fascicoli derivante dagli obblighi di altra natura imposti dalla guerra ai redattori della ‘Rassegna’*”. The next issue, bearing the same sentence, was a double issue for July-October and, as we have already mentioned, it carried part of the meeting of March 5 and Boselli’s circular of August 1. The sixth issue contained a printed band apologizing for the late publication with the further explanation: “*Gli obblighi di altra natura imposti dalla guerra stessa impediscono tuttavia al prof. Giuseppe Gallavresi di curare la pubblicazione della Rassegna storica. Questa è pertanto temporaneamente affidata ai professori Vittorio Fiorini e Italo Raulich (Sede della Direzione, presso la Società per la storia del Risorgimento: Via del Gambero, 23 - Roma)*.” The 1915 issues also appeared after the due date of publication; during the Central Council’s meeting on December 16 1915 President Mazziotti regretted that up to that time only 3 issues had appeared for the previous year. The reason for this was the absence of the editor Gallavresi who had been in Switzerland on an unspecified mission.<sup>39</sup> It was during that session that the proposal was approved to place the direction of the *Rassegna* in the hands of Fiorini and Raulich for the time being. Due to difficulties encountered, the review halved publications in 1916, appearing with three double issues. In this case too the articles are all scientific in nature, except in issue III-IV of May-August where there was a contribution from Raffaello Barbiera, in tones highly patriotic and anti-Austrian, on *Il nuovo martire dell’unità italiana CESARE BATTISTI e i suoi compagni di martirio*.<sup>40</sup> The death of Battisti, executed for high treason on July 12 1916, caused an enormous impression in Italy; rather than as a warning, it was taken as a battle cry. In the *Rassegna* Barbiera wrote: “*Cesare Battisti eccita ancor più, col suo*

Comitato di Torino dell’Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento, in *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. LXXXIV (1997), pp. 195-238.

39. The Central Council’s meeting is reported in *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a. V, n. 1, January-February 1916, pp. 1-3.

40. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. III (1916), pp. 315-322.



*martirio, all'annientamento d'Absburgo e contro la barbarie teutonica*"<sup>41</sup>. It was indeed a very complex moment; from May to July there had been the above-mentioned *Strafexpedition*, the massacre on the Asiago Plateau, the Austrian use of poison gas; by June 19 the Salandra Government had already fallen while the fleeting occupation of Gorizia on August 9 had not been enough to hearten public opinion; in those months, perhaps for the first time, the population feared defeat in that epic conflict. A battle-cry, at that time, not a question of nationalism or power politics, rather a cry for the national unity so heartily invoked by so many; and the *Rassegna*, though with only one article, did not fail to rally to the call. In 1917 the two-monthly rhythm was resumed, except for issue II-III of March-June. The articles kept their scientific tone; we find no explicit reference to the war under way except for a review by G. Fenelli on *Il diritto d'Italia su Trieste e l'Istria. Documenti*, Turin, Bocca, 1915<sup>42</sup>. Although the fact is not mentioned in the review, the work was by Francesco Salata, the well-known historian, born on Cherso, an island under Austrian rule. He moved to Italy in 1914; clearly of irredentist opinion, he gave wide range to his feelings in this work of 1915. And Fenelli himself presented it as a: "*documento nobilissimo della fede, lungamente serbata e operante nel silenzio, che ai migliori cittadini della Venezia Giulia non era mancata mai, e che un d'essi volle testimoniare solennemente ai fratelli della Madre patria, in quella memoranda vigilia d'armi che fu tra l'aprile e il maggio del 1915, per affrettare e quasi per domandare, in nome della sua terra, la parola liberatrice ... L'invocata parola fu pronunciata solo diciannove giorni dopo che questo volume era stato offerto al pubblico.*"<sup>43</sup>

1918 saw the publication of four three-monthly issues of the *Rassegna*. In the second issue an account was given of the praiseworthy work of the national committee, reporting on the pile of documentation collected on the war<sup>44</sup>. In the News section of the fourth issue,<sup>45</sup> a note appeared on *I carteggi della Guerra*; this gave an account of the work on document collection, defined as the: "*raccolta governativa fondata nell'Archivio di Stato in Brescia*". This was an operation with the participation of the towns in

41. *Ivi*, p. 315.

42. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a.IV (1917), fascicolo V, September-October, pp. 534-537.

43. *Ivi*, pp. 534-535.

44. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. V (1918), fascicolo II, April-May-June, pp. 350-351.

45. *Ivi*, October-November-December, pp. 749-751.

the area, school administrations, priests, orphanages, individuals and even the Cremona *Prefettura*. Ersilio Michel had also collaborated in collecting printed matter on the war at the archive library; this fact was highlighted polemically, as it touched at the controversy about the competence for collecting such documents, a topic that had already been tackled forcefully by Boselli, as we mentioned above. In the note, among other passages, we find: “*Piace la segnalazione di tale contributo, perché, in quanto deriva da un noto scrittore di Storia del Risorgimento che è membro del Comitato nazionale, dimostra insussistente quell’incompatibilità che sembrò qui impedire altri dal partecipare alla raccolta*”. Michel does not actually appear in the Committee’s above-mentioned Yearbook; he was, however, a council member for the Tuscan Committee of the *Società*. It is interesting to note the numerous reactions to Boselli’s declarations regarding the single direction of the collection and the problems that might arise should there be a number of organisations gathering material.

In order to reconstruct the *Società*’s activity during the war years, the main source is certainly the *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, which had started in January 1912 to accompany the review but with quite separate tasks as the first number announced explicitly. The *Bollettino* was to be “*un elemento di cronaca della nostra vita sociale, lasciando alla Rivista quel carattere di organo di alta cultura che ora ha, e che la rende meno adatta alle minori necessità della vita della nostra associazione*”<sup>46</sup>. And it was in fact in the *Bollettino*’s pages that the *Società* made public its activity in wartime, frequently also giving an account of the action of the national Committee. At the time Italy entered the war, the two Institutes were closely linked: as well as both having their headquarter in Rome, they shared a large number of members, including Ettore Pedotti, the acting president of the *Società*.

The *Società* differed from the *Comitato* in being associative, that is a wide-spread structure throughout national territory. In 1914 it was organised in a central council chaired by Pedotti, as just mentioned, but with an Honorary President, Senator Antonio Manno, and in seven “Regional Committees”, with a total of 812 members, 116 of whom belonging to the Central Council. The Committees were distributed as follows: the Piedmont Committee under its chairman Cesare Ferrero di Cambiano,

46. A. I, n. 1, 15 January 1912, p.1.

with 116 members; the Lombardy Committee under Francesco Novati, 241 members; the Veneto Committee under Filippo Nani Mocenigo, 65 members; the Romagna Committee under Alberto Dallolio, 43 members; the Tuscan Committee under Ferdinando Martini, 81 members; the Rome Committee under Matteo Mazziotti, 95 members; the Neapolitan Committee under Ferdinando del Carretto, 55 members<sup>47</sup>.

The first repercussion of war had already made itself felt in September 1914. The general assembly of the *Società* was set for October 1 in Genoa: an important meeting with the renewal of the Central Council at the end of its three-year term on the agenda. However, Pedotti opened his three-yearly report, published in the September *Bollettino*<sup>48</sup>, by explaining that “*gli speciali gravissimi eventi della sopravvenuta immane guerra europea*”<sup>49</sup> made it impossible to summon the meeting and that the Council would remain in office “*senza possibili previsioni di tempo*”. Pedotti then illustrated in detail the three years of activity, mentioning both the difficulties and the results achieved. In the last part, he did not expressly touch on the intervention/ neutrality debate then firing up to split Italy; he did, however, underline the “*altamente civile ed educativo*” lesson to be learnt from the history of the Risorgimento that “*rafforza negli animi del popolo il sentimento di libertà e l'amor di patria*”. In the name of their institutional mission, he asked for agreement in implementing the social programme “*facendo tacere qualsiasi risentimento personale o politico*”. This last statement leads us to think that the debate on the war had infiltrated the *Società*; it cannot therefore be taken for granted – as has occasionally been the case – that the two institutions were decisively and by mutual consent on the side of intervention, if not nationalist. General Pedotti certainly could not be thought in any way un-patriotic, nor could he avoid recalling the connection of the present with the origins of the Risorgimento; he did this by citing the president of the National Committee, concluding his long speech with the words:

47. Data taken from the *Relazione triennale della Presidenza della Società*, in *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a. III, n. 9, September 1914; on membership numbers see p. 10. A little information on the Piedmont Committee during the war period can be found in the above-mentioned work by M. BAIONI, *Cento anni di storia e memoria risorgimentali 1895-1995. Il Comitato di Torino* cit., pp. 204-206.

48. *Relazione triennale della Presidenza della Società*, in *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento* cit.; the report takes up the whole publication.

49. *Ivi*, p. 1.

*“Gli italiani di tutti i secoli venturi (diremo con le parole autorevoli dell’on. Boselli) debbono avere dinanzi il quadro completo di quelli che furono i principi della nostra redenzione, la quale fu opera di fede, d’intelletto, di sacrificio e di eroismo. «Da tali principi e da tali esempi gl’Italiani potranno trarre ispirazioni e forza per fare proseguire la nostra gloriosa Italia in quelle vie della prosperità e della libertà, che le furono dischiuse da tanti pensatori, da tanti combattenti e da tanti martiri».”*<sup>50</sup>

1914 closed with a circular letter from Pedotti to the committee chairmen; in it, he repeated that the *“gravi avvenimenti guerreschi e politici”* meant that it was not possible to call the general assembly, hence the Central Council *“sente il dovere di continuare ancora nelle sue funzioni sino all’epoca in cui potrà aver luogo l’Assemblea generale dei soci”*<sup>51</sup>. These postponements did not greatly please the regional committees; for example, in its session of March 11 1915, the Lombard Committee on the proposal of its vice chairman, Baron Cristoforo Scotti, deliberated in answer that it accepted the postponement but only to deal with current affairs and for a period of time strictly necessary<sup>52</sup>.

The *Società* continued its scientific and divulgation activity; however, the conferences held in various parts of the country on the Risorgimento’s great figures and events unfailingly closed with a reference to the present. In Milan, for example, Gaetano Salvemini spoke of Mazzini’s political thinking to which he had devoted a well-known work and talked of brotherhood with the Slav population; in his *excursus* he recalled several passages of nineteenth century history and the Berlin Congress, to demonstrate that *“il sogno nazionale si effettua a qualunque costo”*, ending: *“Un popolo può sopraffarne un altro momentaneamente, ma pagherà a lacrime di sangue il suo trionfo”*<sup>53</sup>.

The *Bollettino* of March 1915 gave a full account of the opening session with Boselli at the head of the National Committee<sup>54</sup>. The Rome Committee meeting of May 9 was somewhat animated and dealt wholly with

50. *Ivi*, pp. 12-13.

51. *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a. IV, n. 1, January 1915, pp. 1-2.

52. *Ivi*, n. 4, April 1915, p. 4.

53. *Ivi*, p. 10.

54. *Ivi*, n. 3, March 1915, pp. 4-6. The April issue of the *Bollettino* gives an account of the National Committee’s meeting on March 12, dealing exclusively with organisational and scientific topics (pp. 5-6).

possible initiatives for a war that was practically taken for granted. Secretary Decio Albini declared that should the army be mobilized – an event then considered a foregone conclusion since chairman Pedotti had already been recalled to head the IV Army Corps – he did not believe that the *Società* “che raccoglie il glorioso patrimonio delle patrie memorie, possa restare inoperosa e indifferente”<sup>55</sup>. He commenced by proposing the “ristampa in fogli staccati di quei proclami che nel periodo delle guerre d’indipendenza fecero vibrare l’anima italiana”, in order to “risvegliare nella mente e nel cuore dei nostri soldati nuova fiamma di ardimenti, nuova virtù di sacrifici”<sup>56</sup>. Council member Giuseppe Leti referred to the Roman Republic of 1849 where he said Aurelio Saffi had created special commissions to keep up the public spirit and promote historical values; he proposed the organization of a series of conferences: “non solo per animare quelli che devono partire, ma anche per impedire la depressione fra le famiglie dei soldati”<sup>57</sup>. Again in the case of war, Giovanni Spadoni proposed the publication of a citizens’ manifesto; the chairman, Mazziotti, even thought of producing a national anthem although he realized how hard that would prove. Albini intervened once more with the proposal, if Italy should enter the war, to donate 60 *lire* to the Red Cross for the purchase of a bed. Some of the proposals were rather coolly received, but all agreed to determine “di rivolgere un voto al Consiglio Centrale, perché la nostra Società prenda parte al movimento patriotico nel caso di un [sic] eventuale mobilitazione dell’esercito”<sup>58</sup>.

The Central Council met on May 23 and entered into a total state of war, so to speak. After approving the Minutes of the previous session, Albini – who was also secretary of the Rome committee – read a letter in which president Pedotti delegated the two vice-presidents, Mazziotti and Dallolio, to lead the *Società*; seeing that Dallolio refused, the appointment was taken by Senator Mazziotti, chairman of the Rome committee and also chairman of that meeting. Several proposals were made in support of the war effort; the following decisions were eventually taken: “I. di elargire la somma di L. 200 a favore della Croce Rossa italiana, prelevandola dal fondo stanziato in bilancio a disposizione della presidenza; II. di sospendere

55. *Ivi*, n. 5, maggio 1915, p. 1.

56. *Ivi*, pp. 1-2.

57. *Ivi*, p. 2.

58. *Ibidem*.

*il Bollettino mensile per destinare le somme relative a beneficio di istituzioni patriottiche, salvo a pubblicare qualche numero straordinario, o fogli volanti, ove le circostanze lo richiedano; III. di aderire in massima al Comitato già costituito per la vigilanza contro lo spionaggio e contro la diffusione di notizie false e per la propaganda in mezzo alle famiglie dei richiamati; IV. a tal uopo si dà mandato di fiducia al Presidente per tutte le spese necessarie in questo periodo eccezionale*". It was then decided to invite the regional Committees to take action in their areas, in particular on small libraries of reviews and patriotic books for officers and soldiers in the hospitals. Publication of the *Bollettino* was suspended, and started once more in December 1915.

The Rome Committee met again on May 30 with Mazziotti who certainly had no difficulty in describing the Central Council's deliberations and organising the work; he added the proposal, unanimously approved, of purchasing a flag. In closing the session, the Committee approved Vittore Ravà's proposal to grant full powers to the president "*durante le circostanze eccezionali della Guerra*"<sup>59</sup>. The same day the Lombardy Committee also met under their chairman Francesco Novati. Several members spoke on the war that had just broken out; Novati restrained certain proposals, such as that to organise a series of encounters with soldiers to illustrate the facts of the Risorgimento and the aims of the current war. On creating libraries, he told the Council that a specific committee had recently been set up in Milan, of which he was part; the Lombardy Committee also contributed 200 lire to the Red Cross subscription. The anticipated election to renew appointments, "*veduta l'eccezionalità del momento*", was put off until the following year.<sup>60</sup>

The Naples Committee met on September 11 and approved the mandate contained in Boselli's August 1 circular regarding the South of Italy "*ed in modo particolare i documenti che gettano luce su operazioni poco o mal note e giovano all'accertamento della verità, nonché i documenti che illustrano la condotta dei soldati meridionali procurando i ritratti e le biografie dei più valorosi*"<sup>61</sup>. These documents were to be housed at the *Società napoletana di storia patria* or at the Royal State Archives. The other Committees also

59. *Ivi*, p. 16.

60. *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a. IV, n. 6, December 1915, pp. 11-14.

61. *Ivi*, p. 14.



reached agreements with local administrations, archives and museums on war material, especially for perishable items such as posters, leaflets, booklets, proclamations etc. which risked being irretrievably lost as time passed. In the following months the *Società*, with all its committees, set about achieving the planned objectives and worked together with the National Committee for the “raccolta di testimonianze e documenti storici sull’attuale guerra italo-austriaca”.

The sum of 200 *lire* was assigned to the Red Cross, with the addition of 50 more *lire* for “l’assistenza del soldato”<sup>62</sup>. The institution of small libraries also met with a notable success; the Rome Committee, in agreement with Military Command, sent more than five thousand publications to the Celio Hospital<sup>63</sup>. With reference to the fundamental, already mentioned Boselli circular of August 1, the Rome Committee of the *Società* undertook four points: “I. Raccolta delle pubblicazioni che dimostrano l’italianità delle terre irredente. II. Azione patriottica remota e prossima spiegata da privati e da Società. III. Raccolta di ritratti, biografie e corrispondenze dei militari della provincia romana morti in guerra. IV. Atti, documenti e stampati sulla preparazione e l’assistenza civile”<sup>64</sup>. In this regard, on October 20 1915 chairman Mazziotti sent a circular to the mayors in the province of Rome. The material, he wrote: “sarà messo a disposizione del Comitato Nazionale, il quale, com’è noto, ha fra gli altri suoi compiti quello di formare nel Monumento a Vittorio Emanuele II l’archivio, il museo e la biblioteca del nostro Risorgimento”<sup>65</sup>.

As we said, in December publication of the *Bollettino* began once more. It opened with a patriotic note *Ai soci* which left no doubt about the idea of a Risorgimento under way: “L’Italia rinnova sui campi di battaglia le tradizioni di fede e di sacrifici che rifulsero nei tempi più gloriosi della nostra redenzione politica. In questo solenne ed eccezionale periodo - nel quale tutte le energie del nostro Paese debbono essere rivolte ai gravi cimenti della guerra - il Consiglio Direttivo e la Presidenza della nostra Società sono stati costretti a sospendere gran parte dell’ordinario lavoro sociale. Con animo fidente nel mirabile valore del nostro Esercito e della nostra Marina noi auspichiamo

62. Consiglio Centrale. Rendiconto Generale Consuntivo per l’esercizio sociale 1914-1915, *ivi*, p. 2.

63. Consiglio direttivo del Comitato romano of September 24 1915, published *ivi*, pp. 7-9.

64. *Ivi*, p. 8.

65. *Ivi*, p. 9.

*che la nostra Storia possa, per la maggior fortuna della patria, esaltare presto nelle sue pagine il completo trionfo delle nostre aspirazioni nazionali e dei nostri ideali di civiltà e di giustizia. E mandiamo intanto un fervido saluto alla falange di soldati e di marinai, ai cui eroismi sono affidate le supreme difese e le nuove glorie d'Italia.*"<sup>66</sup> The *Bollettino* then gave an account of all the work done by the Central Council and the Regional Committees, also mentioning the precious collaboration of public and private organisations and similar initiatives.

The last reunion of the Central Council in 1915 was held on December 16; besides its cultural activity, it was decided to give practical support to the war effort. After the somewhat limited donation to the Red Cross, Mazziotti proposed to convert "*il fondo intangibile di £. 10.750, ora depositato su di un libretto di Risparmio del Monte di Pietà di Roma*" into a National War Loan bond. The proposal was immediately approved and in fact the amount was rounded up to eleven thousand lire<sup>67</sup>.

The *Bollettino* came out throughout 1916, halving the issues to become two-monthly, but in any case continuing to give an account of all activities, undertaken and planned. The main aspect was still the collection of documents and accounts of the war under way; as already mentioned, this was a task involving the *Società* and the *Comitato Nazionale* and other institutions as well. In particular, under Mazziotti's direction, a specific commission was created to acquire material from all over Italy with the support of the regional committees. Rome was to deal with the Marche and Umbria regions as well where there were as yet no committees. The Marche Section was set up and began working with the town councils, in particular to collect portraits, biographical news and correspondence of the dead and the decorated from that region, news and photographs of damaged places, and publications and documents on the conflict<sup>68</sup>. This work produced immediate results and the Section, albeit operating from Rome, formed its own internal set-up by appointing a chairman, Domenico Spadoni, and a secretary, Nerino Bianchi, while awaiting a sufficient

66. *Ivi*, p. 1.

67. *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a. V, n. 1, January-February 1916, pp. 2-3.

68. *Ivi*, pp. 8-9.



number of enrollments to become an independent Committee: article 3 of the Statute specified 30 members.

On March 14 1916 the members' assembly of the Piedmont Committee elected their new officials, confirming Senator Ferrero di Cambiano as chairman. Since the start of the war, the Committee had followed the indications of the Central Council, focusing in particular on the "*propaganda patriottica necessaria nel momento*", with a cycle of conferences to demonstrate the continuation of the Risorgimento "*con la stessa idealità e con lo stesso fervore*", to deal with the "*lotte anteriori contro l'Austria, idealmente collegate colla guerra attuale*"<sup>69</sup>. The Piedmont Committee also responded to the mandate on collecting documents and reports, already under way at the Turin City Council, especially the photographs and diaries of the fallen. The material was to go to the *Museo del Risorgimento*, for which however it was deemed desirable to find more suitable premises than those then being used in the Mole Antonelliana.

On March 15 1916 the board of the Neapolitan regional Committee met; the on-going war became the main topic, although the financial statement for 1915 actually headed the agenda. Collecting historical memorabilia was discussed, but Chairman De Petra also wished to recall the recent exploit of the "hero of Lubjana", Oreste Salomone<sup>70</sup>, who, like vice chairman Pasquale Parente, came from Capua. The Rome regional Committee met on April 2. Chairman Mazziotti greeted the members but then left the secretary, Albini, to read the account of the previous two-year period. The economic difficulties illustrated in the financial statement were discussed, as were members who had passed away, as well as the historical war material already collected or yet to be collected, to be sent to the *Museo del Risorgimento*. The inevitable slackening in institutional activities was spoken of, justified in the introduction almost as a duty: "*Nella grande conflagrazione che sconvolge l'Europa, in questo periodo nel quale la patria richiede fervore di azioni e non già rievocazione di memorie storiche, la nostra Società si è trovata necessariamente costretta a sospendere gran parte delle sue*

69. *Ivi*, n. 4, July-August 1916, pp. 3-6.

70. *Ivi*, n. 3, May-June 1916, pp. 5-6. The pilot Salomone became famous in February for his aerial exploit in the skies over Ljubljana during which he was seriously injured yet managed to return to Italian territory; for this mission, he was the first Italian airman to be awarded the gold medal for military valour. On Salomone and his feats see ROBERTO MANDEL's classic work, frequently republished, *La guerra aerea*, Milano, L'Editoriale moderna, 1931.

*manifestazioni*<sup>71</sup>. In its conclusion the report took on more patriotic tones, stressing the unbroken line of the national Risorgimento: “*Ed ora, mentre il valore del nostro Esercito e della nostra Marina accresce di nuovi e gloriosi fasti la storia della nostra redenzione, noi, anche come cultori degli studi storici, aspettiamo con fede che la presente quarta guerra d'indipendenza finisca col completo trionfo delle aspirazioni nazionali e s'inizi un'era nuova di civiltà e di pace pei popoli*”<sup>72</sup>. At that moment in time Italy was still concentrated on the war against Austria, which could in part justify the idea of the continuation of the independence wars, while exploits such as Salomone's, skillfully diffused by propaganda, were still able to mask the tragic stalemate at the front. The Rome Committee also proceeded to renew its officials, confirming Matteo Mazziotti as chairman.

On April 16 the Central Council of the *Società* met in presence of the president Pedotti, although no important decisions were taken. The only moot point regarded the Congress, already arranged for Genoa, during which the appointments were to be renewed. The cue was given by the Veneto Committee's request that the Congress should be held in Venice for the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation. Such a request was not really acceptable given the arrangements already made with Genoa, but also because the postponement caused by the war would inevitably lengthen and it certainly could not be discussed for 1916<sup>73</sup>. The following meeting on June 16 was under Pedotti once more; the fiftieth celebrations to be held in Venice were discussed, as were the difficulties involved in publishing regularly the *Rassegna*.

The 1916 May-June *Bollettino* also published a short note in which we see the effort made to consider the on-going war as the completion of unification. Towards the end of the first year of war there had been a few skirmishes near the Lardaro forts, recalling: “*che precisamente sotto quei forti si chiuse mestamente la campagna garibaldina del 1866*”<sup>74</sup>. After recollecting some events of those days, the short note closed with the words: “*Cinquant'anni appresso, nel 1916, non avverrà così. Ben più numerosi di allora sono i volontari trentini nell'esercito italiano; molti di essi hanno las-*

71. *Bollettino della Società nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento*, a.V, n.3, May-June 1916, p. 2.

72. *Ivi*, p. 4.

73. *Ivi*, pp. 1-2.

74. *Ivi*, p. 10.

*ciato la giovane vita sulle rocce tridentine o sulle rive dell'Isonzo; ma gli altri, superato Lardaro, superati gli altri ostacoli, giungeranno felici e vittoriosi a Trento, avanguardia dell'esercito liberatore*"<sup>75</sup>.

During the general assembly of the Neapolitan Committee members on July 7 1916 the renewal of appointments was on the agenda. Giulio De Petra had replaced the first chairman Ferdinando del Carretto back in April 1915; he asked to be replaced for health reasons, but at the insistence of the assembly the whole Board was confirmed<sup>76</sup>. After thanking the members, De Petra mentioned the work on collecting war documentation then going forward together with the Naples State Archives, where all the material was to be provisionally housed before being transferred to the Rome *Museo del Risorgimento* in the Victor Emmanuel Monument. In 1916, Lieutenant General Alfredo Dallolio delivered to the Bologna *Museo del Risorgimento* a series of arms taken from the Austrians in 1915, to be exhibited to the public. He was the brother of Alberto, chairman of the Romagna Committee and at that time undersecretary of state for arms and munitions at the War Ministry. Of great future interest for historical memory, the initiative was a success right away, attracting a great number of visitors, and as propaganda for the fighting under way<sup>77</sup>.

The last reunion of the *Società's* Central Council for 1916 was held on December 18. Yet again, both the Congress and the elections for renewal of appointments were postponed<sup>78</sup>. Committee activity was reported, with mention of work both on publications and conferences which were in any case relevant to the present, and on the progress made in collecting war documentation through agreements with various local institutions. The last heading of the report to members regarded the "*Attuale Guerra*"; it began with what had already been done, from donations to document collection to reading matter for soldiers in hospital. It went on in patriotic tones to speak of duty and devotion to the homeland; not a word on the extension of the conflict against Germany. However, already a "victorious peace" was mentioned, a *leit-motiv* to be found more and more often in promotion material and propaganda in times of trouble, particularly in

75. *Ivi*, p. 11.

76. *Ivi*, n. 5, September-October 1916, p. 1.

77. *Ivi*, p. 13.

78. *Ivi*, n. 6, November-December 1916, p. 1.

1917 and particularly after Caporetto. Then the longing for peace was tempered by the fact that peace, unless it was to nullify all past efforts, would have a meaning only with victory. Looking to the future, the *Società* was also thinking of when, “*alla fine dell’aspra prova*”, their work would be more intensive and the *Società* itself would be “*un centro intellettuale più attivo per raccogliere e diffondere i ricordi della nostra indipendenza politica e della nostra unità nazionale*”<sup>79</sup>.

1917 made the weight of the long conflict felt also on the *Società*’s activity. In the Rome Committee Board Meeting of February 25, we hear for the first time that the collection of documents, carried forward with such enthusiasm, had so far been “*opera modesta, compiuta finora per quanto han consentito i mezzi*”<sup>80</sup>. Chairman Mazziotti added that “*durante questo immane conflitto*” it had not been possible to carry out any activity. This expressed the despondency that was overwhelming the whole country, since in fact – as we have seen – in spite of difficulties and delays institutional activity had been fairly intensive, although “history” was by then all in the present. The Piedmont Committee also seemed to cease its institutional work after the activity planned for 1916 “*perché molti membri, per l’incalzare degli avvenimenti, dovettero dedicare tutta la loro attività disponibile alla propaganda della guerra ed all’azione patriottica nei vari Comitati di assistenza civile*”<sup>81</sup>.

The Rome Board met again on May 10 to state once and for all that the “*solenne periodo della vita nazionale*” did not allow tasks to be assigned or initiatives to be undertaken. Two delegates were even appointed for an extraordinary meeting of the Central Council, an assembly which was again to reiterate the impossibility of holding the Congress and renewing appointments<sup>82</sup>. The extraordinary assembly was held in Rome on June 22<sup>83</sup>; the national president Pedotti also declared that in this “exceptional period” activity had been extremely limited. The abolition or suspension of the *Bollettino* was also discussed, the reports of activity to be transferred to the *Rassegna*. The strongest opposition to this came from Mazziotti. The issue was delegated to the president and in fact the *Bollettino* survived only

79. *Ivi*, p. 5.

80. *Ivi*, a.VI, n. 1, January-February 1917, p. 2.

81. *Ivi*, n. 2, March-April 1917, p. 1.

82. *Ivi*, n. 3, May-June 1917, pp. 1-2.

83. *Ivi*, n. 4, July-August 1917, pp. 2-5.

until the end of 1917. The summaries of Committee activities, in spite of general pessimism, showed that conferences, meetings and even document collection had continued throughout the country. Pedotti's letter of July 12 invited all regional committees "*a promuovere una propaganda patriottica fra le classi più umili e specie nei centri rurali*"<sup>84</sup>. Such initiatives were to spread Risorgimento values, make the men and events of the period known and strengthen the spirit of "*italianità*" and "*resistenza*"<sup>85</sup>; the call was well received by all the committees. Informed of the initiative by Mazziotti, the minister without portfolio of the Boselli Government Ubaldo Comandini expressed high appreciation for the *Società*'s decision and offered to support this new propaganda effort with great enthusiasm<sup>86</sup>. At the end of 1917 the *Bollettino* closed down; however in the last year, even in the *cupio dissolvi* atmosphere, not only had it given prompt accounts of the *Società*'s activity, it had also published dozens of short articles on Risorgimento facts and people, as usual with a careful eye on the connection with current events. In the Rome Committee's board meeting on April 12 1918, chairman Mazziotti made some slight mention of the war document collection, recalling on the one hand the restricted funding to sustain it and on the other the disappointing response from the provincial towns<sup>87</sup>.

Now let us return to the *Comitato nazionale* whose work did not slow down when hostilities ended. During the war a great deal of material had been collected, with particular care for anything at risk of deterioration. Coordination between the Rome offices and the war zones through Fracassetti was unceasing; there was also an intensive collaboration network throughout the nation, but many organisations still housed material, and in some cases claimed their prerogatives. As we mentioned above, of great interest was the controversy with the *Ufficio storiografico della mobilitazione* directed by the undersecretary for arms and munitions, set up by Giovanni Borelli. In 1916 he had the idea of a collection of documents, starting from the economic and industrial effort and in fact covering "*la storia documentata dello sforzo dal quale uscirono gli uomini e gli organi alla formidabile*

84. *Ivi*, p. 5.

85. *Ibidem*.

86. *Ivi*, n. 5, September-October 1917, pp. 1-2.

87. *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, a. V (1918), fascicolo II, April-May-June, pp. 352-353.

*impresa*<sup>88</sup>. We know that this Office had over time extended its task of document collection thanks to an illustrious employee, Giuseppe Prezzo-  
lini; on June 8 1918 not only did he state that the work of the organization  
was to “*illustrare la vita della Nazione durante l'attuale conflitto*” and that  
“*una speciale Biblioteca-Archivio*” had already been set up, he also asked  
permission to increase the collection “*ormai per il numero e per l'importanza  
delle pubblicazioni superiore ad ogni altra in Italia*”<sup>89</sup>. The contest continued.

In his letter dated July 24 1918<sup>90</sup>, in an all too explicit note the undersecretary for arms and munitions, Cesare Nava, responded to queries expressed by Boselli directly to the Minister of War; he said that all data collected, some confidential, including individual or social data, came within the wide mobilisation sector which was not limited to industrial mobilisation. The Office, therefore, “*consapevole della cospicua e specifica opera tracciata dal Comitato nazionale e degli accordi da esso ottenuti*”, did not intend in fact to change its objectives. Boselli replied to Nava personally, requesting that the borderlines of research and collection should be more clearly set forth, above all on that most ambiguous point defining the documentation which could in some way come within the generical term “mobilisation”.

The issue that had arisen during the war came up once more after the conflict ended when the *Comitato nazionale*'s aim was to acquire the documentation from the *Storiografico*. In June 1919 there were some preliminary meetings between the *Storiografico*'s director Giovanni Borelli and Boselli, and the two *Comitato* delegates, Zoccoli and Fracassetti. At first Borelli appeared to favour the passage of “*materiale di coltura e di indagine*” to the *Comitato* in future<sup>91</sup>. Boselli and Borelli met in person on June 11, but the next day the director of the *Storiografico* felt it necessary to write again to his counterpart to set down his decision in black and white<sup>92</sup>. At that time the

88. MCR, Guerra italo-austriaca 1915, Ufficio storiografico della mobilitazione, b. 17, 1, lettera a stampa del 26 agosto 1916. On the *Ufficio storiografico* and its originator see BARBARA BRACCO, *Memoria e identità della Grande Guerra. L'Ufficio Storiografico della mobilitazione (1916-1926)*, Milano, Unicopli, 2002; the book does not, however, deal with the controversy with the *Comitato*.

89. MCR, Guerra italo-austriaca 1915, Ufficio storiografico della mobilitazione, b. 17, 1. The letter does not name the recipient.

90. *Ibidem*.

91. *Ibidem*. Letter from Borelli to Boselli, June 10 1919.

92. *Ibidem*.



issue seemed not so much one of transferring the papers to the *Comitato*, but maintaining the identity of the *Storiografico*'s work. As Borelli stressed, the Office had opened when Boselli himself was Premier and had fully approved it, therefore there could be no recent "*equivoci spiacevoli*", hence the immediate need to "*disegnare le linee di un accordo sistematico reciprocamente benefico*".

In July 1919, perhaps uncertain of Borelli's intentions, Boselli wrote to Premier Nitti and to the Minister of Public Education Alfredo Baccelli<sup>93</sup>, to whom he sent a copy of his letter to Nitti. Concerned about rumours regarding other destinations, Boselli asked that "*erede e continuatore dell'Ufficio Storiografico, sia appunto il Comitato Nazionale per la Storia del Risorgimento*", since this solution would allow the integration of "*due cospicue raccolte; di coordinarle organicamente con beneficio degli studiosi; di dare unicità di impulso direttivo alle future ricerche; di evitare lacune dannose e duplicazioni inutili; e di ottenere il maggior possibile risultato con il minor dispendio di energie*". Minister Baccelli answered Boselli on July 20, not only agreeing with the proposal of the *Comitato*'s president, but also assuring him of his support with the head of the Government<sup>94</sup>. On August 7, War Minister Albricci informed Baccelli that he had nothing against the passage of the *Storiografico* to the Ministry of Public Education; such a passage would enhance "*le relazioni fra l'ufficio stesso e il Comitato Nazionale per la Storia del Risorgimento*"; he would therefore await the Government's decision.

Things changed rapidly: on December 15 1919 Borelli sent a memorandum to Senator Benedetto Croce<sup>95</sup> - who was, we recall, also a member of the Central Council of the *Società per la storia del Risorgimento* - in which very briefly he asked that the *Ufficio Storiografico* be supported so it could go on with its work until its collections were complete, and that this should lead to the institution of a *Società* made up of a number of members of the same *Ufficio* and other illustrious scholars and citizens, to be set up as a charitable trust with the aid of the state, with its own library and publishing house. This position was the opposite of what he had previously declared, and would have been that "duplicate" that he himself had considered inappropriate.

93. *Ibidem*. The two letters are undated, but can be traced back to the beginning of July since the first answer, Minister Baccelli's, is dated July 20.

94. *Ibidem*. In a brief note dated July 28, Boselli warmly thanked the Minister.

95. *Ibidem*.

The issue continued but deviated towards a conclusion with the setting up of an interministerial commission under Benedetto Croce, with Fracassetti taking part in its functioning. This was described in the *Comitato's* meeting of July 9 1920<sup>96</sup>; the latest Giolitti Government had been installed the previous June 16, with Croce at the Ministry of Education. The Commission had decided that “*la raccolta dello Storiografico, provvisoriamente affidata per l'immediata continuità del funzionamento ad una Biblioteca Governativa, passi al nostro Comitato non appena questo avrà dato assetto ai nuovi locali*”. In front of Minister Croce, present at the meeting, Boselli expressed his hope for an early decision. In the same meeting Boselli reported on the large quantity of material collected, and on its cataloguing and arrangement to make it available to scholars as soon as possible. In support of this work and on the relative personnel required, Royal Decree n. 1985 dated October 9 1919 had already intervened. The issue was finally set to rest with R.D. n. 1821 dated October 23 1924 assigning the *Ufficio Storiografico's* collection to the *Comitato*. The war came to an end. The collection of documentation continued during the following years, not only through acquisitions from public and private organisations but also from the War Ministry itself, through which, among other things, material was acquired from the *Ufficio centrale notizie* and the photo-cinema establishment.

During the Great War, the *Società* and the *Comitato* had carried out parallel tasks with the common intent of keeping Risorgimento studies alive, promoting scientific initiatives even in the most difficult times, and continuing the collection of historical documents pertaining to the age of national unification. During the same period the *Comitato* had made its main task the collection of material on the war, to which the *Società* had greatly contributed. The fact that the *Società* was an association with members throughout the country meant its task was to project Risorgimento ideals and examples to the military, the wounded and the families by means of small libraries, conferences and encounters: the war was considered to have brought the Risorgimento to fulfilment. These two different ways of representing and supporting the war effort came together in 1935 in today's *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*, which has continued the good work; it is now the custodian of an impressive amount of material

96. MCR, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, n. 45, 1920.



available – as intended – to scholars from all over the world; custodian as well of those values that passed through the “long Risorgimento”.

Today, with the serenity of the time elapsed and with the changes of the last hundred years, the work then carried out inevitably lost the value of a testimony of one part against the other. It has instead acquired value as an essential source for the reconstruction of events that saw ideas, men and happenings encounter one another to change the face of Europe and indeed of much of the world. We must not forget that it was also the work of other warring nations such as France or Germany – which inspired Borelli, for example – in forms not dissimilar, and that today it helps to form an overall vision of that first tragic experience of globalisation.

## Appendix

Elenco dei membri corrispondenti del Comitato nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento<sup>97</sup>

### PIEMONTE

*Provincia di Alessandria*: Diego Martini

*Provincia di Cuneo*: Angelo Vesentini, Annibale Galateri, Edoardo Ingegnatti

*Provincia di Novara*: Giovanni Faldella, Pietro Galloni, Giuseppe Ottolenghi, Corradino Sella

*Provincia di Torino*: Giovanni Sforza, Costanzo Rinaudo, Emilio Pinchia, Adolfo Colombo

### LIGURIA

*Provincia di Genova*: Achille Neri, Ubaldo Mazzini, Francesco Mannucci, Vittorio Poggi, Giulio Natali

*Provincia di Porto Maurizio*: Giulio Lazzari

### LOMBARDIA E VALTELLINA

*Provincia di Bergamo*: Giuseppe Locatelli Milesi, Angelo Pavesi

*Provincia di Brescia*: Evelina Martinengo Cesaresco, Gustavo Giani, Pio Bettoni

*Provincia di Como*: Santo Monti, Luigi Riva, Antonio Magni

97. L'elenco è tratto dalla *Relazione presentata dal presidente on Paolo Boselli sull'opera svolta dal Comitato dall'inizio dei suoi lavori (4 aprile 1909) al 15 giugno 1916* cit., pp. 97-101 (Allegato F).

*Provincia di Cremona:* Ettore Signori, Dionisio Largajoli, Napo Albergoni, Tommaso Aroldi

*Provincia di Mantova:* Ada Sacchi Simonetta, Alessandro Luzio

*Provincia di Milano:* Giuseppe Gallavresi, Domenico Ghetti, Leopoldo Pullè, Giovanni Agnelli

*Provincia di Pavia:* Arrigo Solmi, Robero Rampoldi

*Provincia di Sondrio:* Ulrico Martinelli

## EMILIA

*Provincia di Bologna:* Fulvio Cantoni, Albano Sorbelli, Giorgio Del Vecchio, Alberto Baldini

*Provincia di Ferrara:* Giuseppe Agnelli, Patrizio Antolini

*Provincia di Forlì:* Vittorio Franchini, Paolo Mastri, Luigi Bartorelli

*Provincia di Modena:* Giovanni Canevazzi, Luigi Casini, Matteo Campori

*Provincia di Parma:* Giovanni Mariotti

*Provincia di Piacenza:* Emilio Ottolenghi

*Provincia di Ravenna:* Pier Desiderio Pasolini, Domenico Rossi, Giuseppe Manzoni Ansidei, Alberto Gianola, Antonio Messeri, Giuseppe Brussi, Ignazio Massaroli, Lorenzo Misericocchi

*Provincia di Reggio Emilia:* Naborre Campanini

## VENETO

*Provincia di Belluno:* Angelo Sperti, Attilio Loero

*Provincia di Padova:* Francesco Turri, Francesco Franceschetti

*Provincia di Treviso:* Luigi Bailo

*Provincia di Udine:* Libero Fracassetti, Ruggero Della Torre, Luigi Suttina

*Provincia di Venezia:* Carlo Bullo, Antonio Battistella, Gilberto Secretan

*Provincia di Verona:* Giuseppe Biadego, Dante Fogarini

*Provincia di Vicenza:* Luigi Ongaro, Paolo M. Tua, Domenico Bortolan

## TOSCANA

*Provincia di Arezzo:* Agostino Savelli

*Provincia di Firenze:* Salomone Morpurgo, Guido Biagi, Agostino Gori, Luigi Chiappelli, Paolo Giorgi

*Provincia di Grosseto:* Gaetano Badii

*Provincia di Livorno:* Achille Dina, Ersilio Michel

*Provincia di Lucca:* Cesare Sardi, Amy A. Bernardy

*Provincia di Massa:* Giovanni Cucchiari, Francesco Mariotti, Camillo Cinati

*Provincia di Pisa:* Gino Scaramella, Augusto Mancini, Ezio Solaini, Amerigo Lecci, Giovanni Gentile

*Provincia di Siena:* Giuseppe Sanesi

#### MARCHE ED UMBRIA

*Provincia di Ancona:* Ernesto Spadolini, Gaetano Gasperoni, Luigi Mancini

*Provincia di Ascoli Piceno:* Giulio Garavani, Alceo Speranza

*Provincia di Macerata:* Domenico Spadoni

*Provincia di Pesaro Urbino:* Luigi Nicoletti, Ettore Viterbo, Ruggero Mariotti,  
Luigi Nardini, Giudo Orazio Di Carpegna-Falconieri

*Provincia di Perugia:* Giustiniano Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, Angelo Fani, Raffaello  
Ricci, Angelo Sacchetti Sassetti, Salvatore Fratellini

#### LAZIO

Leone Caetani, Ettore Tolomei, Gaetano Cogo, Vittorio Fiorini, Giovanni Scotti,  
Mario Menghini, Fortunato Pintor, Italo Raulich, Oreste Tommasini,  
Clinio Quaranta, Cesare Pinzi, Giovanni Roncagli, Vito Lesen, Cesare Cesari,  
Giuseppe Ferrari

#### ABRUZZO E MOLISE

*Provincia di Chieti:* Marchese Della Valle, Giovanni Rosso

*Provincia di Teramo:* Luigi Savorini

#### CAMPANIA

*Provincia di Avellino:* Giuseppe Santangelo, Antonio Mellusi

*Provincia di Caserta:* Angelo Brocchi, Vincenzo Simoncelli

*Provincia di Napoli:* Attilio Simioni, Benedetto Croce, Raffaello Barbiera

#### CALABRIE E BASILICATA

*Provincia di Catanzaro:* Ettore Capialbi, Giuseppe De Francesco, Filippo De  
Nobili

*Provincia di Cosenza:* Oreste Dito

*Provincia di Potenza:* Decio Albini, Pietro Lacava

*Provincia di Reggio Calabria:* Fabrizio Plutino

#### SICILIA

*Provincia di Caltanissetta:* Giovanni Mulé-Bertolo

*Provincia di Catania:* Vincenzo Finocchiaro-Speciale, Giuseppe Lombardo  
Radice

*Provincia di Girgenti:* Giuseppe Bianco

*Provincia di Palermo:* Alfonso Sansone, Giuseppe Labate

*Provincia di Siracusa:* Gaetano Di Giovanni

*Provincia di Trapani:* Bernardo Genzardi

SARDEGNA

*Provincia di Cagliari:* Ottone Baccareda, Arnaldo Capra

*Provincia di Sassari:* Pietro Satta-Branca

TRENTINO: Livio Marchetti

SAN MARINO: Pietro Franciosi



Part I  
The European Historiography  
of the Great War: a First Overview





Rémi Dalisson

French Historiography of the Great War:  
from the “*Battle-History*” to the Total, Social History  
of a Specific War (1918-2015)

French historiography on the Great War is both particular and classic with respect to the other nations. Particular, because France, emblematic victor in the war, has made it an identity symbol. The 14/18 war is both the victory of the republican regime and that of French tenacity, symbolising a nation proud and confident in itself and in its national identity. From the very outset, study of the subject was attributed a sacred, highly important character as of 1918 in a country that tends to be capitalise on its history<sup>1</sup>. Yet French historiography is also dependent on university evolutions as well as the future of the ex-servicemen and the disintegration of the national framework as the study field of a world war. In this sense, French study of the Great War is like that of the other European countries. Lastly, the centenary of the Great War<sup>2</sup> poses contrasting French historiography with many questions, at times torn by university disputes, often political and ideological in nature.

French historiography has never ceased to undergo evolution, but it remains a political issue and in the front line of memory in France, at a time when we are asking many questions on national identity and the future of Europe.

1. 1 See RÉMI DALISSON, *Célébrer la nation. Les fêtes nationales en France de 1789 à nos jours*, Paris, Nouveau Monde, 2009, and JOHANN MICHEL, *Gouverner les mémoires*, Paris, Seuil, 2010.

2. See <http://centenaire.org/fr/la-mission/la-mission-du-centenaire> and NICOLAS OFFENSTADT, ANDRÉ LOÉZ, *La Grande Guerre, carnet du Centenaire*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2013.

## The time of fighting history: a historiography under influence (1918-1945)

*The memoirs of the servicemen: the first fundamental points in a fighting historiography.* The soldiers' accounts of their experience are the first form of historiography on the Great War. They are the legacy that keep alive the popular and the academic memory of this war. All genres are used<sup>3</sup>, from poetry (Guillaume Appolinaire, *L'adieu du cavalier*, 1915), to the naturalist novel (Maurice Genevoix, *Sous Verdun*, 1916), to the militant pamphlet (Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu. Journal d'une escouade*, 1916, Roland Dorgolès, *Les croix du bois*, 1919 although started in 1915), to journalism (Georges Duhamel, *Vie des Martyrs*, 1917).

These accounts give different points of view, that of the doctor (Duhamel), the corporal (Dorgolès), the non-commissioned officer (Jacques Péricard<sup>4</sup>) or the private (Barbusse). Most of the authors continued writing after the war, like Genevoix or Léon Werth (who speaks of the war as a "barracks of bodies"<sup>5</sup>). The genre continued to evolve until the Thirties with the private II class Céline (*Voyage au bout de la nuit*, 1932), private Jean Giono (*Le grand troupeau*, 1931), or Lieutenant Pierre Drieu la Rochelle (*La Comédie di Charleroi*, 1934). Although these accounts were soon criticised, in particular in the founding book by Jean Norton-Cru (*Témoins: essai d'analyse et de critique des souvenirs de combattants édités en français de 1915 à 1928*). All of these are the first history of the war.

These accounts complete the first historiography of the 14/18 war, founded by the University back in 1921 with the *Library/War Museum* and an association, the *Society for the History of the War* which from 1923 on published a *Review of History of the World War*. The library/museum is directed by an ex-serviceman, a war invalid, Camille Bloch while the ex-"poilu" and academic Pierre Renouvin at the Sorbonne began his course on the origins of the war, before in turn directing the BDIC (*Library of Contemporary International Documentation*<sup>6</sup>). In twenty years, from 1918

3. See ANTOINE COMPAGNON, *La Grande Guerre des écrivains*, Paris, Gallimard, 2014 and Nicolas Beaupré *Ecrits de guerre, 14-18*, Paris, CNRS, 2013.

4. See JACQUES PÉRICARD, *Debout les morts!* Paris, Payot, 1915-1916.

5. In LÉON WERTH, *Clavel soldat*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1919.

6. Today the review is *World Wars and contemporary conflicts*; JEAN-JACQUES BECKER, "La Grande Guerre et la naissance de la BDIC", *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, Paris, BDIC, 2010/4, n°100

to 1938, the *Scientific Historical Review* on historical research published fifteen articles on the Great War, forty-seven accounts and five hundred and sixty-one prefaces on the topic, a number never again reached until today<sup>7</sup>.

*A Historiography of a classic and patriotic war.* It is time for a historiography centred on the diplomatic crises that led to war. We are in the midst of disputes over compensation and each wants to prove the other responsible for the war. The French government thus supplies funds so that Renouvin can prove German responsibility, but the latter remains independent in his work. In 1925, he publishes *The Immediate Origins of the War* and in 1931 Jules Isaac publishes *The Origins of the War*. The battles are at the centre of this first historiography. The study of the numerous battles sets in motion all forces, not military historians alone. The *Lavissee* (with Charles Seignobos) on the Great War published in 1922 is for the most part on operations<sup>8</sup>; out of five hundred and forty-eight pages, three hundred and thirty-six are on operations and the other one hundred and fifty on diplomatic issues. The whole forms a military history on “war school” lines in which those fighting see little of each other, a story of war without contenders (except for the accounts of the ex-servicemen) summarised in the summa *The French army in the Great War* in thirty-four volumes from 1922 to 1939.

This historiography produces an image of the war presented as the heir to the wars of Year Two of the French Revolution. It is founded only on the study of the fighting, the victories and the heroism of the “Poilus”. And the republican School shortly introduces the Great War into its programmes, starting from 1925 (implemented in 1929) and even before in books like that of Jules Isaac in 1921. The conflict is celebrated in a series of *Petit Lavissee* works for teaching in primary schools, and for secondary schools in the famous *Mallet and Isaac* in the interval between the two wars<sup>9</sup>.

7. See ANTOINE PROST, JAY WINTER, *Penser la guerre, un essai d'historiographie*, Paris, Seuil, 2004, ch. 1, pp. 15-50.

8. In ERNEST LAVISSE, *Histoire de la France contemporaine*, vol. 9, *La Grande Guerre*, by HENRY BIDOU, AUGUSTE GAUVAIN, CHARLES SEIGNOBOS, Paris, Hachette, 1922

9. See the Workshop of Troyes (October 2014), “La guerre, le livre et l'enfant, 1914-1918” and MANON PIGNOT, *Allons enfants de la patrie: génération Grande Guerre*, Paris, Seuil, 2012.

Under the political framework from Vichy to the Second War, historians such as Jérôme Carcopino<sup>10</sup> having joined the regime continually narrate these battles and these victories, the proof of French genius<sup>11</sup>. They boast of the idealised heroism of the “poilus”, symbols of the value of the “French race” (Charles Péguy before the Great War). This is the case of Benoist-Mechin who came out in 1942 with *Ce qui demeure* and seems to immobilise this historiography.

### Cancellation and historiographical evolutions: a new look (1945-1975)

After the Second World War we see the cancellation of the Great War in the trauma of 1939/45. Compared with such horrors, the “Great War seems as far off as the Trojan War.”<sup>12</sup> The Fourteen-Eighteen historiography gives way to that of Thirty-nine/Forty-five.

*A historiography in decline in spite of so many ex?* As François Mauriac said in 1957: “The Great War disappears under the mud tide of 1940” and it is the more recent war that occupies the whole of historiographical space. The number books of eye-witness accounts on the Fourteen-Eighteen war decreased in the Fifties-Seventies, the university works were three times less numerous in the decade following between 1945 and 1958 and novels were very rare (except for Georges Conchon’s book *Les Honneurs de la Guerre* published in 1955). Only the elderly still study the Great War, for example in 1951 the CNCV (the *National Committee for the Memory of Verdun*) was founded by ex-soldier Maurice Genevoix. Rather than the historians, it is the ex-servicemen who ensure the story of Fourteen-Eighteen, therefore: imperfect and without method.

However, at the start of the 1960s, historiography began to undergo an evolution: the ex-“Poilus”, still around fifty thousand, began to meditate on this experience of war, and they wished to hand it down. Historical publications on the Great War returned, resulting in the success of the

10. Pétain’s Minister of National Education (1941-1942) and a famous historian on Roman Antiquities.

11. See ROBERT O. PAXTON, *La France de Vichy*, Paris, Seuil, 1975.

12. *Bulletin de la société philomatique vosgienne*, 1957, cit. by N. OFFENSTADT, *Les Fusillés de la Grande Guerre et la mémoire collective (1914-1999)*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1999.

book that came out in 1959: *Vie e Mort des Français, 14/18*<sup>13</sup>. The book was written by André Ducasse, Jacques Meyer and Gabriel Perreux, all students and then professors; they left writings on the Fourteen-Eighteen war, such as Ducasse who was at the front like Meyer. Encouraged by the success of the work, its publisher ordered two books in the famous collection *Everyday Life*, one on the condition of the “Poilus”, the other on that of civilians. These are *La vie quotidienne des soldats pendant la grande guerre* by Meyer, published in 1967, and *La vie quotidienne des civils en France pendant la grande guerre* by Perreux, 1966.

These three successive books bear witness to the redefinition of historiography on the Great War regarding the fate of the soldiers. This fate became the object of study replacing knowledgeable books on the causes of the war or its military aspects. The state underlined this historiographical evolution ordering three broadcasts from historians to decipher the Thirties. The first, entitled *14/18 la Grande Guerre*, entrusted to Marc Ferro<sup>14</sup> is an assembly from Franco-German archives and was very successful; a film was made of it. Ferro’s work was outstandingly successful as published by Gallimard in 1969. However, the story of the battles does not disappear over the historical horizon. In 1965 for Pathé-Cinema, Henri de Turenne and Jean-Louis Guillaud wrote and made the programme *Verdun (grand prix* of television criticism) which follows this emblematic battle with the aid of the archives; it inaugurated the series *The Great Battles* (1966-74) which studied the suffering of the men more than previously. Thus, at the start of the fiftieth anniversary, Jean Aurel appeared with the film made the year before, *14/18* with many images from the national archive<sup>15</sup>; this film would receive an Oscar award the year after. To conclude this memorial activism, on November 9 1968, the television produced a retrospective on the Great War live from the exhibition of the Invalides for the programme *Rond Point*, an Ile de France programme.

13. The book’s cover centres on the figure Poilu. And the painting “The sleeping soldier” is by Dunoyer de Ségonzac, himself a veteran of the Great War.

14. MARC FERRO, *14-18, la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969.

15. This film whose text was written by Cécil Saint Laurent, is the great (and only) documentary on the Great War by the French school and the French television until ’90.

*Change of generation, change of vision of the war.* Little by little, the military archives were opened, renewing the history of the Great War that began to appear as a global, social, human and cultural phenomenon. These works changed the outlook and history of the Great War. Thus, Guy Pre-doncini's works on the *Mutinies in the French army in '17* (published in 1968) focus more on the men than on the battles.

The series of thirty-seven radio broadcasts, entitled *14/18, monthly programme on the First World War* from 1964 to November '68 confirms this historiographical revival. This series includes ex-Poilus who wrote on the subject (Maurice Genevoix, Jean Guehenno, Dorgoles), historians (Philippe Contamine, Annie Kriegel, Ferro, Renouvin, Jacques Droz) and military personnel (General Haig). The whole thing, with interviews with the Poilus and eye-witness accounts intersecting with historical work, deals with political, economic, social and cultural topics. The "classic" history of the 14/18 war of course does not disappear, as is proved by Jacques Droz's book *The causes of the First World War* published in '73. However, this book goes beyond the classic history of diplomacy to approach the cultural and intellectual story of the war and its causes. These successes bear witness to the persistence and revival of the history of the Great War as a change in the historic paradigm.

A complete, open historiography: from the "Péronne moment" to the transnational history of the war (1975 to the present day)

*The turning-point in the cultural history of the war: Péronne.* In the mid-Seventies, the Great War saw a return to a historical reading of the conflict in favour of those fighting it and their suffering. The famous notion of *war culture* appears, as is shown in the Verdun exchange of '75<sup>16</sup> that focused on the "life of the service-man", "the image of the battle", but also on its *scholastic and cultural history* and how it is handed down, and shows the evolution of historiography on the Great War.

A new generation imposed a new view on the 14/18 war. This is shown in Antoine Prost's thesis on *Ex-Fighters and French society (1914-39)*, a thesis given in 1975, and in that of Jean-Jacques Becker on *French public*

16. See *Verdun, 1916. Acte du colloque international*, Verdun, CNSV, 1976.

*opinion and the commencement of the '14 war*, in '76, while Prédoncin's thesis achieved great success. All three broaden the outlook on the war towards society and culture, and complete the classic military and diplomatic history of the Great War. Public opinion, economy and the soldiers' sensations become the new basis of the war story.

From this time on, historiography of the 14/18 war proceeds towards the cultural with the contribution of the second generation such as Stéphane Andoin-Rouzeau, Rémy Cazals, Jay Winter or Nicolas Offenstadt<sup>17</sup>. The Nanterre exchange of '88 was therefore dedicated "to the European societies and the war" and Jean-Jacques Becker pondered on historiographical perspectives: "In conclusion, the history of the Great War is inseparable from that of the cultures of the people in question. They, perhaps, may be able to give an explanation for the great mystery. Why did the peoples of the planet thereafter, materially, accept utterly to take part in this extraordinary drama from which the world, if the truth be known, has never recovered?"<sup>18</sup>

Four years later, in '92, the same Jean Jacques Becker with Audoin-Rouzeau organized an encounter on "War and culture". Everything became the subject of study: from the most banal objects (postcards, everyday accounts of the front, photographs, toys, flyers<sup>19</sup>) to the most visible (monuments to the fallen, graffiti, ex-voto, mementos from the trenches). Attitudes were carefully observed (mourning, education, second marriages, sexuality<sup>20</sup>, wine, hygiene): all of which led to a *banalisation* of the history of the Great War as Claude Mosse<sup>21</sup> put it. New notions appeared such as the brutalisation of "war culture" or "war violence".

17. For example STÉPHANE AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, *Les combattants des tranchées*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1986; RÉMY CAZALS, *14-18, le cri d'une génération*, Toulouse, Privat, 2003; J. WINTER, (with A. PROST), *Penser la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Seuil, 1992, N. OFFENSTADT, *Les Fusillés de la Grande Guerre* cit.

18. Jean-Jacques Becker cit. by Bruno Cabannes in *l'Histoire*, special issue, "30 ans qui ont changé l'histoire", n° 331, May 2008, p. 66.

19. See Jean-Pierre Verney's magnificent collection of 50,000 objects and war mementos, now in the War 14-18 Museum in Meaux (opened in 2013).

20. M. CONSTANT, M. GABRIELLE, *Des tranchées à l'alcôve. Correspondance amoureuse et érotique pendant la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Imago, 2006.

21. GEORGE L. MOSSE, *La Brutalisation des sociétés européennes. De la Grande Guerre au totalitarisme*, Paris, Hachette littérature, 1990 (English edition), 2000 (French edition).



The new history of the Great War found space for future generations in Péronne's *Historial*. This was sustained by a *Research Centre on the War*, created in '89; an international encounter was organised on July 16 1992 entitled *War and Culture, 14/18* to define the new historiography of the French war:

"For these populations overwhelmed by the conflict, the war is inseparable from the representations that give sense to the suffering undergone. And this *war culture*, the first common point among all the social actors from 1914 to 1918, is at the centre of the museum's project. By means of the museum collections made up of all types of objects, from the artillery piece from the trenches, to the box of sweets, to the work of art, this *war culture* is presented to the visitor."<sup>22</sup>

*Towards a social, transnational history?* This new history of the Great War has prompted new research on the part of historians altering the representation of the 14/18 war. In 2005, a collective called the *Centre for Research and International Debates on the 14/18 War* (CRID 14-18) was formed around Nicolas Offenstadt, Rémy Cazals and Frédéric Rousseau<sup>23</sup> in order to complete work on the war culture. It aims to "set at the heart of its work the practices and experiences of the actors in the war. Without denying the contributions of cultural history to which it also intends to contribute [...] it intends to give first place to social history in understanding the war [...]. It considers it indispensable to include the practices and experiences of all the actors in the war"<sup>24</sup>. Even though historians often have the absurd tendency to oppose the notions of *constriction* (CRID school 14-18) or of *consensus* (Péronne's school)<sup>25</sup> to explain the sacrifice of the soldiers who "resist", their works make it possible to write a new history of the conflict, more complex and founded on the servicemen from every standpoint. For the Great War poses questions that require an intersection of approaches. How did they resist, through a consensus connected to the

22. See <http://www.historial.org/Musee-collection/Musee/Museographie> (consulted on 6/04/2015). The word *historial* and not *museum* also shows the intention to renew and internationalize the historical project and the museum.

23. FREDERIC ROUSSEAU, *La Grande Guerre en tant qu'expériences sociales*, Paris, Ellipses, 2006 and by the same author *Le cri d'une génération*, Toulouse, Privat, 2001.

24. [http://crid1418.org/a\\_propos/charte\\_ini.html](http://crid1418.org/a_propos/charte_ini.html) (consulted on 6/04/2015).

25. JEAN BIRNBAUM, "Guerre de tranchées en historiens", *Le Monde*, 11 March 2006, in Hors Série "Les traces d'une guerre", pp. 80-84.

“war culture”<sup>26</sup> or through constraints imposed by their superiors? Answers imply a blend of cultural and social history, with no anachronisms. The historiographical renewal of the 14/18 war opens up in public spaces the forgotten things on which historians work (alcohol in the trenches, shell shock and all the traumas connected to the noise of explosives, sex, words, animals, food). In these new fields, the question of “shot as an example” is central since it brings into play ideas on obedience, patriotic duty (or death), conscription, solidarity, fear and consent (or constriction).

Now the historians are studying the mobilisation of the various societies, the role of women and children, tactics and strategy, bodies and suffering, globalisation or the role of the Americans. This diversity makes it possible to study forgotten memories, conflicts so long hidden away, such as refusal to fight, desertion, class issues, money problems, pacifism, but also heroism and voluntary enrolment. The crossroads between classic history and cultural and social history allows us to pass from the image of unity conveyed by an idealised history to a more complex and contradictory “image solely of War”<sup>27</sup>, with new approaches thanks to private archives now available.

*The challenge of the Centenary and transnational history.* Lastly, the Centenary provides the occasion for historiographical querying to understand how and why soldiers were able to fight for so long in such conditions. These questions cannot be limited to one country alone; thus the Great War becomes international. The story of 1914-1918 becomes transnational. Starting from France, it has to cross beyond the nations to touch universal issues (war culture, suffering, social and ethnic conflicts, shell shock<sup>28</sup>,

26. S. AUDOUIN-ROUZEAU, *Historiographie et histoire culturelle du Premier Conflit mondial. Une nouvelle approche par la culture de guerre?* in *La Grande Guerre 1914-1918, 80 ans d'historiographie et de représentations (colloque international – Montpellier 20-21 November 1998)*, JULES MAURIN, JEAN-CHARLES JAUFFRET (Eds.), Montpellier, Université Paul Valéry-Montpellier III (E.S.I.D.), 2002, pp. 323-337. A review of the position of Péronne in N. OFFENSTADT, PHILIPPE OLIVERA. EMMANUELLE PICARD ET F. ROUSSEAU, *À propos d'une notion récente: la culture de guerre*, in F. ROUSSEAU (dir.), *Guerres, paix et sociétés, 1911-1946*, Neuilly, Atlande, coll. “Clefs concours”, 2004, p. 667-674.

27. N. OFFENSTADT, *Le Chemin des Dames, de l'événement à la mémoire*, Paris, Stock and *Le centenaire de 14-18 est un enjeu mémoriel*, in *Médiapart*, 25/01/2014, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/journal-cesar/>

28. It is thought that more than one fifth of the war wounded had largely suffered traumatic shock, estimated in 0.7 million soldiers, many more than the official figures. And such trauma, which

memories, genocides). The *Encyclopedia On-line 14/18*<sup>29</sup> demonstrates this transnationality wonderfully well; it cancels frontiers as the servicemen did, it cancels disease and suffering. This allows the history of the Great War to emerge from its single European tropism and to face the horizons, unknown for this topic, of Japan, Argentina and Brazil, for example.

This recent transnational dimension, which French historians have joined, appears in the new collection published with *The Cambridge History of the First World War* edited by Jay Winter, with numerous French historians: Chapter I *Battles*, Chapter II *States*, Chapter III *Societies*, published by Fayard<sup>30</sup> for France. It enables us to revisit the history of the 14/18 war, cross-checking the sources used by each country for its own history of the Great War. The question of the civilians killed during the fighting is also transnational, with the population shifts of which the Armenian genocide in 1915 is the archetype, the centenary of which calls for more study, including its ethical and diplomatic aspects.

*Conclusion.* French historiography, therefore, has evolved since 1918. Such evolution may be summarised in three stages: the time of the “battle history” up until 1940 (followed by the “forgetting” stage); then that of “cultural history”; and lastly that of social and international history. The whole forms a total history of the War as we find it in many other countries<sup>31</sup>. Lastly, this historiographic evolution, including its international side, prompts us to return towards France and in particular to the importance of the conflict in her history<sup>32</sup>, and to the on-going interest in handing down the history of the 14/18 War. What sense shall we make in present-day Europe of this renewed history<sup>33</sup>?

crossed the borders, can be better seen through connecting new sources from each country.

29. <http://www.1914-1918-online.net/>. is a collaboration of researchers from every country, under the direction of the Berlin University (Frei universität) and that of Munich (Bayarische StaaatBibliothek).

30. J. WINTER (ed.), *La première guerre mondiale*, Tome I *Combats*, Tome II *États*, Tome III *Sociétés*, Paris, Fayard, 2013 and 2014 and 2015.

31. See German, English, Austrian and Hungarian interventions of the symposium. See ROBERT BOYCE, SABINE JANSEN, PIERRE PURSEIGLE AND MARIE SCOT (coord.), “Historiographies étrangères de la Première Guerre mondiale”, at *Histoire@Politique*, n° 22, January-April 2014 (September 22 2014).

32. GÉRARD NOIRIEL, *À quoi sert “l’identité nationale”?* Marseille, Agone, 2007; R. DALISSON, *Histoire de la mémoire de la Grande Guerre en France*, Paris, Soteca-Belin, 2015.

33. See at <http://www.europeana1914-1918.fr/fr/>

Gerhard Hirschfeld

## The New German Historiography of the First World War

During the recent debate about Christopher Clark's much-acclaimed book *The Sleepwalkers* (2012, German edition 2013) some German reviewers and commentators not only suggested that the Australian-British historian had written the conclusive answer to Fritz Fischer's study of Germany's "Griff nach der Weltmacht" [grasp for world power] of 1961, but they seemed to imply that modern German historiography of the First World War had all started with Fritz Fischer. This is of course blatant nonsense. Historiography of "Great War" had already begun during the war (generally with war chronicles and documentaries) and it continued and even increased after the war had ended (initially undertaken by military historians of the Reich Archive). But it has to be said: The "Fischer controversy" of the early 1960s surely represented a scholarly watershed in the tradition of World War One historiography.

After the end of the Second World War German (i.e. West German) historians simply continued where they or the previous generation of professional historians had left off after 1933. Their work concentrated again on the question of *Kriegsschuld* [war guilt] that had been triggered by article 231 (the famous *Kriegsschuldparagraph*) of the Versailles Peace Treaty, thereby confirming the widely held public belief that responsibility for the outbreak of the war in 1914 was not a German prerogative but had to be shared by all major European nations. David Lloyd-George's famous verdict of 1934 "The nations slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war without any trace of apprehension or dismay" was condensed and rephrased to "Wir sind doch alle hineingeschlittert" [we all skidded into it]. This sentence was doubtless one of the most often quoted phrases in Germany during the 1950s when historians as well as other *Bildungsbürger* [educated bourgeois] were referring to the outbreak of the First World War.

Hardly any serious research was undertaken as this was not regarded to be essential - for two reasons: firstly, the shock of 1945 seemed to have totally overshadowed the historical importance of the previous war and secondly, the majority of German historians seemed to be firmly convinced - as the military historian Walter Hubatsch categorically stated in 1955 - that the "history of the years 1918 has been better researched than almost any other epoch. The historian stands everywhere on firm ground". Gerhard Ritter and Friedrich Meinecke, the two most renowned and academically extremely influential historians at the time, rejected every idea of a revised view or re-interpretation of World War I. With their insistence upon the value of a handed-down German national historiography, they and other historians barricaded their ability to question traditional views and also to benefit from the by now very intensive research of other countries on the "Great War". Neither Pierre Renouvin's earlier important studies *Les origines immédiates de la Guerre* (1925) and *La crise européenne et la Grande Guerre* (1934) nor Luigi Albertini's *Le origine della Guerra del 1914* (1942/43), not even the English translation (1952-55), did get any real attention from German scholars. On the other hand, a carefully phrased critical position from inside the *Zunft* (the trade - as the older German historical profession used to call itself) like that of Ludwig Dehio, who in 1951 had referred to Germany's policies before 1914 as "a constantly increasing risk of war", was equally dismissed.

It was precisely this scholarly arrogance and obvious complacency, that fostered the strong reaction by many German historians to Fritz Fischer's interpretation and assessment of the overwhelming responsibility of the *Kaiserreich* for the outbreak of the First World War. The "Fischer controversy" became the first *Historikerstreit* [battle of historians] in Germany's post-war history. Its repercussions reached far beyond the academic world, proking and irritating large segments of the bourgeois milieu in Germany. A few conservative politicians, among them the Minister of Defence and leader of the Bavarian CSU, Franz-Josef Strauss, even tried - though unsuccessfully - to prevent Professor Fischer from giving lectures at US-American universities. But it was too late: with his pioneering studies Fritz Fischer had started a new and intensive debate about the causes and responsibilities for the "Great War".

The irony of the "Fischer debate", however, was that "Griff nach der Weltmacht" presented a classical or rather conventional history of diploma-

cy. Fischer's interpretations were based almost exclusively on government and other official sources. Economic or social arguments were largely ignored, or, at least, they played a subordinated role. It was only gradually, so to speak, with every new edition of his World War studies, that Fritz Fischer's horizon of political and diplomatic history widened. With a suggested continuity between Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany Fischer also contributed to the paradigm of a German *Sonderweg* [special way] that was later suggested by then younger German historians (like i.a. Heinrich-August Winkler and Hans-Ulrich Wehler).

Fischer's theses and conclusions are, of course, no longer a challenge for Germany's professional historians – in some respects (the role of the Kaiser) they were even misleading. But at their time, Fischer's studies helped to overcome the old-style national historiography and create the basis for a new and inspiring view of the German *Kaiserreich* and the history of the "Great War". Even the usually rather dogmatic-opinionated Marxist-Leninist school of GDR-historians working on World War I welcomed Fritz Fischer's studies for their provocative and challenging ideas and interpretations. According to a retrospective view by the undisputed doyen of this school, Fritz Klein, Fischer's critical position remained for many years a kind the indicator for GDR-historians for evaluating West-German historiography on this period.

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s a number of substantial studies were published (some of them came from Fritz Fischer's Hamburg school) that dealt primarily with the social and economic history of the First World War: with the organization of the war economy, with the causes and effects of war inflation, with labour relations during the war years, and, above all, with the political and economic changes and distortions within German society as a result of the war. To some extent these studies tied up with much earlier publications by the American Carnegie-Endowment for International Peace (between 1911 and 1941) that were concerned with similar questions and problems. The two most challenging books were Gerald D. Feldman's *Army Industry and Labor* (1966) and Jürgen Kocka's *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg* [Class society in war] (1973). Kocka's suggestion that the causes of the November revolution of 1918 could be explained by the process of social changes and the conflicts of distribution during the war, resonated considerably. Thus the structural and social-economic interpretation became the hallmark of World War I research during this period.



One central aspect, however, was clearly missing from these interpretations: the “human factor” and the so-called “war experience”. In other words: how did average people – soldiers at the front as well as men, women and children at home – view and encounter the war and how did they reconcile with such an exceptional situation - existentially as well as socially? By the early 1990s German World War I-historiography began to take up these questions by turning towards new objectives, contents and methods, all linked with the fields of *cultural history*, *histoire de mentalité* [history of mentalities] and *Alltagsgeschichte* [every-day history]. This change of paradigm occurred in most national historiographies, although the approaches seemed to have differed considerably. In contrast to their German colleagues British and French historians could draw on somewhat longer traditions of “a history of mentalities” (notably the historiographical tradition of the Annales School of the late 1920s) respectively of a soldierly “history from below” (the history of private Tommy Atkins). Consequently, one of the first German publications (1992) in this respect bore the title *Der Krieg des kleinen Mannes* [war of the little man].

During the last two decades the various facets of the so-called *war experience* became a predominant topic of the German World War I historiography. This, however, happened no longer in a mood of openly celebrated patriotism (and occasional chauvinism) like in the 1920s and 1930s, but as a topic of serious research based on a wide range of sources, notably on so-called Ego-documents. Soldierly life at the front as well as civilian life at the homefront was investigated by means of private diaries, letters, picture postcards, photographs, but also by field journals and newspapers. In particular, the discovery of *Feldpost* [soldiers’ mail] as a hitherto rather “unknown popular historical source” (Peter Knoch) turned out to be an important find. Diaries and letters from the soldiers at the front as well as from their families and friends, now lent a voice to people which otherwise would have remained silent.

In this context one should stress the growing interest of German historians for local and regional histories. A number of studies on *Alltagsgeschichte* investigated changing living conditions during the war, and the relationship between men and women faced with a growing distance between home and the front. Other research dealt with the different phases of the war, with a special focus on the beginning. The old topos of a unifying *Augusterlebnis* [August experience] has been categorically questioned or at least differenti-



ated to a large degree. War enthusiasm during the first days in August 1914 was far more apparent in the anonymity of bigger German cities than, for instance, in smaller towns or villages. Studies on rural areas like Bavaria or on border regions of the German Reich like the old university town of Freiburg underline the notion that public mood varied extensively even during the first days of the war, and that these variations strongly depended on local environments and the influence of social classes. Combining local and regional research with the theoretical concept of *Alltagsgeschichte* surely became one of the hallmarks of German World War I-historiography. The investigation into life at the fronts have especially considered how the experience of material and mass warfare (and in particular the trench war) had affected the morale of soldiers between 1914 and 1918. During the last months of the war, the apparent loss of morale among German soldiers on the Western front almost reached proportions of a “hidden military strike” (Wilhelm Deist), resulting in mass desertions and unauthorized leave from the front.

For some time now *Alltagsgeschichte* and the historiography of mentalities have been modified and extended in favour of an internationally correlated research into *Kriegskulturen* [war cultures]. Under the subject matter of *war cultures* or *guerre et cultures* we now find histories and narratives of war mentalities, war experiences, propaganda and ideology but also studies on the role of gender and/or masculinity during and after the war - one of the first works on the important role of gender during the war has been Ute Daniel's pioneering study on working class women (1989). *War cultures* may comprise research on often ambivalent attitudes towards the war of intellectuals, artists and scientists (the work of the late Wolfgang J. Mommsen must be named here) but also on forms of a very specific culture of “coming to terms with the experience of war”, as this has been analysed and described in studies about different ways of mourning and remembrance. Decisive impulses came from the American historian George L. Mosse, whose books *Fallen Soldiers* (1990) about the “cult of soldiers killed in action” and about the “myth of war experience” received widespread attention. Additional stimulus was provided by Jay Winter, i.a. through his important study *Sites of Memory – Sites of Mourning* (1995). In contrast, Paul Fussell's pioneering literary studies about the “frontline experience” (notably his significant book *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 1975) received relatively little attention. For German historians it was

undoubtedly too early to become generally acknowledged as an important contribution to a new cultural interpretation of the war.

The noticeable expansion of themes and methodologies points to another important development of World War I-historiography in Germany in recent years: the linking-up and ensuing close cooperation of German historians with researchers in other countries and continents. This cooperation has been facilitated through direct contacts and regular exchanges as well as through participating in international conferences and contributing to international publications. A most instructive example for this kind of networking across national borders and academic boundaries is the existence and scientific output of international research centres like the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* in Péronne (Somme), currently the focal point for World War I-studies, or the impressive activities of the *International Society for First World War Studies*, a very productive association of post-graduate and post-doctoral scholars from many European universities.

The scholarly expansion of research vis-à-vis the Great War has also left its impact on the curricula and research agenda of German universities. I just refer here to our own Baden-Württemberg-project on the social history and the history of mentalities of World War I, which was jointly organized and successfully carried through between 1992 and 1996 by the Departments of Modern History of the universities of Freiburg and Tübingen and by the Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte/Library of Contemporary History in Stuttgart. The project involved more than 30 postgraduate students and produced, among others, 17 Ph.D.-studies. The University of Tübingen was also host and venue of an equally rewarding, though much bigger, research project *Kriegserfahrungen. Krieg und Gesellschaft in der Neuzeit* [war experiences: war and societies in modern times] that focussed on wars and their aftermaths in four centuries - from the Thirty Years War to the Cold War. The interdisciplinary *Sonderforschungsbereich 437* [special research field] involved not only historians but also a great number of other disciplines in the humanities and was generously financed by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* [German Research Council]. It ran between 1999 and 2008 and generated a number of very fine World War I-studies by historians, social anthropologists, students of literature, etc.

The growing public interest in Germany for the *new* history of the Great War over the last two decades was as much the result of a generational change as of the described new orientation of historians towards a history of

*guerre et culture*. The First World War seems to have finally escaped from the shadow of the Second World War to become a surprisingly popular subject for history books, historical and political magazines, TV-documentaries and feature films. This was quite obvious during the Centenarium in 2014 with more than 180 (according to my publisher) new German publications. Most of the popular books on the “Great War” available in Germany today have a sound basis concerning sources and interpretations; only a minority occasionally uses a mild form of historical dramatization or counterfactual provocation, which may turn out as a kind of “What would have happened, if?” There is also a plethora of impressive coffee-table books and excellently produced catalogues, which are often presented to the genuinely interested public in connection with historical presentations or TV-documentaries about the “Great War”.

Apart from their international and often comparative approaches, the majority of recent exhibitions of the First World War make good use of the current state of research, in particular, by employing also the historiographical concept of war cultures or *guerre et culture*. As a welcoming result the catalogues that were written and produced in preparing these presentations often became standard works and thus benchmarks in their own right. Unlike France, Belgium and other countries, Germany does not possess a central museum of the Great War. This, however, has not turned out to be a drawback – on the contrary. Special exhibitions that are in any case only held for relatively short periods are usually spared the obvious deficits and long standing controversies, which seemed to be part and parcel of historical museums and monuments these days throughout the world. Instead they are usually open for innovative and experimental ideas, they are able to reflect scholarly arguments and, in any case, they are much cheaper than permanent solutions.

So, which are the desiderata on our list of historiographical projects and achievements about the First World War in Germany? What is still lacking is an internationally comparative study of the political, economic, social and cultural processes during the war, although the socio-economic and demographic research that went into the three *Capital Cities at War* (initiated by Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert) forms an impressive step in the right direction. Another part that has been widely neglected in the historiography of World War I is a thorough description of the links between collective mentalities and individual decisions respectively

individual actions. This became apparent in the fierce debate in Germany and elsewhere about the role of decision makers during the July crisis 1914 following Christopher Clark's book *Sleepwalkers*. One of the central tasks of future World War I-historiography, as an "understanding" structural history of the war, is to integrate the research on *Alltags-* and *Mentalitäts-geschichte* into the history of political and military decisions taken during the war. What should then become obvious are the prevailing stereotypes of perceptions, the limits of understanding, the existing group pressure in the process of decision-making, but also the wide spread ignorance about the real course of the war, both, at the front and at home.

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## Austria and the Memory of the First World War

### 1. Historiography

Austrian historiography on the Great War in Austria can be divided into five stages: the preparations already under way during the war; the so-called “officers’ historiography” of the early post-war period; Nazism; the stagnation in the Forties, Fifties and Sixties; and lastly the new research approaches of the Seventies up until the present day.

Already during the war the Austro-Hungarian Supreme Command considered making a description of the war events in order to inform and guide public opinion. This propaganda task was assigned to the *Kriegsarchiv*, the old war archive in existence since the eighteenth century, and the press group at the Supreme Command of the army. In 1917 the director of the *Kriegsarchiv* laid down directives valid also for the historiography of the post-war period in Austria: the historiography of the war was to remain in the hands of the officers and thus the eye-witnesses directing public opinion with a standard work. This work was to be published as soon as possible after the war and would highlight the positive events for Austria-Hungary while the negative facts for the monarchy were to be kept from the readers. Through a divergence in opinion, however, an overall history was never achieved and only a few isolated works of importance were produced before 1918<sup>1</sup>.

1. OSWALD ÜBEREGGER, *Geschichtsschreibung und Erinnerung*, in *Katastrophenjahre. Der Erste Weltkrieg und Tirol*, ed. by HERMANN J.W. KUPRIAN, O. ÜBEREGGER, Innsbruck, Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2014, pp. 548-550; O. ÜBEREGGER, *Vom militärischen Paradigma zur ‘Kulturgeschichte des Krieges’? Entwicklungslinien der österreichischen Weltkriegsgeschichtsschreibung im Spannungsfeld militärisch-politischer Instrumentalisierung und universitärer Verwissenschaftlichung*, in *Zwischen Nation und Region. Weltkriegsforschung im interregionalen Vergleich. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven*, ed. by O. ÜBEREGGER, Innsbruck, Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2004, pp. 64-70.

After the fall of the monarchy the young Austrian republic was not interested in a history of the war because both politics and the army were dominated by the socialists. It was only a few years later that the Catholic and nationalist parties formed a government and the state was increasingly under the influence of the conservative-nationalist right<sup>2</sup>. In this environment the war ministers promoted work on the war. Again, it was the *Kriegsarchiv* in Vienna, full of veteran war officers, to take on the assignment. Between 1930 and 1938 the work *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*<sup>3</sup> [The Last War of Austria-Hungary] was published with seven volumes of text and seven volumes of maps. Officers only, whether functionaries of the *Kriegsarchiv* or external officers, contributed to these books.

*The Last War* focused on the military aspects of the conflict, from the tactical to the strategic level. It is purely a history of the battles without considering the political and social situations. Moreover, it is in nature an apologia, since the Austrian officers attempted to hide their failure and attribute it to the so-called home front, i.e. to civilians and politicians<sup>4</sup>. This was done because the Habsburg officers in the Austrian republic were nostalgic for the monarchy which provided them not only with a position and payment, but also prestige and esteem as the leaders of the emperor's soldiers. They lost all of this in 1918 and had to face accusations and hatred due to the lost war and also because of their frequently uncivilised behaviour towards the common soldiers. For them, the work *The Last War* was at least to give them back their honour.

In 1934 Austria was transformed into a Fascist regime wherein the Catholic-conservative forces were dominant. They saw the First World War as the "hardest battle of the best army of the old Austria". Schoolbooks and official publications were all about the heroism of the soldiers who defended with honour an idealised "world of yesterday"<sup>5</sup>. From today's

2. WALTER GOLDINGER, *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, Vienna, Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1962, pp. 77-201.

3. *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, directed by EDMUND GLAISE-HORSTENAU, ed. by ÖSTERREICHISCHES BUNDESMINISTERIUM FÜR HEERESWESEN, Vienna, Verlag der Militärwissenschaftlichen Mitteilungen, 1930-1938, 15 vols. As well as seven volumes of text and maps there is an index volume.

4. O. ÜBEREGGER, *Vom militärischen Paradigma* cit., pp. 78-91.

5. WERNER SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front im österreichischen kollektiven Gedächtnis, in Krieg in den Alpen. Österreich-Ungarn und Italien im Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. by NICOLA LABANCA, OSWALD ÜBEREGGER, Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 2015, pp. 310-311, 232-327.



point of view, therefore, no great progress or success appears in the historiography of those years. Austria was annexed to Germany in 1938 and the Nazis viewed the first war differently from the Austrian officers. The first war was seen as the prelude to the great German battle for Europe; they judged the Austro-Hungarian army to be full of inferior individuals. For this reason Austrian historiography during Nazism remained for the most part silent on the first war.

Once the Second World War was over, research on World War I did not start again until the late Fifties. The *Kriegesarchiv* documents had been dispersed all over Austria due to war measures, the archive was under the direction of civilian officials and the pre-1918 documents were released only in 1956<sup>6</sup>. At the same time the old official functionaries were replaced by non-military personnel, and in Austrian universities a new generation of historians began to deal with the First World War. The professors to promote many research doctorates on numerous aspects of the First World War were Richard Plaschka, Fritz Fellner and Ludwig Jedlicka<sup>7</sup>. The outcome was a number of important studies such as that of Richard Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner and Arnold Suppan on the home front (*Innere Front. Militärassistentz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918*) in 1974<sup>8</sup>. The university historians noted that the historiography of the post-First World War officers was not only full of gaps but also effectively apologist and absolutely required correction.

The correction came about during the twenty years preceding the centenary: Austrian historiography in certain centres such as Innsbruck, Vienna and Graz dealt with themes of women in war, the economy, everyday life and many more. This can be seen as a “cultural turn” in Austrian historiography on the First World War<sup>9</sup>. Departure from heroism was important: with the miscellany *Österreich und der Große Krieg 1914–1918* [Austria and the Great War 1914–1918] the editors underlined the culture of hatred

6. O. ÜBEREGGER, *Vom militärischen Paradigma* cit., p. 97.

7. *Ivi*, pp. 99–30.

8. RICHARD GEORG PLASCHKA, HORST HASELSTEINER, ARNOLD SUPPAN, *Innere Front. Militärassistentz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918*, Vienna, Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1974, 2 vol.

9. O. ÜBEREGGER, *Vom militärischen Paradigma* cit., pp. 109–116.

and violence of the conflict in Austria<sup>10</sup>. One essential landmark was that of Manfred Rauchensteiner's study *Der Tod des Doppeladlers*<sup>11</sup> [The Death of the Double-Headed Eagle] in which the author brings together the military, economic and social history of the war. Until the publication of a new integrated edition in 2013 with the title *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie*<sup>12</sup> [The First World War and the End of the Hapsburg Monarchy], the book was the reference point for many scholars.

In conclusion, I would like to glance at the 2014 Centenary. Back in 2013 the Austrian Foreign Ministry appointed ten Austrian historians to elaborate a fundamental document on Austria and the First World War. The outcome was a small booklet of nearly 40 pages which gives a brief overall view of the present state of historiography<sup>13</sup>. The interest of the scientific world for the Great War around 2014 was striking and many historians published books and essays on that occasion. The result was a wide range of works on the First World War and Austria-Hungary. There are regional studies<sup>14</sup>, social aspects<sup>15</sup>, illustrated volumes<sup>16</sup>, works on the authors' ancestors<sup>17</sup>, new editions of books<sup>18</sup> and miscellanies<sup>19</sup>. It is clear

10. *Österreich und der Große Krieg 1914 – 1918. Die andere Seite der Geschichte*, a cura di KLAUS AMAN, HUBERT LENGAUER, Vienna, Brandstätter, 1989.

11. MANFRIED RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der Tod des Doppeladlers. Österreich-Ungarn und der Erste Weltkrieg*, Graz–Vienna, Verlag Styria, 1993.

12. M. RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914–1918*, Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, Böhlau, 2013.

13. *Grundlagenpapier österreichischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler aus Anlass des Gedenkens des Ausbruchs des Ersten Weltkriegs vor 100 Jahren*, ed. by CHRISTA HÄMMERLE, GABRIELLA HAUCH, STEFAN KARNER, HELMUT KONRAD, WOLFGANG MADERTHANER, VERENA MORITZ, ANTON PELINKA, OLIVER RATHKOLB, M. RAUCHENSTEINER, HEIDEMARIE UHL, Vienna, Bundesministerium für Europäische und Internationale Angelegenheiten, 2014.

14. *Grenzgang. Das Pustertal und der Krieg 1914–1918*, ed. by MARTIN KOFLER, Innsbruck–Vienna, Haymon, 2014; *Katastrophenjahre. Der Erste Weltkrieg und Tirol*, ed. by H. J.W. KUPRIAN, O. ÜBEREGGER, Innsbruck, Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2014.

15. HELMUT KUZMICS, SABINE A. HARING, *Emotion, Habitus und Erster Weltkrieg. Soziologische Studien zum militärischen Untergang der Habsburger Monarchie*, Göttingen, V&R unipress, 2013.

16. WOLFGANG MADERTHANER, MICHAEL HOCHEDLINGER, *Untergang einer Welt. Der Große Krieg 1914–1918 in Photographien und Texten*, Vienna, Brandstätter Verlag, 2013.

17. SIGRID WISTHALER, *Karl Außerhofer – Das Kriegstagebuch eines Soldaten im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Innsbruck, Innsbruck University Press, 2010.

18. ANTON HOLZER, *Das Lächeln der Henker. Der unbekannte Krieg gegen die Zivilbevölkerung 1914 – 1918. Mit zahlreichen, bisher unveröffentlichten Fotografien*, Darmstadt, Primus-Verlag 2014.

19. *Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I*, ed. by GÜNTER BISCHOF, FERDINAND KARLHOFFER, SAMUEL R. WILLIAMSON JR., Innsbruck, Innsbruck University Press,

that above all the research approaches already existing in Austria during previous years were followed, with no completely different novelty apart from the multitude that surprised many historians.

## 2. Society

During the first post-war period, Austrian society was politically divided into three parts. There were the socialists, the conservative Catholics and the right-wing pro-German nationalists. This was the first republic later called “the state nobody wanted”<sup>20</sup> since all three parties initially favoured annexation to Germany for various reasons but above all because nobody believed that the republic was capable of economic survival.

The parties had differing opinions on the war. The socialists used it for their propaganda for peace and international solidarity among the workers. Their motto “Never more war” was strongly diffused by the associations of socialist veterans. The Catholic conservatives of Austria on the other hand often lamented the fall of the Catholic empire<sup>21</sup>. The nationalists associated the war primarily with its unfavourable outcome for the Austria-Hungarian world: the loss of lands populated by Germans, the so-called “shameful peace” of Versailles and St. Germain and the black legend of the stabbing in the back called *Dolchstosslegende*<sup>22</sup> according to which the armies of the central powers were defeated only through betrayal from the hinterland. The nationalists and Nazis were able to take advantage of the population’s frustration to win the elections.

An important role in the immediate post-war period was played mainly by the paramilitary associations of war veterans. They were formed soon

2014; *Frontwechsel. Österreich-Ungarns “Großer Krieg” im Vergleich*, ed. by WOLFRAM DORNIK, JULIA WALLECZEK-FRITZ, STEFAN WEDRAC, Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, Böhlau, 2014; *Jenseits des Schützengrabens. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung – Wahrnehmung – Kontext*, ed. by BERNHARD BACHINGER, WOLFRAM DORNIK, Innsbruck–Vienna–Bozen, Studienverlag, 2013; *Die Mittelmächte und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. by M. CHRISTIAN ORTNER, HANS-HUBERTUS MACK, Vienna, Verlag Militaria, 2016.

20. HELMUT ANDICS, *Der Staat, den keiner wollte. Österreich von der Gründung der Republik bis zur Moskauer Deklaration*, Vienna, Molden, 1976.

21. W. SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front* cit., p. 311.

22. JOACHIM PETZOLD, *Die Dolchstoßlegende. Eine Geschichtsfälschung im Dienst des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1963.

after it finished, attracting ex-fighters, and were always present during demonstrations throughout Austria. Frequently they were associations originally founded in order to protect towns from the soldiers returning from the front who not infrequently plundered stores and shops. The political attitude was with few exceptions conservative or even nationalist with a certain tendency towards the Nazis<sup>23</sup>.

Between these conservative groups and the socialist militia there were many clashes and in 1934 even a civil war that led to a Fascist regime, the so-called Austro-fascism. This Catholic-conservative, authoritarian regime attempted to reconnect with the traditions of the monarchy and created a certain cult for the old Austria and the soldiers of the First World War<sup>24</sup>. They did this to distinguish themselves from the Nazis, but this was not sufficient to block the advancing policy of Adolf Hitler who occupied Austria in 1938 and brought about the dream of many Austrians: annexation to Nazi Germany<sup>25</sup>.

Now we will leave the political scenario and have a look at the popular culture of the time: in the 1930s and 1940s Luis Trenker's novel *Berge in Flammen*<sup>26</sup> [Mountains on Fire] and the *Isonzo* trilogy by Fritz Weber<sup>27</sup> became best-sellers. The white war depicted by Trenker as the heroic war of the mountain guides was indeed the subject for several films, and the grey war described by Weber fascinated readers. However, they were texts full of a naïve heroism that negated the pitiless mass industrialised character of the battles in the mountains and on the Isonzo<sup>28</sup>. The Nazis took over

23. LOTHAR HÖBELT, *Die Heimwehren 1927-1929. Die Steiermark und der Bund*, in *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark*, nr. 104, (2013), pp. 219-264; W. SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front* cit., p. 310.

24. W. SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front* cit., pp. 310-311.

25. HANS HAAS, *Der „Anschluss“*, in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich. Ein Handbuch*, ed. by EMERICH TÁLOS, ERNST HANISCH, WOLFGANG NEUGEBAUER, REINHARD SIEDER, Vienna, öbv&hpt, 2000, pp.26-54.

26. LUIS TRENKER, *Berge in Flammen. Ein Roman aus den Schicksalstagen Südtirols*, Berlin, Neufeld&Henius, 1931.

27. FRITZ WEBER, *Isonzo 1915*, Klagenfurt-Vienna, Kollitsch, 1933; ID., *Isonzo 1916*, Klagenfurt-Vienna, Kollitsch, 1933; ID., *Isonzo 1917*, Klagenfurt-Vienna, Kollitsch, 1933. See also another work: ID., *Menschenmauer am Isonzo*, Leipzig-Vienna, Steyrermühl-Verlag, 1932.

28. C. EHREMAN-HÄMMERLE, "Es ist immer der Mann, der den Kampfsentscheidet, und nicht die Waffe..." *Die 'Männlichkeit' des k. u. k. Gebirgskriegers in der soldatischen Erinnerungskultur*, in *Der Erste Weltkrieg im Alpenraum. Erfahrung, Deutung, Erinnerung. La Grande Guerra nell'Arco Alpino. Esperienze e memoria*, ed. by H. J. W. KUPRIAN, O. ÜBEREGGER, Innsbruck, 2007, pp. 35-60.

the myth of the heroic warrior in the Alps or on the Isonzo and used it for their propaganda machine in Austria as well<sup>29</sup>.

The disaster of the Second World War pushed the First World War back into second place. After 1945 the two great Austrian parties, the socialists and the conservatives, agreed on the country's future and "our grandparents' war", so-called, no longer played an important role. The new Austria avoided all subjects touching on war, nationalism and discord. A good example of this attitude are the Sissi films. They celebrated the old Monarchy as the world of the imperial court, full of splendour, music and culture. This basic myth of the Second Austrian Republic, Austria as a great power in culture far from political struggles and full of beautiful mountains, had no room for memories of the grueling, terrible war between 1914 and 1918<sup>30</sup>.

The Great War was, however, always present in Austria after 1918 physically: through the countless deaths, the experience of losing a family member was very common throughout Austrian society. The Monarchy lost 1,200,000 dead in the First World War<sup>31</sup>. Therefore in practically every Austrian town or village a monument to the fallen was put up. These monuments are often a sculpture and a list of war dead. Thousands of such monuments were built throughout the territory of present-day Austria, most of them after 1918<sup>32</sup>. The monuments were used a second time, simply adding the names from the Second War. Thus they were part of the culture of memory taken forward by societies of veterans from the second war as well. During anniversary celebrations the fallen of both wars are commemorated<sup>33</sup>.

29. OSWALD ÜBEREGGER, *Geschichtsschreibung* cit., 552.

30. OLIVER RATHKOLB, *Die Paradoxe Republik. Österreich 1945 bis 2005*, Vienna, Paul Zsolnay Verlag, 2005, pp. 45-47.

31. ÖSTERREICHISCHES STAATSARCHIV, KRIEGSARCHIV, *Manuskriptsammlung, Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs, Allgemein, A91*, GASTON BODART, *Die Erforschung der Menschenverluste Oesterreich-Ungarns*, unpublished manuscript, Vienna, 1921, p. 93.

32. JOACHIM GILLER, HUBERT MADER, CHRISTINA SEIDL, *Wo sind sie geblieben? Kriegerdenkmäler und Gefallenenehrung in Österreich*, Vienna, Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1992, pp. 71-111; THOMAS KAHLER, "Kriegerdenkmäler im Felde und daheim". *Materialien zur Gestaltung von Kriegerdenkmälern für die Gefallenen des Ersten Weltkrieges in Österreich und Oberitalien*, unpublished doctorate thesis, Salzburg University, 1990.

33. See for a highly critical view REINHOLD GÄRTNER, SIEGLINDE ROSENBERGER, *Kriegerdenkmäler. Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart*, Innsbruck, Österreichischer Studienverlag, 1991, pp. 106-

Apart from the monuments, the First World War did not leave many physical traces in Austria. Only in Carinthia one part of the front is still visible; together with the Kötschach-Mauthen<sup>34</sup> Museum it is an attraction for the many Austrian travellers in the Alpinism context held in summer. Again as tourists, no few Austrians go to the places of memory on the ex-southwest front where they visit the war cemeteries, both Italian and Austrian. Many go there out of curiosity to see the place where an ancestor once fought<sup>35</sup>.

Further places where the Great War is present in Austria are the few streets that bear the name of a person, a place or some aspect connected to the conflict. For example, in Graz there is an important street that bears the name of Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf. The name was given during so-called Austro-fascism and it has recently been the subject of criticism by historians and citizens particularly for his role as a warmonger who had no consideration for his soldiers<sup>36</sup>. Other commanding persons, places or aspects of the First World War are present only rarely in Austrian public spaces, the only exceptions being a few streets such as Col-di-Lana-Strasse in Innsbruck or Troyerstrasse (commander of the mountain marksmen of Carinthia) in Klagenfurt<sup>37</sup>. An exception for different reasons is the emperor Franz Joseph I who is however remembered for his long regency of 68 years as the symbol of the empire *par excellence*. Of the last emperor Charles hardly any monuments are to be seen in spite of his beatification in 2004.

Occasionally the First World War was seen in the press, for example in 2004 when the Ortler Glacier released the bodies of two soldiers who had died nearly a hundred years before<sup>38</sup>. Or in 2013, when a gas grenade was discovered in the Innerfeld Valley. Its defusing kept the press busy for

121.

34. W. SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front* cit., pp. 329-330; <http://www.dolomitenfreunde.at/>, last consulted 07.07.2016.

35. This phenomenon exists among journalists as well. See in this regard *Reisen zum Krieg. Illustrierte Reportagen. Sarajevo, Przemyśl, Drohobytch, Ypern, Verdun, Dolomiten, Isonzo, Karnische Alpen, Gallipoli, St. Germain*, ed. by CHRISTIAN WENIGER, Graz, Edition Kleine Zeitung, 2014.

36. [http://www.kleinezeitung.at/s/politik/innenpolitik/weltkrieg/4110946/Conrad-von-Hotzendorf\\_So-eine-Figur-darf-man-nicht-ehren](http://www.kleinezeitung.at/s/politik/innenpolitik/weltkrieg/4110946/Conrad-von-Hotzendorf_So-eine-Figur-darf-man-nicht-ehren), last consulted 12.07.2016.

37. W. SUPPANZ, *Die italienische Front* cit., pp. 320-321.

38. <http://www.profil.at/home/86-jahre-wie-soldaten-91152>, last consulted 12.07.2016.

weeks<sup>39</sup>. A real wave of interest in the First World War broke upon Austria this year due to the Centenary. There are dozens of books and events both at local level and at the highest state level with parliament and the president<sup>40</sup> commemorating the outbreak of the originating catastrophe of the twentieth century. The evaluation of this memorial has yet to be made. However, it is clear that the interest of the population was great, not least thanks to all that was offered by the museums. There were three big exhibitions, one curated by Manfred Rauchensteiner in the National Library in Vienna<sup>41</sup>, another in the Army Museum (*Heeresgeschichtliches Museum*) in Vienna where the Sarajevo car is on show<sup>42</sup> and one in the Schallaburg Castle<sup>43</sup> in Lower Austria where an entire castle was adapted to exhibit to show numerous objects from the 1914-1918 years.

39. O. ÜBEREGGER, *Geschichtsschreibung* cit., p. 548.

40. <http://www.bundespraesident.at/newsdetail/artikel/100-jahre-beginn-des-1-weltkrieges-gedenkveranstaltung-im-wiener-heeresgeschichtlichen-museum/>, last consulted 07.07.2016.

41. *An meine Völker! Der Erste Weltkrieg 1914 – 1918. Diese Publikation erscheint anlässlich der Ausstellung An Meine Völker! Der Erste Weltkrieg 1914 - 1918 im Prunksaal der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek vom 13.3. bis 2.11.201* Vienna, Amalthea, 2014.

42. <http://www.hgm.at/de/ausstellungen/permanente-ausstellungen/sarajevo.html> and <http://www.hgm.at/de/ausstellungen/permanente-ausstellungen/erster-weltkrieg.html>, last consulted 07.07.2016.

43. *Jubel & Elend. Leben mit dem Großen Krieg 1914–1918*, ed. by PETER FRITZ for the SCHALLABURG KULTURBETRIEBSGES.M.B.H., Schallaburg, Schallaburg Kulturbetriebgesellschaft, 2014.





## Issues and Historiography of the Great War

It is by now beyond doubt that the First World War had a particularly significant effect on the history of all the various European societies. It is therefore no wonder if, in recent decades, the interest of historians towards that time and its events has also noticeably increased. The symptoms of a huge collective experience – that of finding oneself in front of mechanical death that was killing thousands of people *en masse*, or of experiencing the dismaying revelation of common suffering that made no distinction between count and labourer, bourgeois and peasant, and the sight of multitudes of women performing a new role in the individual war economies – make us understand that the economic-social order at the end of the nineteenth century had turned upside down in most countries. Obviously, the changes and collective experiences such as social traumas influenced events after 1918 in different ways. The victors and the vanquished sought to explain or interpret the new world through or by means of the war, to which they referred while envisaging a view of the future, whether hoped for or claimed, but in any case imagined as having a social order that would be more attractive, more peaceful and more just. In line with the nature of collective memory, the various interpreters in search of acceptable explanations and those who simply wished to keep memory alive competed one against the other, all wishing to communicate something about the present as well; this had been a common characteristic tendency for the past hundred years, and it also added indirectly to the stories on the Great War<sup>1</sup>.

With regard to the Hungarian culture of memory on the Great War, it should be pointed out that, as well as the influence of the above-men-

1. See the introduction to FRANÇOIS FEJTŐ, *Réquiem pour un Empire défunt. Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie*, Paris, 1988. Livre de Poche.

tioned tendencies typical of the countries that took part in the war, there is a further aspect to be revealed holding particular importance for our collective memory. For Hungary, the Great War meant not only slaughter and devastation on a scale never before seen, caused by the mobilisation of a mass society, a controlled war economy and technological progress, but also the end and dissolution of the most important basic point of Hungarian nationalism: the unity of the historical Great Hungary<sup>2</sup>; in this prospective, from the view of the analysis of the social mentality, it matters not a whit whether that same millenary unity was nothing but a myth, seeing that up to 1918 it was a presence with social efficacy among the Hungarian people, forming and determining its feeling of identity. After the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, in the unending wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries nearly four million Hungarians died in the Carpathian basin, and in their place immigrants arrived, Germans, Slovaks, Serbs, Romanians and Ruthenians, with no intention of assimilating ethnically with the Hungarian population. However, the new national historical conception arising in the nineteenth century refused to realise this fact, maintaining the existence of continuing unity in the country and among the Magyar people. Such a position was also at the root of the conception of the Hungarian nation as the guide and natural leader of the peoples living in the Carpathian basin, and this consideration was the starting point in identifying the great objectives of Hungary's policies. This was taught in schools and echoed throughout speeches and public proclamations<sup>3</sup>.

It was in fact this “thousand-year” unity that dissolved between 1918 and 1920 due to defeat in the war, thanks to which the various ethnic minorities were emancipated due also to the support and active participation of the great foreign powers, thus causing the dissolution of the old Hungary.

2. LEO VALIANI, *La dissoluzione dell'Austria-Ungheria*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 1985; OSCAR JÁSZI, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929.

3. IGNÁC ROMSICS, *Nation and State in Modern Hungarian History*. In *Hatalom és kultúra / Power and Culture. V. Nemzetközi Hungarológiai Kongresszus / 5th International Congress of Hungarian Studies (Jyväskylä, 6-10 August 2001). Plenáris előadások & Kerekasztal vitaindítók / Plenary Sessions & Round-Table introductions*. Szerk. / Ed. Tuomo Lahdelma et al. Jyväskylä, 2002. <http://mek.oszk.hu/05500/05558/05558.htm#4>; STEFANO BOTTONI, *L'approccio di Bibó alle questioni nazionali*. In *István Bibó e la storia dell'Ungheria nel Ventesimo secolo. Convegno internazionale CSSEO-Centro Studi sulla Storia dell'Europa Orientale October 26-27 2001, Trento*, pp. 17-21. <http://mek.oszk.hu/02200/02224/02224.pdf>.

The transformation caused an enormous trauma in Hungarian political thinking, wounding society as well. The causes and reasons were analysed in varying contexts, wherein reflections referring to issues connected to Hungary's future never failed to materialise. What were the reasons for the tragedy? Who was to blame: the political system before 1918 and its governing *élite*, or the foreign powers who were so short-sighted? Did it happen because we entered the war or because we came out of it so badly? Should István Tisza be blamed, a strong personality in the previous governing party, or Mihály Károlyi, an opposition member carried to power by the revolution following the defeat in war? From 1920 on, these and similar questions split Hungarian society and, above all, its governing parties, their collective memory and the historiography connected to them. The most evident sign of their importance may be the fact that still today, in current public life, echoes of this way of thinking continue to be heard, to which not infrequently current political voices are added<sup>4</sup>.

The space given to discourse on the memory of the Great War in Hungary is divided into two parts: on one side, there is the exchange of ideas among the *élites* of the ruling levels of society, in which three diverse groups can be distinguished, each featuring a typical narrative model. Their positions are rooted back in historical science, conditioning the ideological context of specific studies. The interpretive point of view of these three groups is determined first of all by the question of political responsibility which goes together with the issues of the right to the government of Hungary after 1920. The so-called "Octobrists" derived their name from the fact that they came to power in October 1918 thanks to the revolution, after defeat in the war, amongst them Mihály Károlyi and his followers; they manifested first of all negligence towards duty on the part of the political *élite* in the age of dualism, finding within it those really to blame for the defeat in the war and contesting the legitimacy of Miklós Horthy's new government which came to power in 1920, seen by them as the "return to the old world". Horthy's followers, on the other hand, took the opposite stand and explained that the defeat and tragic dissolution of the country were the fault of Károlyi and companions; based on such a premise, they

4. I. ROMSICS, *That Was the Century That Was*, in *Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. 40. Winter 1999, pp. 3-23.; ID, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary: the Peace Treaty of Trianon, 1920*, Boulder, 2002, Social Science Monographs.

demanded the government of the new Hungary for themselves. The most extremist representatives of the group, as the ex Chief of Staff Major Gyula Gömbös, appointed minister in the Thirties, also adopted the legend of the “dagger-thrust”, widely known and fairly popular in the circles of individual authors among the officers, Austrian and German. As Gömbös wrote: “in the outlying country (...) systematic propaganda was carried out, threatening the resistance of the monarchy”, thereafter also adding the classic anti-Semite *topos* on the subversive activity of the Jewish people<sup>5</sup>. In the memories of Miklós Horthy or those of István Zadravec, the Franciscan monk and future military bishop who had a decisive role in organising the 1919 counter-revolution at Szeged, several similar ways of thinking re-emerge<sup>6</sup>.

Besides the “Octobrists” and the “Horthyists”, there was also a third group, made up of intellectuals and politicians belonging to circles of the so-called “populist” writers (sociographic writers, all supporters of agrarian reform). Convinced that the Great War, or at least the Hungarian catastrophe, could have been avoided had the old *élite* not become enslaved to German or Austro-German policy, they censured the other two groups, believing the post-1920 political order incapable of freeing itself of the past, which – in their opinion – could have been shaken off only through radical reforms to encourage above all the bourgeoisification of the peasant class and an agreement with the small neighbouring peoples<sup>7</sup>.

In total contrast to the memory of such an *élite* divided into three and bound by its political struggles, there is the collective memory that was forming within the poorest classes of society, featuring a certain way of interpreting the past. This will be the other side of the space given to discourse on the memory of the Great War. An enormous number of peasants enrolled for military service between 1914 and 1918, where they had to

5. GERGELY ROMSICS, *Az első világháborús magyar emlékezetkultúra* [The culture-memory of the First World War], in *Magyarország az első világháborúban* [Hungary in the First World War], Szerk. Romsics Ignác. Budapest, Kossuth Kiadó, 2010, p. 187.

6. MIKLÓS HORTHY, *Memorie: (Una vita per l'Ungheria)*, Rome, Corso, 1956, p. 105.; *Páter Zadravetz titkos naplója* [Secret Diary of Father Zadravetz], szerk. Borsányi György, Budapest, 1967. pp. 116-150.

7. ISTVÁN PAPP, *A magyar népi mozgalom története 1920-1990* (The history of the “populist” movement 1920-1990), Budapest, Jaffa Kiadó, 2012; GÁBOR PÉTERFI, *Szabó Dezső és Féja Géza Trianon-reflexiója és külpolitikai nézetei* [The Reflection on the Trianon and the Ideas on Foreign Policy of Dezső Szabó and Géza Féja], Budapest, L'Harmattan, 2011.

face the massacre of modern warfare, under the impression of which no few started to write, informing of their war experiences. The re-evocation and re-thinking of events greatly contributed to the formation of their political conscience. They were country people who had always cultivated the land: for them, the outbreak of war – as for the poor country teachers – meant the radical, aggressive intervention of politics in their lives. They felt almost instinctively, and often even understood, that under cover of international politics, a world taken over their destiny, and they had no alternative but to put up with it. As a consequence, they turned soldiers more through a sort of renunciation than through real conviction and joy. Although there are texts, prescribed or by memorialist authors or scholars, in which the memories recalled show the influence of war propaganda, in fact the negative *topos* relative to the enemy (including also the way of considering the Romanian, Serb and Russian soldiers as inferiors) became more widespread in the memory of the *élite* (tending to the right) than in that of the ordinary populace.

Experience at the front polarised around two fundamental types of fixed points of the “popular” or “plebeian” memory culture. The first concerned the dynamics and internal structure of the army. Typical in this sense were the comments relative to a lieutenant or sub-lieutenant who treated his soldiers humanely, or who went beyond those social limits considered inviolable “at home”. Yet they also recorded an officer who behaved too severely in maintaining his own authority and his own state towards the troops, refusing any intimacy or fraternisation with his soldiers. All in all, such experiences led to questions being asked that were fairly clear: if a soldier goes to the front to risk his own life for his sovereign or his country, to what extent is it right to consider him inferior to others? Why was it not possible for the soldier returning from the front to claim – quite rightly, of course – greater respect than had been accorded to him previously? Although the authors of the memories, for the most part originally peasants, did not express themselves through abstract concepts, their writing conveys to us that the war for them was the experience of a fundamental turning point, after which it was no longer possible to go back to the old, rigid system of social relations. The famous “experience of the soldier at the front”, described on the basis of research on the mentality of German and French soldiers, can be seen in the case of Hungarian veterans also.

The other fundamental type of popular memory feeds on the alienating sensation of the dehumanisation of a war that made use of the most modern technological resources. The “shower of shrapnel”, the sight of the massacre caused by machine-gun fire, the bayonet battles, marching through scorched earth countryside, the assault in deepest midwinter and the building of trenches in mud and freezing temperatures, were times that left a deep impression in the human psyche. As in the case of criticism of social conditions, this time too we note the fact that many limited themselves to the mere recollection of the facts without interpreting them explicitly, although their words and the entire economy of the text make us guess (or at times understand) that such a quantity of violence and suffering can never be justified by the purposes, true or false as the case may be, of any general or of any sovereign. There are many allusions to the disparity between the fighting soldier and certain privileged groups in the rear who had no desire to get embroiled in the torments of war. Contrary to official propaganda, the soldiers frequently knew well enough that, on the other side of the no-man’s land, there were people just like themselves. If we understand this form of plebeian memory, the reason also becomes clear for the particularly fertile ground found by Communist agitation among prisoners of war and veterans, and why even those who had not sided with the supporters of emancipating ideologies became much more sensitive to inequality and the current conditions of social relations<sup>8</sup>.

Alongside this egalitarian-emancipation line of collective memory, many veterans fostered a particular feeling of Hungarian-ness that was in part incompatible with other experiences. Such incompatibility, however, is perceived only by us, today’s readers – while it was not felt by the authors of the memories. The soldiers who had been on the Serb front, or the Romanian front, often remembered how the foreign troops, irrupting into the country, treated the Hungarian community as enemies, not refraining

8. Two collections of this type of memories: TIBOR SZENTI, *Vér és pezsgő. Harctéri naplók, visszaemlékezések, frontversek, tábori és családi levelek az első világháborúból* [Blood and Sparkling Wine. Diaries of battles, memories, poems from the front, Letters from the battlefield to families in the First World War], Budapest, Magvető, 1988; *Emlékül hagyom az unokáknak, dédunokáknak, lássák, hogyan éltünk, s hogy az ő életük szebb legyen egyszer... Önéletírások* (Left in remembrance to my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, so they can see how we lived, and so that, one day, their life may be better... Autobiographies), szerk. Hoppál Mihály, Küllös Imola, Manga János, Budapest, Gondolat, 1974.

even from acts of cruelty on the local civilian population. Others had to take into account the aversion or, commonly, the explicit hatred from their Slav brothers, even though they all wore the same uniform of the Monarchy: the object of their hostility was not infrequently the whole state, not just certain individuals. This caused them a strong feeling of belonging to one nation, experienced much more consciously, bringing them close to the *élite*, reaching conclusions very similar to that *élite*'s "concern for the homeland"<sup>9</sup>.

Lastly, we must mention the feeling of imprisonment, which for a certain group of memorialists was a fundamental experience, inasmuch as it determined their vision of the past. Being prisoners during the First World War might mean distress, suffering and ill fortune: yet we cannot rid ourselves of the impression that they saw this state of things above all as an escape from the dangers of the front. In the descriptions relative to the treatment of prisoners, little is said of the atrocities undergone, while fraternal treatment is often recalled, above all on the part of the civilians, the simple folk with whom they worked on the land. Such an experience had a particularly strong effect on the soldiers with peasant origins, who naturally and spontaneously felt close to those working for the harvest, thus even further distanced from the world of the gentlemen and the officers<sup>10</sup>.

After 1920, however, this message and such accounts of the popular-plebeian memory of the Great War fell silent in public discourse. In the social order of Horthy's time between the two world wars, such experience, although only partially expressed, was essential subversive, and as such could receive no further publicity. Perhaps the French historian François Furet is right when, regarding the years 1914-1918, he speaks of the "first democratic war in history"<sup>11</sup>. The chronicles of the story of Hungarian memory, however, also include the obstacle erected by the establishment

9. GÁBOR GYÁNI, *Az első világháború és a paraszti emlékezet* [The First World War and the memory of country folk], in *Föld és társadalom. Konferencia a Kiskun Múzeumban* [Land and society. Meeting of the Museum of Kiskun], szerk. Bánkiné Molnár Erzsébet. Kiskunfélegyháza, 2007, pp. 227-237.

10. The first bestseller from lager literature: RODION MARKOVITS, *Guarnigione siberiana*, Milan, Mondadori, 1931; see also GÁBOR MARGITTAI, *Szamar-sziget szellemkatonái* [The ghost soldiers of the Asinara], Budapest, Scolar Kiadó, 2014.

11. F. FURET, *Egy illúzió múltja. Esszé a 20. század kommunista ideológiájáról* [The past of an illusion. The Communist idea in the XX century], Budapest, Európa Kiadó, 2000, p. 67.



after 1920, which conveniently excluded the people's war experiences from public sight. The official memory of the war, dominated by the Trianon syndrome, was constructed around the *topos* of a heroic battle, fought for the unity of the country.

Over time, the figure of the peasant-soldier was obscured by that of the Hungarian soldier, while the trauma of a war carried on by means of the mobilisation of a whole society and by mass armies – at least as far as the official propaganda channels and public discourse was concerned – was overlaid by that of the fragmentation of the country and the shock of the Trianon peace treaty<sup>12</sup>. But even this other memory and experience were badly warped by historiography after 1920, since the Marxist interpretation was put under the control of the new contrast then arising between the Soviet Union and the western countries<sup>13</sup>. Hungarian historiography has fortunately begun to strengthen in the last few years and intends to face and examine its old debt<sup>14</sup>. In this context, without presuming to say everything, I wish to recall the names of Tibor Balla, jr. Iván Bertényi, Attila Bonhardt, Ferenc Pollman, Gergely Romsics, Ignác Romsics, Dániel Szabó, Tibor Hajdú, György Ságvári and Dávid Turbucz. If on the one hand Hungarian historiography's research subject is the discourses of the *élite* as being socially and politically conditioned, on the other it is broadening the scope of its analyses, including the most significant facts and lessons from the plebeian or popular-peasant memory within its study areas on the sources.

12. I. ROMSICS, *Trianon okai. A szembenézés narratívái a magyar történeti gondolkodásban* [The Trianon causes. Narratives compared in Hungarian historical thought], in *Hadtörténeti Közlemények*, 2014, 3, pp. 663-691.

13. KATALIN SOMLAI, *Trianon a marxista történetírásban* [Trianon in Marxist historiography], in *Limes* 2002, 2, pp. 51-61.

14. The works of MIKLÓS ZEIDLER, *Trianon válogatott történeti bibliográfiája* (Selected Trianon Bibliography), in *Trianon (Nemzet és emlékezet.)* (Trianon – Nation and memory), szerk. Zeidler Miklós, Budapest, Osiris, 2003, pp. 905-927.



## The First World War in Recent Russian Historiography

### 1. Forgotten War (Zabytaia voina) and Patriotic War (Otechestvennaia voina)

After the end of the First World War the governments of the countries that had been involved promoted intense commemorative activities (and celebratory activities, in the case of the victorious powers) to help in the elaboration of mass mourning and the construction of a shared patriotic memory. It is well known that this had a profound effect both on the landscape of entire European regions as well as on the national mental horizons of the interwar period. Bolshevik Russia was an exception. None of the commemorative events planned in the course of the war by the tsarist regime were realized concretely by the Soviet government, which refused to acknowledge the patriotic value of the sacrifices made by the country under the guidance of the tsarist monarchy and of the Provisional Government<sup>1</sup>, and relegated the fallen in the execrated “imperialist war” to oblivion, and instead celebrated the heroes of the revolution and the civil war in order to reinforce the legitimacy of the new regime<sup>2</sup>. Whereas in the tradition of Western historiography the First World War on the Eastern Front has been labeled for decades as “the Unknown War”, in the post-Soviet representation of Russia in the Great War the definition has been consolidated of “Forgotten War” (zabytaia voina)<sup>3</sup>.

1. MELISSA K. STOCKDALE, *United in Gratitude. Honoring Soldiers and Defining the Nation in Russia's Great War*, in *Kritika: Explorations in Russia and Eurasian History*, n. 3, 2006, pp. 459-485.

2. ELENA SENIAVSKAIA, *Pamiat' o Pervoi mirovoi voine v Rossii i na Zapade: istoricheskie usloviia i osobennosti formirovaniia*, in *Velikaia voina. Sto let*, edited by MIKHAIL MIAGKOV, KONSTANTIN PAKHALIUK, Saint Petersburg, Nestor-Istoriia, 2014, pp. 251-270.

3. See GIOVANNA CIGLIANO, *La Russia nella Prima guerra mondiale: percorsi della storiografia russa e angloamericana sul fronte orientale*, in *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, a. XVIII, nuova serie (2015),

R. Stites believed that in this specific nature of the Soviet experience he could identify «one of the many historical phenomena that have divided Russia from the West psychologically» in the 20th century<sup>4</sup>, but more recently a vast study by Karen Petrone has endeavoured to reappraise this representation and pursue the objective of «integrating the Soviet Union into the pan-European history of the memory of World War I»<sup>5</sup>. It remains, on the other hand, indisputable that only “Russia outside of Russia” (*Zarubezhnaia Rossiia*), namely the Russian emigration which resulted from the defeat of the Whites in the Civil War, considered the memory of the First World War deserving of promotion and transmission to future generations in the terms that had been typical of the public debate and propaganda of the tsarist period: great (*velikaia*), patriotic (*otechestvennaia*), holy (*sviashchennaia*), and for some even national/popular (*narodnaia*)<sup>6</sup>. Regarding the relatively rich production of publications which emerged in these circles between the wars, an exhibition entitled “Great and forgotten. Russia outside of Russia on the First World War”<sup>7</sup> was presented in August 2014, at the Library of the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg.

The exhibition is one of many initiatives undertaken in recent years within the framework of the celebrations and commemorations organized for the centenary: the opportunity of the anniversary was embraced in Russia for a public redefinition of the characteristics, meaning and value of the war experience and to give adequate recognition in Russian history and memory to the participation of the Tsarist Empire in the Great War.

n. 3, pp. 303-321.

4. RICHARD STITES, *Days and Nights in Wartime Russia: Cultural Life, 1914-1917*, in *European Culture in the Great War: the Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914-1918*, edited by AVIEL ROSHWALD, R. STITES, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 8.

5. KAREN PETRONE, *The Great War in Russian Memory*, Bloomington-Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2011, p. 13. The author does not deny the official marginalization of the event but emphasizes that this does not mean its cancellation from the consciousness of those who had experienced it, and that in any case it is necessary to distinguish various phases within the Soviet period.

6. For some considerations regarding the definition of the war in Russian public debate, see G. CIGLIANO, *La Russia nella Grande guerra: unità patriottica, definizioni del conflitto, rappresentazioni del nemico*, in *Studi Storici*, a. XLIX (2008), n. 1, pp. 5-50.

7. “*Velikaia i zabytaia*”. *Russkoe zarubezh'e o Pervoi mirovoi voine (28 iulia 1914 g.-11 noiabria 1918 g.)*. Knizhno-illustriativnaia vystavka.

In 2013 the “Day of Commemoration of the Russian soldiers who died in the First World War” (August 1) was instituted, and on the initiative of the Russian Military Historical Society (Rossiiskoe Voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo - RVIO) a public competition was organized to choose the best project for the memorial dedicated to the heroes of the Great War, to be placed in Victory Park (*Park Pobedy*) on *Poklonnaia gora* in Moscow, between the triumphal arch erected in memory of the anti-Napoleonic war and the museum dedicated to the Second World War. The monument, the work of the winner of the competition, the sculptor Andrei Koval’chuk, was unveiled on August 1, 2014, with the participation of Vladimir Putin. Its location between memorial sites dedicated to the two wars for which the adjective “*otechestvennaia*” has been consolidated in the Russian-Soviet historical tradition is significant with respect to the willingness to incorporate the experience of the First World War into contemporary Russian patriotic genealogy.

In December 2013, the Russian Military Historical Society organized the conference “Russia and the First World War: History and Memory”<sup>8</sup>, whose proceedings were published in a book presented at the Society’s conference, held in April 2014<sup>9</sup>. In opening the conference, the minister of Culture and president of RVIO Medinskii declared the willingness to finally do justice to that experience, defined «as a defensive and just war», in which «the Russian army and people gave proof on countless occasions of their spirit of sacrifice and true patriotism»<sup>10</sup>. Without the Russian army, which in some phases of the war engaged on its own more than 40% of all the divisions of the enemy, there is no doubt, Medinskii stated, that «Great Britain and France would have suffered a defeat and would have been downgraded to powers of secondary importance»<sup>11</sup>.

The decisive contribution of Russia to the Entente victory was also highlighted by the scientific director of RVIO, M. Miagkov, who in his opening remarks recalled «the numerous examples of collective heroism»,

8. *Rossia i Pervaia mirovaia voina: istoriia i pamiat’*. The Conference took place within the framework of the international forum *Pervaia mirovaia voina v kontekste sovremennoi mirovoi politiki* (The First World War in the Context of Contemporary World Politics), organized by the Standing Committee of the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

9. *Velikaia voina. Sto let cit.*

10. *Ivi*, p. 5.

11. *Ivi*, p. 6.

often forgotten, that took place during the war, and in illustrating the activities of the Society in view of the centenary celebration listed the following goals: «the restoration of the historical continuity among different periods of the country's history; the demonstration of the crucial role played by Russia in the victory of the Entente; the revival of the memory of the forgotten heroes and of the victories of the Russian armed forces; a deeper understanding of the contradictions within Russian society that led to the 1917 upheavals»<sup>12</sup>.

Miagkov indicates two main guidelines followed by the RVIO in relation to the celebration of the centenary: «the memorialization of the memory» of the Great War, implemented not only with the previously mentioned construction of the «First pan-national monument to Russian heroes», but also with the institution in Saint Petersburg of Russia's first museum dedicated to the world war of 1914-18, with the construction of monuments in cities such as Pskov, Saratov, Tula and in the region of Kaliningrad, and with the establishment of common burial grounds, which was to be accompanied by research in the archives of the names of soldiers and officers; and the «popularization of the history of the First World War», through «the cancellation of the “blank spots” and dissemination of knowledge of forgotten valiant feats in the current generation»<sup>13</sup>. Among the contributions of the most innovative section from a methodological point of view, entitled «Social dimension and space of memory»<sup>14</sup>, two essays in particular can be indicated as noteworthy, the essay by K. Pakhaliuk on the representation, in the memorial literature of the Soviet period, of the heroism of Russian soldiers and officers in the First World War<sup>15</sup>, and the contribution by E. Seniavskaia, which analyzes the «historical conditions and particular characteristics of the formation» of the memory of the First World War in Russia and in the West<sup>16</sup>.

In the centenary year a collective volume was published which brings together the papers presented at the international conference on “The Great

12. *Ivi*, p. 8.

13. *Ivi*, p. 9.

14. *Ivi*, pp. 135-284.

15. K. PAKHALIUK, *Otrazhenie geroizma russkikh soldat i oficerov Pervoi mirovoi voiny v memuarnoi literature sovetskogo perioda*, *ivi*, pp. 206-236. The author analyzes 77 testimonials, published between 1918 and 1979 by people who participated in the military operations.

16. E. SENIAVSKAIA, *Pamiat' o Pervoi mirovoi* cit., pp. 251-270.

War of 1914-18 and Russia”, held in Samara in May 2012 by the Scientific Council of the Academy of Sciences for the study of social reforms, of movements, and of revolutions, by the Foundation of Russian History (the Netherlands) and the Samara Regional Universal Scientific Library<sup>17</sup>. The first part is devoted to economic and financial questions, the second to the politics and the tendencies of society and of public opinion, the third to diplomacy and international relations. At the end of the volume are published two versions of the paper *Pervaia mirovaia voina i istoricheskaja sud'ba Rossii* (The First World War and the Historical Fate of Russia) presented by Pavel Volobuev, authoritative historian and academic who died in 1997, at the International Conference *Pervaia mirovaia voina i XX vek* (The First World War and the 20th Century), held in Moscow on May 24-26 1994<sup>18</sup>.

The Pan-Russian Institute of Strategic Research (Rossiiskii Institut Strategicheskikh Issledovanii - RISI) published a work in three volumes in 2014, entitled *The First World War: Historiographical Myths and Historical Memory*<sup>19</sup>. The first volume is dedicated to the memory of the war among the peoples who were part of the Tsarist Empire; the second to the memory of the war in the countries of the Entente and of the Quadruple Alliance; the third to the «Second Patriotic War in Russia». It is significant that in this volume recourse is made to an expression - *Vtoraia otechestvennaia voina* - that was in vogue in Russian public discourse contemporary to the conflict, and which linked the experience of the Great War to the quintessential patriotic war, the war against Napoleon a century earlier. The director of the RISI, Leonid Reshetnikov, presented the publishing initiative to the press in these terms: it pursues the aim of dispelling myths and lies that have accumulated on this theme in one hundred years. The first myth to debunk, he states, concerns the idea that the war was unsuccessful for Russia across the board. Certainly there were defeats, he argues, but there were also great victories, and it is the task of current historiography,

17. *Rossia i Pervaia mirovaia voina: ekonomicheskie problemy, obshchestvennye nastroyeniia, mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia. Sbornik statei*, edited by IURII PETROV, Moscow, Institut Rossiiskoi Istorii RAN, 2014.

18. *Ivi*, pp. 407-415.

19. *Pervaia mirovaia voina: istoriograficheskie mify i istoricheskaja pamiat'*, edited by OKSANA PETROVSKAIA, 3 voll., Moscow, RISI, 2014.

he concludes, to re-establish a correct memory of the First World War, during which Russia waged a severe struggle against three empires.

In 2014 the encyclopedia in three volumes was published as well, by Rosspen (in collaboration with Rgaspi and IRI-RAN) in a luxury edition decorated with the *Georgievskaja lenta*<sup>20</sup>. It is an impressive work, dedicated «to all the citizens of Russia who took part in the Great War», and it is the fruit of three years of work by a «broad collective of scholars consisting of about two hundred specialists», organized by the RVIO and by the Pan-Russian Historical Society (Rossiiskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo - RIO). The encyclopedia aims «to delineate an objective and balanced picture of the actual victories and defeats, of the successes and failures of Russia in the preparation and the conduct of military operations, the supplying of the front, the mobilization of the economy, and in the concentration of the resources of the country around resolving the problems of the war period», as well as to adequately define the contribution of Russia «to the victory of the countries of the Entente»<sup>21</sup>. Volobuev had already drawn attention to this last point in 1994: «Russia gave invaluable help to its allies, often sacrificing its own national interests to the objectives of the coalition (...) there is no doubt that without the contribution of Russia the victory of the Entente in the war would have been impossible»<sup>22</sup>.

In recent years, therefore, Russian historiography, in synergy with the cultural policy promoted by the highest levels of the state, has pursued the double objective of redefining the contours of the public memory regarding the First World War in Russia, drawing also on the rich experience accumulated by western countries in the “memorialization” of that historical experience, and of rewriting the history of the Russian participation in the conflict, saving from oblivion the successes and acts of heroism of the Russian combatants and giving value to the unrecognized contribution of

20. This is the ribbon with three black stripes and two orange ones, used in the Tsarist era as a support for some important military honors, reintroduced during the Second World War, and known in the Soviet tradition by the name *Gvardeiskaia lenta*. Since 2005 the *Georgievskaja lenta* has become a symbol with widespread popular use, utilized by those who want to show their patriotism and respect for veterans.

21. *Rossiiia v Pervoi mirovoi voine. 1914-1918. Entsiklopediia v trekh tomakh*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2014, p. 5.

22. PAVEL VOLOBUEV, *Pervaia mirovaia voina i istoricheskaja sud'ba Rossii*, in *Rossiiia i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., p. 415.

Russia to the final victory of the allies. The incorporation of the First World War into the patriotic tradition becomes functional to the construction of a shared memory, necessary for the rebirth of national pride, under considerable strain after the disintegration of the USSR. Such a shared memory must be capable of carrying out a reconciling process between the experiences of the tsarist and the Soviet past through the recognition of the patriotic value of the blood spilled even in a conflict deprived for a long time of the legitimating definition of “*otechestvennaia voina*” (patriotic war).

In historiographical work this involves the adequate appreciation of the fundamental Russian contribution to the victory of the Entente<sup>23</sup>, obscured by the revolutions of 1917 and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the full accounting of the very heavy human losses suffered, and the full appreciation of the successes achieved at some turning points of the war, the heroism and the valor of the combatants of the tsarist army. The extensive use of the concept of *zabytaia voina* in recent Russian publications has become functional to the patriotic restoration of that historical experience. In presenting his work on the campaign in East Prussia of August 1914, N. Postnikov defines the combatants of the tsarist army as «forgotten soldiers of their homeland»<sup>24</sup>, and writes: «The time has come to remember with pride and honor the Russian combatants of the First World War. To recognize what is due to these men (...) saving their names from oblivion and linking the past to the present firmly and forever»<sup>25</sup>.

The writing of biographies dedicated to the forgotten heroes is a significant chapter in recent Russian historiographical production: in 2013 V. Bondarenko published *The heroes of the First World War*<sup>26</sup>, consisting of 12 essays dedicated to the same number of heroes. The author writes: «No war so obscured, denigrated, cursed and forgotten has ever existed in our country (...) the fate of its heroes has been even more bitter (...) they have not had commemorative medals, pensions, museums, eternal flames, flowers on the day of victory. Their names, merits and honors have been

23. See ALEKSEI OLEINIKOV, *Rossii i soiuzniki v Pervoi mirovoi voine. 1914-18*, Astrakhan, 2009.

24. NIKOLAI POSTNIKOV, *Drama v Vostochnoi Prussii. Sud'ba 1-i russkoi armii generala Rennenkampfa*, Moscow, «Veche», 2014, p. 165 (Already published with the title *Pervaia armii Rennenkampfa: bitva za vostochnuiu Prussiiu*, Moscow, 2012).

25. *Ivi*, p. 4.

26. VIACHESLAV BONDARENKO, *Geroi Pervoi mirovoi*, Moscow, Molodaia gvardiia, 2013.



soiled and cursed (...) this book would like to be a modest tribute to those who did not come back from the bloody fields of Galicia, Volhynia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus»<sup>27</sup>. In 2014 *The successful generals of the forgotten war* by A. Oleinikov was published<sup>28</sup>, dedicated to five generals who distinguished themselves in the war (P. Pleve, V. Fluga, P. Baluev, A. Granikov, N. Batiushin), and V. Runov wrote *The commanders of the First World war. The prominent figures of the Russian army*<sup>29</sup>. A vast biographical encyclopedia in two volumes was prepared by K. Zaleskii on the occasion of the centenary<sup>30</sup>: the first volume is dedicated to the top levels of the tsarist bureaucracy, and the second to the top levels of the military and to the commanders of the Russian army<sup>31</sup>.

An analogous programmatic intent can be found in the bibliographies about the First World War drawn up by some major libraries; see, for example, the vast «retrospective bibliographic index» compiled by the staff of the Military Literature Section of Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennaia Biblioteka (RGB) in Moscow, made up of three parts: the first is devoted to the publications from 1926 to 1964, the second to articles published in the periodical press beginning from the 1920s, and the third to the books that were published between 1999 and 2014<sup>32</sup>. The curators present the work to the readers with these words: «The First World War is a forgotten war (...) in Russia for a long time this event was in fact condemned to oblivion. After the end of the conflict it was defined as an “unjust war”, “predatory”, and “imperialist”. The history of the First World War was denigrated and

27. *Ivi*, pp. 7-9.

28. A. OLEINIKOV, *Uspeshnye generaly zabytoi voiny*, Moscow, «Veche», 2014.

29. VALENTIN RUNOV, *Polkovodtsy Pervoi mirovoi. Russkaia armia v litsakh*, Moscow, Jauza, Eksmo, 2014.

30. KONSTANTIN ZALESSKII, *Pervaia mirovaia voina. Enciklopediia v 2 ch.*, Moscow, FIB, 2014.

31. The same author had already published vast biographical collections that were not limited to Russian figures: see ID., *Sto velikikh polkovodtsev Pervoi mirovoi*, Moscow, «Veche», 2013, which, through the figures of the «great leaders», sets itself the objective of saving the war from the fate of «Great forgotten war», and two vast biographical dictionaries dedicated to the top levels of the military (ID., *Pervaia mirovaia voina. Praviteli i voenachalniki: biograficheskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Moscow, «Veche», 2000, e ID., *Kto byl kto v Pervoi mirovoi voine: biograficheskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Moscow, Astrel', 2003).

32. *K 100-letiiu nachala Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914-1918). Retrospektivnyi bibliograficheskii ukazatel' voennoi literatury*, Moscow, 2014.

cursed by Soviet propaganda, and its heroes and its successes were eradicated from popular memory»<sup>33</sup>.

On the occasion of the centenary the state library of Homel', under the patronage of the Ministry of Education of Belarus, also prepared a bibliography dedicated to the First World War, entitled the «Great Unknown War», which presents a comprehensive survey of the literature published on the topic between 1992 and 2014 (monographs, collective works, articles in the periodical press) available in the library<sup>34</sup>. The introduction to the work states, «World War I, called the Great War, left wounds that even time has had difficulty healing. It has been defined as the Second Patriotic War. Sometimes the expression Great Patriotic War has also been used, but today for many people it remains the Great Unknown War. Today's task is to revive and preserve the memory of the Great War, of its meaning and its teachings, of the heroism and patriotism of the people, of their moral values, of their history»<sup>35</sup>. In Belarus as well, therefore, the centenary is a stimulus and an opportunity to indicate, in the recovery of the history and the memory of the First World War, an important historiographical objective to pursue, in order to achieve adequate recognition of the heroism and patriotism of the population. It is interesting, at the same time, that instead of *zabytaia voina*, forgotten war, in vogue in post-Soviet Russia, it is considered preferable to use the expression *neizvestnaia voina*, a name closer to the *Unknown War* in the Western debate.

## 2. The historiographical phases

A balanced representation of the Soviet historiographical period must in any case, as Petrone rightly suggested, take into account the differentiation among the various phases of a period that was anything but monolithic. From some historiographical investigations<sup>36</sup>, as well as the previously

33. *Ivi*, pp. 3-4.

34. *Velikaia neizvestnaia (K 100-letiiu nachala Pervoi mirovoi voiny)*, a cura di TAT'IANA KUPCHINOVA, Homel, GGU im. F. Skoriny, 2014.

35. *Ivi*, p. 4.

36. See in particular BORIS KOZENKO, *Otechestvennaia istoriografiia Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Novia i noveishaia istoriia*, n. 3, 2001, pp. 3-27. For other surveys cf. SVETLANA SVILAS, *Rossiiskaia istoriografiia Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Belorusskii zhurnal mezhdunarodnogo prava i mezhdunarodnykh*

mentioned bibliography of the RGB, a picture emerges of the specialized publications dedicated to the First World War in the Soviet period that is richer and more complex than the definition of “forgotten war” would lead one to imagine. Even the editors of the Rosspen Encyclopedia, while they point out that this very important historical theme has remained for a long time, «placed at the periphery of the public consciousness» in Russia, and confirm that a real turning point in this regard has begun to take shape only since 2011, emphasize that the vast panorama of knowledge and interpretation offered by the Encyclopedia is indebted to the scientific accumulation accomplished in the past, also the Soviet past, and indicate that, in terms of historiographical research in the strict sense, «the First World War was never forgotten»<sup>37</sup>.

Similar considerations are also found in some collective works published after the end of the Soviet Union: despite recognizing that for a long time the history of the First World War «was not the strong point of national historiography»<sup>38</sup>, V. Mal'kov in 1998 did not subscribe unconditionally to the definition *zabytaia voina*, and recalled that «our national historiography» has also produced «quite a few works of the highest quality», indeed for the most part dating back to the 1920s<sup>39</sup>. It is precisely in the post-war decade that in Soviet Russia reconstructions of the military operations and of their technical and logistic aspects were published, often signed by the direct protagonists of the events, in addition to collections of documents concerning both the historical and military as well as the political and diplomatic aspects of the conflict. Interest in the First World War also experienced a new impetus in the period that preceded and accompanied the outbreak of the Second World War, although the upheavals experienced by the country made the work of studying difficult beginning from the end of 1941, and left room above all for patriotic and propaganda activities directed against the German enemy<sup>40</sup>. After 1956 a

*otnoshenii*, n. 4, 2004, pp. 68-72; ALEKSANDR GULIN, *Osnovnye tendentsii sovremennoi istoriografii Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Vestnik KGU im. N.A. Nekrasova*, n. 5, 2012, pp. 162-166.

37. *Rossia v Pervoi mirovoi voine* cit., vol. I, p. 5.

38. *Pervaia mirovaia voina. Diskussionnye problemy istorii*, edited by IURII PISAREV, VIKTOR MAL'KOV, Moscow, Nauka, 1994, p. 4.

39. *Pervaia mirovaia voina: prolog XX veka*, edited by VIKTOR MAL'KOV, Moscow, Nauka, 1998, pp. 10-11.

40. B. KOZENKO, *Otechestvennaia istoriografiia* cit., p. 9.

series of papers outlined a more complex and balanced interpretation of the Russian participation in the events of the war and of the international context, without in any case questioning the interpretive foundations defined by the Leninist conception of the “imperialist war” and the thematic selection inspired by the official ideology.

As S. M. Iskhakov pointed out in 2014, «the beginning of the contemporary phase in the study of the history of the 1914-18 war in Russian historiography can be set in the first half of the 1990s»<sup>41</sup>, when in the context of the new post-Soviet historiographical period, characterized by giving renewed value to the late imperial period of Russian history, the First World War was “rediscovered” as a founding event of the Russian and European 20th century. In 1992 the Association of Russian historians of the First World War (*Rossiiskaia associaciia istorikov Pervoi mirovoi voiny* – RAIPMV) was established, thanks to an initiative of Iu. Pisarev and other scholars such as P. Volobuev, V. Mal’kov, K. Shatsillo, T. Islamov, Z. Jakhimovich, A. Kavtaradze. At its constitutive nucleus are some historical sections of the Academy of Sciences: the Scientific Council on the problem “of revolution and reform” and the group “for the study of the First World War” at the Institute of Universal History. The Association organizes periodic scientific discussions and promotes the study of this theme as a global historical experience, in collaboration with the Institute of Universal History of the Academy. In the course of the 1990s, at the same time as the anniversaries of 1994 and 1998<sup>42</sup>, two collective works were published, and the collections include, among others, the texts that were presented and discussed on the occasion of the seminar and conference activities organized by the Association<sup>43</sup>.

In 2014 a collective volume was published that uses again the same title as the work edited by Mal’kov in 1998: *The First World War - Prologue to the 20th Century*. It collects the contributions presented at a large inter-

41. *Rossii i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., p. 5.

42. *Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit.; *Pervaia mirovaia voina: prolog* cit.

43. See the papers read at the meeting in March 1993: *V associatii po izucheniiu istorii Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 264-299. See also the round table on the origins of the war, held in September 1993 (*Proiskhozhdenie Pervoi mirovoi voiny*) and the report of the international conference held in Moscow in May 1994 (JURIJ KUDRIN, *Mezhdunarodnaia nauchnaia konferentsiia «Pervaia mirovaia voina i XX veka»*), both in *Pervaia mirovaia voina: prolog* cit., pp. 12-77 and 666-678.

national conference held in Moscow in September 8-10, 2014, organized by the Institute of Universal History of the Academy of Sciences and the University of Moscow (MGU)<sup>44</sup>. A comparison of the two collections shows a similar thematic division, above all with regard to traditional areas of research, such as diplomacy and international relations, with some interesting differences, signifying the change of historiographical climate that occurred in the fifteen years that elapsed between the two publications: in 1998 a section called “Totalitarianism and democracy” is present, whereas in 2014, in addition to a large section devoted to “the Russian empire 1914-1918”, there is a special section on “The tragedy of the prisoner, of the internee, of the refugee”, that is to say, on some of the lines of research that scholars have begun to develop in recent years, also in virtue of the interaction with international historiography.

An innovative element that characterized the 1990s is the establishment in Russia of tendencies that seek a more intense communication with Western historiographical orientations. This already emerges from the presence of foreign scholars involved in the international conferences organized by the Association of Russian historians of the First World War, but it was expressed in a particularly strong way in another important scientific initiative: in June 1998 an international conference was held in Saint Petersburg on “Russia in the First World War”, organized by the Saint Petersburg section of the Institute of Russian History of the Academy of Sciences and by a group of U.S. academics<sup>45</sup>. One of the organizers of the conference, Nikolai Smirnov, illustrates in his contribution the intent to broaden the traditional horizons in the direction of a new social and cultural history: «it is well known that Soviet and Russian historiography for a long time developed along three lines: military history, economic history, and the history of international relations. But these, too, were sub-

44. *Pervaia mirovaia voina – prolog XX veka*, edited by EVGENII SERGEEV, Moscow, IVI RAN, 2014. The Conference was also the opportunity to present to the public two editorial initiatives: the Encyclopedic dictionary of the First World War (*Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Pervoi mirovoi voiny*), edited by E. SERGEEV, president of the Association of Russian historians of the First World War, and the collective monograph on the war and the destiny of European civilization (*Pervaia mirovaia voina i sud'by evropeiskoi tsivilizatsii*), edited by L. BELOUSOV and A. MANYKIN, prepared by the professors of the Department of History of the MGU. See also SERGEI LISTIKOV, *Mnogomernyi podchod k istorii Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, n. 3, 2015, pp. 145-151.

45. *Rossii i Pervaia mirovaia voina (Materialy mezhdunarodnogo nauchnogo kollokviuma)*, edited by NIKOLAI SMIRNOV, Saint Petersburg, Dmitrii Bulanin, 1999.

ordinated to a disproportionately great attention turned first of all to the revolutionary movement during the years of the war»<sup>46</sup>. It is now a question, Smirnov states, with reference to the lines of research that emerged from the contributions to the conference<sup>47</sup>, of pursuing more in-depth study of the questions connected to the modernization of Russian society and to the impact of the all-out war on the culture, the mentality, and the orientations of the *intelligentsiia*.

In the political and cultural climate that characterized the year of the centenary, which was profoundly changed with respect to the late 1990s, there were also some initiatives arising from the collaboration between Russian and Western historians and centers of research: a large and many-faceted international conference was held in Moscow on June 3-5, 2014, organized by Russian, American and German scholars<sup>48</sup>, in which issues were addressed, alongside the customary issues of domestic and international politics, of national identities and the challenge of nationalisms in the western peripheries, of inter-imperial competition, of regimes of occupation, of refugees and prisoners of war, of the image of the enemy and of the allies, and of the mobilization of the *intelligentsiia*<sup>49</sup>.

In the 21st century specialized study regarding Russia in the First World War has experienced a remarkable intensification, culminating in the period that preceded and accompanied the centenary. A significant step along this historiographical path was taken in 2003, when the Institute of universal history of the Academy of Sciences, in collaboration with the Association of the historians of the First World War and of the Second World War, published *Mirovye voiny XX veka*, a work in 4 volumes (two consisting of collections of documents), the first two of which are dedicated to the First World War<sup>50</sup>. There is thus only a partial justification for the rep-

46. N. SMIRNOV, *Voina i rossiiskaia intelligenciia*, *ivi*, p. 257.

47. Among others, Mark von Hagen, Peter Gatrell and Peter Holquist participated in the conference.

48. The Russian institution involved was the *Mezhdunarodnyi tsentr istorii i sociologii Vtoroi mirovoi voiny i ee posledstviu*, directed by O. Budnickii.

49. *Rossia v Pervoi mirovoi voine. 3-5 iunია 2014 goda*.

50. The volume of historical reconstruction is the fruit of the work of a collective of authors guided by V. Mal'kov, and it concentrates on the themes of the economy of war and of total mobilization, of the growing role of the state in the economy, on diplomatic relationships, and on the role of the small nations (*Mirovye voiny XX veka. Kniga 1. Pervaia mirovaia voina. Istoricheskii ocherk*, Moscow, Nauka, 2002).



resentations, recently offered once again by Western literature, describing the conflict on the Eastern Front as an Unknown War and Russia's war as a *zabytaia voina*. They do not take into account a series of monographs on specific themes and the specialized articles published in journals such as *Voprosy istorii*, *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, or such as the *Voennyi-istoricheskii zhurnal* of the Ministry of Defence<sup>51</sup>. The statements of those who complain about the absence, after the publications of the 1920s and 1930s<sup>52</sup>, of complete reconstructions of the First World War on the Eastern Front, indicate a real historiographical delay, but must not make us forget that some books of historical synthesis, dedicated to the war in general or in particular to the Russian experience<sup>53</sup>, were published in Russia in the decade preceding the great abundance of publications of the last five years<sup>54</sup>.

Finally, one cannot fail to draw the reader's attention to the work in four volumes written by O. Airapetov<sup>55</sup>: unlike the majority of books published on the occasion of the anniversary, which are the fruit of a collective of scholars and of the confluence of various specialized contributions, in this case we have the work of a single historian with the intention of offering a detailed reconstruction and a comprehensive reinterpretation of the participation of the Tsarist Empire in the First World War. Hailed as a novelty of great importance and value by nearly all the scholars involved in the historiographical debate regarding the first two volumes which was

51. See the second part of the bibliography drawn up on the occasion of the centenary by the staff of the Military Literature Section of the State Library of Moscow (RGB): *K 100-letiiu nachala Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914-1918). Retrospektivnyi bibliograficheskii ukazatel' voennoi literatury*, Moscow, 2014.

52. See the first part of the bibliography of the RGB, regarding the publications in the period 1926-64 (*ivi*, pp. 5-36). The Commission for the study and the use of the experience of the World and Civil War, between 1920 and 1923, had published seven volumes dedicated to the military operations (*Strategicheskii ocherk voiny 1914-1918 gg.*, Moscow, 1920-1923).

53. ANATOLII UTKIN, *Zabytaia tragediia. Rossiia v Pervoi mirovoi voine*, Smolensk, «Rusich», 2000; ID., *Pervaia mirovaia voina*, Moscow, Algoritm, 2001; VIACHESLAV SHATSILLO, *Pervaia mirovaia voina 1914-1918. Fakty. Dokumenty*, Moscow, Olma-Press, 2003.

54. In addition to the works already mentioned, see also MAKSIM OS'KIN, *Istoriia Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, Moscow, «Veche», 2014; VOLODIMIR MIRONOV, *Pervaia mirovaia voina. Bor'ba mirov*, Moscow, Olma Media Group, 2014; VASILII MOLODIAKOV, *Pervaia mirovaia: voina kotoroi moglo ne byt'*, Moscow, Prosveshchenie, 2012.

55. OLEG AIRAPETOV, *Uchastie Rossiiskoi imperii v Pervoi mirovoi voine (1914-1917)*. T. 1. 1914 god. *Nachalo*; T. 2. 1915 god. *Apogei*; T. 3. 1916 god. *Sverkhnapriazhenie*; T. 4. 1917 god. *Raspad*, Moscow, Kuchkovo pole, 2014-2015 (TT. 1-2: first ed. Moscow, ID KDU, 1914).



organized by the review «Rossiiskaia istoriia»<sup>56</sup>, the work has elements of “revisionism” in the assessment of the choices of Nicholas II and of the policies of the opposition<sup>57</sup>,) and is permeated with patriotic inspiration, illustrated by Kolerov with the following words: for Airapetov the participation of Russia in the First World War is «the story of the suicide of a society and of a state, of the extraordinary irresponsibility of the ruling dynasty and of the political class that demolished it, of the almost completely ignored heroic account of themselves given by the Russian army and fleet, of the severe sacrifice by the people, which has remained in the shadow of the later losses of the 1917-1945 period. This is the epos of the imperial burden of Russia, which it is historically destined to carry and without which it would not exist»<sup>58</sup>.

### 3. Origins and meaning of the Russian participation in the Great War

In an effort to remove the First World War from the cone of shadow cast retrospectively by the October Revolution, the new Russian historiography emphasizes its significance as a watershed also for the history of Russia, which in this way is brought back more organically into the rhythms of European and world history. In 2000 A. Utkin, after defining the period of the Great War as «one of the most important watersheds in world history»<sup>59</sup>, stated regarding his country, «the contemporary history of Russia began in 1914. Much of what now occurs in the development of our state is the attempt (...) to reunite with the European fabric from which we separated in 1914-18. The First World War inaugurated a new phase of our national history»<sup>60</sup>. And in 2003 V. Shatsillo wrote, «the world crisis which humanity faced at the beginning of the last century struck Russia

56. *Dialog o knige. O.R. Airapetov. Uchastie Rossiiskoi imperii v Pervoi mirovoi voine (1914-1917). M., 1914*, in *Rossiiskaia istoriia*, n. 2, 2015, pp. 142-171. Among these, M. Kolerov, F. Gaida, A. Puchentov, A. Smirnov. A more critical evaluation was expressed, instead, by S. Tiutiukin and by V. Aksenov.

57. In particular Airapetov contests the interpretation that considers it a fatal error that Nicolas II assumed direct command of the armed forces in the summer of 1915; he also places great emphasis on the responsibilities of the political opposition in weakening the internal front.

58. *Dialog o knige* cit., p. 143.

59. A. UTKIN, *Zabytaia tragediia* cit., p. 3.

60. *Ivi*, p. 10.

with particular force (...) if there had not been the First World War, the destiny of our country today would be completely different»<sup>61</sup>.

Once the “fatal” nature of the event for all of 20th century Russian history has been recognized, the question of the evitability/inevitability of the conflict remains relevant in the post-Soviet public debate. In 1994 Volobuev, after defining the participation in the war “senseless” and “useless” from the point of view of Russian national interests, stated at the same time that the most advantageous choice, that of neutrality, was in fact not feasible: «in 1914 Russia was firmly embedded in the system of the alliances, and was thus forced to follow the policy of its bloc», as well as having, he added, its own imperialist interests to pursue<sup>62</sup>. In 2013 one of the leading scholars of military operations on the Eastern Front, Alexei Oleinikov, reacted to the statements of the military historian A. Shirokorad regarding the possibility for Russia not to participate in the Great War, and thus to preserve its political, social and institutional stability<sup>63</sup>. Oleinikov, in fact, reaffirmed the inevitability of the Russian choice, although he asserted it with the emphasis on a different aspect from the one emphasized by Volobuev: «it would have been impossible to remain a great power,» Oleinikov wrote, «while staying out of the 1914 conflict»<sup>64</sup>.

V. Molodiakov, instead, believes that the First World War, unlike the Second World War, could have been avoided if the leaderships of the countries involved had not been enthralled by their ambitions and misled by the conviction that they could run the risk of facing a war, in any case expected to be of short duration: «economic competition made the war possible, the actions of the politicians made it inevitable»<sup>65</sup>, he writes, contesting the Soviet thesis of the inevitability of the “imperialist war” and putting all major governments under accusation, beginning from the Russian government, to which he attributes, with some simplification<sup>66</sup>, the obstinate

61. V. SHATSILLO, *Pervaia mirovaia* cit., p. 4.

62. P. VOLOBUEV, *Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 407-408.

63. ALEKSANDR SHIROKORAD, *Tsarev sapog opiat na grabliakh. Pervaia imperialisticheskaia grozit stoletnim iubileem*, in *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 2013, n. 1 (18-24 January).

64. A. OLEINIKOV, *Nevozmozhno bylo ostat'sia velikoi derzhavoi, nakhodias v storone ot konflikta 1914 goda*, in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, n. 10, 2013, pp. 24-26.

65. V. MOLODIAKOV, *Pervaia mirovaia* cit., p. 189.

66. This is evident if this reconstruction is compared with the one offered by Ronald Bobroff (see *infra*).

pursuit, beginning from the reorientation of foreign policy consequent to 1905, of the objective of conquering the Straits and Constantinople (as well as Turkish Armenia) to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire<sup>67</sup>. In setting the imperialistic aspirations regarding the Straits at the center of his interpretation of the foreign policy of tsarism during the crucial phases that led up to the Great War, Molodiakov sets himself, in fact, in partial continuity with the school of the theorizer of “commercial capitalism”, Mikhail Pokrovskii<sup>68</sup>, dominant in the first phase of the Soviet period, inspired by the intention to oppose the tsarist patriotism and imperialism maintained by the so-called “great-Russian chauvinism”. Also related to this school are the studies of one of the leading specialists of the First World War in the Soviet period (often cited by Molodiakov), N. Poletika, to whom an essay has recently been dedicated, significantly entitled *A forgotten historian*<sup>69</sup>.

Seeking answers to the question of the inevitability of the Russian participation in the conflict means dealing with the central interpretive point of the reconstruction of the decisions made by the Russian elites in the crucial weeks leading up to the war, set in the historical context of the foreign policy of the Tsarist Empire in the area of the Balkans and of the Black Sea, in particular during the period inaugurated by the Bosnian crisis of 1908 and culminating in the summer of 1914. In the historiography in English of recent years two important works have addressed these issues: *Roads to Glory* by Ronald Bobroff and *Towards the Flame* by Dominic Lieven<sup>70</sup>. The careful reconstruction by Bobroff emphasizes that the foreign policy of Sazonov, who became foreign minister in 1910, had as its priority the containing of German expansionism, and adopted towards the Straits, which were of growing political, economic and strategic importance for the Russian empire, a cautious policy, even during the initial phases of the world war. Only after the entry of Turkey into the war, in the autumn of 1914, were the direct control of the Straits and the conquest of Constantinople

67. V. MOLODIAKOV, *Pervaia mirovaia* cit., pp. 63-89.

68. Pokrovskii considered the tsarist government to have had the main responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict.

69. BORIS ZHIGALOV, *Zabytyi istorik (K 100-letiiu nachala Pervoi mirovoi voiny)*, in *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istorii*, n. 3, 2015, pp. 30-37

70. RONALD P. BOBROFF, *Roads to Glory. Late Imperial Russia and the Turkish Straits*, London-New York, I. B. Tauris, 2006; DOMINIC LIEVEN, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia*, Penguin Random House, UK, 2015.

set alongside the principal objective, and it was this circumstance, according to Bobroff, that motivated the fatal choice of Russia to keep multiple fronts of war open, refusing every opportunity for a separate peace with the Turkish enemy. The description of the mentality and the motivations of the tsarist elites contained in the work by Lieven is very interesting and subtle. In 1983 Lieven had already been the author of a book that for a long time was a fundamental point of reference for the study of the origins of the First World War from the Russian point of view<sup>71</sup>. The prominence given by Lieven to exponents of Russian liberal imperialism such as Prince Grigorii Trubetskoi is, in my opinion, well argued and meaningful<sup>72</sup>, in light, also, of the relative underestimation of this figure in Russian historiography. Particularly useful for the understanding of the choices made by the tsarist elites is also the focus on the theme that could be defined, in the wake of research developed some years ago by Andrei P. Tsygankov, as “honor in international relations”<sup>73</sup>, exemplified by the comment of the Russian ambassador to Stockholm, the long-time diplomat Anatolii Nekliudov, regarding the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, reported by Lieven: «Russia could never surrender to the third Austro-German ultimatum in five years»<sup>74</sup>.

The “revisionist” book by Sean Mc Meekin has received a certain amount of attention in the Anglo-American debate<sup>75</sup>. The stated intent of this scholar is to place the imperialist policy of the Russian Empire at the center of the mechanism that led Europe into war, and put under accusation the aims of the tsarist regime regarding the Straits and Constantinople, and in general regarding the Ottoman Empire. His interpretation of tsarist foreign policy on the eve of and in the early stages of the war thus shows an interpretive tendency analogous to that contained in the work of Molodiakov. He also shares Molodiakov’s highly critical attitude towards those

71. D. LIEVEN, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War*, London-Basingstoke, The Macmillan Press, 1983.

72. On liberal imperialism, cf. G. CIGLIANO, *La «Grande Russia» tra nazionalismo e neoslavismo: l'imperialismo liberale come risposta alla crisi patriottica (1907-1909)*, in *Studi Storici*, a. LIII (2012), n. 3, pp. 511-557.

73. ANDREI P. TSYGANKOV, *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: Honor in International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

74. D. LIEVEN, *Towards the Flame* cit., p. 321.

75. SEAN MC MEEKIN, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, Mass., The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.

historiographical approaches that trace the origins of the Great War back to the will to power of Germany and to the hegemonic policies of its *Welt-politik*, inspired by the famous work by Fritz Fischer. The books published by A. Utkin about fifteen years ago can still be traced back, in the Russian panorama, to Fischer's approach<sup>76</sup>. But the positions of Molodiakov and McMeekin diverge on one point: while Mc Meekin goes as far as to attribute to the Tsarist Empire, with an evident polemical forced reasoning, the principal responsibilities for the outbreak of the conflict on a European and global scale, Molodiakov adopts the thesis of the shared "guilt" of the political leaderships of the countries involved: «in the outbreak of the war all the principal protagonists were responsible, each in his own way»<sup>77</sup>.

#### 4. The military operations

The work carried out in the last fifteen years by Russian historians to develop a careful and comprehensive historical narrative of the military operations on the Eastern Front has been extensive. The scientific foundations have been laid for going beyond a stereotypical view of the war, in particular concerning some of its decisive crucial moments, such as the campaign in East Prussia in 1914, the Great Retreat in 1915, and the Brusilov Offensive in 1916.

The Russian-Soviet studies of the 1920s had emphasized the extent of the defeat suffered by the tsarist army at Tannenberg, defined by some as the «Cannae of the World War»<sup>78</sup>. In 2001 A. Utkin still stressed the catastrophic dimension of the defeat, presented as «the first great Russian tragedy of the 20th century»<sup>79</sup>. Today's evaluation by O. Alpeev, which is more balanced and detached, remains in continuity with the tradition of Russian historiography and differs from interpretations by Western scholars such as D. Showalter, whose well-known 1991 book intended to dismantle the myth of Tannenberg constructed by the Germans and demonstrate that the Russian defeat in East Prussia had a military significance that was, all

76. A. UTKIN, *Pervaia mirovaia cit.*

77. V. MOLODIAKOV, *Pervaia mirovaia cit.*, p. 9.

78. GEORGH ISSERSON, *Kanny mirovov vojny (Gibel'armii Samsonova)*, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoe voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926.

79. A. UTKIN, *Pervaia mirovaia cit.*, p. 135.

things considered, limited<sup>80</sup>. As for the causes of the defeat, Alpeev, analogously to Utkin and the western specialists, focuses on the operational divergences and the lack of coordination between the General Staff and the commanders; on the misuse of radiocommunications and on the weakness of intelligence work; on the shortcomings in the organization of the rear lines and in the system of supplies; and on the inability of the command to make the best use of the clear superiority of the Russians over the Germans in the cavalry sector. Alpeev concludes by stating that the defeat showed clearly the serious shortcomings of the Russian army with respect to leadership and organization, which made it still inadequate «for contemporary war»<sup>81</sup>. Unlike their Western colleagues, Russian scholars, however, do not attribute great weight to the opposing factions in the armed forces, and especially not to the personal rivalries among commanders.

Russian historiography has worked hard to highlight the historical significance of events and phases of the war that are still not well known. S. Nelipovich has devoted part of his research work, based on massive sifting through archive materials, to the study of the military operations of Warsaw-Ivangorod in 1914 (September 15 to October 26)<sup>82</sup>, and to the calculation of Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German casualties that accompanied them, which were very numerous, especially Russian casualties, although they were lower than in the summer campaigns (the operations in East Prussia and the battle for Galicia)<sup>83</sup>. While acknowledging that the high number of casualties had a negative impact on later military initiatives, Nelipovich defines the operations on the whole as a Russian success, since they «managed to thwart the plans of the strategists of the Central Powers»<sup>84</sup>.

80. DENNIS SHOWALTER, *Tannenberg. Clash of Empires*, Hamden, Archon Books, 1991. Insights for the reappraisal of this event in the overall context of the war on the Eastern Front were already present in NORMAN STONE, *The Eastern Front. 1914-1917*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975.

81. OLEG ALPEEV, *Vostochno-prusskaia operaciia 1914*, in *Rossiiia v Pervoi mirovoi*, vol. 1 cit., p. 430.

82. SERGEI NELIPOVICH, *Krovavyi oktiabr' 1914 goda*, Moscow, Minuvshee, 2013; ID., *Varshavskoe srazhenie*, in *Rossiiia v Pervoi mirovoi*, vol. 1 cit., pp. 272-288; S. NELIPOVICH, *Varshavsko-Ivangorodskaia operaciia*, *ivi*, pp. 290-315 1914; ID., *Ivangorodskoe srazhenie*, *ivi*, pp. 780-791.

83. ID., *Lad'ia Charona: poteri storon v oktiabr'skoi kampanii (Varshavsko-Ivangorodskii operacii) 1914 g. na russkom fronte Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Velikaia voina. Sto let cit.*, pp. 52-86.

84. ID., *Varshavsko-Ivangorodskaia operaciia cit.*, p. 314.

With respect to a dramatic turning point in the balance on the Eastern Front, the “Great Retreat” of 1915, Russian historians are now willing to provide a representation that is not exclusively focused on the catastrophic dimension of events such as the abandonment in the hands of the enemy of vast portions of the western peripheries of the Empire, the devastation of the territory, and the deportation of large masses of the population. The new representation also intends to highlight the achievements reached on a strategic level in managing a military operation of great complexity, and emphasizes its importance for the outcome of the war. According to A. Oleinikov it was an operation that succeeded from a strategic point of view, during which the tsarist army did not limit itself to retreating, but defended itself actively, launched local counter attacks, and above all simultaneously carried out the successful evacuation of the Polish provinces. However, Oleinikov recognizes that it was accompanied by very heavy human losses and also had «extremely negative military and economic consequences»<sup>85</sup>, that is the loss of the immense human and material resources located in the western territories, the fall of Russian prestige in the Balkans, the entry of Bulgaria into the war, and the collapse of the Serbian front.

In the summer of 1916 the Russian offensive took place, taking its name from General A. Brusilov, and for a long time it was considered to be the most impressive and brilliant military operation conducted by the tsarist army during the Great War. S. Nelipovich for many years has been engaged with his research in the critical revision of this important episode in the war on the Eastern Front: this Russian historian is not inclined to exalt the figure of Brusilov, whose merits he believes to have been overestimated, and is not very willing even to consider the offensive to be a military success. From his contribution in 1998 to the encyclopedic entry in 2014<sup>86</sup> and including the short book in 2006 and his article in 2011<sup>87</sup>, Nelipovich has worked systematically to dismantle the myth of the Brusilov offensive. This myth has been proposed once again with conviction by B. Utkin, who has defined the vast operation as «a brilliant result of Russian military art»

85. A. OLEINIKOV, *Velikoe otstuplenie 1915*, in *Rossija v Pervoj mirovoj*, vol. 1 cit., p. 329.

86. S. NELIPOVICH, *Brusilovskii proryv kak ob'ekt mifologii*, in *Pervaja mirovaia vojna: prolog cit.*, pp. 632-634; ID., *Brusilovskii proryv 1916*, in *Rossija v Pervoi mirovoj*, vol. 1 cit., pp. 226-234.

87. ID., *Brusilovskii proryv. Kampaniia 1916*, Moscow, Tseichgauz, 2006; ID., *Tsena pobedy. General'noe nastuplenie rossijskoi armii letom-osen'iu 1916 g.: postavlennye zadachi i dostignutyie tseli*, in *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, n. 10, 2011, pp. 3-10.



and the general as a national hero and symbol of the patriotic unity of the country<sup>88</sup>. For Nelipovich the operation was not a success because it did not achieve its pre-established objectives, and as a result of the enormous human and material losses, it had the unforeseen consequence of favoring the revolutionary outcome. It was also not decisive in relieving German pressure on the Western Front, and the ultimate weakening of the Austrian army, considered to be one of the major achievements of the operation, also had negative implications for Russia, since it allowed the full unification of the command on the part of the Germans.

A complex and balanced evaluation of the offensive, as well as of the merits and limitations of the figure of Brusilov, is offered by the book from 2010 by M. Os'kin. The author illustrates both the tactical successes, which were very significant when compared with the other military operations carried out on all the war fronts, and the strategic failure and the great number of losses, which nullify the results achieved on the field in the initial phases of the operation. In his final assessment the author stresses that it was the Allies who enjoyed the principal benefits of the offensive, while it gave a significant contribution to the destabilization of the tsarist regime. As far as the responsibilities of leadership are concerned, Os'kin weighs the mistakes made by the tsar against those made by the General Staff, and takes a position against considering Nicholas II to be the only scapegoat; he defines Brusilov as certainly not comparable to Suvorov, also by virtue of his circumscribed military experience, limited to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, but, while not making the figure into a myth, he fully recognizes his merits for the victories achieved on the field: the Brusilov Offensive, he concludes, remains one of the most significant operations of World War I, and the general was the last member of the tsarist military tradition who with his experience enriched the Russian military art<sup>89</sup>.

## 5. State and economy, parties and political organizations

The problem of the relationship between state and economy in Russia during the First World War prompts the consideration of the broader

88. See BORIS UTKIN, *Brusilovskii proryv*, in *Pervaja mirovaia voina: prolog cit.*, pp. 627-632.

89. MAKSIM OS'KIN, *Brusilovskij proryv*, Moscow, Eksmo, 2010.

themes of the solidity and the characteristics of Russian industrial development in the early decades of the 20th century and the ability of the tsarist state to mobilize the economy to respond to the challenges of total war. The importance of this thematic and problematic central point is also demonstrated by the extent and complexity of its treatment in the encyclopedia in three volumes published by Rosspen<sup>90</sup>. In it the remarkable growth of the Russian economy in the five years preceding the outbreak of the war is shown, the continuation until the spring of 1915 of an attitude centered on the idea of a short war is emphasized, a war so short that it could be faced with the reserves accumulated previously, without a total reconversion and mobilization of the economy. In the encyclopedia the following assessment is traced: in the war years there was an increase in moments of crisis in the principal sectors of the Russian economy, which only a short time before had placed itself on the path toward modernization. During the war a process of disorganization could be observed of the relationships between city and country, of the interaction between national economic sectors and economic regions, and of the commercial networks. The militarization of the economy produced hypertrophy in some sectors, and the direct interventions of the state in civil sectors were not sufficient to prevent the catastrophe.

The themes of state finances, the war industry, and the standard of living in Russia during the Great War are addressed in the first section of the collective volume of *Russia and the First World War*, edited by the Institute of Russian History of the Academy of Sciences (see above). Among the contributions an essay by S. Tolstogusov on the dynamics of the financial crisis and the anti-crisis policies of the tsarist government is noteworthy<sup>91</sup>. After focusing, for the pre-war period, on some elements that indicated a redefinition of the economic relations already existent, for example in the grain trade, fundamental to Russia's balance of trade, Tolstogusov concentrates on the worsening of the crisis during the war, the prelude to the bankruptcy of the State, which occurred as a result of the severe reduction in the exporting of grain caused by the blockade of the Straits, but also as an effect of erroneous choices of economic policy, such as, for example,

90. See *Rossiiia v Pervoi mirovoi*, vol. 1 cit., pp. 8-10.

91. SERGEI TOLSTOGUZOV, *Finansovo-ekonomicheskii krizis i antikrizisnaia politika pravitel'stva Rossii v usloviakh Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Rossiiia i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 20-31.

the prohibition of the sale of alcohol, which greatly reduced state revenues from the taxation of those products.

One of the most significant questions, as far as the relationship between the needs of war and economic policy is concerned, is the severe shortage of ammunition suffered by the Russian army in 1915. The entries in the Rosspen encyclopedia on «hunger for ammunition» and on the War Industry Committees are signed by O. Airapetov<sup>92</sup>, and propose again, in a concise form, the historical reconstruction and the theses that the author had already expounded in 2003 in the well known monograph on *Generals, liberals and entrepreneurs*<sup>93</sup>. A qualifying point of the historiographical approach of Airapetov is an intention to overturn the established representation according to which delays and inefficiencies of the mobilization should be attributed not only to the structural fragility of the Russian economy, but also to the resistance of the conservative bureaucracy, which did not want to cede power to the social organizations and was not culturally equipped to face the challenges of total mobilization<sup>94</sup>. Airapetov believes that this was a distorted reading produced by the propaganda campaigns of the liberals and of their press, and instead places under accusation the industrialists, who inflated the prices of the huge government contracts for weapons and ammunition, the political leaders such as the Octobrist A. Guchkov and the Kadet P. Miliukov, explicitly accused of working for the preparation of the revolution, and the Minister and reformer A. Polivanov, identified as the person responsible for a series of failures in the management of military contracts abroad and in Russia, rather than as the main author of the solution to the ammunition crisis.

The crisis in Russia was taking on a particular gravity, Airapetov argues, when the massive use of heavy artillery by the Germans and the Austrians produced a significant increase in the demand for ammunition by the Russian army, with which the system of production could not adequately cope because of the depletion of stocks, delays in mobilization, as well as the political and institutional confrontations among sectors of the ruling

92. O. AIRAPETOV, *Snariadnyi "golod"*, in *Rossii v Pervoi mirovoi*, vol. 3 cit., pp. 208-211; Id., *Voенно-promyshlennye komitety*, in *Rossii v Pervoi mirovoi*, vol. 1 cit., pp. 390-393.

93. Id., *Generaly, liberaly i predprinimateli: rabota na front i na revoliuciiu (1907-1917)*, Moscow, Modest Kolerov i Izdatel'stvo «Tri kvadrata», 2003.

94. In western historiography this aspect is emphasized also by PETER GATRELL, *Russia's First World War. A Social and Economic History*, Harlow, Pearson Longman, 2005.

classes, in particular between the military bureaucracy of the General Administration of the artillery (*Glavnoe Administrativnoe Upravlenie*, GAU) and the entrepreneurs of the war industry, politically supported by the political forces of the liberal opposition (Octobrists, Kadets, Progressives). All scholars agree in considering the crisis of ammunition to have been overcome by the summer of 1916: it was indeed a necessary condition for the launch on the South-Western Front in late May of the Brusilov Offensive.

In the period from the mid-1990s to the early 21st century, the publishing house Rosspen published, with the participation of a large number of specialists, an impressive quantity of documents related to the activity of the principal parties and political organizations of late imperial Russia; some of these volumes also cover the years of the First World War<sup>95</sup>. The possibility of having unrestricted access to the archive materials and the disappearance of the ideological constraints of the Soviet period have allowed Russian scholars both to follow paths that are off the beaten track, researching the regional and local life of political organizations during the war years<sup>96</sup>, and to produce some substantial monographs on the Russian political forces during the war; the monographs dedicated to the non socialist parties, which occupied the area between the center-left and the extreme right of the political spectrum, are of particular interest.

In-depth study of the Constitutionalist Democratic Party (Kadets) has been carried out by Fedor Gaida, the author of a detailed and well-documented book, *The Liberal opposition on the road toward power*<sup>97</sup>, by some even considered to be “the last word” in historiography on Russian liber-

95. See, for example: *Protokoly Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Konstitutsionno-Demokratičeskoj partii. 1912-1914*, Tom II, Moscow, Rosspen, 1997; *Protokoly Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Konstitutsionno-Demokratičeskoj partii. 1915-1920*, Tom III, Moscow, Rosspen, 1998; *S'ezdy i konferencii Konstitutsionno-Demokratičeskoj partii. 1915-1917 gg.*, Tom III, Kn. 1, Moscow, Rosspen, 2000; *Partiia socialistov-revoliucionerov. Dokumenty i materialy. Iiun'1907 g. – fevral'1917 g.*, Tom II, Moscow, Rosspen, 2001.

96. NADEZHDA SIDORENKO, NADEZHDA NIZHNIK, *Ural'skie liberaly v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Vestnik JuUrGU. Serii: Social'no-gumanitarnye nauki*, n. 1, 2015, pp. 53-56; N. SIDORENKO, *Ural'skaja konservativnaia periferiia nakanune i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914-1917)*, in *Vestnik JuUrGU. Serii: Social'no-gumanitarnye nauki*, n. 2, 2015, pp. 52-55.

97. FEDOR GAIDA, *Liberal'naia opposiciia na putiach k vlasti (1914-vesna 1917 g.)*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2003.

alism during the Great War<sup>98</sup>. By now recognized as one of the most influential scholars of Kadet policy and in general of the liberalism of the war period<sup>99</sup>, Gaida has written a monograph which shares with O. Airapetov's work a highly critical approach to the liberal circles and their political choices. Gaida's monograph is characterized by the effort to interpret the initiatives and political positions of the Kadets in terms of a series of tactical choices inspired by the fundamental objective of the seizure of power. In my opinion this interpretation implies an inadequate consideration of the political culture and world view of the exponents of Russian democratic constitutionalism, and, instead, it is precisely the study of the way in which they reacted and redefined themselves when they encountered the epoch-making event of the Great War that is an aspect of particular interest for historical analysis.

Andrei Ivanov has devoted two monographs to the parliamentary groups of the Russian far right during the First World War<sup>100</sup>. The more recent one, which deals with the fractions in both the fourth Duma and the State Council, is based on an extensive examination of archival sources: it reconstructs the activity of the principal exponents of the Russian right<sup>101</sup> and the deep crisis experienced by this political area during the war. D. Stogov has published an essay on the statutes and programs of the political organizations of the Russian right<sup>102</sup>. The years of the First World War are

98. See JOSHUA SANBORN, *Liberals and Bureaucrats at War*, in *Kritika: Explorations in Russia and Eurasian History*, n. 1, 2007, pp. 141-162.

99. Other publications by the same author include the following: F. GAIDA, *Russkie liberaly v vospriiatii praviashchei biurokratii v period krizisa Tret'eiiun'skoi sistemy (1911-1917)*, in *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, n. 4, 2007, pp. 42-56; ID., *Kadety i vlast': gore ot uma?*, in *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, n. 4, 2005, pp. 89-93; ID., *Parlamentskaia taktika Konstitutsionno-Demokraticeskoi partii letom 1915 g.*, in *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriia 12. Politicheskie nauki*, n. 5, 2002, pp. 70-87; ID., *Progressivnyi blok v otsenke russkoi liberal'noi opposicii (1915-1917)*, in *Posledniaia voina imperatorskoi Rossii*, edited by O. AIRAPETOV, Moscow, Tri kvadrata, 2002, pp. 92-114.

100. ANDREI IVANOV, *Poslednie zashchitniki monarchii: fraktsiia pravyykh IV Gosudarstvennoi Dumy v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914-fevral' 1917)*, Saint Petersburg, Dmitrii Bulanin, 2006; ID., *Pravye v russkom parlamente: ot krizisa k krakhu, 1914-17*, Moscow-Saint Petersburg, Al'ians - Arkheo, 2013.

101. The same author has devoted a book to one of the most well-known figures of the Russian right. (A. IVANOV, *Vladimir Purishkevich: opyt biografii pravogo politika (1870-1920)*, Moscow-Saint Petersburg, Al'ians-Arkheo, 2011).

102. DMITRII STOGOV, *Ustavy i programmy russkikh pravyykh politicheskikh organizatsii perioda Pervoi mirovoi voiny: sravnitel'nyi analiz*, in *Izvestiia Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A. I. Gercena*, n. 130, 2011, pp. 19-31.

also treated in works that trace the history of the political formations during the longer period which began with the revolution of 1905-07: see, among others, the study by Iu. Kir'ianov, also devoted to the galaxy of the Russian far right<sup>103</sup> and the book by S. Sankova on the moderate and nationalist right of the *Vserossiiskii Natsional'nyi Soiuz* (VNS - Pan-Russian National Union)<sup>104</sup>. Finally, mention should be made of the publication of the proceedings of an international conference held in Kazan' on October 17-18, 2014, devoted to *Gosudarstvennaia Duma i Pervaia mirovaia voina* (The State Duma and the First World War). This conference was organized in the context of the International Scientific Forum *Velikaia voina 1914-1918 godov: Rossiia, Evropa i islamskii mir*, in which, alongside Russian scholars, there was the participation of historians coming from countries which, having been part of the Tsarist Empire, shared with Russia the experience of the Duma over the years 1906-1917: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Poland, Finland, and Kazakhstan<sup>105</sup>. The numerous contributions deal with many interesting aspects, often still not sufficiently investigated, of the discontinuous parliamentary activity during the war years.

## 6. Patriotism and nationalism, mobilization of the intellectuals, war propaganda and representation of the enemy.

In the last fifteen years new directions of research have also been developing that have brought Russian historiography into harmony with the lines of study that have been established among Anglo-American specialists in the last twenty years. Historians such as J. Sanborn and E. Lohr, have initiated an intense debate around the theme of patriotic mobilization in the Tsarist Empire during the First World War, which places the season of patriotic unity (*vnutrennyi mir*) in a pan-European perspective, assimilating it to the Sacred Unions experienced by the other protagonists in the war. Even in recent Russian historiography one finds the tendency to emphasize the presence of a deep-rooted and wide-spread patriotism among the Rus-

103. JURII KIR'IANOV, *Pravye partii v Rossii. 1911-1917 gg.*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2001.

104. SVETLANA SAN'KOVA, *Russkaia partiia v Rossii: obrazovanie i deiatel'nost' Vserossiiskogo natsional'nogo soiuza (1908-1917)*, Orel, Izdatel'Svetlana Zenina, 2006.

105. *Pervaia mirovaia voina i Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferencii*, edited by RUSTEM TSIUNCHUK, Moscow, Izd. Gosudarstvennoi Dumy, 2015.



sian population during the First World War<sup>106</sup>. Some studies, such as the one by I. Narskii on the experience at the front of the soldiers in 1914-16, reach the conclusion that fatigue and skepticism, discontent and disaffection took on significant dimensions only after the February revolution<sup>107</sup>.

Interesting insights on everyday life in the trenches and on the mentality of the fighters are found in the research by E. Seniavskaia<sup>108</sup>, whose historical-psychological approach has undoubtedly been a novelty in the Russian panorama of historiography. With regard to patriotism, the author emphasizes the need to highlight, especially for the early stages of the conflict, the vigor of the patriotism of the nobility and of the middle classes, ignored by the Soviet historiographical tradition; at the same time, she supports the thesis that for the mass of the peasantry involved in the war it remained «incomprehensible and extraneous»<sup>109</sup> and believes that the inability to motivate the population ideologically regarding the war was eventually fatal to the tsarist regime.

On the mentality and views of the masses (peasants, workers, and soldiers) research has been done by O. Porshneva<sup>110</sup>. This author defines the Russian society of that time as characterized by a profound socio-cultural rift, making it ill-prepared to face the total challenge of the war: the result, she argues, was a transformation of the mentality of the masses during the conflict which was at the origin of the revolution, the collapse of the state, and the subsequent civil wars. More recently, Porshneva has published a book on the Ural region during the First World War<sup>111</sup>. The innovative historiographical value of these studies resides also in the fact that they

106. See IRINA BELOVA, *Pervaia mirovaia voina i rossiiskaia provincia. 1914-fevral' 1917 g.*, Moscow, Airo-XXI, 2011, pp. 12-13.

107. IGOR NARSKII, *Frontovoi opyt russkikh soldat. 1914-1916*, in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, n. 1, 2005, pp. 194-204.

108. E. SENIAVSKAIA, *Problemy frontovoi morali v period Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Pervaia mirovaia voina – prolog XX veka* cit., pp. 301-304; EAD., *Okopnyi byt Pervoi mirovoi voiny: ocherk frontovoi povsednevnosti*, in *Istoricheskaia psikhologiiia i sociologiiia istorii*, n. 1, 2014, pp. 192-219.

109. EAD., *Psikhologiiia voiny v XX veke: istoricheskii opyt Rossii*, Moscow, Rosspen, 1999, p. 198. See also EAD., *Pamiat' o Pervoi mirovoi* cit., pp. 256-258.

110. OL'GA PORSHNEVA, *Mentalitet i sotsial'noe povedenie rabochikh, krest'ian i soldat Rossii v period Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914- mart 1918 g.)*, Ekaterinburg, 2000; EAD., *Krest'iane, rabochie i soldaty Rossii nakanune i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2004.

111. EAD., *Ural v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny: vzaimodeistvie vlasti i obshchestva*, Ekaterinenburg, OOO "Prospekt", 2014.



are characterized by the extensive use of sources relating to the variegated provincial realities of the Empire, which for a long time had been little studied<sup>112</sup>.

Having already written as co-author with O. Figes a successful book on the February revolution<sup>113</sup>, Boris Kolonitskii devoted an original monograph to the theme of the de-legitimization of tsarism during the First World War, which he developed through the study of the progressive deterioration of the public image of the imperial family, at the center of rumors and gossip that offer an interesting point of observation regarding the mass culture of the time<sup>114</sup>. Kolonitskii also wrote an essay devoted to the spread of the negative portrayal of Nicholas II during the First World War<sup>115</sup>, and a study on the construction in war propaganda of the image of the Russian military leader, embodied in the figure of the Commander-in-chief, Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich<sup>116</sup>.

Patriotism and nationalism, which were vigorous among urban educated people, are profitably investigated by studying the mobilization of intellectuals and artists in support of the victory of the Entente and of the war objectives of the Tsarist Empire: far from being limited to the elaboration and dissemination of signed appeals that invited public opinion and civil society to mobilize in

112. OL'GA SUCHOVA, *Pervaia mirovaia voina kak vyzov russkoi mental'nosti: massovyie nastroyeniia v provincii v 1914-1917 gg.*, in *Rossii i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 121-140; N. SIDORENKO, *Evoluciia politicheskoi atmosfery provintsial'nogo obshchestva v usloviakh Pervoi mirovoi voiny (na primere gubernii Urala)*, ibi, pp. 141-154; O. SUCHOVA, *Mobilizatsionnye kampanii perioda Pervoi mirovoi voiny v vospriiatii i povedenii rossiiskogo krest'ianstva: itogi i perspektivy izuchenija problemy*, in *Izvestija VUZ. Povolzhskii region. Gumanitarnye nauki*, n. 1, 2014, pp. 39-49.

113. ORLANDO FIGES, BORIS KOLONITSKII, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution. The Language and Symbols of 1917*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1999.

114. BORIS KOLONITSKII, «*Tragicheskaiia erotika*»: *obrazy imperatorskoi sem'i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, Moscow, NLO, 2010. Cf. also ID., «*Politicheskaiia pornografiia*» i *desakralizatsiia vlasti v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (Slukhi i massovaia kul'tura)*, in *1917 god v sud'bakh Rossii i mira: Oktiabrskaiia revoliutsiia (Ot novykh istochnikov k novomu osmysleniiu)*, edited by STANISLAV TIUTIUKIN, Moscow, IRI RAN, 1998.

115. B. KOLONITSKII, «*Slabyi tsar'*» i «*tsar'-durak*»: Nikolai II v antidinasticheskikh slukhakh epochi Pervoi mirovoi voiny, in *Sankt-Peterburgskii mezhdunarodnyi letnii universitet, 2008: revoliutsionnyi terrorizm i russkaia revoliutsiia*, edited by V. PLESKOV, Saint Petersburg, 2008.

116. B. KOLONITSKII, *Voin «starogo vremeni»: obrazy Velikogo kniazia Nikolaia Nikolaevicha v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Studia Russica Helsingiensia et Tartuensia X: "Vek nyneshnii i vek minuvshii": kul'turnaia refleksiiia proshedshei epokhi: v 2 ch.*, Tartu, Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2006, second part, pp. 297-326.

the name of civilization against the barbarity of the enemy<sup>117</sup>, this activism was carried out by means of the organization of lectures, meetings, conferences and of intense activities of public debate and of dissemination of information which took place through collaborations with newspapers and magazines and the publication of books and brochures. Valuable insights for the reconstruction of these aspects of Russia in the Great War are offered by various types of works: monographs which reconstruct the life, ideas, and activities of associations and groups of intellectuals in the area of national liberalism, such as, for example, the extensive work by E. Gollerbach on the publishing house “Put” and on the historical-religious Society named after V. Soloviev<sup>118</sup>; useful collections of texts and contributions in the public debate on the themes of the nation, the empire, and nationalism, signed by intellectuals and public figures in 1905-1917<sup>119</sup>; contributions that analyze the patriotic ideology of intellectuals, writers, and artists<sup>120</sup> and articles devoted to the war propaganda in newspapers of various cultural and political orientations that were active in a patriotic direction<sup>121</sup>.

A variegated picture of Russian editorial production and periodical press, and in particular of the positions of intellectuals in the artistic and literary area during the First World War, is offered by two collective works curated by the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences: in the first the papers converge that were presented at the interdisciplinary roundtable held in November 2012, while in the second a first, vast section made up of sources, collecting the contributions to the public debate of illustrious writers during the war, is followed by a section devoted to the use of literary and artistic sources for the study of the Great War in Russia<sup>122</sup>.

117. See ALEKSANDR DMITRIEV, *La mobilisation intellectuelle. La communauté académique internationale et la Première Guerre mondiale*, in *Cahiers du monde russe*, n.4, 2002, pp. 617-644.

118. EVGENII GOLLERBACH, *K nezrimumu gradu. Religiozno-filosofskaia gruppa «Put’» (1910-1919) v poiskakh novoi russkoi identichnosti*, Saint Petersburg, Aleteia, 2000.

119. *Natsiia i imperiia v russkoi mysli nachala XX veka*, a cura di SERGEI SERGEEV, Moscow, Skimen, 2003; *Natsionalizm. Polemika 1909-1917*, edited by MODEST KOLEROV, Moscow, Dom Intellect. Knigi, 2000.

120. VIKTOR GO’COV, *Problema patriotizma v trudakh V.V. Rozanov v gody Pervoi mirovoj voiny*, in *Rossii i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 194-216.

121. TAT’JANA PARCHOMENKO, *Pervaia mirovaia voina i intelligentsiia Rossii*, in *Kul’turologicheskii zhurnal*, n. 1, 2015, pp. 1-16; JULIIA ZHERDEVA, *Illustrirovannaia pressa kak istochnik formirovaniia obraza voiny v 1914-1918*, in *Rossii i Pervaia mirovaia voina* cit., pp. 155-176.

122. *Russkaja publitsistika i periodika epochi Pervoi mirovoj voiny: politika i poetika. Issledovaniia i materialy*, edited by VADIM POLONSKII, Moscow, IMLI RAN, 2013; *Politika i poetika: russkaia*

One of the most stimulating aspects to study regarding the philosophical, historical and literary culture of the war period is the representation of the enemy, more so because of the great prestige traditionally enjoyed by German culture among Russian intellectuals. On the broader level of the orientations of public opinion and of the masses the theme of the construction of the image of the enemy during the First World War was addressed by Seniavskaia, in a book devoted to the evolution of the representation of the enemies in the Russian wars of the 20th century<sup>123</sup>; by O. Porshneva, who has studied the perception of the German enemy by the soldiers of the tsarist army<sup>124</sup>; and by T. Filippova, already the author of a monograph devoted to the representation of the “enemy from the East”<sup>125</sup>, who in a recent article has investigated the stereotype of the Turkish enemy in Russian journalistic satire devoted to the Caucasian front<sup>126</sup>. Interesting starting points for reflecting on the role played by the “Slavic question” (*slavianskii vopros*) in defining the Bulgarian “betrayal” are contained in a contribution by A. Ivanov and A. Repnikov devoted to the representation of Bulgaria’s entry into the war given by the various trends within the Russian right<sup>127</sup>.

## 7. Forced migrations and refugees, prisoners of war and humanitarian problems, occupations and national questions in the peripheries of the empire

In recent years, Russian historians have worked intensively on the themes of the prisoners of war, both Russian and Austro-Germans, and

*literatura v istoriko-kul'turnom kontekste Pervoi mirovoi voyny. Publikatsii, issledovaniia i materialy*, edited by V. POLONSKII, Moscow, IMLI RAN, 2014.

123. E. SENIAVSKAIA, *Protivniki Rossii v voynakh XX veka: Evoliutsiia «obrazov vrage» v soznanii armii i obshchestva*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2006, pp. 62-72. Cf. also GIOVANNA CIGLIANO, *L'immagine del nemico nella propaganda russa*, in *Costruire un nemico. Studi di storia della propaganda di guerra*, edited by NICOLA LABANCA, CAMILLO ZADRA, Milan, Unicopli, 2011, pp. 89-111.

124. O. PORSHNEVA, *The Image of the German Enemy as Perceived by Russian Army Soldiers during World War I*, in *Quaestio Rossica*, Ural Federal University, n. 1, 2014, pp. 79-93.

125. TAT'IANA FILIPPOVA, “*Vrag s Vostoka*”. *Obrazy i ritoriki vrazhdy v russkoi satiricheskoi zhurnalistike nachala XX veka*, Moscow, Airo-XXI, 2012.

126. EAD., *Kavkazskii front Pervoi mirovoi voyny v ob'ektive otechestvennoi satiricheskoi zhurnalistiki*, in *Vestnik TGU (tverskogo). Seriiia “Istoriia”*, n. 1, 2015, pp. 74-95.

127. ANDREI IVANOV, ALEKSANDR REPNIKOV, «Bolgarskaia izmena»: russkie pravye o vstuplenii Bolgarii v Pervuiu mirovuiu voynu na storone Tsentral'nykh derzhav, in *Noveishaia istoriia Rossii*, n. 3, 2014, pp. 197-217.

of the refugees from zones that were occupied or close to military operations<sup>128</sup>. In the “first monograph” series an interesting book was published, written by I. Belova, analyzing the influence of total mobilization on Russian provincial reality<sup>129</sup>, the organization of supplies in the rear lines, and the impact of migration processes that had as protagonists refugees from the Western Front, prisoners of war and internees, and the evacuated soldiers who were wounded or ill. The book also discusses the organization of charitable activities, local political life, and the spread of anti-German attitudes among the population. Belova conducts her investigation in particular regarding the Kaluga province, but her interpretive approach is not restricted to the local reality: in noting, still in 2011, the absence of a work of general synthesis on the history of the First World War in Russia, the author stated that it would have been difficult for such a work to be written without relying “on a certain number of regional studies”, which supplement the material in the central archives with that of the local archives<sup>130</sup>.

128. ALEKSANDR KURTSEV, *Bezheny Pervoi mirovoi voyny*, in *Voprosy istorii*, 8, 1999, pp. 98-112; ID., *Voennye bezheny v gorodakh Rossii (1914-1917 gg.)*, in *Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii na rubezhe XIX-XX vekov*, Saint-Petersburg, Evropeiskii Dom, 2009, pp. 323-335; ALEKSANDR GULIN, *Bezheny na territorii Vladimirskoi, Kostromskoi i Iaroslavskoi gubernij v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny*, in *Vestnik KGU im. N.A. Nekrasova*, n. 5, 2015, pp. 24-28; MAKSIM OS'KIN, *Neizvestnye tragedii Pervoi mirovoi. Plennye. Dezertiry. Bezheny*, Moscow, «Veche», 2001; OKSANA NAGORNAIA, “*Drugoi voennyi opyt*”: *rossiiskie voennoplennye Pervoi mirovoi voine v Germanii (1914-1922)*, Moscow, Novyi khronograf, 2010; SVETLANA GUR'ANOVA, «*Viatskii plen*» *germanskikh i avstro-vengerskikh poddannykh (1914-16)*, in *Voенно-istoričeskii žurnal*, n. 4, 2011, pp. 17-23; JURIJ BACHURIN, *Vynuzhdennye pereselency iz zapadnykh okrain Rossiiskoi imperii v Moskve i Moskovskoi gubernii (1914-1917 gg.)*, in *Velikaia Voina. Sto let cit.*, pp. 170-190. Numerous essays have been published by scholars who have worked on the theme of assistance to the refugees by carrying out research on the specific regional and local realities, on population groups defined on a national and/or religious basis, and on the activities of the Local Citizen Committees and of institutions such as the pan-Russian Union of the *zemstva* and of the municipal Duma. See for example: MARIIA ZLATINA, *Organizatsiia pomoshchi evreiskim bezhentsam v rossiiskoi imperii v pervye mesiatsy Pervoi mirovoi voyny po materialam pressy (iiul'-oktiabr' 1914)*, in *Izvestiia RGPU im. A.I. Gertsena*, n. 118, 2009, pp. 30-35; DMITRII NADSADNYI, *Pomoshch' bezhentsam v Petrograde vo vremia Pervoi mirovoi voyny: deiatel'nost' gorodskogo samoupravleniia i Vserossiiskogo soiuza gorodov pomoshchi bol'nym i ranenym voynom (1914-1917)*, in *Izvestiia RGPU im. A.I. Gercena*, n. 162, 2013, pp. 30-38; KRISTINA BAZHENOVA, *Deiatel'nost' organizatsii Vserossiiskogo zemskogo soiuz a i Vserossiiskogo soiuz a gorodov Permskoi gubernii po okazaniu pomoshchi bezhentsam v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny*, in *Vestnik CelGu. Istoriia*, n. 12, 2011, pp. 21-27; KONSTANTIN STEPANOV, *Rostovskii komitet pomoshchi bezhentsam v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny*, in *Voprosy istorii*, n. 11, 2015, pp. 56-75.

129. I. BELOVA, *Pervaia mirovaia cit.*

130. *Ivi*, p. 7.

At the end of 2014 Belova published an important new monograph, which goes beyond the regional dimension and is devoted to forced migration in Russia during the Great War, recounting the troubled destiny of refugees and prisoners of war up to their return to their territories of origin<sup>131</sup>.

As a confirmation of the current historiographical relevance of these thematic areas we can recall that the previously mentioned collective volume on *The First World War as the prologue to the 20th century* devotes the entire section on *The human person in the war to The tragedy of the prisoners, internees, and refugees*<sup>132</sup>. A useful historiographical overview is given in the contribution by E. Nazemceva devoted to humanitarian problems<sup>133</sup>. The author, having emphasized the novelty of these approaches to the study of the First World War in the Russian tradition, reviews the works devoted to prisoners of war, to the functioning of the rear lines, and to the organization of supplies, and she highlights their place and significance within the context of the line of study focused on local and regional history. She also appropriately calls the reader's attention to other areas of research concerning the First World War, which are consolidated in the traditions of countries such as France, the United States, Great Britain, and Italy, but innovative for Russian historiography: the psychopathological analysis of the impact of the war experience on the combatants<sup>134</sup>, the application of

131. I. BELOVA, *Vynuzhdennye migranty: bezhentsy i voennoplenennyye Pervoi mirovoi voiny v Rossii. 1914-1925 gg.*, Moscow, Airo-XXI, 2014.

132. *Tselovek na voine. Tragediia plena, internirovaniia i bezhenstva*, in *Pervaia mirovaia voina – prolog XX veka* cit., pp. 269-314. Among the contributions, in addition to the one by Belova on the phenomenon of refugees seen through the eyes of the protagonists, we can mention the contribution by V. Orekhovskii on the role played by the Red Cross in assisting the prisoners of war, and by I. Fomichev on the organization of help to the refugees on the part of students and teachers (I. BELOVA, *Bezhenstvo glazami bezhentssev*, VADIM OREKHOVSKII, *Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Krasnogo Kresta i pomoshch' voennoplennym v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, IGOR' FOMICHEV, *Organizatsiia pomoshchi bezhentsam – uchashchimsia, studentam i prepodavateliam v Rossii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, *ivi*, pp. 273-276, 290-295, 305-307).

133. ELENA NAZEMCEVA, *Gumanitarnye problemy Pervoi mirovoi voiny v sovremennoi otechestvennoi istoriografii*, in *Velikaia voina. Sto let* cit., pp. 136-157.

134. ALEKSANDR ASTASHOV, *Voina kak kul'turnyi shok: analiz psikhopatologicheskogo sostoianiia russkoi armii v Pervyi mirovuii voinu*, in *Voenna-istoricheskaia antropologiia. Ezhegodnik. Predmet, zadachi, perspektivy razvitiia*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 268-281; NIKOLAI KOPYLOV, *Sotsial'no-psikhologicheskii portret russkogo ofitserstva v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny*, in *Voenna-istoricheskaia antropologiia. Ezhegodnik. 2003/2004. Novye nauchnye napravleniia*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 127-140.

the perspective of gender in works on the changing role of women in society and the sexual revolution in the masculine behavior of farmer-soldiers<sup>135</sup>.

A frontier of research of undoubted interest is the study of the tsarist policy towards non-Russian nationalities in the peripheries of the empire (*okrainy*). However, so far the historiographical production on the management of these areas during the First World War has remained very limited, and it is also for this reason that the work from 2004 by A. Bachturina remains valuable, on policy and administration in the territories on the peripheries of the Russian Empire<sup>136</sup>. The part that concerns Austrian Galicia is a more concise version of an important earlier work from 2000, devoted precisely to the imperial policy in occupied eastern Galicia, published by Bachturina in the “first monograph” series<sup>137</sup>. Interesting starting points for studying the subject of the interplay between national questions and imperial policy during the First World War can be found in the sixth chapter of the stimulating book by Alexei Miller on the Empire of the Romanovs and nationalism, entitled: “The legacy of the pan-Russian idea: the memorandums of the Special Political Section of the Foreign Ministry to the tsarist, provisional and Soviet governments”<sup>138</sup>.

135. JULIJA IVANOVA, *Zhenshchiny v voynakh otechestva*, in *Voenno-istoricheskaya antropologiya* cit., 2002, pp. 346-356; A. ASTASHOV, *Seksual'nyi opyt russkogo soldata na Pervoi mirovoi i ego posledstviia dlia voyny i mira*, in *Voenno-istoricheskaya antropologiya. Ezhegodnik. Predmet, zadachi, perspektivy razvitiia*, Moscow, 2007, pp. 367-382.

136. ALEKSANDRA BACHTURINA, *Okrainy rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naya politika v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny (1914-1917 gg.)*, Moscow, Rosspen, 2004.

137. EAD., *Politika Rossiiskoi Imperii v Vostochnoi Galitsii v gody Pervoi mirovoi voyny*, Moscow, Airo-XX, 2000.

138. *Zaveschchanie obshcherusskoi idei: memorandum y osobogo politicheskogo otdela MID tsarskomu, vremennomu i bol'shevistskomu pravitel'stvam*, in ALEKSEI MILLER, *Imperiia Romanovikh i natsionalizm*. Moscow, NLO, 2008, pp. 171-203.



## On Turkish Historiography

A first and preliminary observation on Turkish historiography and on the collective memory currently prevailing in Turkey is that the year of the intervention of the Ottoman Empire in the Great War and the year of the end of the conflict are *not* commonly perceived as turning points in Turkish history. Indeed, the participation in the war by the Turkish Empire and Turkish people is felt as part of a longer process, leading to present-day Turkey, which started in 1908, the year of the revolution of the “Young Turks”, and ended in 1923, the year of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. (Alternatively, on the military side, it is the Italian invasion of Lybia in 1911 and the victory of the Kemalist army over the Greek army in 1922 to be considered as milestones in Turkish history).

As for the First World War, Turkish scholars as well as Turkish popular literature both show a very keen interest in two specific events, which both occurred around 1915: the battle of Gallipoli and the dramatic ethnic cleansing of the Armenians from Anatolia. Also in the other countries involved in the Great War there is a literature focusing on specific battles and specific episodes – e.g. in Italy the Battle of Caporetto of 1918 -, but the extent to which Turks write about the two above mentioned events compared with how little they write about other events of the Great War - or on the Great War as a whole - is truly remarkable. It may also be noticed that when writing about Caporetto, Italian historians, novelists or journalists usually consider the battle in relation with the events of the years 1915-1918; whereas in Turkey whoever writes about either Gallipoli or the Armenian tragedy mainly refers to events that either precede 1914 or follow 1918. In conclusion, in Turkey the First World War is rarely observed as a whole and in its own right: the approach is more specific, but at the same time also in a wider perspective than in other countries.



This preliminary observation is confirmed by a serious and important work such as *The Cambridge History of Turkey*. In its fourth and last volume, devoted to Turkish contemporary history, there is *not* an individual chapter on the First World War: Benjamin C. Fortna's essay on the reign of the last true Ottoman monarch, Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), is followed by Şükrü Hanioglu's essay on the second constitutional period (1908-1918) and Hasan Kayalı's on the Independence War (1919-1922)<sup>1</sup>.

A second general observation is that in the official ideology - therefore in the official historiography - which until fifteen years ago was dominant in Turkey and has influenced significantly also popular culture, the historical process which includes the Great War (the making of modern Turkey) is presented and felt as a process with a very happy ending. For a Turk faithful to the official narrative of the republic, all the terrible storms set off in 1908 led to the best possible outcome: the dismissal of a useless, rather harmful empire; a clear-cut split between Turks and Arabs; the foundation of a Turkish national State where Turks can feel safe, are the masters and can show their capabilities. Thanks to such an approach, the 1918 defeat, far from being a catastrophe, is perceived as a necessary step on the road to the final, happy and glorious outcome, a road over which shines the genius of Mustafa Kemal (the future Kemal Atatürk). The difference between this representation and the depressed narrative spread among the other peoples defeated in 1918, above all the Hungarians, is truly striking.

As a third general observation, if in the other countries once involved in the Great War a more detached historiographical narrative is prevailing, i.e. a narrative mainly focused on the social, economical, and psycho-anthropological sides of the conflict, as well as on topics like the propaganda techniques, the changes in the organization of the production, and the role of women; for Turkish historians such an approach and such topics are a luxury that they can rarely afford. To quote Giovambattista Vico, in relation to some events of her history Turkey is still in the age of "stirred and emotional feelings", because these events touch directly upon the self-consciousness of the nation. Consequently, Turkish historiography has been - and largely still is - a militant historiography. It is not by mere

1. *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 4, REŞAT KASABA (ed.), *Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 2008.

chance that politically committed intellectuals have had and still have a greater role than academic or professional historians in Turkey<sup>2</sup>.

A fourth and last general observation is that many important works were written by authors who either had long work experiences abroad or permanently live and work abroad; therefore either all or part of the works of these authors have been published only abroad or initially abroad, in one of the main Western languages. Many of these authors – even though not all of them – are historians who have criticized the official narrative. The reason is obvious: until no long ago, topics like Mustafa Kemal or the Kurdish question or the 1915 facts could be freely treated only abroad<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, works by foreign historians, when judged as favourable to the Turks, have been largely adopted by the official historiography<sup>4</sup>. More in general, on certain topics works by foreign historians, more than those by their Turkish counterparts, have opened the road to scientific research and been acknowledged as reference works<sup>5</sup>.

2. A Western-like historiography on the First World War is being written thanks to the younger generation of historians: see for instance MEHMET BEŞİKÇİ, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, whose extended Turkish version is ID., *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Seferberliği* [The Ottoman mobilization in the First World War], İstanbul, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015. All translations of titles and texts from Turkish are mine.

3. HAMIT BOZARSLAN, *Histoire de la Turquie Contemporaine*, Paris, La Découverte, 2004; ID., *Histoire de la Turquie de l'Empire à nos jours*, Paris, Tallandier, 2013; H. BOZARSLAN, VINCENT DUCLERT, RAYMOND H. KÉVORKYAN, *Comprendre le Génocide des Arméniens*, Paris, Tallandier, 2015; TANER AKÇAM, *Armenien und der Völkermord: Die Istanbul Prozesse und die Türkische Nationalbewegung*, Hamburg, Hamburger Edition, 1996; ID., *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2006; ID., *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2012; FIKRET ADANIR, *Die Armenische Frage und der Völkermord an den Armeniern im Osmanischen Reich. Betroffenheit im Reflex nationalistischer Geschichtsschreibung*, in HANNO LOEWY / BERHARD MOLTSMANN (HG.), *Erlebnis-Gedächtnis-Sinn. Authentische und konstruierte Erinnerung*, Frankfurt a. M. / New York, 1996.

4. JUSTIN MCCARTHY, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*, New York, New York University Press, 1983; ID., *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, Princeton, Darwin Press, 1996; ID., *Population History of the Middle East and the Balkans*, İstanbul, The Isis Press, 2002; ID., *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2006; Guenther Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2005.

5. EDWARD J. ERICKSON, *Ordered to die: a History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, Santa Barbara, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001; PHILIP H. STODDARD, *The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918: A Study of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, Princeton University, 1963 (unpublished PhD thesis, published in Turkish in 1993). Stoddard had tried to get the documents

The battle of Gallipoli is not in itself the subject of great debates. Historians and intellectuals who criticize the nationalist narrative may not like the rhetoric flooding Turkey at every anniversary, and may consider as exaggerated the role with which the nationalist narrative credits Mustafa Kemal; however these historians and intellectuals do not feel the need to deny, and do not have reason to deny, that the Turkish troops showed admirable heroism and Mustafa Kemal showed courage, resolution and skill.

As a matter of fact, for the large majority of Turks the Gallipoli battle remains a subject of deep emotional involvement. As a proof one may consider a book by the writer (not professional historian) Turgut Özakman (1930-2013), who in 2005 obtained howling success with a monumental book on the 1919-1922 liberation war. In 2008 he doubled the success, maybe on a slightly smaller scale, with a book carrying a highly meaningful title: *Risorgimento - Gallipoli 1915*<sup>6</sup>. What was, for Özakman and for the many readers who loved his book, the Gallipoli battle? It was the moment in which Turkish people rose again, found themselves and their leader

held by Cemal Kutay (1909-2006), an odd figure of nationalist historian-journalist (besides he was of Kurdish origin, like a good many other Turkish nationalists). Holder of a large and precious archive, Kutay had just published about *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* (Special Organization) one among the over 180 books he wrote: CEMAL KUTAY, *Birinci Dünya Harbinde teşkilat-i mahsusa ve Hayber'de Türk cengi* [The *teşkilat-i mahsusa* in the First World War and Turks' battle in Khaibar], İstanbul, Tarih Yayınları, 1962 (on an episode of short resistance against overwhelming Arab forces in 1918). The *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa* was a paramilitary corps charged with intelligence and dirty jobs. It is heavily suspected to have committed the largest planned massacres of Armenians during the First World War. The deliberate destruction of many documents in the days of the defeat has made the task of the historians on this subject very difficult. Clearly single-sided are the memoirs of an ex-orderly of Talât pasha, originally published periodically in a magazine in 1934: ÂRIF CEMİL, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Teşkilâtı Mahsusa* [The *Teşkilâtı Mahsusa* in First World War], İstanbul, Arba Yayınları, 1997; an analysis focused mainly on the post-war trials is provided by CEMİL KOÇAK, "Ey Târihçi Belgen Kadar Konuş!" *Belgesel Bir Teşkilâtı Mahsusa Öyküsü* ["Ehi, historian, talk sticking to the documents you know!"] A documentary history of *Teşkilâtı Mahsusa*, in AA.VV., *İmparatorluğun Çöküş Döneminde Osmanlı Ermenileri. Bilimsel Sorumluluk ve Demokrasi Sorunları* [The Ottoman Armenians in the years of the fall of the empire. Scientific responsibility and issues of democracy], İstanbul, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011, pp. 51-85; on a divulgative level ŞÜKRÜ ALTIN, *Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*, İstanbul, İlgî Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2014. In the transcription in Latin characters of this Persian construct some authors prefer the form with, other authors the form without hyphen. Similarly, some transcribe with â, others simply with a.

6. TURGUT ÖZAKMAN, *Diriliş - Çanakkale 1915*, İstanbul, Bilgi Yayınevi, 2008. *Diriliş* is exactly the term Turks use in reference to Italian *Risorgimento*. For the Turks the Gallipoli battle is the *Çanakkale savaşı*.

and saviour, remembered their value and virtue, declared to the World that Turkish people existed and were determined to continue existing. In the light of such an approach, the Gallipoli battle towered, isolated from the previous and following military events, as the spiritual prelude of the liberation war, of the definitive rescue of the Turkish people and of the birth of the republic<sup>7</sup>.

I must stress that this interpretation of Turkish history from 1908 to 1923 has been not only the interpretation elaborated and imposed by the republican regime starting from its early years, but also an interpretation on the whole accepted by left-wing (even extreme left-wing) circles. Indeed, in Turkey the right-wing nationalism that a Westerner can easily imagine even without direct knowledge is not the only brand of nationalism; a strong left-wing nationalism used to exist and is still lively. A proof comes from the works of two important Turkish intellectuals, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir (1897-1976) and Doğan Avcıoğlu (1926-1983): works that have influenced generations of progressive secularists and are still well-known.

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir was born in Edirne from Balkan refugees. Turanist in his youth (just like most of the progressive and nationalist intellectuals of his generation), he participated as a volunteer to the First World War, then was “contact official” with the Soviet agents during the independence war and eventually became a communist. Towards the end of the 1920s he abandoned (maybe also betraying them) his comrades and joined the Kemalist *inteligentzija*, continuously striving to provide the republican regime with a clear doctrine and a neat revolutionary, Soviet-friendly, anti-imperialistic perspective. He wrote three monumental biographies of three key-figures of Turkish history in the 20th century,

7. Naturally on Gallipoli and in general on the Ottoman military operations during the 1914-18 war there is a large production of “technical” works, mainly published by the Headquarter of the Turkish Armed Forces. I did not think it necessary to present here a list of these works. However, the same Headquarter also published books having a political character, such as SADIK SARISAMAN, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türk Cephelelerinde Beyannamelerle Psikolojik Harp* [The psychological war with the posters in the fronts where the Turks were engaged during the First World War], Ankara, ATASE, 1999; ARŞIV ŞUBE MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ [Archive Section Directorate], *Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Ermenilerin Türklere Yaptığı Katliam - Fotoğraflar* [The massacres Armenians committed against Turks during the First World War - photographs], Ankara, ATASE, 2000; HIKMET ÖZDEMİR, *1915 Tartışılırken Gözden Kaçırılanlar / Missed Issues in the 1915 Armenian Debate*, Ankara, Genelkurmay Basımevi, 2008.

men he personally knew: Kemal Atatürk; İsmet İnönü, who was Atatürk's right hand and successor; and Enver pasha<sup>8</sup>.

We have thus reached the core of the involvement of the Ottoman Empire in the Great War, that is to say the dramatic ethnic cleansing of the Armenians from Anatolia. When talking about Enver pasha we must be aware we are talking about the man who, if we accept the "official Armenian version", on the whole accepted by the majority of the historians and of public opinion, he, together with Talât pasha, should be considered as the precursor and equivalent of Hitler. According to the "official Armenian version", Enver and Talât were directly responsible of a systematic extermination, cold-blooded and carefully conceived, accomplished with the method and pretext of the dislocation in other areas of the Ottoman Empire and characterized by a strong ideological push (to eliminate a Christian people who hampered the Panturkist ideal); an extermination that inspired *shoah* and that is fully comparable with it<sup>9</sup>.

In the decades when the "official Armenian version" took shape, Turkey lived under the unwritten but peremptory order of the Kemalist regime: to forget. I happen to have written that the Turkish republican regime was a layer of concrete over an exploded volcano<sup>10</sup>, the exploded volcano being the Ottoman lands and especially Anatolia, where between 1912 and 1923 all the communities, even if undoubtedly especially the Armenians, had suffered a terrible demographic decrease, in a context not only of famine and epidemics but also of violence, devastations and expulsions. Well, for men like Aydemir *reciprocal* terrible violences had occurred, in a process

8. ŞEVKET SÜREYYA AYDEMİR, *Tek Adam* [The Unique], İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 3 voll., 1963-1965; ID., *İkinci Adam* [The Vice], İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 3 voll., 1966-1968 (at that time İnönü was still alive and on stage); ID., *Makedonya'dan Ortaasya'ya Enver Paşa* [Enver pasha from Macedonia to Central Asia], İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 3 voll., 1970-1972.

9. I wrote that when a young Aydemir was, like so many other progressive and nationalist Turkish intellectuals of his age, a Turanist. Here I refer to Panturkist ideal, because here I am "recording" the "official Armenian version". The original Turkish terms are *turanıcılık* (turanism) and *türkçülük* (turkism). About the difference between these two words a long historical-etimological discussion would be necessary for which this is no place: roughly speaking, the first term has a broader meaning (in some authors it includes not just all the Turkic peoples but also "cousin" peoples such as Hungarians and Mongols), whereas the second refers essentially to the Southern-Western branch of the Turkish peoples.

10. *Atatürk: Luci ed Ombre dell'Occidentalizzazione. Intervista con Fabio L. Grassi* [Atatürk: brilliant and dark sides of the Westernization. Interview with Fabio L. Grassi], in *L'Acropoli*, year XI n. 5, <http://www.lacropoli.it/articolo.php?nid=367>.

started at least in 1912, with the expulsion or massacre of hundreds of thousands of Balkan Muslims. And for many other Anatolians the process had begun decades earlier, with the massacre and expulsion, accomplished by the Tsarist Empire especially in 1864, of the Muslim populations of Northern Caucasus. Those who had survived those massacres and the exodus (barely less perilous) had mainly settled in inner Anatolia<sup>11</sup>.

For many decades the Turkish State expunged the Armenian tragedy from public memory, but it is necessary to know that the Turkish State imposed similar exclusions on *anything every community* suffered in the past. Let me insist: Mustafa Kemal did not impose onto the survivors only the command to forget or deny the Armenian genocide, he commanded to forget little less than everything; and the command was directed first of all to Mr. Mustafa Kemal himself, who was born in Salonika and saw inner Anatolia for the first time in his life only during the Great War. That Mr. Mustafa Kemal was among the millions who ran the risk of looking *behind* and *outside* of the new nation, whereas he wanted the new Turkish nation to look only *inside* and *ahead*<sup>12</sup>. And so in the Turkish public space the pre-republican history became a mysterious desert where sudden and isolated the epics of Gallipoli and of the liberation war appeared.

Now we can understand more Aydemir's attitude. In his great biography of the man who, for those accepting the "official Armenian version" was a match for Hitler's, Aydemir (as much a nationalist as a leftist intellectual,

11. FABIO L. GRASSI, *Una Nuova Patria. L'Esodo dei Circassi verso l'Ottoman Empire* [A new homeland. The exodus of the Circassians towards the Ottoman Empire], Istanbul, ISIS, 2014, pp. 281. In the present times it may be useful to specify that ISIS (a name inspired by the Egyptian goddess) is a serious and renowned publishing house specialised in books in Western languages on Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey.

12. In F.L. GRASSI, *Una Nuova Patria* cit., pp. 102-105, I have shown that the republican regime in a very short time closed all the associations of the Caucasian refugees; similarly, any public memory of the exodus from the Balkans was forbidden for decades: F. L. GRASSI, *Le Guerre Balcaniche per i Turchi: "Non riaprire quella ferita!"* [The Balkan Wars for Turks: "Don't reopen that wound!"], in GIUSEPPE MOTTA (ed.), *Le Guerre Balcaniche e la Fine del "Secolo Lungo". Atti del Convegno di Târgu Mureş* [The Balkan Wars and the end of the "Long Century". Proceedings of the conference held in Târgu Mureş], Roma, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2013, pp. 117-141. These prohibitions began loosening with the coming to power of the Democratic Party, in 1950. On the "prohibition of nostalgia" imposed by the republican regime to the Muslim immigrants coming from Greece in the frame of the exchange of communities agreed at the end of 1922 see the excellent BRUCE CLARK, *Twice A Stranger: the Mass Expulsion that Forged Modern Greece and Turkey*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 2006.



and a son of Balkan refugees), whilst looking at Enver in a far from favourable way, does not, however, portray him as a criminal. So to use a formula well-known during the 1970s, in Aydemir's eyes Enver had been a "comrade on the wrong path", a leader who had insisted in linking the Turkish national struggle to the rhetoric and misleading frame of turanism, a man whose capabilities were inferior to his ambitions and who had taken the decision to throw the Ottoman State in the World War showing superficiality and egotism, a man who then had led an entire army to the Sarıkamış disaster. But in his portrait he also appears as a man who had been capable to die for his ideals. In Aydemir's interpretation, Enver committed all the mistakes Mustafa Kemal would not commit<sup>13</sup>, but he was not a criminal.

As a consequence, Aydemir devotes short lines to the Armenian tragedy. And he explains why: "during the 1914-1918 war, in the Ottoman lands and especially in Anatolia, reciprocal attempts of destruction occurred. But sometimes, in history, between peoples and nations such things occur that it might probably be preferable to forget". And later he adds briefly: "In this tragedy and in the measures taken against the Armenians in my opinion the main responsibilities lay with the so called intellectuals who flourished among the Armenians, but who were by no means capable of wisely considering the geographical and historical conditions"<sup>14</sup>. I am inclined to interpret such cryptic words as arguing that Armenian nationalist intellectuals are the primary culprits, since they stirred their own people towards an ill-conceived struggle: these intellectuals did not take into account that Turks would not flee from Anatolia (also because they did not have a place where to flee), and would fight, this time in favourable conditions, until the last Turk or the last Armenian was left standing. Maybe Aydemir's words can be even more synthetically "translated" as follows: why did you drive us into committing the dispicable acts that we carried out? Be it as it may, with his words Aydemir proved himself once more obedient to the unwritten command of the republican regime. It goes without saying that we historians cannot accept such a command.

The case of Doğan Avcıoğlu - who from several aspects was Aydemir's spiritual heir - is, from the point of view of Western political culture, even

13. Ş.S. AYDEMİR, *Tek Adam* cit., vol. I, pp. 199-219 of the 1985 edition, and Aydemir, *Makedonya'dan*, cit., vol. II, pp. 203-212 of the 1985 edition.

14. Ş.S. AYDEMİR, *Makedonya'dan* cit., vol. III, pp. 462 and 464-465.



more surprising. He went beyond Kemalist official ideology and legitimated the version useful to the old Unionist leaders to seal in 1919-1921 their alliance with the Bolsheviks, looking at the Ottoman intervention as if it were a primordial act of anti-imperialist rebellion. Such an interpretation leads to a particular emphasis being given to the abolition of the Capitulations, proclaimed by the Ottoman government little time before the declaration of war. With such arguments Avcıoğlu played an important role in the diffusion of a “third-world”ist interpretation of the experience of the Young Turks and of the Kemalist revolutions as revolutions betrayed by a *compradora* national bourgeoisie. Besides, just like Aydemir, Avcıoğlu was not a professional historian but a politically committed intellectual: between the late 60s and early 70s he was the mentor of a ba’athist and “third-world”ist *coup d’état* project inside the Turkish armed forces, a project whose accomplishment was anticipated and stopped by the 12 March 1971 *coup d’état* by *communiqué* and by the ensuing tough repression.

Among Avcıoğlu’s most important works is a book in four volumes, focusing mainly on the 1919-1922 period, where the history of contemporary Turkey is interpreted as a century-long process of liberation from the yoke of Western imperialism. This book too is not a scholarly work but, as its title makes clear, a sort of giant *pamphlet*<sup>15</sup>. The title (referring to the Great War) of the first chapter of the first volume is: “An anti-imperialist war before the resistance against imperialist States”; and sections of this chapter carry titles such as “The plan by Imperialists to annihilate Turkey”, “The roots of English Turcophobia”, “If Turkey becomes an example for the oppressed nations...”<sup>16</sup>. You will not be surprised to know that Avcıoğlu devotes very little space to the facts of 1915. He correctly records that the national Turkish bourgeoisie largely flourished on the goods stolen to the minorities, but uses the official term “deportation”<sup>17</sup>.

But talking about certain events at one point became unavoidable. Turks had to cope with the Armenian tragedy when the terroristic organ-

15. DOĞAN AVCIOĞLU, *Millî Kurtuluş Tarihi. 1838’den 1995’e* [History of the national liberation. From 1838 to 1995], İstanbul, Tekin Yayınevi, 1974-1975. No mistake! According to the author Turkey’s submission to Western imperialism had begun with the British-Ottoman Baltalimanı trade agreement; and he prophesied that the liberation process would be accomplished in 1995, with the instauration of a substantially socialist regime.

16. *Ivi*, pp. 33, 37 and 54 (1985 edition).

17. *Ivi*, pp. 11-38.

ization ASALA began killing Turkish diplomats all over the world. This was the time when the “official Turkish version” took a standard shape, which may be summarised as follows: facing the danger of the pro-Russian Armenians bands, the Ottoman state was forced to move the Armenian communities of Anatolia to other areas of the empire; the Ottoman policymakers had no will to kill them, but many people had died through hunger and diseases which led to death many people belonging to other communities; as for the areas directly involved in the war, what happened was not a single-sided massacre committed by the Ottoman State but an intercommunal clash, with no relevant difference, neither in absolute figures nor in percentages, between Armenian and Muslim death tolls.

The “Central committee” of the official Turkish historiography was and is the *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Institute of Turkish History), directly founded (initially with a slightly different name) by Atatürk in 1931. It has been mainly this institute, in the last decades, to set up and champion the “official Turkish version”, re-issuing periodically the old apology by the diplomat Kâmuran Gürün as well as publishing new works, some of which deserve unbiased attention. Indeed, the emergence of a Turkish revisionist historiography and narrative, the urge to cope with the accusations coming from the international community and the purpose to challenge with reliable arguments the “official Armenian version” have pushed the representatives of the Turkish official historiography to evolve<sup>18</sup>. An example comes from the issue of the Armenian children and women rescued or taken away from their own families and brought up more or less forcibly as Turkish Muslims. In the first years of the 21st century the issue blew off, also in literature, as one of the many hidden truths Turkish society must at last face. But then this truth has turned into one of the most convincing arguments used by “patriotic” historians against those who liken the Armenian tragedy with the *shoah*<sup>19</sup>.

18. KÂMURAN GÜRÜN, *Ermeni Dosyası / Le Dossier Arménien / The Armenian File*, Ankara, TTK, 1983; KEMAL ÇİÇEK, *Ermenilerin Zorunlu Göçü 1915-1917* [The forced migration of the Armenians 1915-1917], Ankara, TTK, 2005; HIKMET ÖZDEMİR, *Salgın Hastalıklardan Ölüm 1914-1918* [The deaths due to epidemical diseases 1914-1918], Ankara, TTK, 2005, reprised in Id., *The Ottoman Army, 1914-1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefield*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2008. It is to Özdemir's credit having carefully examined a fundamental aspect of the involvement of the Ottoman populations in the Great War.

19. İBRAHİM ETHEM ATNUR, *Türkiye'de Ermeni Kadınları ve Çocukları Meselesi (1915-1923)* [The question of the Armenian women and children in Turkey (1915-1923)], Ankara, Babil Yayıncılık, 2005. The likening of the Armenian plight to the *shoah* is the direct polemic target of

The first great victory of the Turkish revisionist historiography was the conference held in Istanbul on 23-25 September 2005: a conference which was in itself an historical event and was held at the end of a dramatic vicissitude. We, as historians, hope to do through our job something useful for society, but historians and intellectuals who organized and/or participated in that conference made history and were aware they were making history; one of them, the great Turkish-Armenian journalist and intellectual Hrant Dink, would pay for his struggle with his life: on 19 January 2007 he was killed by a young right-wing extremist, with the complicity of the “deep State”, a combination we Italians know unfortunately all too well.

Everybody knew that the main objective of the conference was to clarify what had really occurred in 1915 and everybody, only by looking at the name of the organizers, and of those who had been invited and - above all - by considering who had *not* been invited, knew that the conference had the open purpose of challenging the official historiography. It was promoted by the state-owned *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi* (also known, for its origin and for its being fundamentally anglophone, as *Bosphorus University*), and by two private universities, *Sabancı Üniversitesi* and *Bilgi Üniversitesi*, two institutions which in the previous years had recalled back from abroad historians notoriously contrary to the official historiography. The conference was scheduled for May 2005 at *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi*; but twice in a row a judge forbade for it to be held, on the basis of the (later amended) notorious article 301 of the Turkish criminal code which punished offences to Turkishness. The Minister for Justice, Cemil Çiçek, approved of the prohibition; but (also due to pressure from the European Union) Recep

YÜCEL GÜÇLÜ, *The Holocaust and the Armenian case in Comparative Perspective*, Lanham, University Press of America, 2012; about the “complicity with the enemy” of the Armenians ID., *Armenians and the Allies in Cilicia 1914-1923*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 2010. It may be useful to recall that for decades the Turkish State has been proposing the formation of a multilateral commission of historians for the analysis and interpretation of the 1915 facts and that both Armenian State and Armenian diaspora have always rejected this proposal. Taking into account that in Turkey the more unrealistic versions are now discredited, let me express the following personal opinion: if Armenians would not insist on the thesis of the likeness of the 1915 facts to *shoah* and more in general on a speculatively unrealistic narrative, a great step forward might be made, not a step in the direction of an unanimously accepted thesis (probably not a desirable outcome), but at least a step in the direction of a productive confrontation among serious and respectable opinions. But I am not optimistic on this matter: now the Armenian diaspora won nearly all over the world their psychological, cultural and political battle and have no interest in reopen the debate on scientific grounds.

Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister at the time, and Abdullah Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, criticised the decision and declared the conference should be held. Çiçek changed his mind accordingly; and the event was re-scheduled for the following September; at the last moment, when all the participants had convened to Istanbul, *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi* had to be replaced as hosting institution by *Bilgi Üniversitesi*; and there at last the conference was held. The sessions unfolded in a very tense atmosphere, under the close scrutiny of the police. Outside the gates of *Bilgi Üniversitesi* ultra right-wing militants insulted, shouted threats, threw eggs and tomatoes onto the participants. Leftist nationalists delivered nervous and elusive statements (but İsmet İnönü's son Erdal, a great scientist, a honest politician and an enlightened Kemalist, wanted to be among the attenders). The publication of the proceedings was also a long and tiresome business, and they were published nearly six years later, in March 2011: maybe in order to stress a collective responsibility, the volume doesn't bear the name of any editor<sup>20</sup>.

The organizers and the participants were the plum of Turkish liberal culture: one must at least mention Selim Deringil, whose "Presentation, more properly a short history of the 'Armenian conference'" opens the volume of the proceedings; Murat Belge (professor of comparative literature); Halil Berktaş, Edhem Eldem, Cemil Koçak, Fikret Adanır, Şerif Mardin, Fuat Dündar, Mete Tunçay and Stefanos Yerasimos (historians); Çağlar Keyder and Nilüfer Göle (sociologists); Baskın Oran (political scientist). Non-academic intellectuals like Hrant Dink, or the famous novelist Elif Şafak, and the German-Turkish politician Cem Özdemir also presented papers at the conference, which help illustrating the militant aspect of the initiative. Erdoğan's and Gül's behaviour was highly meaningful, too. The

20. *İmparatorluğun Çöküş Döneminde Osmanlı Ermenileri* cit. The historical memory of the Armenian presence in Turkey has been corageously kept alive by the publishing house Aras. An intense, bold, praiseworthy confrontation of memories and perceptions is LEYLA NEYZİ / HRANUSH KHARATYAN-ARAQELYAN, *Speaking to One Another: Personal Memories of the Past in Armenia and Turkey*, Bonn, Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband, 2010. Leyla Neyzi is the author of the first part, entitled *Research in Turkey: "Wish they hadn't left". The Burden of Armenian Memory in Turkey*; Hranush Kharatyan-Araqelyan is the author of the second part, entitled *Research in Armenia: "Whom to forgive? What to forgive?"*. The volume is the outcome of the project "Adult Education and Oral History contributing to Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation", led from August 2009 to February 2010 and part of the "Acting Together. Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation project", promoted by *Sabancı Üniversitesi*.

leaders of the Justice and Development Party, which has been governing Turkey from November 2002 until today, for many years have carefully avoided openly attacking the official ideology of the authoritarian secularist State and Mustafa Kemal's image: cunningly, they have left this task to the initiative of the liberal secularists. Mr. Gül sent a long and kind message to all participants, reaffirming his refusal of the thesis of a single-sided genocide and inviting not to forget the serious sufferings Turks had also experienced.

The papers were presented in ten sessions and two panels. Their titles deserve to be quoted: "A general look on the treated issues", "The differences in knowledge and perceptions between World and Turkey", "The *ancien régime* before the Balkan wars", "The breaking point: 1912-1915", "The deportation and its aftermath", "Tales of ruin and rescue", "Memoirs and testimonies", "From a possible facing with what had happened to the rise of a taboo", "Different ways to be Armenian", "The Armenian question and Turkish democracy", "Press freedom and Armenian question", "Today and tomorrow".

Inside this revisionist historiography different positions were present and still are. Roughly speaking, among the representatives of a more extrem wing we may consider the already mentioned sociologist Taner Akçam, who was among the very first to openly confront the official ideology and historiography, and Hamit Bozarslan, a Kurd which seems to have as his sole and rather obsessive purpose to demonstrate that the Republic of Turkey is lacking any historical, political or moral legitimacy. In his works Turkey looks like more an Empire of Evil rather than a problematic and complex reality. Consequently, as I have already observed elsewhere, his *La Turquie Contemporaine* sounds like a history of England written as a fiery Irish nationalist may have written in the early 20th century<sup>21</sup>. Bozarslan not only argues that what happened in 1915 was genocide; but he adds to it that such a genocide had a strong ideological side, coming from turanist and socialdarwinist ideas that had spread among the Young Turks<sup>22</sup>.

21. F. L. GRASSI, *Atatürk. Il fondatore della Turchia moderna* [Atatürk. The founder of modern Turkey], Roma, Salerno, 2008, pp. 401-402.

22. Hamit Bozarslan happened to expose his theses also in Italy, in the conference "La Grande Guerra in Medio Oriente: Imperi, Nazioni, Minoranze" [The Great War in the Middle East: Empires, Nations, Minorities], held on 15 April 2015 in Catania, organized by the Department of Political and Social Studies of Catania University and by the Research Center on Contemporary

Fikret Adanır offers a more complex interpretation of the facts. I have no intention of concealing my admiration for his great effort to make serious historical research in order to understand what happened and why. I find him unaffected by the prejudicial and stereotyped views that still dominate much of the narrative about this event, by the heavy and black-mailing pressure of the words, by ethical or political purposes (historian must pursue the truth, not what is 'right'), by the fear of "giving weapons to the enemy". Fikret Adanır has the stock-in-trade for making serious and comprehensive historical research because he has got a deep knowledge of what happened in the Balkans, on the northern shore of the Black Sea and in the Caucasus, as well as in Anatolia, in the decades before the First World War. Therefore, instead of indulging in void comparisons with what happened *after* 1915, he has simply tried to get a deeper understanding of what had happened *before* (a task which requires much more work). Together with Oktay Özel, he has recently edited a book aimed at presenting the state of the research, in which the contributions of many young scholars are collected<sup>23</sup>. His opinions are summarised in an interview on this book. I quote below the part I found more stimulating and at times even controversial:

"In parallel with the shrinking of the Ottoman Empire in terms of its territories, the Muslim population increased in percentage. While the possibility for the State to survive as an empire increasingly faded, in my opinion the unionist leaders began thinking that as *extrema ratio* they had not any other choice than building a nation state. On the contrary, for the nationalist leaders of the Armenian community on the eve of the First World War, the fulfillment of the dream of a Great Armenia looked more possible than ever. Nevertheless this does not mean that the 1915 catastrophe should be regarded as unavoidable. For example, if the Ottoman State had not intervened in the World War it is very likely that we now would not be talking about deportation or genocide. Much less can one argue that the civil society urged the government to participate in the war. I am

Islamic World and Africa - CoSMICA; I participated in that conference, too, and Bozarlsan and I had to politely note our constant divergence of views.

23. FIKRET ADANIR, OKTAY ÖZEL (eds.) *1915. Siyaset, Tehcir, Soykırım* [1915. Policy, Deportation, Genocide], İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015.



even inclined to think that in 1923 a partial healing of the wounds of the serious traumas experienced was still possible.”<sup>24</sup>

A few years earlier Adanır made observations of the utmost importance, too. I would argue that nobody can reliably talk about the Armenian question without knowing and without having considered them carefully:

“Turkist unionists and Armenian nationalists from a cultural and psychological point of view were actually rather similar. Both were somehow social Darwinists, in that they believed in the principle that “Whoever is strongest wins, and his is the right side. If I don’t kill you you will kill me”. The Armenians who championed social Darwinism said that once constituted the autonomous Armenian region they would not recognize the citizenship rights of the nomads and would drive away refugees: just like the unionists, they accepted the perspective of ethnic omogeneization.”<sup>25</sup>

At least until some years ago, compared to Adanır, scholars such as Selim Deringil looked still too affected by a mentalit y advocating a political and cultural battle. I find very meaningful a passage from an interview given in 2010. The atmosphere is more appropriate to a trial rather than a historical debate:

“To hire American historians and entrust them with propaganda abroad is positively wrong. They are instructed to say ‘This is not genocide. It were the Armeni-

24. MERVE EROL, *Fikret Adanır ve Oktay  zel ile s y le i: ‘1915’  zerine bir soykırımın anatomisi* [Anatomy of a genocide: interview with Fikret Adanır and Oktay  zel about “1915”], *Toplumsal Tarih* [Social History], sayı [number] 264, Aralık [December] 2015, p. 86. Now I must repeat to myself my duty here is to expose, and not discuss, what Turkish historians say. I should only like to add that a victorious Russia, facing a Turkey remained neutral, would probably have carried ahead the project of a Great Armenia and of the conquest of the Straits; and consequently that for the Ottoman State, as a desperate move to save itself, the single serious alternative to the intervention on the side of the Central Empires was not neutrality but the intervention on the side of the Entente Powers.

25. DEVRİM SEVİMAY, *1915 Hukuki Anlamda bir Soykırım deęildir* [From the juridical point of view what committed in 1915 was not a genocide], *Milliyet* [The Nationality], 21 June 2009, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/default.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&ArticleID>. The refugees were the Muslim refugees coming from the Balkans, from the Northern shore of the Black Sea and from the Caucasus.



ans who slaughtered the Turks. Why nobody speaks about what was committed against the Turks in the Balkans?'. True, Balkan Muslims were victim of serious violence, they were expelled and were victim of massacres. But to use what had occurred in the Balkans to legitimate the deportation of the Armenians is not right. The massacre of Turks in the Balkans was not in the same measure cold-bloodedly planned and committed. Granted, probably in the Balkans hundreds of thousand died, too; and it is a known fact that in the Balkan War Serbians and Bulgarians targeted civilians. Yet, even if both events are to condemn, I don't believe that what occurred during the Balkan war legitimated driving out of Anatolia in 1915 an Armenian living in Tekirdağ who had not had the slightest responsibility for those event."<sup>26</sup>

As I hope to have illustrated, while for a lot of Turkish nationalists the revisionist historians are "traitors of the motherland", for some revisionist historians whoever remembers neglected yet undeniable truths like the massacres of 1912 and linken them with what happened in 1915 cannot be other than an agent on the payroll of the Turkish government. This is naturally not the the best way to approach a scholarly debate. No more trustworthy is a certain nationalist literature that has often made use of contradictory arguments, presenting as necessary and legitimate the deportation of the Armenians on one side, whilst on the other depicting the "fathers of the nation", i.e. Mustafa Kemal and those unionists who recognized his leadership, as adverse to the operation. Besides, Deringil admits that there is not the slightest evidence that the future Atatürk was involved in the deportation and accepts the tradition according to which he criticised it.

From this brief information one can perceive to what extent the road leading to a reliable and coherent interpretation of what happened in 1915 is impervious and full of obstacles. Moreover, many issues, extremely important both in themselves and in a comparative perspective, are the

26. NEŞE DÜZEL, *Selim Deringil: "İnönü Tehcire karşı çıkmadı"* [Selim Deringil: "İnönü did not oppose to deportation"], *Taraf* [The stance], 31 March 2010. <http://arsiv.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/nese-duzel/selim-deringil-inonu-tehcire-karsi-cikmadi/10698/>). "Balkan War" is not a translation mistake: it is, not casually, the way the Turks usually call what we call Balkan Wars, even though now, in likeness to Western literature, the plural form is used as well (F.L. GRASSI, *Le Guerre Balcaniche* cit., p. 121). Then, as a little curious remark, let me just note that Tekirdağ is not in Anatolia but in Thrace.

subject of narrow, albeit good, research, but have not been subjected to a deeper reflection yet. Actually, it is not possible to come to a satisfying interpretation of the *metz yeghern* without an accurate knowledge of what happened (or did not happen) in those same years to the great Orthodox communities of the Aegean and of the Black Sea<sup>27</sup>.

I am however fully aware, in making these remarks, of the difficulty of the task embarked upon by historians and intellectuals I have the utmost consideration for and I am highly sympathetic with, to the point that I feel privileged in being able to consider their work from my much easier position.

27. A good, yet limited essay, is YÜKSEL KÜÇÜKER, *Birinci Dünya Savaşı Döneminde Yaşanan Rum Göçü Ve Kadük Bir Mübadele Girişimi* [The migration of the Orthodoxes of Turkey during the First World War and an ephemeral attempt of exchange of communities], *Turkish Studies*, Volume 10/1, Winter 2015, p. 437-454. Far from abundant is also the literature on another important issue, the Arab revolt: even the very good HASAN KAYALI, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Second Constitutional Period of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997, devotes to it a very little space. It may be noticed that also in this book the period of the First World War is included in the broader period of the “second constitutional period”. Actually it ended in 1920, but the author rightly consider the issue he deals with as resolved by in 1918.



## British Historiography

Given the need for brevity, the following pages can only offer a very general picture of the main lines of evolution of British historiography on the Great War, identifying the most important interpretative issues. The first part of the paper will focus on finding the general lines of the three major chronological blocks featured in British historiography on the First World War. The second part will be a more in-depth focus on the historiography of the last twenty or twenty-five years.

However, carrying out such a classification requires first of all an overview of certain premises that must be taken into account. Speaking of 'British historiography' poses the problem of the exact targeting of the very object at the centre of these pages. If, for example, it is fairly intuitive and simple to identify a Russian, a Turkish or even an Italian historiography on the basis of the linguistic connotation or the nationality of the protagonists, for British historiography it is a little more complex, at least as regards the last twenty-five years. This depends on a series of reasons. In part because English is now the *lingua franca* of the academic world. In part because British universities manage to attract scholars and researchers from all over the world, and it would not make much sense to consider such scholars as foreign bodies with respect to the cultural context within which they operate. In part because the very parabola of the British empire makes it difficult to separate clearly the British academic world from that of other English-language countries. To complicate things further, there is the fact that the British publishing system is a global publishing system. Together with the increasing tendency of the different university systems to converge towards the homologation of evaluation criteria in research, this cannot avoid having an impact on topics studied as well. As a result, in the following pages the indication of a 'British historiography' should be taken very flexibly.

Overall, I believe it is possible to identify three basic chronological blocks in the British historiographical production on the First World War. Three blocks that of course follow the more general parabola of historiography on the subject.

A first step of our reflection opens up while it is in progress. As also indicated in other contributions to the present book, the outbreak of war poses the problem of interpreting the events under way, in order to justify the political action of each government. The purpose, therefore, was first of all practical and political: to motivate the entry into war of their own country as an act of defence. Hence a reflection that is overall dominated by the issue of identifying the party or parties to be blamed for the war. The focus of reflection therefore is on the great issues of international and diplomatic policy that precede the summer of 1914 and the important role played by the Foreign Ministers themselves as the institutional holders of the documentation necessary to carry out this task<sup>1</sup>. In general this stage leaves a legacy for those coming after of a “politicisation of the history of international relations before 1914”, lasting until the Sixties of the twentieth century<sup>2</sup>.

Besides the crucial topic of the origins of the war, there is that of narrating the military events themselves. At this first stage, of course, the role of the witnesses and actors in the events is difficult to separate from that of the historians and narrators once such events had been achieved. This is also true in Great Britain. In a study during the Nineties of the last century, Keith Hamilton highlighted in detail the active role of the Foreign Office both in publishing the first reconstructions on the outbreak of war, and in researching or encouraging the collaboration of important historians, from James Wycliff Morley to John Holland Rose<sup>3</sup>. As well as the theme of the origins of the conflict, there is of course the need to recount the political-military events of 1914-1918. Reconstructions appeared that found

1. JAY WINTER AND ANTOINE PROST, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 6-15.

2. WILLIAM MULLIGAN, *Le origini della prima guerra mondiale*, Rome, Salerno Editrice, 2011, p. 9.

3. KEITH HAMILTON, *The Pursuit of “Enlightened Patriotism”. The British Foreign Office and Historical Researchers During the Great War and its Aftermath*, in *Forging the Collective Memory. Government and International Historians through the Two World Wars*, edited by K. Wilson, Providence-Oxford, 1996.

great success, such as for example that of Basil Liddell Hart<sup>4</sup>, the longevity of which is unquestionably due to its detachment from the range of official histories appearing in the Twenties and Thirties.

The second stage is that opening in the Sixties. In Great Britain as elsewhere<sup>5</sup>, the Second World War inevitably shifted historiographical reflection to the more recent conflict, leaving that of 1914-18 further in the background. A return of interest for the First World War came about in the Sixties. Generally speaking, this was inevitably a more mature production than the previous one, both because it could count on the availability of new archive sources, and through attempts to broaden knowledge by enlarging the topics taken into consideration and by the introduction of new methodological approaches. Proceeding with the utmost brevity, I believe that three fundamental elements can be identified in this period.

The first impact is that of Marxism, which in Great Britain can be primarily identified with the ability of the Marxist Historians' Group to influence the British historiographic debate<sup>6</sup>. Shifted onto the research field of the Great War, this became an attempt to use historical materialism as a key to read the events leading to the conflict. The obvious consequence was that the very structure of capitalism was identified as the factor inexorably leading towards war. A second consequence of the new approach of historical studies was the choice of certain problematic nuclei, and firstly the crucial connection between war and revolution, which in the previous stage had been neglected, and the impact of the war on the development of the workers' movement<sup>7</sup>.

The second element that appears to me fundamental for an understanding of the evolution of historiographical work from the Sixties on is the impact of the images conveyed by the new means of communication. Television had by then become a tool of mass communication and in 1964,

4. *A History of the World War, 1914-1918*, London, 1934.

5. J. WINTER AND A. PROST, *The Great War in History* cit.

6. Cf. ERIC J. HOBSBAWN, *The Historians' Group of the Communist Party*, in *Rebels and Their Causes. Essays in Honour of A.L. Morton*, edited by MAURICE CORNFORTH, London, 1978, pp. 21-48; BILL SCHWARZ, *The People in History. The Communist Party Historians' Group, 1946-56*, in *Making Histories. Studies in History-Writing and Politics*, London, 1982, pp. 44-95; WILLIAM PALMER, *The Lives and Works of the World War II Generation of Historians*, Lexington, 2001, *passim*.

7. See as an example the work of the American historian J. WINTER, *Socialism and the challenge of war. Ideas and politics in Britain 1912-1918*, 1974 and of the Irishman JOHN HORNE, *Labour at war. France and Britain 1914-1918*, Oxford, 1991.

on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the war, the BBC broadcast a documentary in episodes lasting twenty-six hours overall. The historians involved in its production wrote texts that were traditional enough: the prevailing view was one of the war as seen “from above”, a narrative focusing on political and diplomatic issues and on questions of military tactics on the western front. The choice of the images, however, showed something different: a vision of the war “from below”, centring on life in the trenches. This made it possible for the first time to focus attention on the impact of the war on the individuals fighting in it. This was a very different perspective than the usual one. The images conveyed directly the idea of the war as an enormous slaughter<sup>8</sup>. This change of perspective is also clearly seen in the more strictly historiographic production.

One example will suffice: *The First World War. An Illustrated History* by A.J.P. Taylor<sup>9</sup>, in which the account of events and the historiographic reflection are accompanied by a collection of images that had the same effect as the BBC documentary. Taylor’s book was published in 1964 and is also a milestone in British historiography on the Great War, as well as being a best seller and a long seller that played an important role in shaping the common opinion of the British regarding the 1914-18 war in the Sixties and Seventies. The basic question that Taylor highlights is that of the Great War as an enormous waste of human and material resources, made possible by the incapacity of political and military leaders to direct events, events they themselves had contributed to bringing about.

The third basic element for a clear outline of the features of this historiographic stage is the attempt to up-date traditional diplomatic and political historiography, broadening the field of investigation to the context. Taylor, mentioned above, had an important role here as well. Two notably important studies of his go back to the Forties and Fifties, aiming to underline the continuity of Prussian and German politics from 1848 to 1945, thereby reiterating German responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War<sup>10</sup>. At the end of the Sixties, however, Taylor published a small book, *War by Timetable*, in which he carried out a much more interesting operation.

8. J. WINTER AND A. PROST, *The Great War in History* cit., p. 20.

9. For an up-dated biography on Taylor cf. CHRIS WRIGLEY, *A.J.P. Taylor. Radical Historian of Europe*, London, 2006.

10. These are *The Course of German History* (1945) and *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe* (1954).



Although he maintained that war is more or less avoidable until political decision-makers take certain steps, i.e., until they specifically order their armies to mobilise; once this has happened, war can no longer be avoided. Indeed, war becomes the necessary outcome of the very mechanism of mobilisation itself. The technical constraints involved in rail mobilisation have a determining impact on the outbreak of war, since they remove from political decision-makers that flexibility which might allow the conflict to be avoided. In a certain sense it is the modernisation of armies that leads to conflict, at the moment when that is added to the mistaken assessment on the part of decision-makers regarding the possibility of controlling the whole process<sup>11</sup>.

The most important and fruitful attempt to reopen research on the origins of the Great War, however, was not Taylor's but James Joll's<sup>12</sup>. In his lecture held on April 25 at the London School of Economics, entitled *1914. The Unspoken Assumptions*, Joll invited First World War scholars to shift the focus of their investigations and their thoughts from the men and their decisions to what he defined as "the hidden motivations of men lost in a moment of great tension". The decisions taken in 1914 can be clearly understood only if we understand the context of reference and the mindset of the men acting in that context; for example, with reference to concepts such as honour, or to the conviction that war at a given moment is perceived as being inevitable. Joll's text is very well balanced.

It clearly lights up the fact that war can be avoided, that it is in any case the human contingent factor that counts in determining events. At the same time, however, he underlines how these actions and these contingent decisions can be understood only in a wider contextualisation, by using the methodological instruments of the *histoire des mentalités* typical of one part of French historiography<sup>13</sup>. Joll was to bring this change of prospect into organic book form on the origins of the First World War only in the Eighties<sup>14</sup>. In one sense, this book may be considered the point of arrival of the whole reflection stage on the origins of the war and on the aims of the powers that fought it, a stage evolving over twenty years during the

11. ALAN J. P. TAYLOR, *War by Timetable*, London, 1969.

12. J. WINTER AND A. PROST, *The Great War in History*, cit., p. 35.

13. The text of Joll's lecture can be read in *The Origins of the First World War: Great Power Rivalry and German Aims*, edited by H.W. KOCH, Basingstoke, 1982, pp. 307-328.

14. JAMES JOLL, *Origins of the First World War*, London, 1984.

Sixties and the Seventies, enthusiastically fuelled and conditioned by the publication of Fritz Fisher's works in Germany<sup>15</sup>.

The third wave of studies on the First World War features cultural history, the attempt to go beyond the traditional approaches of political and diplomatic history, and social and military history as well, thus widening the field of investigation. Whereas we can see a clean cut between the first and second stage due to the impact of the Second World War and the generational turnover, between the second and third stage the passage is much less clear. A number of the stimuli and methodological approaches that have become more common in recent years can in fact be traced back to certain pioneering studies of the Seventies<sup>16</sup>. I am thinking, for example, of John Keegan's 1976 book, *The Face of Battle*, a book of military history which however tries to merge the traditional military history approach with ideas coming from anthropology. From this viewpoint, the central problem becomes the behaviour of soldiers in battle<sup>17</sup>. Already in the Seventies, therefore, there were attempts to link together several approaches and to use interdisciplinary approaches, which would then reach full maturity over the following years. As I mentioned, there is not even a clear-cut generational divide. Very frequently the protagonists of this methodological renewal were scholars who had already been working in the field for several years. Naturally, this aspect also shows the passage from the stage of the Sixties to that of the Eighties more as a shift in the centre of research interest than a radical change.

In general, the premise for this evolution is the 'delegitimisation' of the Marxist paradigm. Cultural history existed already, but the crisis of Marxism gave it a new boost<sup>18</sup>. It is not surprising that among the main protagonists at this stage were scholars who had previously favoured methodologies and themes of cultural history, such as for example Jay Winter<sup>19</sup>.

15. THOMAS G. OTTE, 'Outcast from History.' *The Fischer Controversy and British Historiography*, «Journal of Contemporary History», 2013, pp. 376-396.

16. For a general picture see J. WINTER AND A. PROST, *The Great War in History* cit.

17. A further stimulating and interesting aspect of Keegan's book is the attempt to develop historical excavation and historiographical reflection, structured through a diachronic comparison of three battles, chronologically remote from one another: Agincourt, Waterloo, the Somme.

18. J. WINTER AND A. PROST, *The Great War in History* cit.

19. J. WINTER, *The Experience of WWI* (1988), is perhaps the first major example of this new tendency in Anglosaxon historiography on the Great War. Besides a chapter on the politicians' war, another on the generals' war, one on the soldiers' war and one on the civilians' war, Winter places a

Once more the BBC played an important role in conveying this change in the historiographical paradigm to a wider public. In 1966 the documentary *The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century* was made, with the aim of reconstructing the routes by which individuals – the leaders and also those subjected to the decisions of those in power – built the sense of the war and its consequences<sup>20</sup>.

This, in a nutshell, was the long-term parabola of British historiography on the First World War. If we then go on to consider the last twenty-five years, the tendency is to accentuate the interdisciplinary approach that had started at the end of the Seventies. To this, a second feature was added, that of an increasing tendency towards a trans-national approach. It is with these methodological novelties that historians have been working on the classic questions always posed by Great War historiography: why did the war break out? Why were the Entente powers victorious? What were the responsibilities of the military commands for the huge loss of human life? Lastly, to what extent did civilian society accept the war? Was there really such widespread enthusiasm for going to war in the summer of 1914? And also, to what extent was the war effort effectively supported by civilian society in the course of fighting?

As regards the first question, why war broke out, the tendency is again to draw crystal-clear attention to the events of July 1914. Which means, on the one hand, abandoning any form of determinism on the inevitability of war, and on the other, to bring attention back to the protagonists who were for too long neglected by Fisher's prevailing theories regarding Germany's faults<sup>21</sup>. Austria, Serbia and the Balkans return centre-stage, as does

chapter on the consequences of the war and another on the memory of the war in the arts, literature and cinema.

20. PETER STANSKY, *The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century*, «American Historical Review», 1997, pp. 593–594.

21. Cf. HEATHER JONES, *As the Centenary Approaches. The Regeneration of First World War Historiography*, «The Historical Journal», 2013, pp. 857–878; SAMUEL R. WILLIAMSON JR AND ERNEST R. MAY, *An Identity of Opinion. Historians and July 1914*, in *The Journal of Modern History*, 2007, pp. 335–387; W. MULLIGAN, *The Trial Continues. New Directions in the Study of the Origins of the First World War*, in *English Historical Review*, 2014, pp. 639–666; ID., *The First World War between Scholarship and Politics: Centenary Debates in the English-speaking World*, in *Ventesimo secolo*, 2017, 41, pp. 18–37.

Russia<sup>22</sup>. This is a production that reinstates the weight of contingencies in historical dynamics and therefore aims at a meticulous reconstruction of details. Thanks to the contaminations of cultural history and of the history and theory of international relations, its more mature results do, however, manage to connect the events of the 1914 summer within the context of a more on-going systemic crisis<sup>23</sup>, retrieving ideas and stimuli supplied more than forty years ago by Joll<sup>24</sup>.

In answering the question “why did the allies win the war?” recourse has generally been made both to the political history approach and to that of military history. Among those favouring the former approach, some, such as David Stevenson and Niall Ferguson, have underlined the highly contingent nature of the Entente victory, recalling the Austro-German victories on all fronts between the autumn of 1917 and the spring of 1918, that is until the arrival of substantial American aid. It is this last factor that tipped the scales in favour of the Entente<sup>25</sup>. Military historians on the other hand have underlined the so-called learning curve of British commanders. This has led to the flourishing of studies appraising the capacity of command and officers in enhancing their own performance over the course of the war<sup>26</sup>.

The topic of the learning curve leads to the third question, that is to what extent the military commands are to be condemned for such high mortality on the battlefields. The existence of a learning curve implies an active, determining role on the part of the military commands in achieving the final victory. And this tends to overturn the extremely severe opinion synthesised in the formula ‘lions led by donkeys’, well rooted in the most

22. Solely as an example, see CHRISTOPHER CLARK, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, London, 2012 and T. G. OTTE, *July Crisis. The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914*, Cambridge, 2014.

23. See for example the above-mentioned book by C. CLARK, W. MULLIGAN, *The Origins of the First World War*, Cambridge, 2010.

24. H. JONES, *As the Centenary Approaches*, cit., p. 861. See also S. R. WILLIAMSON JR AND E. R. MAY, *An Identity of Opinion*, cit., pp. 336-342.

25. DAVID STEVENSON, *With Our Backs to the Wall. Victory and Defeat in 1918*, London, 2011; NIAL FERGUSON, *The Pity of War. Explaining World War I*, London, 1999.

26. See for example GARY SHEFFIELD, *Forgotten Victory. The First World War: Myths and Realities*, London, 2011; JONATHAN BOFF, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front. The British Third Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918*, Cambridge, 2012. For a trans-national approach to these subjects cf. WILLIAM PHILPOTT, *Bloody Victory. The Sacrifice on the Somme*, London, 2009, edited by ELISABETH GREENHALGH, *Victory through Coalition. Britain and France during the First World War*, Cambridge, 2005.

popular historiography in Britain<sup>27</sup>. This tendency is clearly found for example in the biography on the commander of the British Expeditionary Force, Douglas Haig<sup>28</sup>.

Clearly connected to this topic is that on how the soldiers faced trench warfare. It is on this issue that the interdisciplinary, comparative and trans-national approach has perhaps been most applied, in order to investigate the resistance and psychological collapse of those fighting<sup>29</sup>; the importance of religion and religiousness for the resilience of soldiers in the trenches<sup>30</sup>; the impact of military discipline on the efficiency of the armies<sup>31</sup>; the impact of propaganda on the endurance of the enemy armies<sup>32</sup>.

The most interesting and innovative aspects of recent reflection are probably linked to the problem of defining to what extent civilian society accepted the war effort. The line of tendency is to rethink as clearly as possible the idea that European society, British society above all, was permeated by a warlike and militarist spirit in the summer of 1914<sup>33</sup>. Adrian Gregory has highlighted how in fact important anti-military protests were repeatedly held throughout Great Britain, by the Trade Unions above all and by that complex and composite universe of non-conformist groups<sup>34</sup>. The most detailed research on this topic from the point of view of the archives consulted is that of Catriona Pennell<sup>35</sup>, also pointing to the need

27. The classic example is ALAN CLARK, *The Donkeys*, London, 1961.

28. G. SHEFFIELD, *The Chief. Douglas Haig and the British Army*, London 2011.

29. See an example in ALEXANDER WATSON, *Enduring the Great War. Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*; Cambridge, 2008; MICHAEL ROPER, *The Secret Battle. Emotional Survival in the Great War*, Manchester, 2009.

30. EDWARD MADIGAN, *Faith under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War*, Basingstoke, 2011; PATRICK HOULIHAN, *Clergy in the Trenches. Catholic Military Chaplains of Germany and Austria-Hungary during the First World War*, Chicago, 2011.

31. GERARD ORAM, *Death Sentences Passed by Military Courts of the British Army, 1914-1924*, London, 1998; ID., *Military Executions During World War One*, Basingstoke, 2003.

32. See for example on the efficacy of Italian propaganda aimed at weakening the Austro-Hungarian army, MARK CORNWALL, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary. The Battle for Hearths and Minds*, Basingstoke, 2000.

33. A tendency common to the whole of European historiography, cf. H. JONES, *As the Centenary Approaches*, cit., p. 868 and ff. On the Italian case, see the recent book ed. by FULVIO CAMMARANO, *Abbasso la guerra. Neutralisti in piazza alla vigilia della Prima guerra mondiale*, Florence, 2015.

34. ADRIAN GREGORY, *The Last Great War. British Society and the First World War*, Cambridge, 2008.

35. *A Kingdom United. Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*, Oxford, 2012.

to limit warlike enthusiasm to well-defined groups and places. This idea is also present in Ferguson's book. One of the most successful chapters of *The Pity of War* is that in which the idea of a society clamouring for war is demolished. Ferguson recalls the pacifist demonstrations and above all he carefully analyses the daily papers, pointing out how in reality most of the British press held non-interventionist positions, with the crucial exception of the *Times*.

Connected to this is the topic of relations between the internal front and the front line. The general tendency is to consider them as two spheres that are interconnected rather than separate. From this point of view, what made it possible for British society to cohere and the internal front to compact was the sufficiently widespread awareness of the suffering undergone by the soldiers at the front. The other fundamental element underlined is the fact that it was not so much state propaganda to mobilise the internal front; it was actually those organisations which to a certain extent acted independently of the state to enhance civilian society's support. The propaganda in support of the war effort was not exclusively the prerogative of state action. Indeed the most effective was that produced by organisations acting independently of the state<sup>36</sup>.

This is an overall outline of what may be defined as the British evolution of historiography in a general sense on the First World War. For the United Kingdom as well as for other countries present in the essays of this volume, a strong tendency is seen to pass from a national vision of the war towards a trans-national dimension<sup>37</sup>. In spite of the intent to make the comprehension of the event ever more homogenous at the transnational level, the space for an up-dated national reflection on the First World War still exists. This was made evident by a book that created a good deal of debate and discussion<sup>38</sup>, *The Pity of War* by Niall Ferguson, published at the end of

36. A. GREGORY, *The Last Great War* cit.; J. HORNE AND ALAN KRAMER, *German Atrocities, 1914. A History of Denial*, London, 2001.

37. See also *New Perspectives on the Cultural History of Britain and the Great War*, monographic issue with the review *Twentieth Century British History*, 2014, n. 3.

38. Cf. T. G. OTTE, *Neo-revisionism or the Emperor's New Clothes. Some Reflections on Niall Ferguson on the Origins of the First World War*, in *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 2000, pp. 271-290; S. R. WILLIAMSON JR AND E. R. MAY, *An Identity of Opinion* cit.; J. WINTER, *The Pity of War*, in *Review in History*, <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/print/review/72>; R. W. JOHNSON, *The Greatest Error of Modern History*, in *London Review of Books*, 18 February 1999, pp. 7-8.

the Nineties. The ruling idea in this book is that Great Britain was mainly responsible for the First World War. The expansionist reaction of Germany was due to poor political handling of the events by the United Kingdom. Above all, according to Ferguson, London should not have intervened in the conflict. It should have allowed Germany the chance to defeat France, since that would actually have created a uniformity across the European continent which would not have had the least effect on Great Britain's naval power, nor on its ability to use its dominant position to set up political and diplomatic relations with a European union under Wilhelm. Lastly, according to Ferguson, London's intervention was a mistake not only because it served to prolong the conflict, but also because it weakened Great Britain. The United Kingdom came out of the war greatly debilitated and that made it impossible for it to continue exercising its own role efficiently as world leader.

Behind the whole of this discourse is what is probably the most important public and historiographic debate in Great Britain since the time of Joseph Chamberlain, that on Great Britain's decline. This became a crucial issue in the Seventies and was the element that allowed Thatcherism to pose as an antidote to the decline, something which a conservative historian such as Ferguson could do nothing but follow through in an attempt to develop a structured, documented picture. This of course opens up a whole series of broader questions which we cannot deal with here. It is however important to take all these factors into account and remember that, in a context moving towards the ever greater transnational approach of research, the focus on the national dimension and on the need to understand the place and the political and cultural meaning of an event within the national context is still absolutely central.





*Ion Cârja*

## Between History and Historiography: Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian Army serving on the Fronts during the Great War

World War I has become, over the course of the century that has elapsed since its outbreak, one of the densest chapters of historical writing, particularly for the nations that experienced this event and suffered its consequences<sup>1</sup>. For scholars worldwide and, implicitly, for Romanian historians, the centenary of the «Great War» represents an opportunity for refocusing their interest in this topic, for reassessing the historiographic studies dedicated to it over the course of time and, not least, for necessary changes of vision and perspective. Since 2014, when the first systematic approaches to the first global conflagration were launched, Romanian historiography has proved, through individual or team initiatives, its determination to use the opportunity provided by the context of this centenary, by exploring or re-examining an issue that is far from exhausted, in spite of the impressive amount of writings devoted to it.

Romanian historiographical approaches have, to a variable extent, been influenced by extra-scientific considerations, foremost among which is the political factor. Totalitarian regimes imposed their own historiographic agenda in East-Central Europe, rendering historians entirely subservient to the political power-holders and massively instrumentalizing the past. As regards World War I and the Great Union of 1918, two themes that are strongly interconnected in Romanian historiography, approaches to them during the interwar decades were bellicose and combative, in the sense that historical writing about the Union and the creation of Greater Romania was turned into a political weapon for defending the political and

1. The study has already been published in Romanian in VALENTIN ORGA, OTTMAR TRAȘCĂ, LIVIU ȚĂRĂU, VIRGILIU ȚĂRĂU (eds.), *Din modernitate în contemporaneitate. Studii istorice dedicate lui George Cipăianu la împlinirea vârstei de 75 de ani*, Argonaut Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, pp. 196-230.

state system established by the Paris Peace Treaties of 1919-1920. While this polemical-combative dimension of the historiography devoted to the war's end and to the Great Union was, to some extent, inevitable, historiographical studies being largely the work of «participant» historians, who had contributed considerably to the course of events from the late 1910s<sup>2</sup>, after World War II the Communist regime brutally subordinated and instrumentalized Romanian historiography, constraining it to serve its ideological and propagandistic objectives<sup>3</sup>.

A recent study has identified 2,700 titles of works published in the period 1944-2014, relating to the theme of World War I and the Great Union. Of these, 339 are books and 2,361 are studies<sup>4</sup>, indicating the tremendous interest in this subject shown by Romanian historians during this period. Extremely diverse, these writings are also imbalanced in terms of their value and relevance, as they range from consistent reconstructions of the past, written with the highest degree of authentic professionalism, to occasional texts or articles whose reverential and commemorative purpose is not always accompanied by too much scientific rigour<sup>5</sup>. *Bibliografia Istorică a României*<sup>6</sup> [*The Historical Bibliography of Romania*] and the work

2. VALER MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii*, in V. MOGA and SORIN ARHIRE (eds.), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică. Contribuții bibliografice și istoriografice*, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy/Centre for Transylvanian Studies, 2007, pp. 7-8.

3. For studies focused on approaches to World War I and the Great Union in the Romanian historiography during the Communist period, see HADRIAN GORUN, *Considerații privind percepția istoriografiei comuniste asupra participării României la Primul Război Mondial*, in IOAN BOLOVAN, GHEORGHE COJOCARU, IOANA MIHAELA TĂMAȘ (eds.), *Primul Război Mondial. Perspectivă istorică și istoriografică/World War I. A Historical and Historiographical Perspective*, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy/Centre for Transylvanian Studies, 2015, pp. 161-172; V. MOGA, *Unirea de la 1918 în istoriografia anilor 1945-1967*, in V. MOGA and S. ARHIRE (eds.), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică cit.*, pp. 49-83. On the impact of political interferences in the historiography of the Communist period, see, among others: VLAD GEORGESCU, *Politică și istorie. Cazul comuniștilor români 1944-1977*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1991; ANDI MIHALACHE, *Istorie și practici discursive în România «democrat-populară»*, Bucharest, Albatros Publishing House, 2003; GABRIEL MOISA, *Istoria Transilvaniei în istoriografia românească: 1965-1989*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2003; FLORIN MÜLLER, *Politica și istoriografie în România 1948-1964*, Cluj-Napoca, Nereamia Napocae, 2003.

4. I.M. TĂMAȘ, *Război și memorie. Scrieri românești despre Marele Război*, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy/Centre for Transylvanian Studies, 2015, pp. 10-11.

5. V. MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii cit.*, p. 18.

6. The most comprehensive record of the Romanian historiographical production, *Bibliografia Istorică a României*, comprises, in its thirteen volumes (most of them printed by the Romanian

that continues it, *Anuarul Istoriografic al României*<sup>7</sup> [*The Historiographic Yearbook of Romania*], provide an accurate overview of the sheer amount of historiographical writings dedicated to World War I in the Romanian historiography of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Given the fact that historiographical approaches to this topic cover such an extensive period, we can identify, in time, several distinct stages thereof. Thus, three main periods can be distinguished: the period between the two World Wars, the Communist period and the post-Communist period, when historical writing in Romania underwent a process of liberalization and a return to normality. In turn, the historiography produced in the period of Communist totalitarianism reveals, at a closer glance, several distinct stages, whose specificity was determined by the pressures imposed by the system. Historical writing had to comply with the political and propaganda demands of the Communist regime. Thus, during the period 1948-1989, there were three distinct stages insofar as approaches to World War I and the Great Union (as well as other topics) were concerned: the period of cultural Stalinism (1948-1965), characterized by the abandonment of national values and the appropriation, to the point of complete identification, of the Soviet cultural-historiographical paradigm; the period of limited and controlled liberalization (1965-1971); and, last but not least, the period of national-Communism (1971-1989)<sup>8</sup>. In this context, mention should be made of the fact that the two themes - World War I and the accomplishment of the Great Union - are dealt with jointly, as a single major topic, in many of these works. The 1918 Union of all the provinces previously under foreign dominion with the Romanian Kingdom is seen as the blissful crowning of all the sacrifices and sufferings endured by the Romanian people during the war years, of the losses and casualties incurred on the battlefronts for the purpose of accomplishing the national ideal

Academy Press), a record of the publications that appeared in the period 1944-2010. Works referring to the period 1914-1918 are generally included, in the structure of each volume, under: *A. Probleme generale/IV. Izvoare istorice/2. Memorialistică/C. Modernă și contemporană, B. Istoria României/IV. Epoca modernă/4. Anii 1878-1918/d. România în primul război mondial* and *E. Anul 1918*.

7. *Anuarul Istoriografic al României*. So far there have been published: vol. I/2011 and vol. II/2012, under the patronage of "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca. The volumes are published by Argonaut Press in Cluj-Napoca. Their content structure is similar to that of *Bibliografia Istorică a României*.

8. V. MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii* cit., pp. 7 ff.; O. M. TĂMAȘ, *Război și memorie* cit., pp. 10-11.

through the birth of Greater Romania. From the standpoint of the history of historiography, however, approaches to this issue are inconsistent, in the sense that there are numerous contributions dedicated to historical writing on the Great Union<sup>9</sup>, with fewer, almost non-existent analyses devoted to the Romanian historiographic approaches to the war years. Despite the unitary character of the period 1914-1918, World War I and the Great Union are two autonomous issues, with incontestable content specificity. While the majority of approaches aiming to establish what has been written about the period 1914-1918 and the manner in which this subject has been tackled have preferred to focus on the Great Union, we consider that the assessment and analysis of the historiographical production referring to the years of the war is a necessary undertaking, both in the short and in the long term<sup>10</sup>.

The participation of the Romanians in Austria-Hungary in World War I under the flag of the Habsburg Emperor-King is an important topic in the Romanian historiography concerning the Great War and the Union of 1918. As the subjects of a bicephalous monarchy, the Romanians in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, Sătmăr, Maramureș and Bukovina were forced to enlist in the Austro-Hungarian military units and fight on the battlefronts of the war, paying thus a heavy tribute of blood in the maelstrom of the great conflagration. According to the data offered by the historiography on this

9. For a comprehensive overview of interwar Romanian historiography dedicated to the year 1918, see the study authored by the late Professor IACOB MĂRZA, *Secvențe istoriografice românești interbelice asupra anului 1918*, in V. MOGA and S. ARHIRE (eds.), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică* cit., pp. 33-47. For the subsequent period, see ȘTEFAN PASCU AND MARCEL ȘTIRBAN, *Bibliografia Unirii Transilvaniei cu România-1 Decembrie 1918*, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj*, XI (1968), pp. 171-257; CONSTANTIN NUȚU AND MIRCEA TOMESCU, *Contribuții bibliografice privind Unirea Transilvaniei cu România*, introductory study by ION POPESCU-PUȚURI, Institute of Historical and Social-Political Studies Attached to the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Bucharest Central University Library, 1969. The Romanian and foreign bibliography on the year 1918, published after World War II, is repertoried in the work cited above: V. MOGA and S. ARHIRE (eds.), *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică* cit., pp. 187-382. For the latest study, with an extensive bibliographical list concerning the war years and the accomplishment of the Great Union, see O. M. TĂMAȘ, *Război și memorie* cit., pp. 23-236.

10. As regards the much needed historiographical review of the studies dedicated to World War I, besides the work written by O.M. TĂMAȘ, *Război și memorie* cit., mention should be made of the noteworthy studies included in the section *De la surse la scrisul istoric*, in the work edited by I. BOLOVAN, GH. COJOCARU and O.M. TĂMAȘ, *Primul Război Mondial. Perspectivă istorică și istoriografică* cit., pp. 15-172.

subject, from 1 August 1914 to 1 November 1918 926,500 Transylvanian officers and soldiers were called under arms, including Romanians, Hungarians, Saxons, Jews, Gypsies and other nationalities. If we take into account the fact that according to the Census of 1910, Transylvania's population had 5,598,996 inhabitants, it becomes clear that the percentage of those who participated directly in military operations was 16.5%. Of the total number of Transylvanians, the soldiers of Romanian nationality accounted for at least 52%<sup>11</sup>. The almost one million Transylvanian soldiers were enrolled in the 624 battalions of the joint army (K.u.k.) and in 288 Honvéd battalions; about 2,000 served in the Imperial Navy<sup>12</sup>. The Romanians were assigned to twelve regiments of the joint army (of line infantry) and to six Honvéd regiments. Other military units with a smaller Romanian composition and the majority of Romanians from Bukovina were enrolled in the Landwehr units, in addition to which there was a regiment with a Romanian majority population, namely Regiment n. 41 in Chernivtsi<sup>13</sup>. Of the total number of Romanian soldiers fighting on the fronts of the Great War, 52,954 were killed and 25,402 became invalids<sup>14</sup>. Along with

11. Regarding this issue, statistical estimates vary from one source to another. Thus, according to calculations made by ASTRA, the total number of Transylvanian Romanians enrolled in the war was 489,544. According to Vasile Barbu's estimates, the overall number included 650,000 Romanian officers, NCOs and soldiers (see IOAN I. ȘERBAN, *Românii în armata austro-ungară în anii Primului Război Mondial*, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, Series Historica, II-III (1998-1999), pp. 206-207). Professor LIVIU MAIOR has also advanced different figures, in the studies he has published on this subject over the years; thus, in the article *Soldați români în armata austro-ungară 1914-1918*, published in the volume NICOLAE EDROIU, AUREL RĂDUȚIU, POMPILIU TEODOR (eds.), *Civilizație medievală și modernă românească*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 1985, pp. 357-358, the author suggests the number of 484,373 Romanians, while in the work *Românii în armata habsburgică. Soldați și ofițeri uitați*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2004, p. 178, the total mentioned is 484,924 Romanians. Liviu Maior in fact pointed out the limits of these estimates as well as the partially contradictory character of the numbers put forward by some sources from that period. Dumitru Zaharia claims, in his turn, that the number of young Romanians from Transylvania and Bukovina who were enrolled and sent to the frontlines during the first global conflagration amounted to almost 600,000 (see DUMITRU ZAHARIA, *Condițiile în care a avut loc formarea legiunii române din Italia. Contribuții documentare*, in ALEXANDU MATEI (ed.), *Sub semnul marilor înaintași. Ion Rusu Sărățeanu la 90 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Napoca Star Publishing House, 2011, p. 349).

12. L. MAIOR, *Românii în armata habsburgică. Soldați și ofițeri uitați* cit., p. 178.

13. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Românii în armata austro-ungară în anii Primului Război Mondial* cit., pp. 206-207.

14. L. MAIOR, *Soldați români în armata austro-ungară 1914-1918* cit., p. 358.

other works examining the Romanian presence in the Austro-Hungarian armies on the battlefields of World War I, the studies cited below also provide other types of relevant statistical information. However, we shall not insist upon it because it goes beyond the scope of this analysis. Still, we consider that a brief quantitative outline is required before presenting the historiographical aspects under consideration here. The subject itself - a historiographical overview of the Romanians' participation in World War I, in the military structures of Austria-Hungary - is far from being exhausted, in terms of the advancement of knowledge through new information and approaches. Nonetheless, we consider that the bibliography of this subject lends itself to a review, albeit preliminary, from the perspective of the history of historiography. In what follows, we shall attempt to assess what has been written about this topic and how, over the course of the century that has passed since the outbreak of World War I.

Clearly, the participation of the Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the first global conflagration under the banner of the Habsburg Emperor-King tends to be regarded in Romanian historiography from a well-known vantage point: they fought and died against their will, for interests and ideals that were foreign to them. This perspective had its reasons and was generated by the need to shape, after 1918, an integrative vision concerning the Romanians' participation in the Great War, a vision that included the Romanians from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina. The aim was to write and promote, among the general public, the notion of a history with a «happy ending» regarding the Romanians' presence on the fronts of World War I, showing the war years as the preliminary sacrifice for the fulfillment of the national ideal - the creation of Greater Romania. In this way, the Romanians from inside the arc of the Carpathians were integrated into a «national history» of the Romanian presence in the Great War. Otherwise, it must also be emphasized, their participation in the conflagration under the conditionalities and loyalties imposed by the state (Austria-Hungary) they had been a part of until 1918 was barely intelligible if looked at through the lenses of the new historiographic sensibilities of Greater Romania. Their status as combatants in the service of the bicephalous monarchy was assessed in keeping with a more general perspective entrenched in Romanian historiography, which considers the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as victims of national oppression and of the assimilationist policies imposed by the governments in Budapest during



the period the dualist regime. The effort to outline a unique and integrative vision of the war, encompassing the members of the same ethnicity or nationality who had fought under different banners, was also made in other countries of East-Central Europe to which history offered the opportunity for «national unification» at the end of World War I. We are referring here, in this sense, not only to the undertakings of a historiographic nature, but also to the collective memory of countries such as the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia or Italy, which had to find a reasonable explanation for the deeds of arms of their co-nationals, who had worn an «inappropriate» uniform when fighting on the fronts of the Great War<sup>15</sup>.

An overview of the historiography regarding the Romanians' presence in the armies of Austria-Hungary during World War I will reveal that it was in the interwar period that the topic became legitimized as part of a long-term historiographic research program. Studies are still being published as part of this program today. Even though the evolution of Romanian historiography after World War II led it to substantially, even dramatically reorganize (at a certain point) its thematic priorities and to change its philosophy and vision under pressure from the ideology of antinational Stalinist internationalism and, later, of national-Communism, we consider that certain themes and particularities of the research conducted on World War I, cultivated by Romanian historical science during the interwar decades, have never been discarded, as they are still part of the historiographical production on this subject today. Thus, memoirist literature about the war began to be published between the two World Wars. This historiographic exercise was to prove particularly long-lived. Historical writings dedicated to World War I survived throughout the Communist era (when the memoirs of the participants or restitutive and analytical materials based on such sources were published) and continued in the post-totalitarian period, up to the present day. Memoirist literature about the war and the Great Union began to be written and published during the interwar decades, out of the vital need to confess about those intense, dramatic, traumatic experiences, which were, in any case, unique and defining for those who lived them. The Transylvanian component of these sources is very much present, alongside

15. For the Italian situation, see ANDREA DI MICHELE, *L'Italia in Austria: da Vienna a Trento*, in RAOUL PUPO (ed.), *La vittoria senza pace. Le occupazioni militari italiane alla fine della Grande Guerra*, Bari, Laterza Editrice, 2014, p. 31.

the memoirs of the participants in the war from the Old Kingdom, Bukovina or Bessarabia. Whether we speak about the participating historians (*Teilenhamer*) that are mentioned by Valer Moga, who wrote and published their memoirs because they wanted to share their first-hand experience of the war or because they were driven by professional reasons, or we refer to the participants who felt compelled by the vital imperative to confess in order to perpetuate the memory of the war, with its intricate blend of tragic exemplariness, it should be noted that in the interwar years memoirist projects were conducted in the proximity of and in close connection with historiographical undertakings.

In spite of their commitment to the war effort of another state, for foreign goals and interests, the participation of the Romanians from Austria-Hungary in World War I was, as we suggested earlier, re-signified, invested with new meaning in the interwar historical studies on the period 1914-1918. This participation was presented as integrated into the overall effort for political-national unity made by the entire people, with a view to creating Greater Romania. Thus, the war effort of the Romanians in the Danubian Monarchy was integrated into what was later consistently called the «national struggle» of all Romanians for achieving the nation's longstanding political goal: the attainment of political and state unity. The national Romanian scale imprinted upon the participation in the Great War of the Romanians who fought under different colours was to prove a constant concern in historical studies on this topic. This perspective was perpetuated in the historiography from the Communist era: after 1965, it was very easy to confiscate and instrumentalize it by the propaganda of the regime. Like all the themes pertaining to «national history», the Romanians' participation in World War I, along with its apothecotic finale - the Great Union - were exaggerated during the period of national-Communism and subsumed to an ideological and propagandistic effort intended to support the cult of the «beloved Leader», of the dictator. The propagandistic use of these themes - World War I and the Great Union - was not the only type of approach dedicated to them in the period under consideration here. Genuine, scientifically legitimate research was also conducted during these years, 1965-1989. It all depended on how much professional historians interested in this topic could circumvent or avoid the political-ideological and propaganda directives of the regime. Thus, having its origins in the interwar decades, the historiography with a «national agenda» relating to

these themes - World War I and the Union of 1918 (including the question of the Romanians from Austria-Hungary) - continued to be produced, with the details and nuances outlined above, in the Communist era. It was also resumed after 1989, when almost all the historiographical trends relating to the great conflagration were actually perpetuated from the earlier period. It should be noted, however, that the rapport between them began to change and new investigation perspectives emerged<sup>16</sup>. The drafting and publication of memoirs, alongside participation in the war - seen as an integral part of the effort made by the whole nation for fulfilling the ideal of unifying all Romanians into a single state - are thus two major traits of the historiography regarding the interaction of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with the great conflagration. These traits were laid down as part of a *sui generis* historiographic program after 1918. They were maintained in the subsequent stages of the Romanian historiography on World War I and are still topical research themes in contemporary Romanian historical writings, being far from exhausted.

Straddling the boundary between memory and historiographical reconstruction or, rather, in the area of memory as an imperative for confession and as a historiographical undertaking, historical writings concerning the participation of the Romanians from Austria-Hungary in World War I began to follow, the interwar years, precise thematic lines. This ensured their longevity and persistence over time. The texts published in this period reveal several major themes for those who had something to say about the Great War, either in the memoirist register and/or by historically reconstructing it. These writings include texts about the Romanian prisoners in Russia and Italy and, to a lesser extent, to those in France, as well as their initiatives to form combat units and fight alongside the Entente's armies, or to join the Romanian troops. The testimonies concerning the Romanian prisoners in Russia and their willingness to enlist as volunteers in the Romanian Army, or the confessions referring to those who were taken prisoners on the Italian front of the Great War and their attempt to found the *Romanian Legion in Italy*, their preparations prior to their deployment on the front, alongside the Italian Army, and, last but not least, the memories relating to the Romanian soldiers fighting in the Austro-Hungarian Army who became prisoners in France and their organization for re-entry

16. V. MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii* cit., p. 8.

into combat - all these represent distinct chapters in the memoirs of the participants from Austria-Hungary in the first world conflagration. These thematic categories gained shape in the interwar period and have been maintained to this day, as can easily be seen from this cursory assessment of the Romanian historiography on this subject.

Thus, in the period between the two World Wars, the texts that were written and were beginning to see the light of print were primarily memoirs about the experience of the Romanians from the former dualist monarchy on the battlefronts of the first global war. The need to confess in order to perpetuate the memory of the war and the experiences it occasioned was considered by the participants as a fundamental, imperative duty that was to be wisely harnessed for the benefit of posterity. The memoirs of the war answered thus the need for testifying about the experience of the war and formed an incipient historiographic exercise. During the armed conflicts, the Romanian newspapers in Austria-Hungary periodically published numerous accounts of Romanian soldiers on various fronts or reports inspired by their stories. These texts had an obvious propaganda purpose<sup>17</sup>, as the regime aspired to maintain the psychological stability of the ones on the home front. Despite this propagandistic agenda and the desire to manipulate the «front behind the frontlines», the reports that appeared in the press reflected the stringent need to confess and communicate a completely unique experience, which had often proved traumatic for those who fought in the first lines. The press continued to publish, even after the war, reports of experiences from the time of war, memories from the battlefront, journals and memoirs (entirely or fragments thereof), texts of various lengths, written from memory or on the basis of notes, which could be resumed, or not, at a later stage, in the context of other restitutive approaches. The brief notes published in *Gazeta Ilustrată*, over a decade after the end of the war, by Corneliu I. Codarcea, a former officer who had participated in the battles waged on the Italian front, are a significant testimony in this context<sup>18</sup>. Not least, besides editing brochures, the press

17. See, in this sense, ION CÂRJĂ, *Intrarea Italiei în Marele Război (1915). Atitudini și percepții ale românilor transilvăneni*, in ANGELA RUS, OTTMAR TRAȘCĂ, VIRGILIU ȚĂRĂU (eds.), *Transilvania în modernitatea românească. De la mișcarea națională, la autodeterminare și integrare. În onorarea Gheorghe Iancu*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2015, pp. 208-217.

18. CORNELIU I. CODARCEA, *Românii ardeleni în Italia de sub ocupația austro-ungară. File de carnet*, in *Gazeta Ilustrată*, II (1933), n. 6, June, pp. 120-121.

was a channel of expression for the Romanian volunteers on the eastern front of World War I (former soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian armies, taken prisoners by the Russians), who printed and distributed, during the conflict and afterwards, newspapers such as *România*, *România Mare*<sup>19</sup>, *La Transylvanie*, *Gazeta Voluntarilor*<sup>20</sup>, etc.

During this period of the war, some inhabitants of Ardeal also printed their own notes as individual books. This was complementary to what was published in the press. Octavian Codru Tăslăuanu served as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, deserted in 1915, crossed the Carpathians and surrendered himself to the Romanian authorities. We have from him a volume of memoirs printed at Bucharest in the same year<sup>21</sup>. The manner in which the war is presented in Tăslăuanu's memoirs borders very closely on literature. He has a vast and varied war experience, as a fighter under the Austro-Hungarian flag and after 1915 "under the national colours», serving as a volunteer in the Romanian army. Octavian C. Tăslăuanu, a man of culture, well versed in writing, is one of the most prolific authors of memoirs regarding the period of World War I; the other works are mostly printed in the first post-war years<sup>22</sup>.

Cassian R. Munteanu, the publicist and scholar from Banat, soon followed in the footsteps of Tăslăuanu: he abandoned the Austro-Hungarian uniform and crossed the mountains, in Romania. He will publish his own war memoirs in Bucharest, in the same year, 1915<sup>23</sup>.

19. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Gazeta România Mare, organ de presă al corpului voluntarilor români din Rusia (iulie-decembrie 1917)*, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, Series Historica, VIII (2004), pp. 175-182.

20. Two periodicals which have this title were published: *Gazeta Voluntarilor*, published in Cluj in between 1923-1937, respectively *Gazeta Voluntarilor-organ oficial al Asociațiunii foștilor voluntari din județul Hunedoara*, edited at Deva in between 1927-1930.

21. OCTAVIAN CODRU TĂSLĂUANU, *Trei luni pe câmpul de războiu. Ziarul unui român, ofițer în armata austro-ungară, care a luat parte, cu glotașii români din Ardeal, la luptele din Galiția*, Bucharest, Stănciulescu Publishing House / «Energia» Graphical Arts Establishment, 1915 (in between 1915-1916 the volume was published in three editions).

22. O. CODRU TĂSLĂUANU, *Hora obuzelor. Scene și icoane din războiu*, Bucharest, Editura Librăriei C. Sfetea, 1916; Id., *Sub flamurile naționale. Note și documente din războiul de întregire al neamului*, vol. I, Sighișoara, "Miron Neagu» Publishing House, 1934.

23. CASSIAN R. MUNTEANU, *Atacul. Însemnările din război ale unui soldat român din armata austro-ungară*, Bucharest, A. A. Stănciulescu Publishing House, 1915. See also the memoir published in the first interwar decade by PETRU NEMOIANU, *Cassian R. Munteanu. Viața și activitatea sa*, Lugoj, 1927.

An early book concerning the experience of the Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy during World War I, written this time from the perspective of the historian taking part at the events, was signed by Ion Clopoșel and has a significant title: *Însemnări pe răboj. Jertfe românești în războiul neamurilor* [Notes on the tally. Romanian sacrifices in the war of the nations]. It was published in Arad in 1915<sup>24</sup>. Clopoșel's writings have value as testimony memoirs and as an early attempt at historiography. At the same time he represents one of the most prolific authors of the period who wrote about the development of the events contemporary with them. His works force us to make a generally valid assumption about the inhabitants of Ardeal who lived the events of 1914-1918 and chose to write notes about them: most of them focused on events from the end of that period. In other words a vast majority chose to turn their attention to the Union, thus focusing less on the war effort<sup>25</sup>. Obviously the exceptional character of 1918 and the immediate period afterwards with events such as the preparation and the *de facto* union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania followed by the integration of the Romanian provinces from the former Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy in Romania, somewhat turned the attention from the course of the war and what it meant. The Great Union was chosen by those who, at that time or later, wrote notes about that period. Alongside Ioan Lupaș, Silviu Dragomir, Zenobie Păclișanu and Tiron Albani, Ion Clopoșel is one of the first historians who wrote about the Union<sup>26</sup>. When making a quantitative analysis about the writings concerning the War and the Great Union which we have from the ones contemporary with those events it is our opinion that we have an incontestable prevalence of texts discussing the Union, at least for the period immediately after. In time the distribution of the themes tends to balance out: we have journals, memoirs, notes from those serving on the front during the actual conflagration. They are either published by the authors themselves or edited posthumously.

24. ION CLOPOȘEL, *Însemnări pe răboj. Jertfe românești în războiul neamurilor*, Arad, s.n., 1915.

25. Except for the book quoted in the previous footnote all other works signed by Ion Clopoșel discuss the Union and the period afterwards, thus: I. CLOPOȘEL, *Frământările unui an-1918*, Cluj, Cosânzeana, 1919; ID., *Lupta pentru democrație în România de la actul Unirii încoace*, Brașov, Transylvania Gazette, 1921; ID., *Revoluția din 1918 și Unirea Ardealului cu România*, Cluj, Tomorrow's Society, 1926; ID., *Amintiri și portrete*, Timișoara, Facla, 1973.

26. V. MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii* cit., p. 7.



A very important writing, a synthesis of the subject, which has a major impact concerning the participation of Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in World War I is the book written by Zenobie Pâclișanu, *Jertfele românilor din Ardeal, Bănat, Crișana, Sătmar și Maramurăș, aduse în războiul mondial din anii 1914-1918* [The sacrifices of Romanians from Ardeal, Bănat, Crișana, Sătmar and Maramurăș in the world war during 1914-1918]. Printed only a few years after the Great Union the book represents the result of a massive investigation conducted by ASTRA in Romanian communities; its goals was to point out the sacrifice in human lives and materials that the Romanians suffered during the war. In our opinion it is the first paper, outside of the memoirs-type books, which can be included in the analysis and facts reconstitution genre, which is part of the post-1918 historiography and which deals with the relations between the Romanians from Ardeal and World War I<sup>27</sup>.

The Italian and Romanian versions of the memoirs of Valeriu Șeredan are printed in 1922. Valeriu Șeredan was an officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy during the war and towards its end organized and led the national guard of Romanian sailors from<sup>28</sup>.

Among the memoirs published after the war as separate volumes one can find the notes written by Horațiu C. Deacu and concerning the Galicia front. These were published posthumously at Gherla in 1930, in an edition cared for by Alexandru Lupeanu Melin<sup>29</sup>.

The presence of Transylvanian Romanians in Italy during World War I and immediately after is a theme encountered late, post 1918, in the writings of the participants. The printed texts are not so much narrations of the military experience from northern Italy<sup>30</sup>, rather they discuss the

27. ZENOBIE PÂCLIȘANU, *Jertfele românilor din Ardeal, Bănat, Crișana, Sătmar și Maramurăș, aduse în războiul mondial din anii 1914-1918*, Sibiu, «Asociațiunii» Publishing House. Archdiocese Printing House, 1923.

28. VALERIU ȘEREDAN, *Garda Națională Română a marinarilor din Pola și descompunerea marinei austro-ungare*, Bucharest, Pavel Suru Publishing House, 1922; ID., *La guardia nazionale romana dei marinai di Pola e lo scioglimento della marina austro-ungarica*, Roma, Società anonima poligrafica italiana, 1922.

29. HORAȚIU C. DEACU, *Ziarul unui erou. Însemnări făcute pe câmpul de luptă din Galiția, între 12 August-21 Octomvrie, ziua în care autorul a fost ucis de un glonte dușman*, revised and edited for printing by ALEXANDRU LUPEANU-MELIN, Gherla, s.n., 1930.

30. In 1923, V. LUDU published a memoir concerning this. It is entitled *Piave*, in *Calendarul voluntarilor pe anul vișect 1924*, Cluj, 1923.



issue of soldiers from Austro-Hungarian units who fought in the area, were captured by Italians and distributed in prisoner camps in the peninsula, the attempts to organize them in a Romanian Legion and to enrol them in the army of the Italian kingdom. One of the first such texts, in chronological order, is the article about the Romanian prisoners from Italy published in *La Roumanie*, on 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 1918<sup>31</sup>. Two years later an article about the medal of the Romanian Italian legionaries is published in *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române*<sup>32</sup>. In the interwar decades the Romanian Legion from Italy generated first of all texts written by the protagonists of those events. The texts signed by G. G. Mironescu and Simion C. Mândrescu were printed. They were both active in Italy and, towards the end of the war, intervened with the authorities from Rome on behalf of the Romanian prisoners so that they too could take part in the war as an active force alongside the Italian armies<sup>33</sup>. We also have written texts about this period from other participants or analysts interested on the subject, such as Onoriu Suci<sup>34</sup>, Valeriu Pop<sup>35</sup>, Claudiu Isopescu<sup>36</sup> and Octavian Metea<sup>37</sup>.

Simion C. Mândrescu left us a relevant text about the Romanian political and diplomatic activity conducted in France. The goal was to organize the Romanian war prisoners in a legion, similar to what had happened in Italy. Sever Bocu<sup>38</sup> published in Paris in 1918 a paper on this subject followed by Corneliu I. Codarcea<sup>39</sup> in 1922 and Alexandru Lapedatu pub-

31. *Les prisonniers roumains en Italia*, în *La Roumanie*, n. 21, June 6<sup>th</sup> 1918.

32. *Medalia legionarilor români din Italia*, în *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române*, XV (1920), n. 35-36, p. 85.

33. GEORGE G. MIRONESCU, *Din pribegie. Prizonierii români din Italia aprilie 1918*, în *Convorbiri Literare*, LX (1927), May-August, pp. 64-77. SIMION C. MÂNDRESCU, *În Franța și Italia pentru cauza noastră* (27 septembrie-7 ianuarie 1919), Bucharest, 1919; ID., *În sprijinul unității noastre naționale*, Bucharest, f.a.; ID., *Pro Italia*, Bucharest., M. O. National Printing House, 1937.

34. ONORIU SUCIU, *10 ani de la înființarea legiunilor române din Italia*, în *Universul*, 18<sup>th</sup> of August 1928.

35. VALERIU POP, *La légion roumaine d'Italie*, în *Revue de Transylvanie*, III (1937), n. 2, pp. 154-166.

36. CLAUDIU ISOPESCU, *La legione romana in Italia*, în *Augustea*, Rome, XIV (1939), n. 6, pp. 21-23, n. 7, pp. 21-23.

37. OCTAVIAN METEA, *Din cele trecute vremi. Legiunea română din Italia*, în *România Nouă*, n. 69/21<sup>st</sup> of December 1940 and the next.

38. SEVER BOCU, *Les legions Roumains de Transylvanie*, Paris, 1918.

39. CORNELIU I. CODARCEA, *Voluntari români în Franța*, în *Gazeta voluntarilor*, I (1923), n. 14 April 15<sup>th</sup>.

lished a text in a French and Romanian edition in 1930<sup>40</sup>. The interwar period also brings to light a series of texts about the Romanian soldiers who served in the Austro-Hungarian army and who ended up as prisoners in Russia, their attempt to organize themselves and serve as volunteers in the Romanian army, some of them having followed a course that included Siberia and the Far East. We would like to quote here the text written by Petru Nemoianu, in 1921<sup>41</sup>, 1922<sup>42</sup> and 1933<sup>43</sup>. In 1922 *Gazeta de Transilvania* [The Transylvania Gazette] published ample accounts on the topic of Romanian volunteers from Russia; the articles were signed by Pompiliu Nistor<sup>44</sup>. V. Nițescu<sup>45</sup> published in 1926 his experience as a volunteer in Russia and Siberia. Elie Bufnea<sup>46</sup> will publish a paper covering this subject in 1928, 1929 and 1931. He will enrich the historiography covering this topic with other testimonies as well. Gheorghe Cernea published in 1934 a paper discussing the activity of the volunteer Teofil Moraru<sup>47</sup>. The subject of Romanian volunteers from Russia will prove very fruitful for the historic writings regarding the Romanian element from the Austro-Hungarian army: it will lead to the introduction of primary sources in the scientific circuit (narrative as well as other types) and of writings meant to reconstitute events.

40. ALEXANDRU LAPEDATU, *D-l de Saint Aulaire și românii refugiați din Austro-Ungaria în timpul marelui război*, în *Generația Unirii*, Cluj, II (1930), n. 14-15/April-May, pp. 1-2; ID., *Monsieur de Saint Aulaire et les roumains refugies d'Autriche-Hongrie pendant la grande guerre*, Bucharest, 1930.

41. PETRU NEMOIANU, *Corpul voluntarilor români în Rusia. Conferință ținută la reuniunea de lectură din Lugoj în 6 Martie 1921*, Lugoj, «Tipografia Națională» Publishing House, 1921.

42. P. NEMOIANU, *Prima Alba Iulie. Corpul voluntarilor români în războiul pentru întregirea neamului. Istoric general*, Timișoara, Institutul de arte grafice «Poporul» Publishing House, 1922.

43. P. NEMOIANU, *Prizonier la Ruși-rob la Unguri*, Bucharest, «Pavel Suru» Publishing House, 1933.

44. POMPILIU NISTOR, *Corpul voluntarilor români ardeleni-bucovineni. Istoricul înființării până la sosirea lor la Iași*, în *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, n. 176-198, 1922.

45. V. NIȚESCU, *Douăzeci de luni în Rusia și Siberia (anul 1917)*, Brașov, 1926.

46. ELIE BUFNEA, *Voluntarii români din Siberia. Cu 16 fotografii în text*, Brașov, «A. Mureșianu, Branisce et Co.» Publishing House, 1928; ID., *Formațiile de voluntari*, în *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana, Maramureșul*, vol. I, Bucharest, Cultura Națională, 1929, pp. 119-141; ID., *Cruciți, tirani și bandiți*, vol. I-II, Bucharest, Tipografiile Române Unite, 1931.

47. GHEORGHE CERNEA, *Voluntarul Teofil Moraru. Un exemplu strălucit de fel în care Românii ardeleni au știut să lupte pentru unitatea noastră națională 1916-1918*, Bucharest, «Lupta Națională» Publishing House, 1934.

The participation of Romania in World War I, with the subsequent aspect of the Romanian ethnic element from Austro-Hungary which took part in the events of the period, has suffered considerable changes, both as historiographical type and research topic during the communist regime. This was first of all due to the political, ideological and propagandistic obligations of that time. The period of cultural Stalinism, 1948-1965, was by far the worst period for studying the past. It was characterized by the exclusion of national values in the name of international proletarianism and the programmatic and obvious approach towards the Soviet Union. Following this trend Romania's participation to the war was qualified as an aggressive, imperialist act, dictated by the motivations of the bourgeoisie from the Old Kingdom to occupy new territories in order to exploit their resources. Romania's interest for the historical provinces with a Romanian majority, which were under foreign rule, particularly Bessarabia, was deigned imperialist and invasive and the country's overall participation in the war was qualified as a surrendering of the country by the Romanian bourgeoisie to the imperialistic interests of the Great Powers. The year 1918 was a delicate subject for most of the Dej regime but towards the end of the 50' begins being considered a positive event in Romanian history. This happened because the important role played by the masses in the creation of the Great Union was emphasized<sup>48</sup>.

Although during this period the Romanian historiography did not contribute at all to the subject we are discussing, after 1965 the topic is progressively re-discussed given the general context of recovering the national history and thus returning to themes and subjects previously discussed by the interwar historiography. Following the 1965-1971 cultural liberalization, both limited and controlled, there came a new and long political and ideological aggression against the historic writing. This time it was meant to confiscate and turn national history into an instrument for building Nicolae Ceaușescu's personality cult. The regime practiced the exaltation of nationalism, over-emphasizing the «national values» as long as they corresponded to the official ideological and propagandistic canon. The manner in which topics connected to World War I and the 1918 Union was done from a perspective emphasizing the role played by the great

48. See the analyses proposed by H. GORUN, *Considerații privind percepția istoriografiei cit.*, pp. 165-170 and G. MOISA, *Istoria Transilvaniei cit.*, pp. 126-127.

masses in the war and especially in achieving the Union. The contribution that certain personalities with leftist political views had in the events from 1914-1918 was preferentially emphasized; the moment of 1918 and the end of the war, which proved to be happy for Romanians, were presented as the culmination of the entire nation's multi-secular efforts, the realization of its «centuries long dream» for national unity. These conditionings and limitations undoubtedly influenced Romanian historic writings between 1971-1989 that dealt with the participation of Romanian in the war and the Great Union. They marked a historiographical climate obviously lacking the freedom of choice and expression; still the historiography of this period produced many valid texts, written with outmost professionalism, a series of reconstructions that remain valid even after the political and ideological pressures on historiography disappeared following the new period brought in by the December 1989 revolution.

Following the 1965-1971 liberalisation, Romanian historiography returns to subjects previously tackled in the interwar decades. The participation of Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy is re-discussed, alongside many other themes from Romania's national history. The historiographical attempt focused on these subjects follows the research programme established in the interwar period. Thus, primary sources connected to them are published, there is a preference for Austrian-Hungarian soldiers of Romanian nationality who became prisoners, on the Eastern, Italian and French fronts in connection with the attempt to organise them as volunteer units so that they too could fight for Romania's national interests. The topic benefited from many factual and event reconstructions, from important analytical and interpretative approaches. A historiography, in the large and consistent meaning of the term, covering the participation of Romanians from Austria-Hungary in World War I will be created now, in between 1965-1989. It will follow on the course set in the interwar period, mature historiographical attempt discussing the participation of Romanians from the Danubian monarchy in the war and going beyond the preferential focus set on the end of the war and the creation of the Union. Such a focus was obvious in writings from the interwar period that discussed the topic.

A very important contribution to the study concerning the presence of Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian army, one of the earliest, was the paper written by Eliza Campus. It was printed at the beginning of the

post-Stalinist liberalisation period and contained precious information regarding the desertion of Romanian soldiers from the military units of the bicephalous empire. The study was published in 1965<sup>49</sup>.

The 50 years anniversary of the end of World War I and from the Great Union, celebrated in 1968, had a major impact in the historiographical production, leading to the publishing in that year, and in chronological proximity, of papers dedicated to our subject at hand. Thus in 1968 the studies signed by Constantin Enea<sup>50</sup> and Dumitru Tuțu<sup>51</sup>, Nicolae Ciachir and collaborators<sup>52</sup>, Liviu Maior<sup>53</sup>, are published: they deal with presence of Romanian soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army. In the next two memoirs touching on the subject are published the journal of Dumitru Ciumbudean, a socialist militant, who served in the Austro-Hungarian army and fought on the Eastern and Italian fronts<sup>54</sup>, respectively the memoirs of Avram P. Teodor who fought on the Italian and French fronts<sup>55</sup>.

In chronological order we mention the works of Dumitru Zaharia, discussing the Romanian prisoners from Italy and how they were organized so that they could return to the front. Dumitru Zaharia stands out among those who did not happen to study this subject by accident; he publishes several studies in 1970, 1971, 1979 as well as after 1989<sup>56</sup>. In 1970 the

49. ELIZA CAMPUS, *La lutte pour l'achèvement de l'unité nationale roumaine (1914-1918)*, în *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, 1965, nr. 4, pp. 765-790.

50. CONSTANTIN ENEA, *Aspecte ale descompunerii armatei austro-ungare (Dezertări și răscoale ale soldaților români din Transilvania 1914-1918)*, în *Acta Musei Napocensis*, V (1968), pp. 275-291; vezi și ID., *Organizarea și acțiunile prizonierilor români transilvăneni din Rusia (1917-1918)*, în *Studii și articole de istorie*, XI (1968), pp. 153-183.

51. DUMITRU TUȚU, *Voluntarii români din Transilvania în lupta împotriva Puterilor Centrale, pentru eliberare națională și unitate*, în *Studii. Revistă de Istorie*, XXI (1968), n. 6, pp. 1125-1143.

52. NICOLAE CIACHIR, VASILE RADU, P. CINGHIȚĂ, *Traian Vuia-neobosit luptător pentru unitatea națională*, în *Sargeția*, V, 1968, pp. 295-310.

53. L. MAIOR, *Din lupta voluntarilor români pentru unire*, în *Tribuna*, XII (1968), nr. 43, p. 6.

54. DUMITRU CIUMBRUDEAN, *Jurnal de front 1914-1918*, Bucharest, Political Printing House, 1969.

55. AVRAM P. TEODOR, *Cu Divizia 35 la Piave și pe frontul francez. Amintiri*, în *Apulum*, VII/II (1969), pp. 315-326.

56. DUMITRU ZAHARIA, *Aspecte ale luptei prizonierilor și refugiaților români aflați în Italia pentru realizarea unității de stat a României 1916-1919*, în *Studii și Cercetări Științifice de Științe Sociale*, 1970, pp. 247-253; ID., *La legione romana nella prima guerra mondiale*, în *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato* (Rome), XXXI, 1971, pp. 717-721; ID., *Constituirea legiunii române din Italia, rolul și importanța sa istorică* [1918], în *Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz. 1917-1977*, Bacău, 1979, pp. 105-128 (the paper was written after archives from Italy were studied); ID., *Contribuția românilor*

memoirs of Vasile Barbu, who served as captain and then as major during the war and was promoted to brigadier general in the Romanian army after 1918 are published in Vienna<sup>57</sup>. C. Toderăşcu published in 1972 an important study about the evolution of the voluntariate<sup>58</sup> and in 1973 P. Teleagă writes a text on the same topic<sup>59</sup>, as well as the study of Alexandru Porţeanu dedicated to the contribution of Traian Vuia in organizing the Romanian Legion from France<sup>60</sup>. A text worth mentioning was published in 1976 by Eugen Hulea: it discusses the contribution of Romanian volunteers to the Union<sup>61</sup>. In 1977 A. Macovei publishes a text concerning the presence of volunteers from Transylvania and Bucovin in Iaşi, June 1917<sup>62</sup>. In the same the paper written by Victor Caţavei is published an extremely valuable study through the documentary evidence used; it discusses the presence of Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian navy during World War I and is extremely solid and relevant even today for the historiography of the problem. Caţavei mentions in this text the memoirs of Valeriu Şeredan and Caius Brediceanu, printed in the interwar period, as well as a third unedited text written by Alexandru Russu, a member of the Romanian national guard from Pola<sup>63</sup>. He thus brings these texts in the historiography of the subject. In the last years of the eighth decade and the beginning of

*din Italia la înfăptuirea unităţii naţionale*, in *Revista Arhivelor*, LV (1979), vol. 40, Supplement, pp. 247-251; Id., *Simeon Măndrescu şi Italia*, in *Carpica*, XI (1979), pp. 41-47; Id., *Condiţiunile în care a avut loc formarea Legiunii române din Italia. Contribuţii documentare*, in ALEXANDRU MATEI (ed.), *Sub semnul marilor înaintaşi. Ion Rusu Sărăţeanu la 90 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Napoca Star Printing House, 2011.

57. VASILE BARBU, *Amintiri din Viena*, in *Almanahul parohiei ortodoxe române din Viena*, Viena, 1970.

58. C. TODERĂŞCU, *Evoluţia voluntariatului în anii 1916-1918*, in *Oastea cea Mare. Tradiţii înaintate ale luptei maselor populare din România pentru libertate şi independenţa naţională*, Bucharest, Editura Militară, 1972, pp. 219-248.

59. PETRE TELEAGĂ, *Contribuţia voluntarilor români din Transilvania, Banat şi Bucovina la lupta pentru desăvârşirea statului naţional român*, in *Studii şi Materiale de Muzeografie şi Istorie Militară*, VI (1973), pp. 136-162.

60. ALEXANDRU PORŢEANU, *L'activité politique d'un grand homme de sceince roumain-Traian Vuia*, in *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, XII (1973), nr. 2, pp. 317-333.

61. EUGEN HULEA, *Despre contribuţia voluntarilor români la înfăptuirea Unirii*, in *Apulum*, XIV (1976), pp. 343-363.

62. A. MACOVEI, *Primul eşalon de voluntari transilvăneni şi bucovineni la Iaşi (iunie 1917)*, in *Ziridava*, VII (1977), pp. 153-157.

63. VICTOR CAŢAVEI, *Descompunerea marinei austro-ungare. Garda naţională română a marinarii de la Pola*, in *Ziridava*, VIII (1977), pp. 347-387 *passim*.



the next, the historiography of the participation of Romanian soldiers in Austro-Hungarian armies on the fronts of the Great War is enriched by important contributions which go beyond contextual and superficial approaches. Thus the *Memorii* [Memoirs] of Sextil Pușcariu, professor and linguist from Cluj, are edited in 1978 through the care of Magdalenei Vulpe. They discuss among other topics the experiences of the author while on the Italian front<sup>64</sup>. In the same year, 1978, several other contributions discussing the matter at hand are signed by Ioana Botezan<sup>65</sup>, Vasile Frențiu<sup>66</sup>, Ioan Nistor<sup>67</sup>, E. Popescu<sup>68</sup>. The manner in which the Italian front is reflected in the Romanian publishing of the period is another text published now and signed by Mihail E. Ionescu<sup>69</sup>. In the following year the historiography of the subject is enriched by the contributions of Gh. I. Oancea<sup>70</sup> and Doru E. Goron<sup>71</sup>. It is at this time that the earliest contributions of Ioan I. Șerban, a researcher from Alba-Iulia, are written. He is one of the most important historians given the subject we are discussing. The study entitled *Istoricul Legiunii române din Italia (1918-1919)* [The history of the Romanian Legion from Italy (1918-1919)], published in 1980, is a very important reconstitution of the subject, one of the most valuable we have so far. Besides the recreation of events that the author proposes, the chief

64. SEXTIL PUȘCARIU, *Memorii*, edition by MAGDALENA VULPE, preface by ION BULEI, notes by ION BULEI and MAGDALENA VULPE, Bucharest, Minerva Printing House, 1978.

65. IOANA BOTEZAN, *Documente privind aspecte ale acțiunii de recrutare a voluntarilor dintre prizonierii români transilvăneni și bucovineni din Rusia pentru a lupta pe frontul din Moldova în anul 1917*, în *Mehedinți-istorie și cultură*, edited by ELEODOR POPESCU, CONSTANTIN POGANU ET AL., *Drobeta Turnu Severin*, The County Committee for Socialist Education and Culture, National Archives. Mehedinți County Office, 1978, pp. 132-143.

66. VASILE FRENȚIU, *Amintirile unui ofițer voluntar din primul război mondial*, in *Mitropolia Banatului*, XXVIII (1978), n. 10-12, pp. 655-657.

67. IOAN NISTOR, *Acțiunile emigrației și prizonierilor români în Italia*, in *Tribuna*, XXII (1978), n. 27, p. 6.

68. ELEODOR POPESCU, *Constituirea primului batalion al voluntarilor transilvăneni și bucovineni. Sosirea la Iași-iunie 1917. Semnificația acestui eveniment*, în *60 de ani de la făurirea statului național unitar român*, edited by MATEI VLAD, I. GHEORGHIEU and IOAN SCURTU, Bucharest, University of Bucharest/Faculty of History and Philosophy, 1978, pp. 107-116.

69. MIHAIL E. IONESCU, *Luptele de pe frontul italian în primul război mondial reflectate în publicistica românească a epocii*, in *Revista de istorie*, XXXII (1979), n. 4, pp. 645-662.

70. GHEORGHE I. OANCEA, *Emigrația română din Italia și Franța și rolul ei în făurirea statului național unitar român*, in *Ziridava*, X (1979), pp. 489-501.

71. DORU E. GORON, *Voluntari români ardeleni și bucovineni în lupta pentru desăvârșirea statului național român unitar (1916-1918)*, in *Marmația*, V-VI (1979-1981), pp. 312-323.



merit of the text is reexamining memorial texts published in the interwar period and especially some text which remained in manuscript form and were first added to historiography now. The texts were written by those who were prisoners and then took part in the Romanian Legion from Italy at the end of war, men like Octavian Metea, Simion C. Mândrescu, Romulus Cărpinișan, Onoriu Suciu, Petre Ugliș, Ștefan Merlaș, Nicolae Bidnei, George G. Mironescu, Elie Bufnea, Marius Z. Ciugudeanu<sup>72</sup>. Ioan I. Șerban publishes in the same year a study about volunteers from Ardeal and Bucovina in Russia<sup>73</sup>, and in the next year, 1981, another text concerning the contribution of the volunteers from Ardeal to achieving the Great Union<sup>74</sup>. These are texts that foreshadow a large series of contributions from one of the leading specialists on the subject of Romanian volunteers from the end of World War I; his activity continues after 1989. We would also like to note the publication in 1981 of a text written by professor Nicolae Lascu on the subject of the Romanian war camp from Sulmona, central Italy<sup>75</sup>. The interest of the Latinist from Cluj for this subject was aroused by some aspects from the biography of his own family, as a latter research informs us<sup>76</sup>. In 1981 and 1983 two more texts signed by historian Radu Păiușan are added to the historiography concerning the volunteers from Ardeal<sup>77</sup>.

Liviu Maior, a professor from Cluj, published in 1985 a text relevant for the Romanian soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army from World War I. It is one of the few summary texts discussing the subject published before 1989, a text which proves that the author is well-versed in the subject

72. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Istoricul Legiunii române din Italia (1918-1919)*, in *Apulum*, XVIII (1980), p. 495-528 *passim* (for the unpublished materials he mentions see the footnotes in the present study).

73. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Primul corp al voluntarilor transilvăneni și bucovineni din Rusia*, in *Apulum*, XVIII (1980).

74. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Din lupta voluntarilor transilvăneni pentru unire. Senatul central al ofițerilor și soldaților români din Viena și Legiunea română de la Praga*, in *Sargetia*, XV (1981), pp. 269-286.

75. NICOLAE LASCU, *Români transilvăneni în lagărul de prizonieri de la Sulmona (Italia), în primul război mondial*, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, XVIII (1981), pp. 581-583.

76. VIORICA LASCU, *Nicolae Lascu. În căutarea fratelui dispărut*, in GEORGHE MÂNDRESCU, GIORDANO ALTAROZZI (eds.), *Primul Război Mondial, în Războiul și societatea în secolul XX / Guerra e società nel XX secolo*, Cluj-Napoca, Rome, 2007, pp. 12-17.

77. RADU PĂIUȘAN, *Contribuții privind rolul voluntarilor ardeleni din armata română în lupta pentru unitatea națională*, *Ziridava*, XIII (1981), pp. 167-174; ID., *Contribuții la problema recrutării de voluntari dintre românii transilvăneni ajunși prizonieri în Rusia în primul război mondial*, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, XX (1983), pp. 273-292.

and the Romanian and foreign literature covering the topic<sup>78</sup>. The author will return to this topic after 1989 in order to discuss it in more details and it will become one of professor's Maior favorite post-communist research topics.

Of all the studies published towards the end of the totalitarian regime and which come to our attention because they focus on the topic at hand we mention the one written by Rodica Andruș about Ioan Oțel from Brad, a member of the Romanian Legion from Italy<sup>79</sup>, as well as the article of the distinguished Italianist Ștefan Delureanu. His study focused on Romanian volunteers from the Peninsula and the goal of national unity<sup>80</sup>.

The fall of the communist regime following the events from December 1989 opened a new era in Romanian historiography and began a climate of normality, characterized first of all by the disappearance of ideological conditionings and complete freedom of choice when specialists had to choose their topics of study. In this atmosphere of openness and of regaining normality, Romania's historical writing tries to reattach itself to the interwar historiographical tradition and, at the same, to recover the lost ground when compared to international historiographical evolution. This lost ground was due to the isolation imposed by the communist regime. With regards to the themes of World War I and the 1918 Union of all Romanians all tendencies that were manifested in the historiography of the subject prior to 1989 are maintained – this was already mentioned in an analysis. We would like to mention however that there is a change of proportions between them and some approaches even fall into disrepute while others are further developed and even new approaches appear<sup>81</sup>. The initiative to print primary sources continues as collections of sources; also published are many works attempting to recreate events and interpret them based on direct sources alongside studies with a specific character centered on certain aspects from those events. We must add that studies

78. L. MAIOR, *Soldați români în armata austro-ungară 1914-1918*, published in the volume NICOLAE EDROIU, AUREL RĂDUȚIU, POMPIIU TEODOR (ed.), *Civilizație medievală și modernă românească*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 1985, pp. 355-367.

79. RODICA ANDRUȘ, *Un hunedorean în legiunea română din Italia-Ștefan Oțel din Brad*, in *Sargeția*, XX (1986-1987), pp. 366-388.

80. ȘTEFAN DELUREANU, *Voluntari români în Italia și idealul reîntregirii naționale*, in *Tomis*, XXIII (1988), n. 8(222), August, p. 13.

81. V. MOGA, *Anul 1918: un traseu istoriografic de nouă decenii* cit., p. 18.

with a circumstantial character, of much reduced scientific relevance, are also present. We would to point out at this stage of the subject's historiography the great number of texts published in cultural magazines or volumes of a disclosing nature, while, obviously, their contribution in terms of documents or interpretations is parsimonious when compared to that of studies from scientific magazines.

The participation of Romanians from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in the war reflects, at this stage, all the general characteristics of how the conflict was received in the Romanian historiography. When discussing this subject post-1989 it is obvious that there exists a feeling of continuity, which shapes itself in a historiographical program with traits and thematic directions sketched out in the interwar period and resumes after 1965. We notice the efforts to edit narrative sources, the war memoirs, as they are discovered in public archives or private collections, proof of a memory of the Great War, created by the participants which continues to be discovered decades after the events took place. When researching the topic we notice, like in the previous stages, a major focus on the situation of Romanian soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army who were taken prisoners on the eastern front of the war (Russia), on the south-western front (Italy) and on the western front (France) and on the efforts to organize those prisoners into volunteer units fighting to preserve Romanian national interests. However, the aspect concerning the participation of soldiers of Romanian nationality to fighting conducted by the Austro-Hungarian military units in which they served, is much reduced quantitatively in the historiography from the past 26 years which was dedicated to this subject. This option in the study of the subject, which stands out even from the interwar period, is a consequence of the «national program» that Romanian historiography always had: namely aspects covering the participation of Romanians under foreign rule which could be recovered from the perspective of emphasizing the effort to create the Great Union and thus constitute a national, unitary state for all Romanians. In other words the historical research focus was not on the deeds of arms done in the name of the «emperor» but rather on the actions through which Romanian ethnics from Austria-Hungary who were fighting in the war, tried to unite and rally themselves to Romania's war interests.

In the post-1989 historiographical writings dedicated to our subject we notice an increase in the quantity of works dedicated to Romanians

from the Italian front when compared to the previous period. Many works discuss Romanian prisoners and the attempts to constitute and reinsert the Romanian Legion from Italy into offensive actions. Among the first contributions from this category published in the 90s we can mention the study written by Elena Maria Schatz<sup>82</sup>, concerning the Romanian Legion from Italy, followed by the studies signed by Gheorghe Nicolescu and Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu<sup>83</sup> and respectively Valer Hossu<sup>84</sup>. In chronological order we must mention the texts written by Ștefan Damian<sup>85</sup> and Adrian Grecu<sup>86</sup>, those signed individually or as co-authors by Cristina and Iulian Stelian Boțoghină alongside Marinela Lăzărescu<sup>87</sup>, a text written by the Italian historian Alberto Basciani, discussing the Romanian prisoners from the Avezzano prisoner camp<sup>88</sup>. The study written by Dorin-Ioan Rus, Etelka Szabo and Arthur Szabo about the soldiers from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Târgu Mureș Regiment who were decorated following the Asiago battle is valuable because of its documentary contribution to the subject. The study was published in 2004<sup>89</sup>. Other contributions published afterwards

82. ELENA MARIA SCHATZ, *Legiunea română din Italia. Documente din colecțiile Bibliotecii Naționale*, in *Revista Bibliotecii Naționale*, 1995, vol. 1, fascicola 1, pp. 17-20.

83. GEORGHE NICOLESCU, VALERIU FLORIN DOBRINCU, *Românii din Italia în lupta pentru cauza națională*, în anul 1918, in *1918. Sfârșit și început de epocă*, Satu Mare, Zalău, 1998, pp. 127-135.

84. VALER HOSSU, *Alpinii români din Italia pe fronturile reîntregirii*, in *Acta Musei Porolissensis*, XXII (1998), pp. 619-622.

85. ȘTEFAN DAMIAN, *Legiunea română din Italia*, in *Cetatea*, IV (2001), n. 4, p. 9; ID., *Prizonierii români de la Avezzano*, in *Cetatea*, IV (2001), n. 2, p. 13.

86. ADRIAN GRECU, *Legiunea română din Italia*, in *Omagiu istoricului Dan Berindei*, Focșani, 2001, pp. 185-213.

87. IULIAN BOȚOGHINĂ, *Despre prizonierii primului război mondial: cazul legiunii române din Italia*, in *România în ecuația păcii și dictatului*, Pitești, Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pp. 170-190; CRISTINA BOȚOGHINĂ, I. BOȚOGHINĂ, *Propagandă și educație națională în taberele Legiunii Române din Italia 1918-1920*, in *Argesis*, XI (2002), pp. 337-344; I. BOȚOGHINĂ, MARINELA LĂZĂRESCU, *Despre națiune și naționalism, patrie și patriotism în taberele Legiunii române din Italia: cazul celor 800 de «nazarieni»*, in *Restituiri. Studii și comunicări*, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 63-72.

88. ALBERTO BASCIANI, *I prigionieri di guerra romeni nel campo di concentramento di Avezzano (AQ) durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale 1916-1918*, in *Annuario dell'Istituto Romano di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia*, IV (2002), pp. 214-221.

89. This study uses an unpublished narrative source about the Italian front, the memoirs of Isidor Todoran from Reghin, see: DORIN-IOAN RUS, ETELKA SZABO, ARTHUR SZABO, *Lista soldaților din Regimentul 22 Târgu Mureș decorați după bătălia de la Asiago*, in *Angustia 8. Istorie-Etnografie-Sociologie*, 2004, pp. 151-166.

are those signed by Horațiu Bodale<sup>90</sup>, Florin Curta<sup>91</sup>, Ștefan Damian<sup>92</sup>, Georgeta Toma<sup>93</sup>, Iulian Stelian Boțoghină<sup>94</sup>, Dorel Bușe<sup>95</sup>, Constantin C. Gomboș<sup>96</sup>, Petre Pop<sup>97</sup>, George Trohani<sup>98</sup> and Dumitru Zaharia<sup>99</sup>. The most recent contribution belongs to Vasile Dudaș, a historian from Banat constantly interested in World War I<sup>100</sup>.

On the Eastern front the Romanian soldiers from Austro-Hungarian units fell prisoners early on, from the start of the war. According to an estimate at the middle of 1916 there were 120 000 prisoners of Romanian nationality on the Russian front<sup>101</sup>. Without enjoying a historiography as large as the one dedicated to the Italian front, the topic of Romanian prisoners from the Eastern front of the war and their subsequent organization as volunteers so that they rejoin the fight was studied after 1989. This interest manifested itself in published papers, factual recreations and

90. HORAȚIU BODALE, *Legiunea română din Italia (1917-1919)*, in CORNELIU GAIU, H. BODALE (ed.), *Centru și periferie*, Bistrița, Accent Publishing House, 2004, pp. 324-334.

91. VIRGIL CURTA, *Growing with the war. A Romanian Volunteer on the Austrian-Italian front 1915-1917*. Translated by BOTOND BALOGH, FLORIN CURTA. With introduction and notes by F. CURTA, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2006.

92. ȘTEFAN DAMIAN, *Sextil Pușcariu sul fronte italiano della Prima guerra mondiale*, in *Transylvanian Review*, XVI (2007), n. 2, pp. 107-121.

93. GEORGETA TOMA, *Fondul Ștefan Bidnei-prizonierii români din Italia în primul război mondial*, in *Valachica*, 2007, n. 20, pp. 289-302.

94. IULIAN STELIAN BOȚOGHINĂ, *Metamorfoze identitare în lagărele de prizonieri din Italia: cazul Legiunii Române*, in *Unirea din 1918, act fundamental al istoriei României*, edited by VASILE CIOBANU and SORIN RADU, Sibiu, Techno Media Publishing House, 2008, pp. 53-81.

95. DOREL BUȘE, *Legiunea voluntarilor români din Italia, din Primul Război Mondial*, in *Eroi și morminte. Studii și comunicări*, Buzău-București, Alpha MDN Publishing House, 2008, pp. 9-24.

96. CONSTANTIN C. GOMBOȘ, *Voluntarii români din Italia au jurat: «vom apăra România Mare»*, in *Columna 2000*, IX (2008), n. 35-36, pp. 55-57.

97. Petre Pop edited the volume containing the memories of Ionel Floașiu, who was an officer on the Italian front, see: IONEL FLOAȘIU, *Mărturii*, volume edited and preface signed by PETRE POP, Cluj-Napoca, Paradigma Publishing House/Petre Pop Collection, 2008, pp. 11-56.

98. GEORGE TROHANI, *Înființarea Legiunii Române din Italia în anii primului război mondial. Noi documente fotografice*, in *Muzeul Național*, XXIII (2011), pp. 83-94.

99. DUMITRU ZAHARIA, *Condițiile în care a avut loc formarea legiunii române din Italia. Contribuții documentare*, in ALEXANDRU MATEI (ed.), *Sub semnul marilor înaintași. Ion Rusu Sărățeanu la 90 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Napoca Star Publishing House, 2011, pp. 349-364.

100. VASILE DUDAȘ, *Legiunea română din Italia*, in ANTONIO FAUR, RADU ROMĂNAȘU (eds.), *Perseverență și devoțiune în căutarea adevărului istoric. Omagiu profesorului și istoricului Viorel Faur la împlinirea vârstei de 75 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Romanian Academy/Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2016, pp. 730-749.

101. V. DUDAȘ, *Voluntarii Marii Uniri*, Timișoara, Augusta Publishing House, 1996, p. 85.

interpretative approaches. Two names stand out: they are the historians Vasile Dudaş and Ioan I. Şerban. They studies the topic of Romanian volunteers from Ardeal, Banat and Bucovina who served on different fronts towards the end of the war and last but not least those from the Eastern front who were more numerous when compared to those from France and Italy. Given the similitudes in their research agendas the two were interested in Romanian elements serving in the Austro-Hungarian armies during the war, as we will discuss in the next pages, but their favorite topic was Romanian volunteering. Vasile Dudaş defended his very well documented PhD thesis entitled *Voluntari bănăţeni în armata română în anii Primului Război Mondial* [Volunteers from Banat serving in the Romanian army during WORld War I]<sup>102</sup> in 1994; it was published as a book two years later<sup>103</sup>. A substantial chapter of this thesis is dedicated to Romanian volunteers from the mentioned historical provinces who were in Russia<sup>104</sup>. We must mention that Vasile Dudaş quotes in his PhD thesis two novel memoirs, as yet unpublished signed by St. Peneş and D. Şiclovan<sup>105</sup>.

Ioan I. Şerban is a historian who developed his academic career in Alba Iulia, close to an institution filled with primary sources from World War I like The National Museum of the Union. This allowed him to write important studies on the subject of Romanians from Ardeal during World War I. In 1997 he defended at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, his PhD thesis entitled *Voluntari transilvăneni şi bucovineni din Rusia în lupta pentru întregirea statală a României (1916-1920)* [Volunteers from Transylvania and Banat from Russia in the fight for Romania's national unity]<sup>106</sup>. We can say that even now it still is the most complete research on the topic; it was published

102. V. DUDAŞ, *Voluntari bănăţeni în armata română în anii Primului Război Mondial*, PhD Thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 1994. See also the article: ID., *Voluntari bănăţeni în armata română în anii primului război mondial*, in *Analele Banatului*, 1994, 3, pp. 395-397.

103. See footnote 101.

104. V. DUDAŞ, *Voluntari bănăţeni în armata română în anii Primului Război Mondial* cit., pp. 98-140; ID., *Voluntarii Marii Uniri* cit., pp. 85-117.

105. V. DUDAŞ, *Voluntari bănăţeni în armata română în anii Primului Război Mondial* cit., pp. 93, 250.

106. I.I. ŞERBAN, *Voluntari transilvăneni şi bucovineni din Rusia în lupta pentru întregirea statală a României (1916-1920)*, PhD Thesis, Cluj-Napoca, 1997.



as a book in 2003<sup>107</sup>. A thorough knowledge of the archives allows Ioan I. Șerban to quote in this paper numerous memoirs written by former volunteers, which are valuable for the historiography of this subject. Most of them are as yet unpublished. We refer to texts written by: A. Crișan, Victor Deleu, V. Poruțiu, I. Șaiu, A. Ghinghiniță, M. Petricoane Drugărin, O. Furlungeanu, E. V. Pop, I. Macarie, Gh. Bratu<sup>108</sup>. Ioan I. Șerban's contributions to this topic also include a series of studies published in historical magazines<sup>109</sup>.

Other papers concerning the Romanian volunteers from the Eastern front of the war have been published. We would like to mention here the study signed by Minerva Lovin<sup>110</sup>, the book published by professor Ion Agrigoroaiei and his collaborators<sup>111</sup>, the contributions of Cornel Țucă<sup>112</sup>, Constantin C. Gomboș<sup>113</sup> and Ioana Cazacu<sup>114</sup>. The papers published in the year 2000 led to the restitution of an important figure from the ranks of the Romanian volunteers serving on the Eastern front, namely Elie Buftea who coordinated the activity of Romanian volunteers from Russia and Siberia<sup>115</sup>.

107. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Voluntarii transilvăneni și bucovineni din Rusia în războiul pentru întregirea neamului 1916-1919*, Alba Iulia, Aeternitas Publishing House, 2003.

108. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Voluntarii transilvăneni și bucovineni din Rusia în lupta pentru întregirea statală a României* cit., pp. 49, 50, 90, 92, 93, 191, 208.

109. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Constituirea celui de al doilea Corp al Voluntarilor Români din Rusia (august 1918)*, I, in *Apulum*, XXXVI (1998), pp. 449-460; II, *Ivi*, XXXVII/2 (2000), pp. 153-164; Id., *Gazeta «România Mare», organ de presă al corpului voluntarilor români din Rusia (iulie-decembrie 1917)*, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica*, VIII (2004), pp. 175-182.

110. MINERVA LOVIN, *Câteva aspecte privind voluntariatul românilor ardeleni prizonieri în Rusia reflectat în memoriile vicarului Iacob Popa (1917-1918)*, in *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia*, XLIII (1998), n. 1-2, pp. 123-131.

111. ION AGRIGOROAIEI, SORIN D. IVĂNESCU, DUMITRU IVĂNESCU, SILVIU VĂCARU, *Stări de spirit și mentalități în timpul marelui război. Corpurile de voluntari români din Rusia*, Iași, Junimea, 2005.

112. CORNEL ȚUCĂ, *Despre prizonieratul în Rusia al românilor din armata austro-ungară*, in *Argesis*, 2006, pp. 379-391.

113. CONSTANTIN C. GOMBOȘ, *Nicolae Munthiu, ofițer de naționalitate română din armata austro-ungară. Scrisori de pe frontul din Galiția*, Timișoara, Marineasa Publishing House, 2007.

114. IOANA CAZACU, *The Second Corp of Romanian Volunteers in Russia*, in *Revista Română de Studii Baltice și Nordice*, II (2010), n. 1, pp. 111-118.

115. SABIN IVAN, *Elie Buftea Cu voluntarii români în Siberia (1917-1920)*, in *Memoria*, 2000, n. 30, pp. 46-55; E. BUFNEA, *Cruciați, tirani și bandiți*. vol. 1. *În Rusia sovietelor*, vol. 2. *În Siberia* lui Kolceak, Baia Mare, Marist Publishing House, 2008; IOANA RUSTOIU, GABRIEL RUSTOIU,



Although to a lower degree, the presence of Romanian prisoners from the Austro-Hungarian army in France was discussed by the post-1989 Romanian historiography and several important studies have been published on this topic. A very important research concerning this has been conducted by Vasile Dudaş and resulted in a book published in 1996, about the Romanian Legion from France<sup>116</sup>. The French historian Jean Nouzille, who is interested in Romanian modern and contemporary history, also wrote an important book about Romanian prisoners from Alsace-Lorraine in between 1917-1918. The book was published in 1997 in both French and Romanian editions<sup>117</sup>. Since the effort to organize the Romanian Legion in France is part of a wider attempt at promoting Romanian national interests at the end of the war, an attempt conducted also by members from the Romanian community from France which mostly included immigrants and students, we must mention historiographical approaches that discussed the topic from a wider angle, such as the studies signed by Gheorghe Sbărnă<sup>118</sup> and Virgil Valea<sup>119</sup>.

Among the documentary recreations, next to the presentation or analysis texts based on such primary sources and concerning the war experience of Romanian from Ardeal, or later on their experience as war prisoners and soon-to-be organized volunteers, published in the past 26 years we can also select those signed by Nicolae Şteiu<sup>120</sup>, Vasile

SMARANDA CUTEAN, *Corpul voluntarilor români din Siberia (1918-1920). Album*, Baia Mare, Marist Publishing House, 2010.

116. VASILE DUDAŞ, *Legiunea română din Franţa (1918-1919)*, Timişoara, Mirton Publishing House, 1996.

117. JEAN NOUZILLE, *Calvarul prizonierilor de război români în Alsacia-Lorena (1917-1918)*, preface by DUMITRU PREDA, Bucharest, «Semne '94» Publishing House, 1997; J. NOUZILLE, *Le calvaire des prisonniers de guerre roumains en Alsace-Lorraine 1917-1918*, Bucharest, «Semne '94» Publishing House, 1997.

118. GHEORGHE SBĂRNĂ, *Universitari români în sprijinul unităţii naţionale în Franţa şi Italia (1917-1918)*, in *Analele Universităţii Spiru Haret*, I (1998), pp. 45-52.

119. VIRGIL VALEA, *Lupta emigraţiei române pentru unitatea naţională, în Franţa (1917-1918)*, in MARIUS GREC, STELEAN IOAN BOIA (eds.), *Aradul şi Marea Unire*, Arad, Vasile Goldiş University Press, 2008, pp. 136-150.

120. NICOLAE ŞTEIU, Țăranul Dumitru Faur despre primul război mondial şi problemele românilor transilvăneni, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, XXVI-XXX (1989-1993), pp. 619-623.

Popeangă<sup>121</sup>, Maria Maxa<sup>122</sup>, Eugenia Bârlea<sup>123</sup>, Vasile Marian Pop<sup>124</sup>, Traian Corneanu<sup>125</sup>, Liviu Păiuș<sup>126</sup>, Adolf și Ioana Minuț<sup>127</sup>, Valeriu Leu<sup>128</sup>, Dan Mihai<sup>129</sup>.

When inventorying the more relevant post-1989 contributions to the subject of the participation of Romanians from Austria-Hungary to the war, enlisted in the armies of the dual monarchy, some studies stand out, such as those signed by Vasile Dudaș<sup>130</sup> and Ioan I. Șerban<sup>131</sup>. As we have seen these historians continue their research on World War I, research they started in the communist period. These texts were published either as separate studies or as chapters in the books published by the two historians mentioned above. We must also note the interest manifested by historiography during the last 26 years on the subject of Romanian participation on the Austro-Hungarian navy during the Great War and also their attempts towards the end of the war. This interest manifested itself in studies signed by Victor Cațavei (who returns to a text published years

121. VASILE POPEANGĂ, *Voluntari băcățeni în lupta pentru înfăptuirea Marii Uniri*, in *Ziridava*, XVIII (1993), pp. 217-252.

122. MARIA MAXA, *Manuscrisul jurnalului lui Dumitru Nistor, prizonier de război în Japonia. 1914-1919*, in *Philobiblion*, 1995, n. 1, pp. 174-178.

123. EUGENIA BÂRLEA, *Atitudinea prizonierilor ardeleni din primul război mondial față de corpurile de voluntari*, in *Acta Musei Porolisensis*, XIII (2000), pp. 167-178.

124. VASILE MARIAN POP, *Activitatea Legiunii române din Praga reflectată în colecția personală Gavril Câmpeanu*, in *Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național*, I (2003), n. 2, pp. 276-283.

125. TRAIAN CORNEANU, *Voluntarii ardeleni și bucovineni în războiul de reîntregire a neamului*, in *Maramureș vatră de istorie milenară*, V, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 185-196.

126. LIVIU PĂIUȘ, *Soldat și prizonier. Însemnări din primul război mondial*, in *Arhiva Someșană*, III (2004), pp. 507-523.

127. ADOLF MINUȚ, IOANA MINUȚ, *Odiseea unui român din Făgăraș în primul război mondial (1914-1918)*, in *Mousaios*, XI (2006), pp. 271-282.

128. VALERIU LEU, *Memorialistica românească din Banat referitoare la primul război mondial și la unirea din 1918*, in *Banatul din memorie. Studii de caz*, Timișoara, 2008, pp. 279-317.

129. DAN MIHAI, *Istoria ce am petrecut în crâncenul război*, edited by VIOREL CIUBOTĂ AND IOAN M. BOTOȘ, Satu Mare, Satu Mare Museum Publishing House, 2008.

130. VASILE DUDAȘ, *Românii în armata austro-ungară (1867-1918)*, in *Studii de istoria Banatului*, XVI (1992), pp. 202-226.

131. I.I. ȘERBAN, *Românii în armata austro-ungară în anii primului război mondial*, in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, II-III (1998-1999), pp. 201-215.

back, in 1977)<sup>132</sup>, Teofil Oroian<sup>133</sup>, Ion Ionescu<sup>134</sup>, Marian Sârbu<sup>135</sup>, Virgil Șerban<sup>136</sup> and Augustin Mureșan<sup>137</sup>.

As we have already mentioned, the historiography concerning the participation of Romanians from Ardeal under the Austrian-Hungarian flag at the Great War, shows a relation of continuity between the communist period and the following period. This is showed by a continuing interest in editing narrative sources and for cultivating certain precise aspects from the topic even after 1989. The newly created environment following the fall of the communist regime made possible the study of history in a climate of intellectual freedom, without political and ideological constraints but we must also mention some novelties proper to the manner in which the topic we focus on was discussed. Thus, for the manner of emphasizing the historiographical importance of the anonymous «silent» world of villages, which gains its own voice now, in times of war, more powerful than in the past, we must mention the contributions of Valeriu Leu and Carmen Albert and especially the paper *Banatul în memorialistica «mărunță» sau istoria ignorată* [The region of Banat in «ignored» memoirs or history ignored] published in 1995<sup>138</sup>. The two researchers from Banat brought attention on the relevance of memoirs edited now, in the dramatic years of the world war, not by the elites, but by simple peasants, barely used to the exercise of writing and who feel the need to take notes and confess, in a manner similar to oral history, the experiences they endured in this great clash. They feel this need due to the special impact the events have on them. Valeriu Leu and

132. VICTOR CAȚAVEI, *Conducătorii gărzii naționale române a marinarilor de la Pola*, in *Ziridava*, XVIII (1993), pp. 255-260.

133. TEOFIL OROIANU, *Militari români în armata austro-ungară*, in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, 1996, n. 3-4, pp. 13-15.

134. ION IONESCU, *Marinari români din flota austro-ungară și actul unității naționale*, in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, 1998, n. 6, pp. 28-29.

135. MARIAN SÂRBU, *Activitatea marinarilor români în flota austro-ungară. Garda marinarilor români de la Pola*, in *Anuarul Muzeului Marinei*, IV (2001), pp. 201-208.

136. VIRGIL ȘERBAN, *Piese din patrimoniul muzeului arădean legate de Garda de la Pola*, in *Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național*, I (2003), n. 2, pp. 284-290.

137. AUGUSTIN MUREȘAN, *22 noiembrie 1918-sosirea Gărzii Naționale Române a marinarilor de la Pola, la Arad*, in M. GREC, S.I. BOIA (eds.), *Aradul și Marea Unire* cit., pp. 151-158; A. MUREȘAN, *Garda Națională Română a marinarilor de la Pola în contextul luptei pentru înfăptuirea Marii Uniri*, in VASILE POPEANGĂ, EMIL ARBONIE (ed.), *Pe drumul Marii Uniri*, Arad, Vasile Goldiș University Press, 2008, pp. 90-103.

138. VALERIU LEU, CARMEN ALBERT, *Banatul în memorialistica «mărunță» sau istoria ignorată*, Reșița, The History Museum of Caraș-Severin county, 1995.

Carmen Albert noted for the first time in the post-December 1989 Romanian historiography, the importance of these «small» memoirs, created by those who, like in Banat and other parts of Europe and the globe, make frequent use of writing, be it war correspondence<sup>139</sup>, autobiographical notes and memoirs, written in the heat of the moment or later on as a manner of passing on the war memory in the form of personal experience<sup>140</sup>. Following this trend of ideas, the manner in which the Romanian rural world perceived the war, we must mention the book signed by Eugenia Bîrlea, *World War I seen from the perspective of the rural world*. Initially a PhD thesis, the book enjoys a rather novel approach in the post-1989 Romanian historiography interested in World War I. By using research methods characteristic of ethnology and of the history of collective mentalities the book is a demonstration regarding the advantages brought by interdisciplinarity when analyzing the vision of the Romanian peasants from Transylvania regarding the Great War<sup>141</sup>. The book signed by Ioan Bolovan, which analyses the demographic realities from Transylvania during this period (family, morality and gender relations) also falls in the category of innovative research – due to its thematic - with regards to our subject of study<sup>142</sup>.

The most important and most systematic of all the post-1989 initiatives to publish sources regarding the participation of Romanians from Austria-Hungary in World War I comes from the historiography written in Banat. The project was started by Valeriu Leu, following his interest in the memorial exercise of the rural world from Banat during the years of the war, alongside another great historian from Banat, professor Nicolae Bocşan. The aim of the project was grandiose, unique in post-communist Romanian historiography: to fully recreate in the form of an anthology,

139. For the Italian space historiography mentions 4 million letters exchanged between the soldiers and those at home, thus an unprecedented communication exercise for the masses on the road to alphabetization. See FEDERICO MAZZINI, *Rappresentazioni e realtà nell'esperienza dei soldati italiani*, in NICOLA LABANCA, OSWALD ÜBEREGGER (ed.), *La guerra italo-austriaca (1915-18)*, Bologna, Società editrice il Mulino, 2014, p. 166.

140. See the study of DORU RADOOSAV, *Memoria «de jos» a războiului. Câteva considerații*, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Orală*, XIV (2014), pp. 5-54.

141. EUGENIA BÂRLEA, *Perspectiva lumii rurale asupra primului război mondial*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut, 2004. See Sorin Mitu's comment in the article *Identități și solidarități țărănești*, published in the volume: SORIN MITU, *Identități moderne în Transilvania*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Publishing House, 2016, p. 34.

142. IOAN BOLOVAN, *Primul Război Mondial și realitățile demografice din Transilvania. Familie, moralitate și raporturi de gen*, Cluj-Napoca, «Școala Ardeleană» Publishing House, 2015.

*Banat's memory of the Great War*, by publishing all memorial sources coming from the Banat participants to the war and the Great Union. Before the untimely death of professor Nicolae Bocșan, following his friend Valeriu Leu who died several years earlier, three volumes containing edited texts had been published. The texts have been initially published initially in the interwar period and afterwards along texts newly discovered by the two historians and their collaborators in archives from Banat and Transylvania. Volume I of this anthology contains 25 memorial texts, written by the protagonists from Banat as follows: Petru Albu (unpublished), I. Babeu (first edited: 1933), Nicolae Badiu (first edited: 1929-1947), Filaret Barbu (first edited: 2003), Coriolan Băran (two manuscripts, initially published in 1992, respectively 2009), P. Bizerea (first edited: 1930), Sever Bocu (two manuscripts, previously published in 1933, 1939, 2005), Dimitrie Botău (first edited: 1931), Emil Botiș (first edited: 2006), Valeriu Braniște (first edited: 1972), Caius Brediceanu (first edited: 1936), Nicolae Brânzeu (first edited: 2008), Coriolan Buracu (first edited: 2007), Pompiliu Ciobanu (1934), Nicolae Corneanu (1977), Aurel Cosma jr. (three unpublished manuscripts and the fourth first edited in 2010), Mihai Drugărin Petri-coane (first edited: 1996), Octavian Furlungeanu (unpublished).

The second volume contains the manuscript of the memoirs of Pavel Jumanca (the period referring to the post 1914 period), a document of a special documentary value. Pavel Jumanca was a teacher from Caransebeș enrolled in the Austro-Hungarian army who deserted in Romania where he remained until the end of the war. The third volume contains 21 texts, some edited in the interwar period, when the publication of the Romanian war memoirs begins, like the ones from first volume, some afterwards and some unpublished until now. These materials are reproduced in the volume in the following succession: Ioan Geția (memoirs partially published in succession in the interwar press, thusly: 1930, 1931, 1933, 1937, 1938), Eftimie Gherman (previous editions: 1995, 2000), Petru Ghiocel (unpublished), Cornel Grofșorean (unpublished), Ilie Gropșianu (first edition: 1931), Mihail Gropșianu (first edition: 1935), Ioan Ilie (first edition: 1978), Sofia Imbroane (first edition: 1933), Damian Izverniceanu (first edition: 1931), Ștefan Jianu, Ioan David (first edition: 1935), Ion Jurjac (first edition: 1957), Lae from Banat (first edition: 1932), Ștefan Lazăr (unpublished), N. Linția (unpublished), Alexandru Mihai (first edition: 1930), Grigore Mihăiuțiu (unpublished), Ilie Mișcuția (first edition: 1978), Aurel Moacă

(first edition: 1929), Koloman Müller (unpublished), Gh. Neamțu (first edition: 1927)<sup>143</sup>. Beyond the massive character of the documentary recreation proposed, we must point out the unique character of this project in present-day Romanian historiography. It does not have contain many initiatives to exhaustively edit the sources regarding the Great War although the centenary of the conflagration created the occasion.

In this historiographical periphrasis in the writing about Romanians who fought under the Austrian-Hungarian flag during the Great War we reserve a special place for the post-1989 works of historian and professor Liviu Maior. Professor Maior anticipated focusing on the subject in a study published in 1985<sup>144</sup> and, after 1990, without renouncing other areas of interest, such as the 1848 revolution and the history of the Romanian national movement from Transylvania, devoted more attention to it. The two studies dedicated to Romanian officers and soldiers serving in the Habsburg army<sup>145</sup>, respectively the transfer that took place in the collective conscience and mentality of Romanians under the rule of the Habsburg emperor-king during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until World War I, «from dynastic loyalty to national identity»<sup>146</sup>, Liviu Maior decisively entered the area of documentary contributions and careful interpretations. He proposes a novel approach towards the history of the Habsburg Empire and the role of the army in its relations with nationalities. Liviu Maior puts forwards the idea of leaving aside a much trodden perspective: the Danubian Empire represented a «prison of people», a place of eternal social and national oppression, a perspective marked by a nationalist vision imposed by the

143. *Marele Război în memoria bănățeană (1914-1919)*, vol. I: anthology, studies and notes by V. LEU AND N. BOCȘAN collaborators: MIHAELA BEDECEAN and IONELA MOSCOVICI, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 2012; vol. II: *Memoriile lui Pavel Jumanca*, anthology, studies and notes by V. LEU, N. BOCȘAN, M. BEDECEAN, collaborator: I. MOSCOVICI, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, 2013; vol. III: anthology, studies and notes by V. LEU, N. BOCȘAN, M. BEDECEAN, collaborator: I. MOSCOVICI, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj University Press, Romanian Academy / Center for Transylvanian Studies, 2015.

144. See footnote 10.

145. L. MAIOR, *Românii în armata habsburgică. Soldați și ofițeri uitați*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2004.

146. L. MAIOR, *Habsburgii și români. De la loialitatea dinastică la identitate națională*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 2006. On the same subject see also the article: ID., *Românii ardeleni de la loialitatea dinastică la loialitatea națională*, in *Revista de Istorie Militară*, 2008, n. 5-6, pp. 19-26.



post-1918 Romanian memoirs which led to a demonizing of the Austrian military system in a whole historiography that made history in Romania. The novel element proposed by professor Maior is the recovery and reconsideration of the dynastic loyalty / patriotism, as a bonding agent ensuring the cohesion and equilibrium of an empire with such a different ethnical and national component. Focused on the image of the emperor, dynastic patriotism represented an ideology and conviction cherished by Romanians from Ardeal, until the end of World War I, similar to other nationalities from the Empire. When analyzing the propagation and consolidation of this phenomenon the army represented a very efficient laboratory, a set of values that will degrade progressively, particularly during the war, in favor of attachment to national identity. It is thus the merit of Liviu Maior to have created a change of perspective in the post-1989 historiography interested by the Romanian element from the Habsburg frontiers and, particularly, their participation to World War I. The importance of loyalty in understanding Romanian participation to the war was restated by professor Maior in his most recent published book (2016): *Doi ani mai devreme. Ardeleni, bucovineni și basarabeni în război, 1914-1916* [Two years earlier. Fighters from Ardeal, Bucovina and Bassarabia in the war, 1914-1916]. A chapter of this book widely discusses the impact the Sarajevo assassination among Romanians, namely that the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand meant according to the author «the end of the loyalty of Romanians to the House of Habsburg» and foreshadowed the moment of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918<sup>147</sup>.

When one widely analyses the historic writing dealing with the participation of Romanians from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire to the adventure of World War I, one notices that the theme is felt in the century following the start of this conflict, following the oppressive or stimulant

147. L. MAIOR, *Doi ani mai devreme. Ardeleni, bucovineni și basarabeni în război, 1914-1916*, Cluj-Napoca, «Școala Ardeleană» Publishing House, 2016, p. 63. The research initiated by prof. Maior, focused on studying Romanian attitude towards the House of Habsburg (dynastic loyalty *versus* national loyalty) was stimulant. Thus, after 1989 we see in the Romanian historiography a series studies centered on it. Some such contributions are mentioned in ION CÂRJA, „*L'ultimo imperatore. Carlo I (IV), i romeni della Transilvania e la Prima Guerra Mondiale (1916-1918)*”, in ANDREA CIAMPANI, PIOTR SALWA (eds.), *La Grande Guerra e la Polonia in Europa. Atti del convegno, Roma 12-13 novembre 2015*, Roma, Accademia Polacca delle Scienze Biblioteca e Centro di Studi a Roma, 2016, pp. 106-107.



experience that it endured in the different stages of Romanian historiography. It suffered until it was instrumentalized the political pressure during the communist years but managed to maintain scientific decency and the lines of research program sketched out in the interwar period. The program proved its strength and relevance in time. It edited sources, produced sources of factual reconstruction, of analysis and interpretation of the subject, it enjoyed innovative methodology and approaches. Today, in 2016, the historiography of the problem we have discussed in this article is, after all, like the precedent stages of its route: an open workspace, producing works that enrich the bibliography of the subject, at least in terms of quantity. After more than two and a half decades of historiography developed in a climate of intellectual freedom, the subject essentially retains its priorities: publishing sources or bringing them in actuality by re-editing them<sup>148</sup>, approaching (and revising) some aspects insufficiently or wrongly discussed until now (particularly in the communist period). The war participation of Romanians from Ardeal under «different uniforms» has been stingily discussed when compared to the volunteering phenomenon generated by them after falling prisoners in Russian, Italian or French hand or the contribution they brought to the preparation and creation of the Great Union. Our contribution is meant to highlight this imbalance of approaches towards Romanian history from the 1914-1918/1919 period, imbalance mostly gone now by way or research and innovative approach generated by above-mentioned post-communist historiographical research.

The participation of all Romanians to World War I, not only those from Transylvania, as a research subject focuses today on other desiderata needed in order to correlate the Romanian discussions of the war to the evolutions of international historiography. Following this train of thought, there is an aspect which focuses on continuing with innovating research subjects and methodologies; it is in this direction that the Romanian research has oriented itself through the above-mentioned contribution. Thus, it would be extremely necessary to discuss themes such as collective mentalities and imaginary during the war, the attitude towards death, bereavement,

148. See also SEBASTIAN STANCA, *Contribuția preoșimii române din Ardeal la războiul pentru reîntregirea neamului (1916-1919)*, edition, introductive study, notes and indices by MIHAI-OC-TAVIAN GROZA AND MRCEA GHEORGHE ABRUDAN, Cluj-Napoca, Deva, Argonaut Publishing House, Deva and Hunedoara Episcopate Publishing House, 2015.

commemorations, propaganda conducted on the front lines and behind the front, in the ranks of the civilian population («the home front»)<sup>149</sup>, children during the war<sup>150</sup>, photography during the conflict<sup>151</sup> etc., themes and problems for which it has already been proven that there exists interest and availability among present-day Romanian historians and which might be considered as belonging to the «cultural history» of the Great War. Another very important and promising aspect that started being developed in the international historiography of the subject is the change from the «national» histories of the Great War, marred by unavoidable partisanship, nationalist visions, clichés and stereotypes long-trodden upon in the literature from some country or another to a «transnational history» viewed as a sign of reconciliation and also, in terms of approach, moving to a higher qualitative level, treating the war as a global war. A recent initiative following this perspective was put forward by the British historian Jay Winter in the form of the first volume of the book *The Cambridge History of the First World War*<sup>152</sup>. The historiographical initiatives where historians from countries which were enemies in 1914-1918 sat down at the same table and wrote common histories of the great conflagration are also of great interest. Such is the book published in 2008 and signed by Jean-Jacques Becker

149. We find the recent book published by IRADU TUDORANCEA to be very promising: *Frontul de acasă. Propagandă, atitudini și curente de opinie în România primului război mondial*, Bucharest, Eikon Publishing House, 2015.

150. We would like to mention the study signed by ANA VICTORIA SIMA AND MIRELA ANDREI POPA, *Copiii în vreme de război. O perspectivă transilvăneană asupra Primului Război Mondial*, in IOSIP MARIN BALOG, IOAN LUMPERDEAN, LORÁND MÁDLY, DUMITRU ȚEICU (eds.), *Multiculturalism, identitate și diversitate. Perspective istorice. In honorem prof. univ. dr. Rudolf Gräfla împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega Publishing House, 2015, pp. 501-516.

151. On this subject have been published so far the following: MARIUS CRISTEA, SMARANDA CUTEAN, *Memorie și onoare, românii în primul război mondial. Album. Volum dedicat aniversării a 90 de ani de la Marea Unire din 1 Decembrie 1918*, Alba Iulia, Altip, 2008; CHRISTOPHE PROCHASSON, FLORIN ȚURCANU (eds.), *La Grande Guerre. Histoire et mémoire collective en France et en Roumanie*, Bucharest, New Europe College-Institut d'études avancées, 2010; DORIN GIURGIU, MARIUS CRISTEA, IOANA RUSTORIU, SMARANDA CUTEAN, *Regii României Mari la Alba Iulia. Album*, Alba Iulia, Altip Publishing House, 2013; CAROL BEREZKY, *Album cu fotografii din Primul Război Mondial. Album mit Fotos aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Első-Világháborús fénykép-albuma. World War I. Photos Album*, Reșița, The German Democratic Front from Caraș-Severin County, The German Cultural and Educational Association for Adults Reșița, «Banatul Montan» Publishing House, 2014.

152. JAY WINTER, *The Cambridge History of the First World War*. Vol. I: *Global War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

and Gerd Krumeich: *La Grande guerre. Une histoire franco-allemande*, followed by a German edition in 2010<sup>153</sup>. The book coordinated by Nicola Labanca and Oswald Überegger, *La guerra italo-austriaca (1915-18)*, published in Bologna in 2014<sup>154</sup> is just as significant from this perspective. The Italian edition will be followed by a German translation. Starting from such examples and given the topic of this article we wonder when will a Romanian-Hungarian history of World War I be possible...

153. JEAN-JACQUES BECKER AND GERD KRUMEICH, *La Grande guerre. Une histoire franco-allemande*, Paris, Tallandier, 2008, translated in German as *Der Grosse Krieg. Deutschland und Frankreich, 1914-1918*, Essen, Klartext Verlag, 2010.

154. N. LABANCA, O. ÜBEREGGER N., *La guerra italo-austriaca cit.*, particularly the notes from pp. 14-25.



## Bulgarian Historiography on the First World War

The First World War has traditionally been studied in Bulgaria for the most part by military historiography. This in part reflects a certain formalism and unilateral way of thinking in the scientific approach to the topic, but it is above all connected to the political conditions of the country, which – apart from the last twenty-five years – developed within an authoritarian and totalitarian context in the presence of the increasing influence of the military in all spheres of public and private life. Lastly, it is of no little importance that the outbreak of the First World War and the institutionalisation of Bulgarian military historiography came about at the same time, since that the latter was initiated in 1914.

In the days immediately following those when the armies of the Central Empires and the Entente Powers met in direct confrontation, and to be precise on August 5, the Commission of Military History (*Voennoistoričeska Komisija*, VIK) was set up under orders imparted to the Army High Command by Tsar Ferdinand. Formally his creation had no direct connection with the war itself; it was rather a belated attempt to make up for the lack of any similar institution that had existed in a whole series of European armies since the mid-nineteenth century.

The main task of the VIK was to complete the history of the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, begun a few years earlier by a group of military historians, and to concentrate on the study of the Balkan wars. The very fact that this institution was set up in wartime meant that it was not destined for a valid, trouble-free scientific life. Bulgaria's entry into war beside the Central Powers on October 1 1915 interrupted the formation of the new institution. Set up again during the war years in 1917 and renewed after the Neuilly Treaty of 1919, the institution began its work in the early 1920s<sup>1</sup>.

1. TODOR PETROV, *Sāzdavane i načalni stāpki na Voennoistoričeska Komisija (1914-1946)*. – V: *90 godini organizirani voennoistoričeski izsledvanija v Bālgarija. Sbornik dokladi i naučni sāobštenija*,

In spite of the difficult conditions under which it had to work – the political, economic and moral crisis of a defeated country and the stringent cuts and constraints imposed on the national armed forces – the VIK completed its mandate and was confirmed as the leading scientific institution for the study of military history and of the wars of Bulgaria, above all of the First World War, which together with the Balkan wars proved to be its main priority. The correlation between the Balkan wars and the First World War is important from the historiographical point of view, given that both (if we mean the First and the Second Balkan Wars, the former otherwise known as the Balkan War, the latter as The Inter-Allied War, the two stages of a single military and political conflict) are politically interwoven; the protagonists were in fact the same – whether politicians, diplomats, generals and officers taking part, or whether military or civilian professionals involved in studying the issues.

An important condition for the development of the VIK's scientific work is that it is organised as an integral part of the military historical archives, collecting and housing the whole of the documentation on, and starting from, the First World War (and also on the other wars of Bulgaria) – from the operational plans to the most important directives of the Supreme Command down to the books of regimental orders and the diaries of the commanders. Bulgarian historiography on the First World War develops within the framework of three periods that are clearly, indeed drastically, distinct one from the others.

1. The first period coincides with that between the two world wars, reaching as far as September 9 1944, the date of the installation of the totalitarian Communist regime. During this period, the VIK came to the fore as the centre of organisation and coordination. In 1921 it approached a number of officers, whether serving or reserve, asking them to prepare a military history of Bulgaria. Those who had taken part in the strategic planning and the command of the Bulgarian army in the Serbo-Bulgarian war (1885), in the Balkan wars (1912-1913) and in the First World War

*izneseni na međunarodna naučna konferencija v Sofija, 26-27 oktombri 2004, Sofia, 2004* [Formation and first steps of the Commission of Military History (1914-1946), in 90 years of studies on military history in Bulgaria. Miscellany of reports and communications held at the international scientific conference in Sofia, 26-27 October 2004], Sofija 2004.

were invited to write their memoirs. Under the same order the work of the Commission was planned. The first to be completed was the history of the Serbo-Bulgarian war, published in a single volume in 1925, after which work started on the history in seven volumes of the Balkan wars, published between 1933 and 1937.

Then came the turn of the history of Bulgaria's participation in the First World War, for which nine volumes were planned: work began in 1928, but was mainly carried forward during the Thirties. This work was not brought to completion since at the end of the period of publication, from 1936 to 1943, only six volumes had appeared, on the attacks by the Bulgarian army in Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Dobrugia<sup>2</sup>. From the merely quantitative point of view, the work published is remarkable with its 5700 pages and an appendix of more than 200 maps. The same cannot be said for the contents. One observation could be made regarding the whole of the VIK's production, but in this case specifically it is not possible to speak of a scientific study in the current meaning of the term, therefore the volumes on the First World War can be seen at the most as being of documentary value, seeing that they present a very wide range of the documents kept in the military historical archives on the single battles and operations, without however being accompanied by in-depth scientific analysis and without any conclusion being reached.

From 1927 on, the VIK started to publish its scientific review *Voennnoistoričeski sbornik* [Miscellany of Military History], which was to contribute to the study on the wars for national unity. At the end of 1943, when

2. *Bălgarskata armija v Svetovnata vojna 1915-1918 g.* T. II: *Vojnata sreštu Sărbija prez 1915 g. Nastăplenieto na 1-va armija prez granicata ot 1 do 14 oktomvri*. [The Bulgarian army in the World War 1915-1918. Vol. II: The war against Serbia in 1915. The First Army crosses the border, 1-14 October], Sofia, 1936; T. III: *Vojnata sreštu Sărbija prez 1915 g. Nastăplenieto na 2-va armija v Makedonija*; [vol. III: The war against Serbia in 1915. The advance of the Second Army in Macedonia], Sofia, 1938; T. IV: *Vojnata sreštu Sărbija prez 1915 g. Nastăplenieto na 1-va armija po dolinata na r. Morava i tova na severnata grupa ot 2-a armija kăm Leskovec i Priština ot 22 do 31 oktomvri* [Vol. IV: The war against Serbia in 1915. The advance of the First Army in the valley of the Morava River and of the Northern Brigade of the Second Army on Leskovec and Priština, October 22-31] Sofia, 1940; T. V: *Kosovska operacija* [Vol. V: Operation Kosovo], Sofia, 1946; T. VIII: *Vojnata sreštu Rumănija prez 1916 g. Podgotovka na vojната i Tutrakanskata operacija* [Vol. VIII: The war against Romania in 1916. Preparation for war and Operation Tutrakan], Sofia, 1939; T. IX: *Nastăplenieto na 3-va armija v Dobrudža* [Vol. IX: The advance of the Third Army in Dobrugia], Sofia, 1943.



publication ceased due to the Anglo-America bombing of Sofia, 98 numbers had been issued, overall approximately 20,000 pages, containing 312 contributions on Bulgarian military history and on Bulgaria's wars. Most of the papers were on the First World War – 148, 46% of the total, followed by those on the Balkan wars, 93 in number, 29%. Such proportions were in line both with the aims assigned to the VIK under the outline the review's editorial policy, and with the needs of the political-military moment.

In the Thirties nearly all the European states were preparing for a new world war which by then appeared inevitable, and with regard to the technical-military aspect this preparation was totally conditioned by the experience of the First World War. This was also true for Bulgaria where the shock of the national catastrophe meant that most of the publications were emotionally charged, since they were the work of military personnel who had taken part in person in the events narrated. This explains, for example, the publication of a series of papers on the fighting at Dobro Pole, where in September 1918 the Entente troops made the decisive break-through that determined the capitulation of Bulgaria. According to the author of a metric analysis of the contents of the *Voennostoričeski sbornik* during this period, the publications were the result of individual interests and mind-sets and the presentation of material on the First World War was not carried out according to any interpretative logic<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission on Military History worked closely with the Foundation for Military Publications. The latter had been set up in 1919 as an independent military-commercial company with statutory provisions for juridical personnel. Its purpose was to publish books and periodicals on military science and history, to be presented as the result of private initiative in order to by-pass the constraints imposed by the Neuilly Treaty. Apart from the production of the Military History Commission, the Foundation for Military Publications issued the review *Narod i armija* [People and the Army] (the continuation of the old semi-official paper of the War Ministry *Voenni izvestija* [Military News]), the reviews *Voennen žurnal* [Military Review], *Bălgarski voin* [Bulgarian Soldier], *Podoficerski žurnal* [Non-Commissioned Officer's Review], *Săvremenna pehota* [Contempo-

3. NIKOLAJ PRODANOV, *Voennostoričeski sbornik (1927–1943) - V: 90 godini organizirani voennostoričeski izsledvvanija v Bălgarija*, [Ninety years of publications of military history in Bulgaria], pp. 181-182.

rary Infantry], *Našata konnica* [Our Cavalry], *Artileriiski pregled* [Artillery Review] and others containing valuable memoirs, eye-witness accounts or further material on the Balkan wars<sup>4</sup>.

Beyond the institutional frameworks, Bulgarian historiography on the world war in this period went forward in the private sector as well. There were many, military personnel and civilians, who published books on their own initiative through private publishers. Among the most prolific authors of the time were generals and officers who in the course of the war had held positions of responsibility in the General Staff or as commanding officers; they attempted to explain the reasons for the new national catastrophe to distance themselves from liability and shift it onto the shoulders of others – disloyal allies, incompetent politicians, traitors at home. This type of literature features a bias dictated by reasons that were strictly personal or political and was often bitterly polemic in tone, leaving little room for objectivity<sup>5</sup>.

The typology of military historical literature on the First World War in this first period is highly varied: monographs by single or collective authors, founded on the basis of the wealth of war documentation; not always

4. STANČO STANČEV, *Sāzdavane i razvitie na voennoistoričeskite naučnoizsledovatel'ski strukturi v Bālgarskata armija*, [Formation and development of the structures of scientific research on military history in the Bulgarian Army] in *90 godini cit.*, pp. 11-13.

5. IVAN FIČEV, *Lični spomeni na vseobštata Evropejska vojna* [Personal memoirs of the European world war], Sofia 1921; LUKA MALEEV, *Prinos kām istinata za katastrofata na Bālgarija prez septemvri 1918 g. Dokumenti, fakti i spomeni* [Contribution to the truth on Bulgaria's catastrophe in September 1918. Documents, facts and memories], Sofia, 1921; Nojkov St., *Zašto ne pobedihme 1915-1918* [Why we did not win 1915-1918], Sofia, 1922; VASIL RADOSLAVOV, *Bālgarija v svetovната kriza* [Bulgaria in the world crisis], Sofia, 1923; NIKOLA RIBAROV, *Prinos kām istinatai taktičeskoizsledvane na pričiniteda ne pobedim vāv vojnata 1915-1918* [Contribution to the truth and tactical study on the reasons why we did not win the 1915-1918 war], Sofia, 1924; NEDJO NEDEV, *Bālgarija v Svetovna vojna (1915-1918). Begāl istoričeski pregled* [Bulgaria in the World War (1915-1918). A rapid historical examination], Sofia, 1925; VELČO VELČEV, *Kām pogrom. Kal se razvaliha nacionalnite ideali* [Towards defeat. How national ideals collapsed], Sofia, 1926; NIKOLA ŽEKOV, *Bālgarskoto vojnstvo 1878-1928* [The Bulgarian Army 1878-1928], Sofia, 1928; ATANAS HRISTOV, *Istoričeski pregled na Obštovropejskata vojna i učastieto na Bālgarija v neja* [Historical re-examination of the general European war and of Bulgaria's participation in it], Sofia, 1925; MIHAIL MADŽAROV, *Diplomatičeska podgotovka na našite vojni* [Diplomatic preparation for our wars], Sofia, 1932; ALEKSANDAR GIRGINOV *Izpitanijata vāv vojnite 1915-1918* [Hardships in the wars 1915-1918], Sofia, 1936. For a more detailed list of publications that appeared during this period see *Učastieto na Bālgarija v Pārvata svetovna vojna 1915-1918 godina. Bibliografija* [The participation of Bulgaria in the First World War 1915-1918. Bibliography], Sofia, 1994.

impartial memoirs of commanding officers whether high- or low-ranking; professional analyses by competent specialists in military matters; not quite so competent and professional, but sincere and objective impressions of those who had been in the front line; semi-official and pathetic regimental stories for propaganda purposes; personal and critical evaluations of single authors published to justify or to denounce. From a strictly scientific point of view, writing in the immediate aftermath on very recent events, apart from the merit of presenting the facts in the first person, also have the fault of wallowing in detail and lacking in a detached, wider overall vision of the topic in question. The subjective factor in this period is clearly prevalent, since the purpose of the authors, most of whom had had an active part in the recently-concluded drama, was to be rid of any sort of responsibility and if possible to 'pass the buck'.

In spite of their defects however, such works, often accompanied by documentation, proved important material for future generations of scholars. The production of Bulgarian historiography in the Twenties and Thirties of the last century can be considered as the output of a national school, clearly marked by the trauma of the political catastrophes and unresolved national issues. The desire to furnish political justification for Bulgaria's participation in the First World War and to glorify the Bulgarian army inspires to a great extent both the VIK publications and those of the other authors. A single motto or key for an understanding of this period of historiography can be found in the title of the book by General Stefan Tošev, commander of the Third Army, who became famous for his victories over the Russian and Romanian troops in Dobruia in 1916. The motto is this: "Defeated without being beaten. An answer to those who insult us for taking part in the Alliance. A review of the entire war 1915-1918"<sup>6</sup>.

During World War II the VIK's work on the history of the First World War stopped. The Anglo-American bombing of Sofia at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944 determined the transfer into the provinces of the whole office in charge of the work together with its personnel, archives and libraries. The reasons for stopping publication of the numerous vol-

6. STEFAN TOŠEV, *Pobedeni bez da bādem biti. Otvor na hulitelite ni, kato sājuznicite. Obzor na cjalata vojna 1915-1918* [Defeated without being beaten. An answer to those who insult us for taking part in the Alliance. A review of the entire war 1915-1918], Sofia, 1924.

umes are however to be found elsewhere. They stem from the ideological and political nature of the regime set up in Bulgaria on September 9 1944.

2. The second period of Bulgarian historiography on the First World War embraces the entire era of the Communist regime and the totalitarian administration from September 9 1944 and November 10 1989. The first half of that period features above all the ideological dogmatism of the governing Bulgaria Communist Party (BKP) which obediently followed the ideological political model set out by the Soviet Union. Just as in the other fields of Bulgarian scientific and intellectual life, historical science was subjected to severe ideological revision in which the struggle against “monarchic-fascism” and “Great-Bulgarian chauvinism” took on a decidedly sinister colouring. Well-known Bulgarian historians were stigmatised as “reactionaries”, “fascists”, “Great-Bulgarian chauvinists”, with all the personal consequences that this type of epithet entailed. Apart from this, their works were confiscated and on Party orders the contents of history textbooks were radically re-elaborated and purged of the “fascist and chauvinist Great-Bulgaria elements”. This regarded in particular the military historians, most of whom were in active service or reserves and as such were accused of all the misdoings of the Bulgarian Empire. It was within this context that the institutional basics of Bulgarian military historiography were decided.

At the end of December 1944 the VIK returned to Sofia. In spite of the damage and losses sustained, its scientific objective was ambitious – to finish the history of Bulgaria’s participation in World War I and at the same time the two volumes on the Second Balkan War, also called the Inter-Ally War. The enthusiasm of the military historians soon suffered a cruel set-back, however. In the guise of a reform of the organisational structure, a purge of the old executives was carried out, accompanied by a Stalinist ideological indoctrination campaign.

In early 1946 the VIK was converted into the Section for Military History of the National Defence Ministry (MNO), and the following year publication of the *Voennohistoričeski sbornik* ceased (to reappear once more only in 1952)<sup>7</sup>. The transformation of Bulgarian military historiography through the ideology with which it was imbued, the men who were

7. T. PETROV, *Sāzđavane i načalni stāpki* cit., pp. 35-36.

studying it and the institutions set up for this purpose, was accompanied by a change in topics: the Balkan Wars and the First World War together with the build-up of the military apparatus, and the other wars fought by Bulgaria from 1878 to 1944, all vanished to be replaced by the scientific priority of the anti-military activity of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), partisan resistance and the participation of the Bulgarian army in the final stages of the Second World War.

In March-April 1948, at the initiative of the BKP within the framework of the programme “for an efficient ideological re-organisation on the scientific front” coming directly from decisions taken at the constituting conference of the Cominform in September 1947, a conference was held on the state and tasks of Bulgarian historiography. It was under the direction of Vălko Červenkov, at that time the president of the Committee for Science, Art and Culture and a member of the BKP’s political office, responsible for the moods of the intelligentsia; the main report was given by Tuše Vlahov, inspector for history of the Ministry of Education. In the spirit of ideological dogmatism and the prevailing national nihilism, he defined the participation of Bulgaria in the wars of the 1912-1918 period as the result of the chauvinist policy of aggression of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie which was making every effort to widen its field of economic action and thus also consolidating its domination of the country. He identified the main culprit of the national catastrophes of 1913 and 1918 in Tsar Ferdinand, as the “agent” of Germany and Austria-Hungary<sup>8</sup>.

In 1948 it was Vălko Červenkov himself who set forth the main tasks of Bulgarian historical science: it was to “clean up the Augean stables of Bulgarian historiography”, to free itself of the “reactionary legacy of Great-Bulgarian chauvinism” and to re-organise itself “on healthy Marxist-Leninist scientific foundations”<sup>9</sup>. These were the directives under which the “new” History of Bulgaria was to be written.

After the pre-September 9 bearers of historical memory had been politically and morally (and in many cases physically) annihilated, it became necessary to deal them the final blow at the “scientific” level. Krumka Šarova

8. *Sădăt nad istoricite. Bălgarskata istoričeska nauka. Dokumenti i diskusii 1944-1950* [The judgement of historians. Bulgarian historical science. Documents and discussions 1944-1950], Sofia, 1995, vol. I, pp. 270-271.

9. *Doklad na dr V. Červenkov pred V kongres na BKP* [Report by companion VÁLKO ČERVENKOV to the V congress of the BKP], “Istoričeski pregled”, 1948/1949, nn. 3-4.

was appointed to deal with those who had written on the Balkan wars. She was at that time still assistant professor of history at Sofia University. Her one and only article on this subject appeared in the review *Istoričeski pregled* [Historical Review] in 1950 under the title *Bourgeois historiography and the participation of Bulgaria in the 1912-1918 wars*. She herself let it be known that her purpose was to satisfy the appeal launched at the V Congress by Georgi Dimitrov and Vălko Červenkov calling for radical criticism of the “hostile and scientifically flawed historiographical concepts on our history of Great-Bulgarian fascism”. And she made a good job of it, her ideological fervour and political correctness compensating for her mediocre historiographical analysis and lack of bibliographical knowledge. The article was a severe condemnation without appeal of the representatives of Bulgarian historiography of the time, defined as “ordinary apologists of the aggressive policy of the bourgeoisie and the monarchy” and “propagators of Great-Bulgarian chauvinism”. “The history of the Balkan war, the Inter-Allied war and the imperialist First World War has not yet been written. Its writing” concluded the author of the article, “is one of the basic tasks to be solved by the historians armed with the Marxist-Leninist method, the *only* correct method, the only scientific method”<sup>10</sup>.

After the old historians had been subjected to such an ideological disqualification, it was extremely difficult to find a Bulgarian historian with enough courage to try to read their books in the libraries, seeing that their use was subjected to a special regime (“special funds”, “secret dossiers”, “access limited to personnel on duty” etc.). How the theme of the 1912-1918 wars was to be dealt with is shown by the way in which Tuše Vlahov dealt with it, publishing in the same review a number of articles contesting the legitimacy from the national viewpoint of Bulgarian political aspirations in Macedonia<sup>11</sup>.

The results of the “successful ideological reorganisation of the scientific front” were made apparent in all their splendour in the two volumes of the *History of Bulgaria*, edited by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences [BAN,

10. KRUMKA ŠAROVA, *Buržoaznata istoriografija i učastieto na Bălgarija văv vojnite (1912-1918)*, *Istoričeski pregled*, 1950, n. 2, p. 157.

11. THUŠE VLAHOV, *Vărhovizmăt i negovata rolja po vreme na vojnite* [Suprematism and its role in the time of the wars], *Istoričeski pregled*, 1950/1951, n. 4 and n. 5 [The term “suprematism” refers to the wing of the Macedonian nationalist movement committed to the union of the Macedonian region with Bulgaria. Translator’s note].



Bălgarska Akademija na Naukite]. Prof. Hristo Hristov was commissioned to write on the subject of the First World War (the second volume of the *History of Bulgaria*, 1955). At that time he was the deputy director of the Institute for history of the BAN, thereafter for many years academic and director until the switch to democracy.

The very structure of the work is significant, divided into two distinct parts in two different sections of the book. In the Second Section, on *Bulgaria at the time of imperialism*, the period from the start of the 1914 war until the autumn of 1917 is dealt with in chapter III, the last but one, *Bulgaria in the First World War*. A chapter follows on Bulgarian cultural development from 1878 to 1917. The Third Section, *Bulgaria in the general crisis of capitalism* starts with a first chapter entitled *The echo of the great socialist October Revolution in Bulgaria* which ends the narration of the First World War.

The content of the two chapters is as little logical from a historical viewpoint as it is, for that very reason, totally logical from the political viewpoint: more than on the war itself, it focused on the antimilitary propaganda and subversive action of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers' Party (POSDB – rigorous socialists), on the influence of the Russian Bolshevik revolution on the army and Bulgarian society, and on the so-called “military revolt”, the insurrection of deserters on the Macedonian front in September 1918. The attitude of the author towards the war and its purposes for Bulgaria was explicitly negative. “The basic task of the new government [the reference is to Basil Radoslavov's government] was to detach Bulgaria from the Entente and yoke it to the chariot of the Austro-Germanic imperialist bloc. In each part of the text the expression “national unification” was unfailingly placed in inverted commas, in order to underline the author's negative attitude towards it<sup>12</sup>.

Due to a number of ideological errors it contained, at the start of the Sixties the *History of Bulgaria* underwent a remake and was published in three volumes. The text on the First World War, contained in the second volume published in 1962, remained unchanged both in structure and in content, evidently because it was still considered valid on the political-ideological level<sup>13</sup>.

12. *Istorija na Bălgarija*, Sofia, 1955, pp. 295-326, 363-394.

13. *Istorija na Bălgarija*, Sofia 1962, pp. 288-317, 354-386.



With such stigma the subject of Bulgaria's part in the First World War was relegated to second place in the interests of historians, both military and civilian. In the course of the twenty years from 1952 to 1972 only 36 articles were published on the topic in the *Voenoistoričeski sbornik*, more than half of them on the subversive activities opposing the war and on the military revolts etc<sup>14</sup>. A number of monographs and collections of documents on similar themes at that time in line with the dominating ideology were published<sup>15</sup>. One of the few exceptions is the monograph by Tuše Vlahov on the relations between Bulgaria and her allies during the war<sup>16</sup>.

Some variation in the approach of Bulgarian historiography arrived at the beginning of the 1960s. It was the result both of the changed political conditions in the Communist bloc in general and in Bulgaria in particular, and also of a new element in Soviet historiography which was still the ideal political and methodological beacon for Bulgarian historians. This consisted in the publication in the Soviet Union of the history of the First World War in due volumes<sup>17</sup>.

At approximately the same time Bulgarian military historiography underwent an important structural change in its organisation and management. At the decision of the Central Committee of the BKP and the Council of Ministers, the Section for military history of the Ministry of Defence was transformed into the Institute for Military History, part of the general High Command of the National Bulgarian Army. This became the centre for the coordination and methodological approach of the stud-

14. *Voenoistoričeski sbornik. Bibliografičeski spravočnik*, Sofia, 1974, pp. 66-83.

15. LJUBOMIR PANAJOTOV, *Borbata na BRSDP (t.s.) protiv zavojevatelnata i avantjuristična politika na bālgarskata buržoazija v perioda na vojnite (1912-1918)* [The struggle of the POSDB (rigorous socialists) against the policy of conquest and adventurism of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie in the period of the wars (1912-1918)], Sofia 1956; HRISTO HRISTOV, *Revolucionnata kriza v Bālgarija prez 1918-1919* [The revolutionary crisis in Bulgaria 1918-1919], Sofia, 1957; *Velikata oktomvrijska socialističeska revolucija i revolucionnate borbi v Bālgarija prez 1917-1919. Sbornik ot dokumenti i material* [The great socialist October Revolution and the revolutionary struggles in Bulgaria in 1917-1919. Collection of documents and materials], Sofia, 1957; H. HRISTOV, *Vojniškoto vāstanie 1918* [The military revolt of 1918], Sofia, 1961; *Rabotata na BKP v armijata 1891-1918. Dokumenti i material* [Work in the army of the BKP 1891-1918. Documents and materials], Sofia, 1966 [BKP is the acronym of the Bālgarska Komunističeska Partija, the Bulgarian Communist Party, BCP. Translator's note].

16. T. VLAHOV, *Otnošenijata na Bālgarija i centralnite sili po vreme na vojnite 1912-1918* [The relations between Bulgaria and the Central Powers at the time of the wars 1912-1918], Sofia, 1957.

17. *Istorija Pervoj mirovoj vojnji*, Moscow, 1975, vols. 1 and 2.

ies on military history in Bulgaria. The appearance of this new institute therefore coincided with the Soviet publication of the history of the First World War, as mentioned above.

In the wake of this Soviet experience a number of Bulgarian military historians also began to propose commencing work on a history of Bulgaria's part in the war, but the idea was not well received. On the advice of Party and State leaders, the Institute turned its attention to the following topics: the military aspects of the armed struggle in 1941-1944; the revolutionary activity of the BKP in the bourgeois army; the patriotic war of Bulgaria in 1944-1945; the construction of the armed forces in Bulgaria; the military collaboration and friendship with the Soviet army and the armies of the other member states of the Warsaw Pact<sup>18</sup>.

A certain shift in Bulgarian historiography in relation to the subject of the First World War came about at the end of the Seventies and beginning of the Eighties, at the time when preparations were under way for the celebrations of the 1300 years since the birth of the Bulgarian nation (681-1981). For the occasion, the Communist regime relaxed the embargo on themes smacking of patriotism, such as those on the Balkan wars or the First World War. The deep-rooted reasons for this change were to be found in the intentions of the Party élite to use nationalism as a possible escape route from the economic, political and ideological crisis in which the totalitarian regime was embroiled at that time. At this point it is possible and indeed necessary to draw a parallel between the two periods in which Bulgarian historiography focused on the First World War.

If from the nationalistic viewpoint the time between the two world wars may be defined as the *classical* period, it follows that the Eighties may be considered the *Renaissance* period. If the *socialist nationalism* of this period is considered with due rigour, controlled absolutely as it was by a totalitarian state, it was much stronger than the nationalism of the previous authoritarian state had been. Yet it was this very totalitarian control that made it timid, docile, incapable of any sort of bite, the pet favourite in the house of the "socialist community".

Within this political context, on February 13 1980 a seminar was held at the Institute for Military History on the theme "The character of the Bulgarian Army and of its wars in the 1885-1918 period". Twenty military

18. S. STANČEV, *Sāzdavane i razvitie* cit., pp. 13-16

and civilian historians took part in the forum with reports, communications and interventions. Further reports, judged as highly significant and innovative, were published in a single number of the review *Izvestija na Instituta za voenna istorija i Voennostoričeskoto naučno društvo* [News from the Institute for the military history and of the scientific society of military history]<sup>19</sup>.

The seminar and the publication of the reports, coming within the official celebrations for the 1300 years of the Bulgarian nation, were the final and effectively masked clash between the ideological dogmatism of an epoch in decline and the scientific pragmatism of the new times. In their pure and simple meaning, expressions like “seminar of discussion” and “clash” are euphemisms, unless seen within the reality of a totalitarian state. As if by the wave of a magic wand, from one minute to the next historians who up to then had repudiated the Balkan war as a war “of conquest”, now began to exalt it as a war “of liberation”.

If there were a “clash” on these ideas, it came about on such concepts not at the scientific level, but at the topmost echelons of the Party-State. And its final outcome – a real touch of the magic wand – was the decision taken in 1979 by the Secretariat of the BKP’s Central Committee to strengthen patriotic education in all sectors of society and primarily in the scientific sector and that of education. This document offered the ideological framework and the political cover, at the time absolutely essential, within which the turnaround took place, as radical as it was rapid in the development of Bulgarian historical science: in the institutes and faculties of history, scientific clubs were founded (sections or groups) around the topics of the national issue.

Due to the very nature of its organisational structure and to the scientific subjects dealt with, a guiding role in this turning point was assigned to the Institute for Military History of the Bulgarian Army’s High Command. The discussion seminar mentioned above in fact was a manifestation of unanimous consent; it assigned the Party imperative with a scientific role and categorically proclaimed the new

19. *Izvestija na Instituta za voenna istorija i Voennostoričeskoto naučno društvo (VIND). Priturka kām sp. Voennostoričeski sbornik* [News from the Institute for Military History and from the Scientific Society of Military History (SSSM). Supplement of the review *Voennostoričeski sbornik*], vol. 31, 1981.

attitude towards the Balkan wars on the basis of which they became progressive, just wars of liberation, a continuation of the struggle for national freedom in the period before and after the Liberation of Bulgaria, a logical and natural appendix to the Russian-Turkish war of liberation of 1877-1878.

The participation of Bulgaria in the First World War was not accorded such a simple welcome, not least for the fact that in 1916-1918 the Bulgarian troops had fought in Dobrugia and on the Romanian front (on the Seret River) against the Russian army, a fact that in the eyes of Bulgarian Communists constituted sacrilege toward the myth of Russia/the Soviet Union “twice the liberator” (in 1878 from the “Turkish” yoke and in 1944 from the “fascist” yoke).

The material from the discussion seminar was published in 1981 in the midst of the national celebrations for the 1300 years’ existence of the Bulgarian nation; it triggered the reorganisation of Bulgarian historical science, above all concerning the studies on the Macedonian question and on the Balkan wars. For the reason already given, the studies on the First World War continued to be evidently fewer than those on the these two latter subjects and lacked the strong patriotic tones the others possessed.

In the period from 1973 to 1989 the *Voенnoistoričeski sbornik* published only 24 articles on the First World War compared to the 58 on the Balkan wars<sup>20</sup>. The fact is hardly surprising that out of these articles, those previous to 1981 were generally on the so-called “military revolt”, while in those coming later the space was given merely to topics of military history<sup>21</sup> or more modern general history<sup>22</sup> or

20. *Spisanie “Voенnoistoričeski sbornik” i “Izvestija na Instituta za voenna istorija i Voенnoistoričeskoto naučno društvo” 1973-1997*, Sofia 1999, pp. 98-104.

21. NEŠO NEŠEV, *Vojnoto izpolzvanе na bālgarskata artilerija prez Pārvata svetovna vojna* [The use in the field of the Bulgarian artillery during the First World War], *Voенnoistoričeski sbornik*, 1987, n. 2, pp. 135-147; ASEN KARAIVANOV, *Otbranata na Dojranskata pozicija prez septemvri 1918 godina* [The defence of the Dojran position in September 1918], *Voенnoistoričeski sbornik*, 1988, n. 2, pp. 117-139; JORDAN MILANOV, *Bālgarskoto vāzduhoplavanje prez Pārvata svetovna vojna (1915-1918 g.)* [The Bulgarian Air Force during the First World War], *Voенnoistoričeski sbornik*, 1989, n. 2, pp. 96-123.

22. IVAN ILČEV, *Bālgarija v strategičeskite planove na Velikobritanija na Balkanite (oktomvri 1915 – septemvri 1918 g.)* [Bulgaria in the strategic plans of Great Britain on the Balkans (October 1915-September 1918)], *Voенnoistoričeski sbornik*, 1981, n. 2, pp. 30-48; Idem, *Iz istorijata*

even cultural history<sup>23</sup>. In the *Izvestija na Instituta za voenna Istorija i Voennoistoričeskoto društvo* (IVIND), which began publication in 1966 as a supplement of the *Voennoistoričeski sbornik*, the same proportion is found between the number of articles on the Balkan wars and those on the First World War: in the period from 1973 to 1989, against the 52 essays and short articles on the Balkan wars there were 13 on the First World War, of which five had already been published in the collection of materials from the discussion seminar of 1980<sup>24</sup>. During the Eighties a number of monographs were also published on civil history dealing in a more objective and scientific way with the political-military and diplomatic issues of the First World War<sup>25</sup>.

3. The third period of Bulgarian historiography on the First World War commenced on November 10 1989. This date, connected to the dethroning of Todor Živkov, the long-standing president of the Central Committee of the BKP and of the Council of State of the People's Republic of Bulgaria,

*na bālgarskata propaganda v Švejcarija po vreme na Pārvata svetovna vojna i na Parīžkata mirna konferencija 1919 g.* [From the history of Bulgarian propaganda in Switzerland at the time of the First World War and of the Paris Peace Conference], *Voennoistoričeski sbornik*, 1984, n. 1, pp. 115-133.

23. RUMYANA KONEVA, *Kulturna politika i dejnost na Štaba na Dejstvuvaštata armija 1915-1918 godina* [Policy and cultural activity in the High Command of the operative Army 1915-1918], *Voennoistoričeski sbornik*, 1986, n. 5, pp. 79-95.

24. IVAN ALEKSANDROV, *Nacionalosvoboditelnite zadači na bālgarskata armija vāv voinite ot 1885 do 1918 g.* [The tasks of the Bulgarian army for national liberation in the wars from 1885 to 1918], IVIND, 1981, vol. 31, pp. 93-103; VASIL VASILEV, *Za socialno-klasobata harakteristika na bālgarskata armija vāv vojnite ot 1885 do 1918 g.* [On how the Bulgarian army was classified according to social class in the wars from 1885 to 1918], IVIND, 1981, vol. 31, pp. 55-74; SIMEON DAMJANOV, *Bālgarskijat nacionalen vāpros v načalnija etap na Pārvata svetovna vojna (1914-1915)* [The Bulgarian national question in the initial stage of the First World War], IVIND, 1981, vol. 31, pp. 104-122; PETĀR STOIOLOV, *Za haraktera na bālgarskata armija i na vodenite ot neja vojni prez perioda 1977-1918* [Character of the Bulgarian army and the wars it fought for the period 1977-1918], IVIND, 1981, vol. 31, pp. 9-54; DIMITĀR HRISTOV, *Ošte za vojnite, vodeni ot bālgarskata armija ot 1885 do 1918* [More on the wars fought by the Bulgarian army from 1885 to 1918], IVIND, 1981, vol. 31, pp. 130-134.

25. ANDREJ PANTEV, PETKO PETKOV, *Sāedineneti amerikanski štati i Bālgarija po vreme na Pārvata svetovna vojna* [The United States of America and Bulgaria at the time of the First World War], Sofia, 1983; MILČO LALKOV, *Balkanskata politika na Avstro-Ungarija 1914-1917. Avstro-ungarskata diplomacija v borba za sājuznici prez Pārvata svetovna vojna* [The Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary 1914-1917. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in its search for allies during the First World War], Sofia, 1983; S. DAMJANOV, *Bālgarija vāv frenskata 1878-1918* [Bulgaria in French policy. 1878-1918], Sofia, 1985.

refers officially to the “fall” of the Communist regime in Bulgaria, that is at the start of the guided transition from totalitarianism to democracy. The evident mechanisms of totalitarian control were replaced by softer, more discreet forms of influence on the part of the political world acting behind the scenes in the institutional underworld, which seized hold of most if not all the new-born organisations and associations of civil society.

The old organisation was pushed out to feed abundantly on the principles of market mechanisms, but its élite never forgot it, even after being banished. As time passed they were to grow yet stronger, developing new weapons. It was different for most intellectuals. The historians of the First World War and of the national issues connected to it now have the support of the Scientific Macedonian Institute and the Scientific Thracian Institute, re-founded respectively in 1990 and in 1994, as well as the old structures.

Intense research continued in the Institute for Military History which in 1992 became the National Centre for Military History, passing from the General High Command to the Ministry of Defence. For the first and last time, civilian historians outnumber others. Within it a section was created on “Army and society” entrusted with research on the participation of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian army in the wars from 1912-1918, now openly called “wars of liberation and national unification”. At this point the Balkan war, the Inter-Allied war (otherwise called the Second Balkan war) and the World War were no longer studied only from the strictly military viewpoint, but in their various connections with the processes and happenings of society overall. The idea of writing a military history of Bulgaria’s part in the First World War once more came to the fore. Paradoxically however, but perhaps quite naturally, military historic science was not to experience enhancement of quality under the new conditions, in spite of the fact that Bulgaria was orientated towards the European Union and NATO.

Perhaps because of the penetration within Bulgarian society of ideas of multiculturalism and globalisation, and because of the tactical or forced retreat of nationalism, or else for reasons purely organisational and financial, the fact is that in 1995 the National Centre for Military History was re-assigned to the General High Command, to be then demoted at the end of the Nineties to a simple section with certain experts among the functionaries of the Military Academy and with an orientation by then directed towards the field of “practical teaching” (taken from the world and national experience of the NATO mission to impose and guarantee peace).



The flagship of military history, the review *Voенноисторически сборник*, stopped publication: it came out again in 2003, shut down in 2009, and reappeared again in 2010, but this time as a private publication. In spite of the decline in organization and the decimation of personnel, military historians continue to make their contribution on the subject of the First World War. It was the subject of an international meeting organized in 2005 at the Military Academy: the papers presented were not only on specifically military topics, but also on the war in its political, economic, cultural and social aspects<sup>26</sup>. Shortly afterwards the first volume of a collective work appeared: *The Bulgarian Army in the First World War 1915-1916*<sup>27</sup>; the second volume, however, has not yet appeared. With the same title, a substantial monograph was published in 2015 covering the whole period of Bulgaria's participation in the World War, from 1915 to 1918<sup>28</sup>. The military historians, the authors of these works, made use of the results obtained by their colleagues in the interwar period, which they enriched utilising new archive material and new studies. At the time of the decline in Bulgarian historical science curated by the military, the subject of Bulgaria's part in the First World War saw a great blossoming of work among civilian historians. Undoubtedly this is due to the end of the monopoly enforced by the military historians on this subject and all others connected with it.

Moreover the disappearance of the totalitarian forms of ideological control favours the direction taken by the professional interest of historians towards those subjects so far excluded essentially for ideological reasons, for which the expression "white spots" was used in Bulgarian history. An objective examination of this positive phenomenon however reveals its flaws. Frequently amateurs curious for knowledge invade the field of scientific research "enriching" it with their "contributions", imposed by force as the only correct versions; but mediocrity oozing aggressiveness is not the only problem.

Very often the approach of many authors towards new evaluations is the same as in the past, only with the political hallmark inverted, that is, the prevailing vision is newly tinted with ideology used for revanchist

26. *Pärvata svetovna vojna na Balkanite. Sbornik dokladi i naučni säobštenija na mëždunarodna konferencija v Sofija na 10-11 oktomvri 2005* [The First World war in the Balkans. Reports and scientific communications from the international meeting, Sofia, 10-11 October 2005], Sofia, 2006.

27. *Bälgarskata armija v Pärvata svetovna vojna 1915-1916*, vol. I, Sofia 2010.

28. *Bälgarskata armija v Pärvata svetovna vojna 1915-1918*, Sofia, 2015.



purposes. There is no lack even of eccentric manifestations and an absurd revisionism going beyond any common sense. Particularly harmful from the scientific point of view is the compromise with the laws of the market that demand vulgarisation and sensationalism. The new political situation in one way or another opens up new opportunities. Even some serious historians take advantage of these chances attracted by the history of the First World War and by military history in general. Their studies also have not so far seemed lacking in scientific value<sup>29</sup>.

In the Bulgarian historiography of this period, the most distinguished expert on issues of the history of the First World War is Georgi Markov, professor and director of the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAN), of which he has been a corresponding member since 2004 and an active member since 2008. In the previous historical and historiographical period he was an eminent figure as a scholar of the Balkan wars and now, of course, his interest has turned to the First World War. In 1995 he published his monograph on Bulgaria's balancing act between the Entente and the Central Powers regarding entry into the war in the two-year period 1915-1916, entitled *The Great War and the Bulgarian Key to the European Powder-Keg 1914-1916*<sup>30</sup>. Ten years later it was completed by a second monograph entitled *The Great War and the Bulgarian Sentinel between Central Europe and the East* on the 1917-1918 period and also on the outcome of the peace treaty of Neuilly of 1919<sup>31</sup>. The author definitively rehabilitates the concept current in the first period of historiography which saw Bulgarian participation in the First World War as the justifiable defence of national interests and a war for national unity. His monographs are founded on his

29. IVAN ILČEV, *Bălgarija i Antantata prez Părvata svetovna vojna* [Bulgaria and the Entente during the First World War], Sofia, 1990; VALENTIN ALEKSANDROV, *Bălgarija i tajnata vojna. Austro-ungarskoto i germanskoto razunavane v Bălgarija 1914-1944* [Bulgaria and the secret war. The Austro-Hungarian and German secret services in Bulgaria 1914-1944], Sofia 1992; for a more detailed bibliography on the topic at the start of the Nineties see: *Učastieto na Bălgarija v Părvata svetovna vojna 1915-1918. Bibliografija* [The participation of Bulgaria in the First World War 1915-1918. A bibliography], Sofia 1994; R. KONEVA, *Goljamata srešta na bălgarskija narod. Kulturata i predisvikelstvata na vojnite 1912-1918* [The great appointment of the Bulgarian people. The culture and the challenges of the wars 1912-1918 1912-1918], Sofia, 1995.

30. GEORGI MARKOV, *Goljamata vojna i bălgarskijat ključ za evropeiskija pogreb 1914-1916*, Sofia, 1995.

31. ID., *Goljamata vojna i bălgarskata straža meždu Sredna Evropa i Orienta 1916-1919*, Sofia, 2006.

solid knowledge and on wide use of documents from the stores of archives, especially from the Central Military Archives of Veliko Tŕrnovo, inaccessible for a long period to common historians, a problem that saw Bulgarian historiography in the same category as foreign historiography.

In 2016 on the basis of his two monographs Markov produced a popular commercial variant in two richly illustrated volumes and approximately a thousand pages under the title *The Great War and the Bulgarian Sword on the Balkan issue 1914-1919*. The motto or better the dedication accompanying the publication sufficiently illustrates its contents: "We won the battles, we lost the war. Heroes, you did your duty by your country. Eternal glory to you, rest in peace!"<sup>32</sup>

In our time studies and publications on the First World War are going through a real boom connected to the celebration of the centenary. For the occasion, a National Committee has been set up with the object of underlining the importance of the hundred years since the First World War and Bulgaria's part in that event (1914-2018). Thanks to its support and the participations of the scholars of the Military Academy, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Macedonian Scientific Institute, the Thracian Scientific Institute, universities, archives and museums throughout the country, national and international scientific meetings are organised and publications are being issued that collect the results of research and various articles.

So far eight such meetings have been held and three voluminous collections of contributions on military and interdisciplinary history have appeared<sup>33</sup>. It is too soon to assess their scientific value. But one thing is certain: never before has there been such a blossoming of Bulgarian historiography on the First World War. And certainly this will continue until the end of the centenary celebrations.

32. ID., *Goljamata vojna i bŕlgarskijat meč nad balkanskija vŕzel 1914-1919*, Sofia, 2016.

33. *Pŕrvata svetovna vojna na Balkanite i vstŕpvaneto na Bŕlgarija v neja (1914-1915). Sbornik c dokladi ot meždunarodnata naučna konferencija, Sofija, Vidin, Kjustendil, Kŕrdŕali, 13-16 oktombri 2015* [The First World War and Bulgaria's entry into war (1914-1915). Papers of the international scientific meeting, Sofia, Vidin, Kjustendil, Kŕrdŕali, 13-16 October 2015], Sofia 2017; *Pŕrvata svetovna vojna i Bŕlgarija prez 1916. Meždunarodna naučna konferencija, 4-7 oktombri, 2016, Sofija, Blagoevgrad, Dobrič, Tutrakan* [The First World War and Bulgaria during 1916, International scientific meeting, 4-7 October 2016, Sofia, Blagoevgrad, Dobrič, Tutrakan], Sofia 2016; *Bŕlgarija v Pŕrvata svetovna vojna 1915-1916. Sbornik sŕs studii i statii* [Bulgaria in the First World War. 1915-1916. Collection of essays and articles], Sofia 2016.



## Perceptions of the Great War in Greece

The general historiography on the Great War and especially on post-1918 events places greater emphasis on the Western Front and the consequences of the war in France, Great Britain and Germany in particular. The conventional starting date for World War I is August 1914; the war ended with the armistice of November 11, 1918. The most studies particularly by the side of winning countries such as Great Britain and France were focused on the western front and World War I is usually viewed as a European affair. However, the Great War of 1914-1918 started with the Italian attack in the North-African regions of Tripoli and the Cyrenaica<sup>1</sup>, areas that until then were Ottoman, finishing on the south-eastern front in 1922 with the military defeat of Greece in Asia Minor. The Great War that effectively led to the destruction of three Empires containing a mosaic of ethnic groups –the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and Russia– also represents a turning point for the countries of West Europe and their expansionist colonial policies<sup>2</sup>.

In order to better understand the consequences of the Great War, we should study it in a broader framework, including the front in South-East Europe and Asia Minor. The events that unfolded during the Great War spelled the end of the Ottoman Empire and gave rise to the formation of modern Turkey. For the Greek side, they put an end to the territorial expansion of Greece.

We will focus on the South-East European front and especially on Greece. The period of the Great War was one of the most troubled periods in Modern Greek history. The Great War in Greek historiography forms

1. TIMOTHY CHILDS, *Italo-Turkish Diplomacy and the war over Libya 1911-1912*, Leiden, 2009.
2. ROBERT GERWARTH, EREZ MANELA (eds.), *Empires at War 1911-1923*, Oxford, 2014, p. 10; see also PIERRE RENOUVIN, *La première guerre mondiale*, Paris, 1983.

part of a longer period that begins with the Balkan Wars, continues with the “National Schism”, and culminates with the massive deportation of the Greek Orthodox populations from Asia Minor in the context of population exchange<sup>3</sup> schemes between Greece and Turkey, sanctioned by the Lausanne Treaty (1923). Thus, perceptions of the Great War in Greece relate to the earlier period and the events that ensued in Asia Minor. Throughout the Great War, the “National Schism” constituted therefore a major event on the Greek political scene, and its impact over the following decades deeply influenced the history of Modern Greece.

Greece’s role and participation in the Great War should also be examined in the context of the contemporary international political situation. However, we should also take into consideration the conditions inside the country. In the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Greece had greatly expanded its territory, especially after its victories in the Balkan Wars. Thus, the Great War was seen as an opportunity to realize the “Great Idea” (*Megali Idea*), i.e. the aspiration reunite all Greek Orthodox populations under the Greek State; its ultimate goal was the re-conquest of the historical capital of the Greek-Orthodox Church: Constantinople. Greece therefore intended to annex areas largely inhabited by Greek Orthodox populations, such as Thrace, North Epirus and Smyrna with its hinterland in Asia Minor. The “Great Idea” evolved into a “National Idea” during the course of the Great War and dominated Greek foreign policy. It should be pointed out that as Greece lacked the means to implement its “Great Idea” expansion on its own, the country was forced to adapt its expansionist policy to the imperialist pursuits of the Allies.

### International political context of the time

To better understand the events that led Greece to join in the Great War, we should first study the Greek case in the international political context, where Allied financial interests in the Eastern Mediterranean featured prominently. European countries were divided in two camps defined by the competition between the great powers. On the one hand, the Central

3. ONUR YILDIRIM, *Population exchange, Refugee and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey*, in *East European Quarterly*, t. XI (1), 2006, pp. 49-55.

Powers: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Germany and Bulgaria. Germany<sup>4</sup> was trying to curtail Great Britain's global domination, and was keenly interested in gaining control over the Middle East. After the concession of the Baghdad railway to the Germans by the Ottomans, Germany strengthened its foothold in the Middle East. This was an essential detail in the achievement of the great new German Empire, extending from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, the Entente countries, Great Britain and France, maintained vested economic interests in the Middle East, and were pressurizing Greece and Serbia to enter the war. By August 1914, the Ottoman Empire had signed a treaty of alliance with Germany, and joined the ranks of the Central Powers. This development greatly aided the rapprochement between Venizelos<sup>5</sup> and the Entente powers.

Since the beginning of the Great War, the great powers and especially Great Britain had promised Greece significant territorial compensations in exchange for entering the war on their side. These included Eastern Thrace; the region of Smyrna (also coveted by Italy)<sup>6</sup>; and the islands of Imbros (Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada). In these areas, the vast majority of the local population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were Greek Orthodox. The island of Cyprus, a British colony at the time, was to be handed over as a reward to Greece, in case the latter decided to provide military aid to Serbia.

The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were vital to the Entente countries that's ought to connect directly with Russia and its allies over the sea, and thus implemented the Gallipoli Campaign. During the Dardanelles War of 1915<sup>7</sup>, Bulgaria's participation on the side of the Central powers placed the Entente countries in a difficult position, as the Ottoman Empire

4. The United States ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Morgenthau, based on the testimonies of German officers points out that they had mentioned having consulted the Union and Progress Committee officers to get rid of ethnic groups, Greek orthodox and Armenians that lived in the Ottoman Empire, because they were close to England and France, which was an obstacle to German interests in the Middle East HENRY MORGHENTAU, *Τα Μυστικά του Βοσπόρου* [The Secrets of Bosphorus], Athens, 1998, pp.115-136.

5. PASCALIS M. KITROMILIDES, *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship*, Edinburgh, 2008.

6. FABIO L. GRASSI, *Le battaglie diplomatiche relative alle occupazioni italiane in Turchia nel 1919*, in *Annali dell'Istituto Ugo la Malfa*, Vol. X, 1995, pp.276-304.

7. ERNO GONDOS, *Ο ΑΠαγκόσμιος Πόλεμος και η Προϊστορία του (1870-1918)* [World War I and its Prehistory (1870-1918)], Athens, 2015, pp. 117-118.

was able to receive ammunitions and supplies from Austria via Bulgarian soil. During this time that the pressure exerted by the Entente powers on Greece increased and resulted in the dispatch of British and French troops to Thessaloniki. King Constantine I of Greece opposed the policy of his Prime Minister Venizelos, and refused to participate in the Battle of the Dardanelles alongside France and England. In August 1916, Venizelos was removed from his position of prime minister by King Constantine I. Following this development, Venizelos headed the “National Defence” (“Εθνική Άμυνα”) movement that enjoyed the support of the Entente and formed a new government<sup>8</sup> in Thessaloniki. The “National Defence” movement was thus transformed into a “Provisional Government of National Defence”<sup>9</sup>. With the aid of the Entente countries Venizelos decided to mobilize the Greek army for war. Thessaloniki was the headquarters of the allied armies<sup>10</sup> under the command of Maurice Sarrail. The hinterland of Macedonia was an area of financial competition between France and England<sup>11</sup>. Venizelos believed that joining World War I on the side of the Entente would allow him to fulfil the “Great Idea”: the annexation of the Ottoman regions inhabited by Greek Orthodox populations to the Greek state. To realize the dream of “Greater Greece” spanning North Epirus, all of Thrace and Western Asia Minor, he pursued a policy of rapprochement with Great Britain, which he considered a world power, with the goal of securing its help to gain control over certain regions of Asia Minor.

Relations between Greece and the Entente countries were also affected by the balance of power between the imperialist countries of the time and

8. DIOMIDIS PETSALIS, *Η Ελλάδα των δύο κυβερνήσεων, 1916-1917* [Greece of two governments, 1916-1917], Athens, 1988, pp. 69-72. Venizelos forms a government with admiral Pavlos Kountouriotis and general Panagiotis Daglis.

9. IOANNIS MOURELOS, Η Προσωρινή κυβέρνηση της Θεσσαλονίκης και η σχέση της με τους συμμαχούς [The temporary government of Thessaloniki and its relation with the Allies], in *Μνήμων*, 8 (1982), pp. 150-186; FRANCESCO GUIDA, *La Grecia tra Guerra e “scisma nazionale”*, in *La Granda Guerra e l'Europa danubiano-balcanica*, a cura di Francesco Guida, numero de *il Veltrò*, LIX, 2015, pp. 169-185.

10. DIMITRIS BAHARAS, Συμμαχικές επεμβάσεις σε οικονομίες πολέμου, Αγγλογαλλικός ανταγωνισμός και οικονομικά παιχνίδια στη Μακεδονία [Allied intervention in war economies, Anglo-French competition and economic games in Macedonia], in *Αρχιτάξιο*, 2015, (17), pp. 28-41. In 1917 the army of the East that arrived in Macedonia exceeded 250,000. The French founded a Commercial Office in Thessaloniki in 1917.

11. GEORGE B. LEON, *Greece and the Great Powers 1914-1917*, Thessaloniki, 1974. DIMITRIS. BAHARAS, *Συμμαχικές επεμβάσεις σε οικονομίες πολέμου* cit., pp. 28-41.



on each country's internal politics. King Constantine I in Athens, however, opposed the war preparations<sup>12</sup> commenced by the supporters of Venizelos and was unwilling to declare war on the Central Powers, preferring Greece's neutrality. Venizelos organised an army and declared war on Bulgaria on November 11/24, 1916. At the outbreak of World War I, King Constantine I found him in the unenviable position of having to choose sides. Despite his close ties with the British and Russian royal families, Constantine I felt closer to the German Empire<sup>13</sup>.

### Greece in World War I and the "National Schism"

Greece's participation in the Great War engendered a political rift within the country: on one side were the Venizelists, and on the other those loyal to King Constantine. The "National Schism" (*Ethnikós Dichasmós*) was the split that led to the clash between King Constantine I and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos. The origin of the National Schism, however, can be traced back to the tensions between the rival factions of the previous period of Balkan Wars, and was a reflection of deep political rifts within Greek society. In collective memory, World War I is considered the cause of the "National Schism" that was actually the political division between the established State, under the control of King Constantine I, and the regions annexed in the recent Balkan Wars, whose people supported the politics of Venizelos<sup>14</sup>. It was a conflict between "Old Greece" and the "New Lands". "The National Schism" activated important parts of the Greek society. For a period of time Greece had two governments and two capitals, one in Athens and one in Thessaloniki, which highlights the geographical and social implications of the "National Schism".

Venizelos'expansionary politics in the course of the Great War have been the subject of numerous studies in Greek historiography. Most of these, however, focus on the National Schism, which has become a de-

12. The king's refusal to join the battle of the Dardanelles in February 1915 was significant for the participation of Greece in the ranks of the Entente countries. King Constantine I, in a letter to Kaiser William II, mentioned the inability of Greece to fight alongside the Central Powers.

13. The king of Greece had completed part of his military training in Berlin and married the younger sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

14. FRANCESCO GUIDA, *La Grecia tra Guerra e "scisma nazionale"* cit., p. 170.

bated subject. Some researchers and historians have concluded that Venizelos' campaign in Asia Minor was necessary<sup>15</sup> to save the Greek Orthodox populations from reprisals by the Young Turks after the Balkan Wars, while others<sup>16</sup> criticised his choice to side with the Entente powers and claiming he lacked a precise plan and that Greece's role among the Allied powers was not well determined<sup>17</sup>. They reproach Venizelos for his expansionist politics considering that the landing of the Greek Army in Asia Minor rather served to safeguard Great Britain and France's interests on the mineral deposits (oil) in the Near East. Other historians<sup>18</sup> insist on Venizelos' politics which they consider reckless because he had not taken into consideration the consequences of an alliance with the Entente countries, which led Greece to political and economic instability.

Douglas Dakin<sup>19</sup> stresses that the Greek Prime Minister led an adventurous policy while admitting that his alliance with the victors of the Great War brought about territorial gains. For some researchers<sup>20</sup>, Greece's aspirations to control regions of Asia Minor in the context of the «Great

15. We will only mention the most representative works from each side. Konstantinos Svolopoulos, according to his research in the personal archive of Venizelos concludes about the necessity of the operations that Venizelos carried out in Asia Minor. He considers that Venizelos sought the alliance with the Entente powers and in particular Great Britain in order to achieve his policy of the «Great Idea» and to save the Greek Orthodox populations from reprisals by the Young Turks after the Balkan Wars. KOSTANTINOS SVOLOPOULOS, *Η απόφαση για την επέκταση της Ελληνικής κυριαρχίας στη Μικρά Ασία* [The decision to extend the Greek dominance in Asia Minor], Athens, 2009, pp. 10-35; ID., *Η Ελληνική Εξωτερική Πολιτική, 1900-1945* [Greek Foreign Policy, 1900-1945], τ. 1, Athens, 2008, pp. 11-117.

16. YIANNIS YIANNULOPOULOS, *Η ευγενής μας τύφλωση. Εξωτερική πολιτική και «εθνικά θέματα» από την ήττα του 1897 έως τη μικρασιατική καταστροφή* [Our noble blindness. Foreign politics and «national issues» from the 1897 defeat until the Asia Minor catastrophe], Athens, 1999.

17. GEORGES LEONTARITIS, *Η Ελλάδα στον Πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, 1917-1918* [Greece in World War I, 1917-1918], Athens, 2005, p.15.

18. THANOS VEREMIS, IOANNIS KOLIOPOULOS, *Ελλάς. Η σύγχρονη συνέχεια. Από το 1821 μέχρι σήμερα* [Greece. The modern sequel. From 1821 until today], Athens, 2006, pp. 332-335; T. VEREMIS, *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος: κοινωνία, οικονομία, πολιτική στην εποχή του* [Eleftherios Venizelos: society, economy, politics during his time], Athens, 1989. GEORGIOS MAVROGORDATOS, CHRISTOS CHATZIOSSIF (eds.), *Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός* [Venizelism and urban modernization], Crete, 1988, pp. 11-18.

19. DOUGLAS DAKIN, *Η Ενοποίηση της Ελλάδας 1770-1923* [The Unification of Greece 1770-1923], Athens, 2001, p. 336.

20. NIKOS PSIROUKIS, *Η Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή 1918-1923. Η Εγγύς Ανατολή μετά τον Πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο* [The Asia Minor Catastrophe 1918-1923. The Near East after World War I], Athens, 2000, p. 68.

Idea» led to a military operation dictated by British and French imperialist interests. After the dismissal of Venizelos from office by King Constantine I and his departure from Athens in September 1916, his followers were prosecuted; even the Greek Orthodox Church pronounced an anathema against Venizelos because of the support he offered to the Entente powers. Protests took place in Athens against Venizelos<sup>21</sup>. The government formed by order of King Constantine I, created a climate of polarization between the two rival parties. The Entente countries, seeking to gain control of Southern Greece, landed 3,000 men at Piraeus on December 1, 1916<sup>22</sup>, and tried to further pressure the government in Athens and King Constantine I by applying a naval blockade<sup>23</sup> that resulted in the death of many civilians from starvation. The direct intervention of the Allied countries aggravated political divergence and thus intensified the National Schism<sup>24</sup> that deeply divided society and political life in Greece. France even encouraged Venizelos's government to extend its influence on the Ionian Islands such as Zakynthos, Cephalonia, Ithaca and Lefkada by inciting local uprisings. Greece was subsequently cut into three: a zone in the south was loyal to the government of Athens; in the north, Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus, the zone of the "Provisional Government of National Defence" with Thessaloniki as its capital and Venizelos at the head of the government; between the two lay a neutral zone controlled by the Allied forces to prevent the imminent threat of civil war.

The Entente countries, however, did not limit themselves to supporting a political power; they further sought to transform the political system in Greece. They saw King Constantine I as a potential obstacle for their plans about South-East Europe. Following French pressures, on June 12, 1917, King Constantine I withdrew from the throne, without formally abdicating, and went into exile. His younger son, Alexander I, ascended the throne as his heir. During that period, a series of events disturbed the

21. DIMITRIS MICHALOPOULOS, *Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός Η Άλλη Διάσταση* [The National Schism. The Other Dimension], Athens, 2012, pp.140-141.

22. Y. YIANNIOULOPOULOS, *Η ευγενής μας τύφλωσις* cit., pp. 243-245.

23. F. GUIDA, *La Grecia tra Guerra e "scisma nazionale"* cit., p. 170.

24. GEORGIOS MAVROGORDATOS, *1915: Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός* [1915: The National Schism], Athens, 2016, pp. 40-112.

international balance and signalled the weakening of the Athens state<sup>25</sup>; the entry of the United States into the war<sup>26</sup>; the Russian Revolution and the Tsar's evanescence from the political scene; the death of French Prime Minister Aristide Briant, who was more reluctant regarding the operations of the Allied force, and the accession of Alexander Ribot as Prime Minister.

Venizelos formed a new government in Athens on June 15, 1917 and officially declared war on the Central Powers. He aimed to annex areas that were largely inhabited by Greek Orthodox populations, namely Thrace and Smyrna with its hinterland in Asia Minor, to the Greek state. As France and Great Britain were seeking to safeguard their hold on and financial interests in the Middle East, Venizelos'expansionist ideology of the "Great Idea" was useful to them in that it facilitated their plans in Asia Minor. The treaties of London and Bucharest at the end of the Balkan Wars allowed Greece the annexing of Macedonia, part of Epirus, and Crete. The issue of Western Thrace was settled by the Treaty of Neuilly (November 14, 1919), while that of Smyrna was provisionally settled by the landing of the Greek Army in Smyrna with the consent of the Allied forces<sup>27</sup>. World War I had strengthened tensions between the ethnic groups in the interior of Asia Minor<sup>28</sup> and Smyrna in particular. Greece believed it could overcome any local resistance from the Turkish side with the aid of the Allies. Under the auspices of the League of Nations, on the principle of self –determination, the inhabitants of Smyrna and its hinterland were called to decide whether they wished their land to be annexed to Greece, or remain under Ottoman rule. Greece was thus rewarded for its intervention in the war on the Allied side. The Treaty of Sèvres (July 28, 1920) indeed brought Greece a step closer to attaining the "Great Idea", as the country was given control of Eastern Thrace, the province (*vilayet*) of Smyrna and the islands

25. ELLI LEMONIDOU, *Τυπολογία και συνέπειες της ξένης στρατιωτικής παρουσίας στην Ελλάδα του Α' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου* [Typology and consequences of the foreign military presence in Greece during World War I], in *Αρχιτάξιο*, 2015, (17), pp. 8-19.

26. G. LEONTARITIS, *Η Ελλάδα στον Πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο* cit., pp. 26-27; DOUGLAS DAKIN, *Η Ενοποίηση της Ελλάδας 1770-1923*, cit., pp. 340-341.

27. The legal justification of the landing in Smyrna is found in article 7 of the Moudros Armistice Treaty, which enabled the Allies to "occupy any strategic point of Ottoman territory in any situation that threatened the security of the Allies". It also arranged the possibility of voluntary immigration for the populations living in areas to Greece.

28. EMMANOUIL EMMANOULIDES, *Τα τελευταία έτη της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας*, [The last years of the Ottoman Empire], republication of 1924 edition, Athens, 2010.

of Imbros (Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada). In contrast, the Ottoman Empire, “punished” for allying itself with the Central Powers, practically lost all of its European provinces, save the area around Constantinople. This marked the inception of a Greek-Ottoman War, during which the Ottoman government at Constantinople collapsed. World War I completed the work of Western penetration and the creation of zones of influence in the former lands of the Ottoman Empire, as was envisaged in the Sykes-Picot agreement between France and Great Britain, dating back to May 1916<sup>29</sup>.

The geopolitical context of the Greek-Ottoman war of 1919-1922 was linked to the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the Allies after the Great War; a development that occurred as a consequence of the fact that the Ottoman Empire participated by the side of the Central Powers during the conflict. Greece was on the winning side and Venizelos finally succeeded in partly realizing the “Great Idea” by annexing Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace to Greece.

Venizelos’ politics, however, requires multilevel analysis. In order to examine Venizelos’ territorial aspirations over Asia Minor, we must first consider the consequences of the Balkan Wars, and particularly the annexation of Ottoman regions to Greece and the concomitant relocation of Muslim populations to the Ottoman Empire. This development caused a backlash in the form of hostilities against the Greek Orthodox populations in Asia Minor. From this point onwards we can observe a significant trend: Greek Orthodox populations begin fleeing their birthplaces to escape the hostilities of the “Union and Progress” government. Thus Venizelos’ ambitions for the Asia Minor regions aimed initially at controlling these areas.

The death of King Alexander I and Venizelos’ attempts to proclaim a republic led to elections in November 1920. The issue of the form of government and the return of Constantine I to the throne still divided

29. On 16 May 1916, the agreement is finalized between France and Great Britain, between Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. Ultimately provides a breakdown of the Near East in several areas of influence for the benefit of Great Powers, that is to say, the area between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Caspian Sea, then part of the Ottoman Empire. France would acquire Lebanon, the coast of Syria, Adana, Cilicia, Gaziantep, Urfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir and Mosul. Great Britain would take southern Mesopotamia with Baghdad and the ports of Haifa and Accra. Palestine would be placed under an international regime. The Russian Empire took part in the deliberations and agreed, like Italy, with the terms of the secret treaty. DAVID FROMKIN, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York, 1989, pp. 286, 288.

Greek society between Venizelists and monarchists. At this time, however, Venizelos and his supporters were viewed as the ones responsible for a Greek-Turkish war that led nowhere. Venizelos' government was unable to control the general discontent and the unwillingness to continue the war. As a result, Venizelos lost the elections<sup>30</sup> and left the country. King Constantine I, whose politics of alignment with Germany had greatly displeased the Allies during the Great War, came to power for the second time. In a referendum that was held in December, the electorate voted for the return of King Constantine I by 99%. The king's restoration had serious consequences that transcended the diplomatic level. In the military, the electoral defeat of Venizelos led to the eviction of all his supporters among the officer ranks. Veterans of World War I, experienced commanding officers who were largely responsible for the military operations in Smyrna and Asia Minor, were dismissed. The dispute between the Venizelist and anti-Venizelist officers in the army of Asia Minor created breakdown conditions; the "National Schism" led, among other things, to the collapse of the front.

The King Constantine I's policy for the continuation of the military operations on the Asia Minor front, previously realised by Venizelos, and the lack of support by the Allied forces, are often brought up. The reasons for this are complex and the discontent of the Entente countries toward King Constantine I does not seem to be the only plausible explanation. Greece found itself deprived of the economic and military powers of its allies and was isolated on the international political stage. United States President Thomas Woodrow Wilson's illness, his abortive attempt to persuade Congress to vote for his country's accession to the League of Nations<sup>31</sup>, the failure of Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, an ally of Venizelos, in the French elections and -most importantly- Great Britain's desire to redefine its policy toward Mustafa Kemal and revive talks – all these decisively influenced the course of the Greek Army's operations in

30. Venizelos' party won 118 parliamentary seats out of 369.

31. G. LEONTARITIS, *Η Ελλάδα στον Πρώτο Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο*, [Greece in World War I] cit.. The United States as a world power, promised, through President Wilson's proclamations, freedom, democracy and protecting the right to self-determination to peoples in Europe and the Near East. IOANNIS STEFANIDIS, *Ο τελευταίος Ευρωπαϊκός αιώνας, Διπλωματία και πολιτική των δυνάμεων 1871-1945* [The last European century, Diplomacy and power politics 1871-1945], Athens, 2009, pp. 75, 90-92.



Asia Minor. Consequently, the shift in Allied attitudes from around the fall of 1920, the absence of Ally help, and Greece's isolation on the international political stage are some of the chief causes for its military defeat.

## The Ottoman Empire in World War I

As soon as it had risen to power in 1908, and later, under Enver, Talaat and Djemal's "triumvirate" in the Young Turks movement, the "Committee of Union and Progress"<sup>32</sup> exhibited a clear unwillingness to treat all ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire in an equitable and egalitarian manner. In the course of World War I policies became increasingly hostile towards ethnic groups living under the Ottoman Empire. World War I broke out on August 2, 1914 with the Ottoman Empire maintaining a nominally neutral stance vis-à-vis the two warring sides. The Ottomans joined forces with the Central Powers on October 16, 1914 launching an offensive against the Russian naval forces in the Black Sea. Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, with France and Great Britain following suit. After the outbreak of the war, the Ottoman Empire closed the Dardanelles, cutting off Russia's maritime access to the Mediterranean Sea, an area that was to prove crucial for the outcome of the war; by the fall of 1914 the Central Powers had captured Batumi, thereby exercising pressure on Russia.

In June 1915, Arab troops aided by the British attacked the Ottoman Empire. Palestine was the first to fall late in 1917, followed by Syria (October 1918); Mesopotamia had been under Britain's control since 1914, when British-Indian troops took control of Basra. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire was hard-pressed along its south and south-eastern borders. In the African and Middle East fronts, the Allies dominated swiftly and decisively. At the same time, disorder prevailed in the western provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and more specifically in its Balkan possessions<sup>33</sup>. Failure on the external front was coupled by an internal crisis, as problems arose within the Young Turks movement.

32. ERIC J. ZÜRCHER, *The Unionist Factor. The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement*, Leiden, 1984, p. 76; ŞÜKKRÜ HANIOĞLU, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908*, Oxford, 2001.

33. FIKRET ADANIR *Makedonya Sorunu*, [Macedonian Question], Istanbul, 2001.



A turning point in the war in favor of the Allies was Italy's change of stance and its accession to the Entente for which it was rewarded with territorial gains (such as the Dodecanese that remained under titular Italian control until 1948). Russia defeated the forces of Austro-Hungary in the Eastern Front which led to the collapse of the Central Powers. In the course of the war, however, Russia experienced the October Revolution and evolved into the Soviet Union. In that political juncture and following the landing of Greek troops at Smyrna (1919) Mustafa Kemal Atatürk sprang to action, mobilizing Turkish forces and creating fighting groups, chiefly composed of followers of the Young Turks movement. He assembled two congresses, in Erzurum (July 23, 1919) and in Sivas (September 4, 1919) with the aim of protecting the Ottoman state's eastern and European areas; from these congresses Mustafa Kemal emerged as the leader of the Turkish independence movement. Soon after he declared the independence of the eastern Ottoman provinces with Ankara as their capital and sought to oust Entente troops from Asia Minor.

The end of World War I found the Ottoman Empire on the losing side, having suffered huge territorial losses. The Empire's capital, Constantinople, was captured by British troops and the Ottomans were forced to sign the Treaty of Sèvres. Mustafa Kemal had distinguished himself during the Gallipoli Campaign and was the foremost architect of the Turkish independence movement, whose chief goal was, among else, to overturn the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres.

Nevertheless, the Great Powers gradually began to support Mustafa Kemal, supplying him with vital war material, while he signed secret treaties with Russia and France. These developments secured peace and safety along Turkey's northern borders. In what followed, Mustafa Kemal defeated the Greek troops at Sakarya (1921) and broke through the Greek defensive lines at Kütahya-Eskişehir-AfyonKarahisar<sup>34</sup>; this allowed him to march his army as far as the Aegean coasts of Asia Minor and Smyrna until the final retreat of the Greek Army and the forced mass exodus of the Greek-Orthodox populations of Asia Minor in their entirety. Having entered World War I, close to its end, the Ottoman Empire began evolving into the modern Turkish State following the end of the Greco-Turkish War.

34. MICHEL LLEWELLYN SMITH, *Το όραμα της Ιωνίας: η Ελλάδα στη Μικρά Ασία, 1919-1922*, [The vision of Ionia], Athens, 2002.

## The end of Greek military operations in Asia Minor

While examining the reasons for the Greek military defeat, we should keep in mind the political changes that were under way as the Ottoman Empire declined, and the appearance of new actors gaining ground on the political scene. The seizure of power by Mustafa Kemal is a very important factor for the Entente's change of politics towards Greece. The Middle East constituted an area of financial competition between France and Great Britain. On the side of Great Britain, Winston Churchill supported reconciliation with the Muslim world in the Middle East to preserve British financial interests in the area. Immediately after the collapse of the front and the expulsion of the Greeks, Great Britain dispatched (October 1922) Arab military contingents, occupied Mosul, and signed an agreement with Iraq, with which the British tutelage and influence over the region became entrenched.

By 1919, France had found common ground with Mustafa Kemal. In September 1920, with the Treaty of Ankara, Mustafa Kemal secured the departure of French troops from Cilicia and, in return, offered concessions of iron, silver and chromium mines in the Harşit valley to France<sup>35</sup>, who was thus turning the page in its policy for Asia Minor. The French deputy Franklin-Bouillon travelled to Anatolia bearing guns, cartridges, grenades, airplanes and uniforms – everything that was needed to wage war<sup>36</sup>. Facing the growth of power of Mustafa Kemal's forces the Entente countries preferred therefore to sign separate agreements with the supporters of Mustafa Kemal and abandon their claims over Anatolia. Even Lloyd George<sup>37</sup>, who had always supported Venizelos, pressed by the Army and the Foreign Office not to involve the Great Britain in a new conflict, did not pledge his support for Greece anymore. This meant that after 1921 Greece stood alone. Mustafa Kemal's forces also had contacts with the Italians from 1919<sup>38</sup>. Having lost its mandate over the area of Smyrna in favour of Greece, Italy used its base in Antalya to equip and train Mustafa Kemal's

35. PAUL DUMONT, *Mustafa Kemal invente la Turquie moderne*, Paris, 1996, pp. 113-114.

36. *Ivi*, pp. 114-115.

37. DAVID LLOYD GEORGES, *Mémoires de guerre*, Paris, 1934.

38. FABIO L. GRASSI, *Diplomazia Segreta italo-turca dopo la Prima Guerra Mondiale Convergenze ed equivoci (1919-1920)*, in *Clio*, Anno XXXIV, (1) Gennaio-Marzo, 2003, pp. 51-84.

troops<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, in 1920, 400 kilograms<sup>40</sup> of Russian gold arrived in Asia Minor to fund supplies for the Turkish army, a gift by the Soviet government allowed the troops of Mustafa Kemal to continue their fight<sup>41</sup>.

To better understand Soviet policy during the Asia Minor campaign, we should bear in mind that during that period Soviet Russia considered Great Britain as its main rival on the international scene, because it enjoyed access to the Black Sea as well as to the south parts of Russia in Central Asia<sup>42</sup>. Venizelos' efforts in 1919 to transport Pontian battalions to Batumi, then under British rule, were blocked by the British. The aim was material assistance to the Greeks of Pontus. However, these actions were known to Russia. Greece was "punished" for participating in the Allied expedition in support of the Tsar following the Russian revolution of 1917. Thus, Soviet Russia, by entering in an alliance with Mustafa Kemal's<sup>43</sup> army turned against Greece, a country firmly in Britain's sphere of influence. Essentially by this action, Soviet Russia, aimed at pushing Britain. Soviet rapprochement with Mustafa Kemal's army was formalized with the signing of the "Peace and Brotherhood Treaty" in 1921. After the signing of that treaty 10,000 gold roubles<sup>44</sup> and war material<sup>45</sup> were sent to Mustafa Kemal. Russian aid proved decisive for the outcome of the Asia Minor front, as it coincided with the restructuring of the Turkish resistance from 1920, which continued throughout the Greek Army's operations in 1921 in Asia Minor and was crucial in the final operations in 1922. It should be noted that in Greek historiography it is not sufficiently focused on the importance of the growth of Mustafa Kemal's movement, the support he

39. ID., *I profitti di un fallimento: politica e affari segreti dell'Italia in Turchia tra 1920 e 1923*, in *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, XC (2003), fasc. 1, p. 82.

40. P. DUMONT, *Mustafa Kemal invente la Turquie* cit., p. 87.

41. The first contact between the Soviets and Mustafa Kemal are dated in 1919, the time he arrived in Asia Minor.

42. VASSILEIOS LOUMIOTIS STAMATIS PANOUSAKIS, KONSTANTINOS SBRILIOS, *Η Μικρασιατική Εκστρατεία: Ο ρόλος των Σοβιετικών* [The Asia Minor Campaign: the role of the Soviets], Athens, 2016, pp. 20-31. BÜLENT GÖKAY *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920-1991*, London, 2006, pp. 28-29.

43. PATRICK KINROSS, *The Rebirth of a Nation*, London, 1964.

44. The initial request of the Turkish side was 1.5 million gold rubles; V. LOUMIOTIS, S. PANOUSAKIS, K. SBRILIO, *Η Μικρασιατική Εκστρατεία* cit., p. 6; G. BÜLENT, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey*, cit., p. 29.

45. Guns, rifles, machine guns, cartridges, destroyers.

enjoyed from the British, the French, the Russians, and his presence on the contemporary international stage. We therefore believe that the success of Mustafa Kemal's movement played a decisive role in the progression of the war on the Greek side.

The Greek military defeat in Asia Minor in 1922, which resulted in the mass deportation of the Greek Orthodox populations, was formalized by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. In total, about 1.35 million Orthodox Greeks left Turkey and 400,000 Muslims left Greece. Religion was the main criterion for the exchange of populations. This was the largest deportation before World War II. With the arrival of refugees from Asia Minor a crisis broke out in Greece<sup>46</sup>. The Greek people were demanding exemplary punishment for those responsible for the defeat, which brought about the conviction and execution of six leading politicians from the party then in power.

The Great War is considered a turning point and a critical period of transformation for the countries that participated in it. Tensions among ethnic groups were heightened throughout World War I in multi-ethnic empires, resulting in dissolution and their transformation into nation-states. The Great War was therefore proved decisive in the development of nation-states. For Greece, the Great War does not only refer to Europe. In Greece we observe a certain "lack" of memory concerning the Great War because it is perceived as a sequel to the Balkan Wars and a prelude to the Greek-Turkish war. The victories that Greece achieved in the Great War were regarded as a fulfilment of the "Great Idea". That is why, in the collective memory, the Great War began with the Balkan Wars with their territorial gains and ended in 1922 with the defeat of the Greek Army in Asia Minor. The events of 1918-1922 in collective memory are therefore understood as a consequence of the Great War. These events meant the definitive loss of Asia Minor for Greece. After 1922, the Modern Greeks state consolidated its new borders and ultimately abandoned the "Great Idea". Apart from the military defeat in Asia Minor, Greece has to deal with the issue of the refugees<sup>47</sup>. Thus the "cancellation" of the "Great Idea" and the refugee trauma created a common memory ground that led to the

46. F. GUIDA, *La Grecia tra Guerra e "scisma nazionale"* cit., p. 180.

47. HARIS EXERTZOGLU, *Η ιστορία της προσφυγικής μνήμης*, in ANTONIS LIAKOS (ed.), *Το 1922 και οι Πρόσφυγες μια νέα ματιά*, [1922 and the Refugees a new approach], Athens, 2011, pp. 191-201.

identification of the collective with the national<sup>48</sup>. The years of World War I are characterized by the “National Schism” that created deep rifts in Greek society and politics, and influenced the development of modern Greece for the next decades; this is why this period is called “National Schism” instead of “Great War”<sup>49</sup>. The Great War in the collective memory of Greece therefore forms part of a longer period beginning with the Balkan Wars, continuing through the National Schism and ending with the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey.

48. EMILIA SALVANOU, *Ο Α΄ Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος στην Ελληνική Ιστοριογραφία* [World War I in Greek Historiography], in *Αρχιτάξιο*, 2015, (17), pp. 66-93.

49. KOSTAS KOSTIS, *La paix introuvable: le cas grec*, in STÉPHANE AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, CHRISTOPHE PROCHASSON (eds.), *Sortir de la Grande Guerre: Le monde et l'après 1918*, Paris, 2008, pp. 349-350. VLASIS VLASIDIS, *The Great War and the Balkans: the use of memory in Bulgaria and Greece*, in *Greece, Bulgaria and Europe challenges in the Balkans*, Sofia, 2015, pp. 242-255.

## Polish Historiography

The First World War changed the world order and was a significant turning point. It brought the Belle Epoque to a close; it pointed the way to changes at various levels and in various environments; it meant an explosion of new trends and ideologies which have played a primary role in influencing political regimes ever more orientated towards totalitarian systems weighing on personal freedom. In the opinion of a famous contemporary Polish historian, Andrzej Chwalba, Europe committed suicide<sup>1</sup>.

It is therefore hardly surprising that studies and scientific research on the First World War have always been living material throughout specialised literature the world over, above all at the various anniversaries. By the end of 2012 sixty thousand works on the Great War had been published throughout the world in 150 languages; today the fifth generation of historians<sup>2</sup> is starting to investigate the war. In this sense Polish historiography is no exception, even though it is probably worthwhile to remember that most historians, would agree that for many years the historiography on the First World War, unlike that of the Second World War, did not arouse great interest among historians<sup>3</sup>. In order to understand the reasons for such "disinterest" certain features must be considered which specifically influence Polish historiography on the Great War.

For the Poles, since 1795 a people without their own homeland and state as in Kazimierz Wierzyński's poem entitled *The Year 1914*, the outbreak of war was comparable to the dawn of freedom. Already at the beginning of the twentieth century the possibility of an armed conflict was

1. ANDRZEJ CHWAŁBA, *Samobójstwo Europy. Wielka wojna 1914-1918*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014.

2. *Ivi*, p. 7.

3. *Ivi*, pp. 6-7.

on the books, a clash in which the invading powers would find themselves on opposing sides of a world conflict. This fact caused a dual sensation: on the one hand, reawakening the hope of improving the Poles' political situation and retrieving Polish independence, even though the two main political groups, the anti-German national group of Roman Dmowski and the anti-Russian group of Józef Piłsudski, channelled such hope through different alliances; and on the other, the concern that the war would cause other problems: a fraternal struggle among Poles forced to fight one against the other within the armed forces of the invaders.

The Polish did not see the First World War as a Polish war, but as a conflict among the great powers, empires and foreign countries. The Poles fought in the armies of the occupying powers and died not for their own interests but often against them, since they were incorporated into the armies of the invaders, frequently having to fight their fellow-countrymen. In the world conflict the Poles saw the chance to retrieve independence.

This explains why in the many publications at the beginning of the conflict, 1914 was underestimated. The year 1918 on the other hand was highlighted, the year of the rebirth and reconstruction of the state (Polish 'state-ship'). Scholars were more interested in the war in its final aspect, seen from the viewpoint of that happy day of November 11 1918, when after 123 years of dependence, Poland was reborn as a free country. The military and diplomatic effort for the successive independence of Poland was then analysed and underlined.

The study of the history of the Great War in its wider European and also common dimension is thanks to the scientists of recent years. Therefore in discussing it, I will focus on recent literature, in the literal sense that is after the transformation of the 1990s, starting with the appearance of *Solidarność* in the 1980s. This is also its symbolic dimension in the sense that the first war was seen as an omen and hope for the independence of Poland that took place first at the beginning and then at the end of the twentieth century. The significance in this case appears in a book published in 2014 by the Institute of National Memory, entitled *From Independence to Independence*, dealing with Polish history from 1918 to 1989<sup>4</sup>.

4. ADAM DZIUROK, MAREK GAŁĘZIOWSKI, ŁUKASZ KAMIŃSKI, FILIP MUSIAŁ, *Od niepodległości do niepodległości. Historia Polski 1918-1989*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Warsaw 2014.



From the period between the two wars to the 1980's

The writing in the inter-war period was dominated by memories, diaries, reports and memoirs of citizens, politicians and soldiers who fought on the various fronts and in the various armies. Among the many, we should recall the writing of Józef Piłsudski (*My First Battles; Memoirs Written in the Magdeburg Fort*)<sup>5</sup>, the remarkable *Notebooks* by Roman Dmowski<sup>6</sup>, *Memories* by Ignacy Daszyński<sup>7</sup>, L. Biliński (Memoirs and documents)<sup>8</sup>, M. Hoffmann (*The War of Extraordinary Opportunities*)<sup>9</sup>, A. Krasicki, officer in the Russian campaign 1914-1916<sup>10</sup>, B. Janusz (*293 Days of Russian Government in Leopoli*)<sup>11</sup>, and many others.

The most representative and complete study of this period was that of a historian and professor at the Vilnius Jagellonica University, (b. 1890, d. 1965), expert on Polish-Hungarian relations and the medieval history of Poland, Jan Konstanty Dąbrowski, the author of numerous publications among which *The Great War 1914-1918*<sup>12</sup>. With a goodly dose of objectivity, the author describes the advantages and disadvantages of the Austro-Hungarian army, comparing it honestly with the German ally and the Russian adversary, focusing on topics of political rather than military history. Extremely valuable because it is authentic and genuine, but also highly subjective, is another document written by Dąbrowski, *The Diary 1914-1918*<sup>13</sup>, with many references perfectly featuring the differing aspects of contemporary reality. The author does not hide his appreciation for the conservatives of Krakow and as of 1915 a certain degree of hostility for the Piłsudski circle, and for the socialists and peasant leaders as well. Apart from these likes and dislikes, *The Diary* contains a great deal of interesting information on the state and the prospects of the Polish cause. The Dia-

5. JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI, *Moje pierwsze boje. Wspomnienia spisane w twierdzy magdeburskiej*, Warszawa, Czeszy i Ludzie, 1924-1926.

6. ROMAN DMOWSKI, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa*, Warszawa, 1926.

7. IGNACY DASZYŃSKI, *Pamiętniki*, T.1, Kraków 1925, T.2 Kraków, 1926.

8. LEON BILIŃSKI, *Wspomnienia i dokumenty*, Warszawa 1924.

9. MAX HOFFMANN, *Wojna wśród niewyzyskanych sposobności*, Warszawa, 1931.

10. AUGUST KRASICKI, *Dziennik z kampanii rosyjskiej 1914-1916*, Warszawa, 1988.

11. BOHDAN JANUSZ, *293 dni rządów rosyjskich we Lwowie*, Lwów, 1915.

12. JAN KONSTANTY DĄBROWSKI, *Wielka wojna 1914-1918*, Warszawa, Trzaska Evert i Michalski, 1937.

13. ID., *Dziennik 1914-1918*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1977.

ry's author spoke with almost everyone, from the Polish political leaders through to the prisoners captured by the Russian army. In addition to general political characteristics he gave information on the feelings of the population, descriptions of the reality of everyday life. A further writing by Dabrowski is interesting, *The Polish Question in Hungary 1914-1916*<sup>14</sup>.

Among the publications after the Second World War, the work of Henryk Batowski merits attention, in particular that published in 1965 *The Disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1914-1918*, with its second edition, reviewed and enlarged with the subtitle 'Ethnic issues and diplomacy' published in Krakow in 1982<sup>15</sup>. Batowski describes the history of the Hapsburg monarchy during the First World War, investigating the causes of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but he turns the question upside down, trying to discover how "the State, so anachronistic, managed to function for so long." In answering, he maintains that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was condemned to decline firstly because of centrifugal national aspirations. The multinational body, in which the two dominant nations, German-Austrian and Hungarian, were little more than two fifths of the total population (43%) and had no possibility of surviving in the era of national states. Once the idea of self-determination of peoples and their right to their own national state had triumphed, the presence and the process of centrifugal movements were inevitable, and the task of blocking them was beyond the effective possibilities of the government and decision-makers.

An important contribution to describe the story of the Hapsburg dynasty, even in the period of the First World War, undoubtedly came from Stanislaw Grodziski, lawyer, well-known history professor of Krakow, professor *honoris causa* of the Wroclaw University, author of many works on the history of Galicia and the Austrian empire, among which: *History of the Socio-Political System in Galicia 1772-1848* in 1971<sup>16</sup>, *In the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria* in 1976<sup>17</sup>, the piece on *Franz Josef I* of 1983<sup>18</sup>,

14. ID., *Sprawa polska na Węgrzech 1914-1916*, Piotrków, 1917.

15. HENRYK BATOWSKI, *Rozpad Austro-Węgier. Sprawy narodowościowe i działania dyplomatyczne*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1965; wyd 2 Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 1982.

16. STANISŁAW GRODZISKI, *Historia ustroju społeczno-politycznego Galicji 1772-1848*, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków, 1971.

17. ID., *W królestwie Galicji i Lodomerii*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 1976.

18. ID., *Franciszek Józef*, Wrocław - Warszawa - Kraków - Gdańsk-Łódź, 1983.

and the book on the dynasty of the *Hapsburgs*, published in 1998<sup>19</sup>. His publications make a determined effort to compare the legend of Galicia with historic reality, affirming that if the nineteenth century gave rise to the Polish legend, the next, the twentieth, brought about its revision, comparing it to reality. With the utmost care and precision he examines the fundamental factors and attributes of a state, its territory, its power and population, seeing in the independence of Galicia and in the wisdom of its people the source of hope for the future of Poland.

Another well-known historian, Henryk Wereszycki, wrote a book published in Krakow in 1975 entitled *Under Hapsburg Domination. Problems of Nationality*<sup>20</sup>. This concentrated in particular on ethnic issues in the State of the Hapsburgs, trying to analyse the successive stages of development of this problem: from the reawakening of national consciousness among the peoples of this country, through a period of struggle for a new configuration of the system of monarchy according to the needs of various nationalities and increasing ethnic tension. Lastly he also analyses the period before the First World War and the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Another historian well known for his publications is the professor at the Krakow University, Józef Buszko, author of the studies *From Slavery to Independence (1864-1918)*<sup>21</sup> and *Galicia 1859-1914, A Polish Piedmont*<sup>22</sup>? in which he examines the history of the Polish nation and the Polish state, highlighting its tragic destiny and underlining the sacrifice of the Poles and the value of Galicia's independence – as promoter of the ideas of independence, the support of hope for the Polish people – seen also as the land where the Polish heart beats. Worthy of note is the collective work by Jerzy Holzer and Jan Molenda, *Poland in the First World War*<sup>23</sup> and many other studies on the subject, among which the work of Stefan Kieniewicz, *History of Poland 1795-1918*, Henryk Zielinski, *Polish History 1914-1939* of 1983, Ludwik Bazyłow, to name only the most important<sup>24</sup>.

19. ID., *Habsburgowie*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 1998.

20. HENRYK WERESZYCKI, *Pod berłem Habsburgów. Zagadnienia narodowościowe*, Kraków 1975.

21. JÓZEF BUSZKO, *Od niewoli do niepodległości (1864-1918)*, Kraków, 2000.

22. ID., *Galicia 1859-1914. Polski Piemont?*, Warszawa, 1989.

23. JERZY HOLZER, JAN MOLEND, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, Warszawa, Wiedza Powszechna, 1963; wyd. 2 1967; wyd. 3 1973.

24. STEFAN KIENIEWICZ, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, Warszawa, 1968; HENRYK ZIELIŃSKI, *Historia Polski 1914-1939* Wrocław, 1983; LUDWIK BAZYŁÓW, *Historia powszechna 1789-1918*, Warszawa, 1986.

## Publications in more recent times

A great deal of mature study is presented in the 1987 book *1914-1918. Studies and Sketches on the History of the First World War*<sup>25</sup> by Marian Zgórniak, the author known for other publications, for example: *The Strategic Role of Krakow before the Outbreak of the First World War*<sup>26</sup>, *Galicja in Planning the War of Austria and Austro-Hungary*<sup>27</sup>, or *Battle of Gorlice*<sup>28</sup>. Professor Zgórniak's work is a concrete, compact study developed with great maturity. It contains an amazing quantity of information. The author shows that it was evidently a modern war, involving politicians and strategists, industrialists and scientists, quite apart from the soldiers and civilians involved willy-nilly in the battles. It was a new type of war. It required military preparations above all, which unfortunately were not at a level adequate to the situation. A significant part of the publication is on the affairs of the Poles. Zgórniak uncovers little-known topics, such as the role of Polish emigration in the struggle for independence, the activity of Polish formations in Romania especially on the eastern front which for years crossed Polish land, bringing death and destruction. Material damage was assessed at the enormous sum of 75 billion golden francs. He underlines the fact that the Poles took an active part in the three partitioning powers, losing on all fronts approximately 500,000 people.

One First World War historian in Poland is unquestionably Janusz Pajewski, for many years professor at the University of Poznań. His publications demonstrate this: *"Mitteleuropa". Studies on the History of German Imperialism in the Era of the First World War* in 1959; *About the Polish Case of 1970*; and *The Reconstruction of the Polish State 1914-1918* of 1978<sup>29</sup>. The latter is dedicated to "all those who in the darkness of imprisonment, in

25. MARIAN ZGÓRNIAK, *1914-1918. Studia i szkice z dziejów I wojny światowej*, wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 1987.

26. ID., *Strategiczna rola Krakowa przed wybuchem I wojny światowej*, Karków, Materiały sesji naukowej, 1988.

27. ID., *Galicja w planowaniu wojennym Austrii i Austro-Węgier*, Zeszyt 121, Kraków, Wydawnictwo UJ, 1997.

28. The essay was published in the volume *Rzeka Ropa. Szkice historyczne*, Kraków 1968.

29. JANUSZ PAJEWSKI, *"Mitteleuropa". Studia z dziejów imperializmu niemieckiego w dobie pierwszej wojny światowej*, Poznań, 1959; also by him *Wokół sprawy polskiej*, Paryż – Lozanna – Londyn – Poznań, 1970 and *Odbudowa państwa polskiego 1914-1918*, Warszawa, PWN, 1978 (3 edizione 1985).

the nation's most difficult moments, have never doubted Poland". Starting from his analysis of the Polish question on the eve of war, considering the position of the partitioning powers, the problems of Polish lands under occupation by the Russian, German and Austrian invaders, he describes the difficulties from the outset of the reconstruction of the Polish state and its new place in the post-war world. The story of the history of the First World War, as Pajewski himself admitted, has always aroused his lively interest. It is not surprising therefore that the book *The First World War 1914-1918*<sup>30</sup>, appearing in 1991, became his *opus magna*. This study with its 932 pages is an excellent combination of description of direct military actions with the presentation of strategic and diplomatic activity. The author, in much detail and with great sensitivity and a profound knowledge of his subject describes the situations on the various fronts, and political *salons*. He presents interesting discussions on the possible variants in the war, chances lost or missed. Pajewski's book is an attempt to account for a "general war for the freedom of peoples", for which the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz had prayed. Pajewski seeks to describe the two fundamental questions: the objectives of the war imposed by the powers causing the war itself, and the results obtained. The war lasting 4 years, 4 months and 11 days was a turning-point in the history of Europe and of the world, marking the transition towards a new historical era. Lastly, the book reveals the immensity of the tragedy of the Great War.

An important role in research on contemporary Polish and European history is unquestionably that of the professor of History of the Institute of Political Studies and the Collegium Civitas of Warsaw, a front-line expert in the history of the twentieth century and the author of publications such as *The Political Mosaic of the Second Republic*; *Solidarność 1980-1981. Origin and History*; *Communism in Europe*; *The European Tragedy of the Twentieth Century. The Second World War*<sup>31</sup>; Jerzy Holzer. In 2008 he published the book *Europe of the Wars 1914-1945*<sup>32</sup>, where he describes the story of the first half of the twentieth century, focusing not only on the political

30. JANUSZ PAJEWSKI, *Pierwsza wojna światowa 1914-1918*, Warszawa, PWN, 1998, 3ediz.2005.

31. JERZY HOLZER, *Mozaika polityczna II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 1974; ID., *Solidarność 1980-1981. Geneza i historia*, Paryż 1984; ID., *Komunizm w Europie. Dzieje ruchu i systemu władzy*, Warszawa, 2000, ID., *Europejska tragedia XX wieku. II wojna światowa*, Kraków Warszawa, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Wydawnictwo Znak, 2012.

32. J. HOLZER, *Europa wojen 1914-1945*, Warszawa, Świat Książki, 2008.

aspect, often treated as a priority, but also trying to show other, often neglected, aspects of history: economic, social and cultural rights. Moreover, he considers the different histories of the diverse European regions, and in particular the highly significant regions of central-eastern, south-eastern and eastern Europe. His attention focuses on the First World War. The author refers to the prestigious studies in recent world historiography (D.S. Landes, A.G. Kenwood, E. Hobsbawm, N. Davies); in seeking to examine the causes of the conflict, he underlines the enormous role of “nationalist feelings” that “in the minds of politicians and the great masses of population became a power, unobserved for a long time. (...) Europe, or a significant part of Europe, at the beginning of the twentieth century experienced the restlessness due in certain nations to the enormous uncertainty in others for lack of respect for their own interests. With the prospect of war, the powers desperately sought allies, the smaller states – seeking fellow-sufferers among the oppressed nations *cercavano dei compatrioti, le nazioni oppresse* – possible liberators. War was at the gates of Europe. It was simply a question of luck, a random consequence, as to which event in the international arena would be the first to trigger it”<sup>33</sup>. Looking at the many illusions characteristic of politicians and military actors (illusion on the brevity of the war, the perception of war as a celebration a kaleidoscope of uniforms, brave men and processions), he confesses that the First World War was “a war of millions of soldiers in the trenches”. Their tragedy was the “immobility, a strange mirage of boredom and almost bestial conditions of life on the ground or underground, (...) the tragedy of living with the constant presence of death. (...) This war with millions of fighters, millions of dead and wounded, unlike previous and successive wars, was in general without any spectacular aspect”<sup>34</sup>. It was a total war, with all the consequences of economic and psychological war, causing suffering to civilians (in the wake of military operations, hunger and disease, the war killed approximately 5 million civilians<sup>35</sup>. The Great War led to changes in traditions, for example altering women’s traditional role since they had to take over as head of the family, quite apart from changes in sexual habits.

33. *Ivi*, p. 90.

34. *Ivi*, p. 100.

35. *Ivi*, p. 123.



An excellent study on the First World War is that of Andrzej Chwalba, highly-respected historian and essayist, professor at the University of Jagellonica, is the author of many history books on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as *The History of Poland 1795-1918*; *Third Republic – the Special Relationship*; *History of 1989-2011*; *Universal History. The XIX Century*<sup>36</sup>. In 2014 he had made a broad study of 645 pages on the First World War: *The Suicide of Europe. The Great War 1914-1918*<sup>37</sup>. The title refers to declarations found not only in literature. Otto von Bismarck himself spoke of the idea of preventive war with France calling it “suicide out of fear of death”<sup>38</sup>. Chwalba follows in the tracks of the war. He examines war in the field, indicating its various models (manoeuvres, trenches, action in the Alps, war in winter, psychological war, the secret services, amphibious operations) and the activity on various fronts: the western front, the eastern front, the southern front. He describes war at sea, war in the air, war against civilians, and lastly a war of nations from which the new Europe was born.

Throughout, he tries to answer the question of why Europe decided to commit suicide, that is, to start the war out of fear of death, the war that in reality divided two eras. The war symbolised the failure of the 1815 Vienna order. In the opinion of Hannah Arendt, the famous twentieth-century philosopher, the twentieth century started exactly in August 1914 – a time of catastrophes and human tragedies. According to Chwalba, the Great War meant a prelude to what was to happen thereafter in the years 1939-1945. For him, the Second World War had its origin in that infamous 1914. Both wars, although different in so many ways, had a lot in common: the militarisation of political and economic life, the displacement of people and hard labour, common responsibility.

The author intentionally abandons the analyses of the peace treaties, the subject of so many previous publications such as those of Henryk Batowski, and devotes himself to searching for other answers to the basic questions: the origins of the Great War, for example. He deals with the typology of manoeuvres, he discusses the evolution of combat technologies and

36. ANDRZEJ CHWAŁBA, *Historia Polski 1795-1918*, Kraków, 2001; ID. *III Rzeczpospolita – raport specjalny*, Kraków, 2005; ID. *Historia powszechna 1989-2011*, Warszawa, 2008; ID. *Historia powszechna 1989-2011*, Kraków, 2016.

37. A. CHWAŁBA, *Samobójstwo Europy*, cit..

38. *Ivi*, p. 10.



destruction and killing techniques, he points out actions of manipulation and those of propaganda. Lastly, he poses the question of the fate of the wounded and disabled soldiers, and of the deserters, attempting to create his own evaluation of the Great War (referring to the statistics given by other authors such as P. Kennedy). He does not, however, stop at the analysis of numbers and statistics. He draws attention to the fact that in every case the issue was a single war hero, his drama, his fate as a soldier, his drama of becoming acquainted with pain, death, his loss and recovery of faith in God and victory. He also speaks of the relations between the soldier and civilian power at the crucial but abnormal moment embodied into the everyday life of civilians, he speaks of the role of women, "courageously entering into the history of men". All these problems he analyses and describes, drawing attention to the political effects of war. At the same time he maintains that it was in the war trenches that the liberal state was defeated and died, and the ideas and systems of totalitarianism arose: Communism, Fascism and Nazism. In 1917 Bolshevik Russia was born, and after the war came the European pacifists who were willing to die neither for Gdańsk nor for Paris. Chwalba also analyses the consequences of the fall of the great empires and the rise of the new countries (not always wished for or expected, Poland among them<sup>39</sup>).

In Polish historiography, there is no lack of studies on military aspects. The publication entitled *At the Origins of Independence 1914-1918*<sup>40</sup> edited by Piotr Stawecki focuses on the story of the military actions of the Polish army. We find interesting sketches on the origins and organisation of the Polish legions, the Polish military formations in Russia, in France, the Poles' participation in the Russian army and the Austro-Hungarian army, the liberation of Polish territory and the birth of the army of the Second Republic. From the military aspect, Hubert Mordawski examines *The Military Air Force of the First World War*<sup>41</sup>. Studies of this type are ever more frequent.

39. *Ivi*, p. 8.

40. PIOTR STAWECKI (red.), *U źródeł niepodległości 1914-1918. Z dziejów polskiego czynu zbrojnego*, Warszawa, 1988.

41. HUBERT MORDAWSKI, *Siły powietrzne I wojny światowej*, Wrocław, 2008.

Studies on territory are also interesting. Andrzej Olszański, the author of the study *The First World War in the Carpathians*<sup>42</sup>, analyses the most important battles. Piotr Szanta, the Polish historian connected to the academic centre of Toruń dedicates his book to *Tannenberg 1914*<sup>43</sup>, while Jarosław Centek of the University of Warsaw, in his writing analyses two important battles, that of the *Somme 1916*<sup>44</sup> and that of *Verdun 1916*<sup>45</sup>. The military operations in Galicia are described by Juliusz Bator in his wide-reaching study *Galician War. The Actions of the Austro-Hungarian Army on the Northern (Galician) Front in 1914-1915*<sup>46</sup>.

According to Bator the First World War marked a critical point in the history of our civilisation: the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. It was the first armed conflict of such dimensions, both from the territorial aspect and from that of the enormous tragedy of the victims. It was also an experimental field for the modern means of destruction invented at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries: the machine-gun, artillery, offensive and defensive grenades, etc. In his book, the author raises complex questions connected to events of the First World War in the sector of Galicia and Lodomeria. He describes the course of the fighting, the battles between the troops of the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian Empires during 1914-1915 (the defence of Lviv, the battles on the Vistula and in the Carpathians, the battle of Dęblin, the defence of the Przemyśl fortress). He analyses war plans, military preparations, the impact of diplomatic activity on the course of the fighting, the methods and consequences of the use of modern weapons. The book also contains interesting documentary material: photographs, maps, biographies of the commanders, and an appendix with the analysis of the conditions of the Austro-Hungarian army in 1914.

Different from this historic perspective but very interesting in viewing and analysing the case of the First World War is the political science perspective. An original interpretation from this view is offered by Tadeusz

42. TADEUSZ ANDRZEJ OLSZAŃSKI (red.), *Pierwsza wojna światowa w Karpatach*, Warszawa, 1985.

43. PIOTR SZLANTA, *Tannenberg 1914*, Warszawa, 2005.

44. JAROSŁAW CENTEK, *Somma 1916*, Warszawa, 2011.

45. ID., *Verdun 1916*, Warszawa, 2009.

46. JULIUSZ BATOR, *Wojna galicyjska. Działania armii austro-węgierskiej na froncie północnym (galicyjskim) w latach 1914-1915*, Kraków, Libron, 2005.

Kisielewski, an independent analyst of international relations with interests in geopolitics and geostrategy. In his book *The Great War and Polish Independence*<sup>47</sup>, published in 2014, therefore in the year of the anniversary of the Great War, he concentrates on a political analysis that shows the play of international political relations, the rivalry between the great powers for dominance in Europe and the struggle for the colonies. The publication, made up of five essays, shows the complex history of alliances and blocs, negotiations and circumstances that took Poland to independence, that independence so longed-for and awaited. Kisielewski states that Poland lost her sovereignty, not in 1795 when after it was carved up for the third time it vanished from the map of Europe for 123 years, but as early as 1704 during the Great War of the North, when Poland entered into an alliance with Russia, signing the Norwegian treaty on the basis of which Russian troops could remain and operate throughout the territory of the Republic. The War of the North ended in 1721, but the Tsar dealt with Poland in such a way that the treaty, concluded in wartime, remained in force indefinitely. Lithuania, as of 1702, and also Poland as of 1704, therefore became a Russian protectorate. He concludes therefore stating that if the Poles had lacked a sovereign state, not for 123 year but for more than 210, then that was all the more reason to celebrate the anniversary of its rebirth.

The First World War has been not only the topic of discussion among historians, but also the subject of literary works written both by those serving in the war and by the people from successive generations. This analysis is contained in a collective study edited by Eugenia Loch and Krzysztof Stępniać, *The First World War in Polish and Foreign Literature*<sup>48</sup>. The authors, convinced that literature too is a witness to truth, show through its means the different ways to “re-acquire independence”. They show the First World War through literary and journalistic works of twenty-first century writers in Poland and in several European countries.

It is worth underlining that the anniversary of the war has triggered the need to show its story through images, photographs, exhibitions. This has led to the production of several albums, for example *The Great War*

47. TADEUSZ A. KISIELEWSKI, *Wielka wojna i niepodległość Polski*, Poznań, 2012.

48. *Pierwsza wojna światowa w literaturze polskiej i obcej. Wybrane zagadnienia*, edited by EUGENIA ŁOCH, KRZYSZTOF STĘPNIĄK, Lublin, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1999.

1914-1918. *The Real End of the Belle Epoque*, with an introduction by Professor Zbigniew Wawer, the director of the Museum of the Polish Army in Warsaw where he organised a commemorative exhibition on the Great War, documenting its complex nature, and paying tribute to the fallen, frequently unknown, nameless soldiers. An important contribution to modern research is a study by Iwona Kienzler, *The Great War 1914-1918*<sup>49</sup>. Richly illustrated, it analyses the origins and development of the conflict, everyday life in the reality of war and the consequences of the conflict. In the latter, the attention of scientific research concentrated also on the documentation and memory of the war. Among the publications on this aspect, we should recall Oktawian Duda's book, *Cemeteries of the First World War, in the Western Part of Galicia*<sup>50</sup> and Roman Frodyma's *War Cemeteries of the First World War at Tarnów*<sup>51</sup>.

The First World War revolutionised Europe and is still a resounding echo in all walks of life. It influenced the new European and world order, the development of man and culture. It is therefore not surprising that researchers have tried to describe its most important events and to document the tragedy of war, in order to understand the reasons for the outbreak of the Great War, the changes, historical-political, social and economic of new trends and ideologies. All this in the land of Poland is recalled in order to understand the real price and value of independence, the need to create an adequate historical policy and the memory of all those who fought for freedom without for an instant doubting Poland and its values.

49. IWONA KIENZLER, *Wielka wojna 1914-1918*, Warszawa, 2014.

50. OKTAWIAN DUDA, *Cmentarze wojenne z I wojny światowej w Galicji Zachodniej*, Warszawa, 1995.

51. ROMAN FRODYMA, *Cmentarze wojenne z I wojny światowej na ziemi tarnowskiej*, Krosno, 2006.



## The Belgian Historiography on the Great War. Between Regional and European Perspective

In 1914, Belgium is at the same time a small country – 29,457 squared kilometers, 7,4 million inhabitants in 1910 – and an industrial and colonial power. It is a neutral state. Its neutrality, on the contrary of the Swiss one, has been at the same time imposed and guaranteed in 1839 by five powers, i.e. Austria, Russia, France, England and Prussia. The last three are Belgium's neighbours. A fourth one is Holland with which a treaty is also signed in 1839 for regulating the situation born from the revolution of 1830 and the independence of Belgium. The fifth neighbour is Luxemburg. In order to say it shortly, Belgium, in 1914, is similar, from the point of view of its international charter to an under-age even if it has been successful, thanks to an important participation to the international life out of the political-diplomatic field, with being regarded as a “field of experiences” in order to say it with a French observer of the time<sup>1</sup>.

I will not stop here to the issue of the attitude of Belgium in front of the war danger<sup>2</sup> and I will limit myself to remember that on 3 August 1914, the Belgian government answers with a refusal to the German ultimatum. Would Belgium accept this last one, writes the minister of Foreign affairs, “it would betray its duties with regard to Europe”. This is the reason why, continues the minister, “the Belgian government, resorting to all means to its disposition, is firmly decided to reject any attack to its right”<sup>3</sup>.

1. HENRI CHARRIAUT, *La Belgique moderne, terre d'expériences*, Paris, Ernest Flammarion, 1910. Examples include investments abroad, organization of international exposures (5 in the twenty years before the war), active participation to the peace movement, the Second International, etc.

2. DAVID STEVENSON, *Battlefield or Barrier? Rearmament and Military Planning in Belgium, 1902-1914*, in *The International History Review*, vol. 29, n°3, 2007, pp. 473-507.

3. Note delivered by the BELGIAN minister of Foreign affairs, Davignon, to Below Saleske, minister of Germany in Belgium, 3 August 1914, in ROYAUME DE BELGIQUE, *Correspondance diplomatique relative à la guerre de 1914 (24 juillet-29 août)*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1914, p. 22. About

On 4 August, the German army invades Belgium. In Berlin, the chancellor Bethmann Hollweg declares at the Reichstag that the treaty of 1839 is only a “scrap of paper”. The Belgian army instead of shooting some fire blows before surrendering as the Germans but also a great part of the European public opinion waited for, manifested an unexpected ability to resistance. In front of this last, the German army engages in numerous atrocities against the civil population<sup>4</sup>. They are attributed to the will to exercise a pressure on the populations to oblige the opponent to lay down arms but also to the paranoia of an uprising against the military occupation.

The killing of several hundreds of civilians – men, women and children –, the devastation of Louvain and the fire of the library of the university of this city, the pillage of other urbanized areas, the escape towards France, Holland and England of 20% of the entire population attracts the international indignation. This indignation is exploited by the propaganda. The expression “rape of Belgium” used in reference to the violation of the neutrality, very soon sharpens a literal meaning in consideration of the German atrocities. The violation of the neutrality, the resistance of the army and the crimes of war contribute to the birth of the legend of neutral Belgium, martyr of the right and the civilization. It is not surprising that the Belgian case is exploited by the propaganda of the allies but also by German and Belgian propaganda. In fact, Belgium has to defend itself from charges of Berlin trying to justify the violation of the neutrality before explaining that the violence used against the civilians is due to the irregulars. The action of the Belgian propaganda will be therefore destined above all to the public opinion of the neutral states second a thematic one illustrated in the book of Emile Waxweiler, published in 1915 and translated immediately in English, entitled *Belgium neutral and loyal*<sup>5</sup>.

The Belgian case is of use to the French and to the English to justify their good right and their intervention. Both try to demonstrate that their war is right because it is inspired by the will to fight against barbarity. From this point of view “the rape of Belgium” becomes a leitmotiv. The “Poor

Belgium from 1914 to 1918, besides Pirenne cited more ahead: SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *La Belgique et la première guerre mondiale*, Bruxelles, PIE-Peter Lang, 2004, and MICHEL DUMOULIN, *L'entrée dans le XXe siècle, 1905-1918*, new ed., Bruxelles, Le Cri, 2011.

4. JEFF LIPKES, *Rehearsals. The German Army in Belgium, August 1914*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2007; sec. ed., Wesley Chapel, Florida, The Brabant Press, 2014.

5. *Belgium neutral and loyal: the war of 1914*, New York-London, G.P. Putman's Sons, 1915.



little Belgium”<sup>6</sup> and its king, i.e. Albert I come heroized<sup>7</sup>, together with others figures of the resistance like Cardinal Mercier, Gabrielle Petit<sup>8</sup> and Edith Cavell, the English nurse whose execution in Brussels on 12 October 1915 provokes an international surge of anger<sup>9</sup>.

The “instrumentalization” of the Belgian case is a transnational phenomenon which, having fed the period of the war, feed the memory of this one until our days. The historiography of the “European war” as a big part of the press calls it in August, 1914 is born, in Belgium like elsewhere, in an atmosphere of mourning, hatred of Germany and, at the same time, pursuit in the realization of the formula “never more that! “. But this does not close the speech<sup>10</sup>. In May 1924 the first issue of the journal entitled *Revue belge des livres, documents, et archives de la guerre 1914-1918* is published [Belgian review of the books, documents and archives of war 1914-1918]<sup>11</sup>. From the origins until the last number exited in 1953, the journal collects a colossal amount of bibliographical and archival information. From a first analysis of the corpus, it turns out that the arguments privileged from the publishing activity are the civil and military memorialist literature, local history, the bad faith – in order not to say more – of the Germans and the

6. LARRY ZUCKERMAN, *The Rape of Belgium: The Untold Story of World War I*, New York, New York University Press, 2004.

7. LAURENCE VAN YPERSELE, *Le roi Albert, histoire d'un mythe*, Ottignies, Quorum, 1995; new ed., Bruxelles, Labor, 2006.

8. S. DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *Gabrielle Petit: The Death and Life of a Female Spy in the First World War*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

9. EMMANUEL DE BRUYNE, *Le réseau Edith Cavell*, Bruxelles, Racine, 2015.

10. For the bibliography: PATRICK LEFEVRE-JEAN LORETTE (dir.), *La Belgique et la première guerre mondiale. Bibliographie*, Bruxelles, Musée royal de l'Armée, 1987 (Centre d'histoire militaire, travaux, 21); P.A. TALLIER-S. SOUPART, *La Belgique et la première guerre mondiale, Bibliographie*, t. 2: *ouvrages édités de 1985 à 2000 - België en de Eerste Wereldoorlog, Bibliografie, deel 2: werken uitgegeven van 1985 tot 2000*, Bruxelles, 2001 (Centre d'histoire militaire, travaux, 35). About the historiography and its evolution: LAURENCE VAN YPERSELE, *Bilan historiographique de la guerre 14-18*, in *Cahiers CRHDI*, n°23-24, Bruxelles, Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, 2005, pp. 1-29, and BRUNO BENVINDO-BENOIT MAJERUS-ANTOON VRINTS, *La grande guerre des historiens belges, 1914-2014*, in *Journal of Belgian History*, t. XLIV, 2014, n°2-3, pp. 170-196. It should be noted that while knowing that it is impossible to account for the whole historiographical production, this interesting work ignores the contributions about propaganda, the role of the Church and religions, political and diplomatic issues, cultural life, etc.

11. Bruxelles, Falk & fils, Georges Van Campenhout - Paris, Falk-de Nobele, 1924-1925 (1ère série) - 1939-1953 (14e série).

resistance during the occupation. Therefore, the military operations and the political-diplomatic events take only a little place.

The conflict has been the detector of the patriotism but above all of a form of nationalism generated by two mobilizations, the first one against the outside enemy; the second against the internal one<sup>12</sup>. This last one corresponds to the denunciation of the enemies of the unitary state, that is of all those, mostly but not only Flemish<sup>13</sup> who betrayed the national cause within the framework of the Berlin's *Flamenpolitik*. Which amounts to saying that the myth of Flanders collaborator of the Germans arisen from World War I and strengthened by the second is still alive in the French-speaking public opinion. But this is not the only consequence from the internal point of view. Beyond the issue of the collaboration in the occupied country, the dissonance provoked from the so-called difference of treatment in the trenches between French-speaking and Flemish-speaking soldiers becomes and is still an important point of discussion. It is said that the latter were obliged to obey orders given in French by French-speaking officers; orders which would be indirectly responsible for the strongest mortality of the Flemish-speaking soldiers. That is why, in spite of the results of the historic research we spoke and we speak until our days of Flemish losses representing 80% of the total of the losses of the Belgian army<sup>14</sup>.

12. Let us quote S. DE SCHAEFDRIJVER, *Deux patries. La Belgique entre exaltation et rejet, 1914-1918*, in *Cahiers d'histoire du temps présent*, n° 7, 2000, pp. 17-49 and 306-307: "An underground patriotic discourse sought to uphold the "spirit of 1914", emphasizing the eminent rightness and overriding importance of the Belgian cause. As the occupation wore on and tensions within the population deepened, and the marching orders of 1914 paled into abstraction, so this discourse of patriotism met with increasing indifference. Meanwhile, a coherent counter-discourse emerged in the circles of so-called "activism" (namely, that part of the Flemish Movement willing to collaborate with the occupying forces, who were pursuing a "Flemish policy"). Activism's self-justificatory counter-patriotism centered on the notion of the defence of Flanders, an authentic "true Fatherland" ostensibly threatened by artificial Belgium, a mere state. Activist counter-patriotism was to influence significantly the postwar Flemish Movement, thus reinforcing the notion of Belgium's ineluctable artificiality. This notion, which had been such a central element of German wartime rhetoric, thus cast a longer shadow than the notion of heroic, "transcendental" Belgium, which at the international level was widely and swiftly dismissed as so much war propaganda, and which, in Belgium itself, foundered amidst the disillusionments of the post-war era."

13. PAUL DELFORGE, *La Wallonie et la première guerre mondiale. Pour une histoire de la séparation administrative*, Namur, Institut Destrée, 2008.

14. It is only at the end of the years 1980 that the results of a research putting an end to the myth of the 80% are published: LUC DE VOS-HANS KEYMOLEN, *Een definitieve afrekening met de 80%-mythe? Het Belgisch Leger (1914-1918) en de sociale en numerieke taalverhoudingen onder de*

The “Belgian divorce”, begun very before the war, is strengthened during it as in Belgium as in the trenches and is aggravated with the succession of the years. This divorce, even if it does not constitute the subject of this presentation, was and is still present in the remembrances of World War I. Today the Belgian state is a federal one. This state has wide left the initiative of the commemorations – that they have had a vastness without precedence – to the Regions and Communities that compose a complicated institutional landscape. The direct consequence of this demobilization of the central power in an atmosphere of competition and not collaboration is the risk of a bigger fragmentation of the memory of the Great War. On both sides of the linguistic border everyone rewrites its history according to angles of approach very different as shown by the Flemish Region/Community that was accused to use remembrances in order to reinforce the Flemish identity<sup>15</sup>.

Turning back to the period of the first post-war period, we observe that the factors which we quoted explain that little room was made for the Europeanist speech and action. Certainly, as demonstrated by Geneviève Duchenne<sup>16</sup>, certain activists of the European idea are very active as well in Belgium as abroad. However, it seems that the public opinion, even if he would be more exact to speak of several public opinions, was never passionate about the most important realization of the idea of European peace and security of that age, that is the League of Nations. At the same time the pacifist role of the veterans, mainly Flemish, cannot be forgotten. They not only contribute to the discredit of the war but also to that of the signed military alliance with France in 1920<sup>17</sup>. Doing so, they encourage

*gesneuvelden van lagere rang*, in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Militaire Geschiedenis-Revue belge d'histoire militaire*, t. XXVI, 1988, n° 8, pp. 589-612; t. XXVII, 1989, n°1, pp. 1-37 and n°2, pp. 81-101.

15. For the critical presentation of the programs of the commemorations in Belgium, see JEAN LEFEVRE, *1914-1918. Etat de the question. Les enjeux politiques autour des commémorations de la première guerre mondiale*, Brussels, Institut Emile Vandervelde, 2013, and for a first analysis of the realizations: MÉLANIE BOST-CHANTAL KESTELOOT, *Les commémorations du centenaire de la Première guerre mondiale*, in *Courrier to hebdomadaire du Crisp*, n°2235-2236, Brussels, Crisp, 2015.

16. GENEVIÈVE DUCHENNE, *Esquisses d'une Europe nouvelle. L'euroépisme dans la Belgique de l'entre-deux-guerres (1919-1939)*, Brussels... Wien, PIE-Peter Lang, 2008 (Euroclio. Études et documents).

17. GUIDO PROVOOST, *Vlaanderen en het militair-politiek beleid in België tussen de twee wereldoorlogen*, Leuven, Davidfonds, 1975-1977, 2 vol.

a diplomacy oriented towards Geneva at least until the clamorous failures of the thirties. Having said that, the action carried by the trilogy consisted by the liberal pacifism, the Roman Catholic Church and the democratic socialism, as well as the will of the government to find peace guarantees with the great neighbours, demonstrate an almost dialectical tension between a jealous nationalism shared between remembrance and glorification of the heroes, and an increasing internationalism<sup>18</sup>.

It is not surprising to notice that the historiography of the 20s and 30s does not report what precedes. Beyond the fact that contemporary history is considered journalism, it is almost impossible to make the history of all which seems contrary to mythology and its heroes as demonstrated very well, between many other examples, by the issue of the surveys of peace between 1915 and 1918. It means so how much it was difficult to propose a speech trying to consider Germany with a certain critical distance. This distancing was not however impossible as illustrated by the case of the medievalist Henri Pirenne. In 1919, returned from Germany where he had been prisoner and had written his *Histoire de l'Europe des invasions au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* which will be published after its death<sup>19</sup>, he is appointed rector of the university of Ghent. His inaugural speech of the academic year 1919-1920 is entitled "Belgium and Germany. Some historical reflections."<sup>20</sup> In that speech, the Belgian historian of great international reputation tries to understand why and how Belgium could be betrayed by Germany. Remembering that the German Karl Lamprecht, another very famous historian, called Belgium "a microcosm of Europe" when Stefan Zweig wrote that it is "a mirror with one thousand facets which presents

18. 13 intergovernmental organizations existed in 1914. They are 31 in 1930. The not governmental organizations are 135 in 1910, 375 in 1930.

19. *Histoire de l'Europe des invasions au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris-Brussels, Librairie Félix Alcan-Nouvelle Société d'Édition, 1936. An edition nearer the original of Pirenne has been published recently: *Histoire de l'Europe, éditée d'après les carnets de captivité (1916-1918), suivie des Souvenirs de captivité. Préface et édition critique par Jean- Pierre Devroey et Arnaud Knaepen*, Brussels, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2014.

20. UNIVERSITÉ DE GAND, *Année académique 1919-1920. Ouverture solennelle des cours, 11 novembre 1919. Discours de M. le Recteur H. Pirenne, La nation belge et l'Allemagne, quelques réflexions historiques. Rapport sur la situation de l'université pendant année 1918-1919*, Gand, Vanderpoorten, 1920, p. 6.

in short as a summary of the multiple universe”<sup>21</sup>, Pirenne expresses the regret of the transformation of the “microcosm of Europe” in battlefield of it, of the loss of the benefits of the cohabitation of the French culture with the German one, so present and admired in Belgium. Warning, in 1922, against any “crusade against German science”<sup>22</sup>, Pirenne advocates the following year in its speech of opening of the first international conference of historical sciences in favor of a comparative history opposing it to the ethnocentric history that he repulses<sup>23</sup>. He makes especially the trial of the historiography that worries mainly so not exclusively about national history without considering other situations. The defects of this method to write history are numerous. And Pirenne to explain that it is dangerous to consider as “national” the one which is general or results from a loan made from another national situation to tell nothing of the danger to consider as new and original something which, after all, is old kept repeating. The so-called national characters, write the Belgian historian, “are almost always bound to universal human phenomena”<sup>24</sup>

This *pirennian* revaluation of the historiographical method explains that the historian, besides his fame and the place that he occupies in the international scientific institutions of his time, was chosen as person in charge for Belgium of the project of economic and social history of the war initiated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The book dedicated to Belgium and the world war, written by Pirenne and published in 1928 in the Belgian series of the “Economic and Social History of the

21. *Ibidem*. The words of Zweig are cited by Pirenne in French: “Un miroir à mille facettes qui présente en raccourci comme un abrégé du multiple univers”.

22. HENRI PIRENNE, *Ce que nous devons désapprendre de l'Allemagne*, Gand, Vanderpoorten, 1922, p. 7.

23. About Pirenne and Germany just after WWI: CINZIO VIOLANTE, *La fine della «grande illusione»*. *Uno storico europeo tra guerra e dopoguerra, Henri Pirenne (1914-1923). Per una rilettura della “Histoire de l'Europe”*, Bologne, Il Mulino, 1997 (Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico, Monografia, 31), PETER SCHÖTTLER, *Henri Pirenne, historien européen entre la France et l'Allemagne*, in *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, t. 76, n°4, 1998, pp. 875-883 and IDEM, *Henri Pirenne face à l'Allemagne de l'après-guerre ou la (re)naissance du comparatisme en histoire*, in SERGE JAUMAIN, MICHAËL AMARA, BENOÎT MAJÉRUS, ANTOON VRINTS (DIR.), *Une guerre totale? La Belgique dans la Première Guerre mondiale. Nouvelles tendances de la recherche historique. Actes du colloque international organisé à l'ULB du 15 au 17 janvier 2003*, Bruxelles, Archives générales du Royaume, 2005, pp. 507-517.

24. Henri Pirenne, “*Réflexions d'un solitaire*”, ed. by BRYCE LYON, MARY LYON E JACQUES-HENRI PIRENNE, in *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*, t. CLX, 1994, pp. 192-193.

War World”, testimonies of a change of methodological direction and of the internationalization of historical sciences. The book illustrates at the same time the effort of the author to interpret the Belgian experience of the war in the sense of a reinforcement of the identity of the country and therefore of its unity<sup>25</sup>. Considered as “the indispensable guide for who wants to dedicate himself to the economic and social history of Belgium during the war”<sup>26</sup>, the book its great serenity of spirit is praised for “its great serenity of spirit”<sup>27</sup> while Lucien Febvre writes that it constitutes “a preliminary synthesis that, circumscribing the field of our ignorance, [is] destined to give the starting signal to innumerable researches”<sup>28</sup>.

The function of guide of this preliminary synthesis has been effective during almost 70 years, that is until the publication in 1997 Sophie De Schaepdrijver’s book dedicated to Belgium in the first world war<sup>29</sup>. It is obvious that this does not mean that the book of Pirenne is by now useless – it has been published in English in 2014<sup>30</sup> – and still less that the historiography of the great war remained silent during 70 years. On the other hand, the lengthy delay that separates the publication of the works of Pirenne and Schaepdrijver led to wonder about the nature of the researches carried out between the 30s and the end of the 90s.

Some authors are right to mention that the Belgian historiography of the first world war has been neglected after WWII because of the priority given to it by the historians. The same authors write also that the historians when going back to the Great War paid quite exclusively attention

25. SARAH KEYMEULEN, *Pirenne, Belgium and the First World War: Introduction*, in H. PIRENNE, *Belgium and the First World War*, Wesley Chapel [Florida], The Brabant Press, 2014, pp. IX-XV.

26. JOSEPH DE SMET, *Pirenne (H.)*, *La Belgique et la guerre mondiale*, in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, t. VIII, n°4, 1929, p. 1304.

27. CAMILLE BLOCH, Pirenne (Henri), *La Belgique et la guerre mondiale*, in *Revue d'histoire de la guerre mondiale*, 9e année, n°1, 1931, p. 195.

28. LUCIEN FEBVRE, *Economie belge. La Belgique sous l'occupation allemande*, in *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 2e année, n°5, 1930, p. 149.

29. SOPHIE DE SCHAEPDRIJVER, *De Grote oorlog. Het koninkrijk België tijdens de eerste wereldoorlog*, Amsterdam, Atlas, 1997; Antwerpen, Houtekiet, 2013. The book is translated in French: *La Belgique et la première guerre mondiale*, Brussels... Wien, P.I.E. - Peter Lang, 2006 (Documents pour Histoire des Francophonies. Europe. Vol. 4). Of the same author, see also a selection of essays published after 1997: *Erfzonde van de twintigste eeuw. Notities bij '14 - '18*, Antwerpen, Houtekiet, 2013.

30. H. PIRENNE, *Belgium and the First War World*, Wesley Chapel [Florida], The Brabant Press, 2014.



to national issues, looking mainly at the origins of some polemics as the so-called “royal question” and at the gap between Flemish community and French speaking one<sup>31</sup> But at the same time, these authors lose sight of the change of paradigm which characterizes a large part of the Belgian historians during the decade which follows the end of the Second World War. Els Witte has recently showed how the Belgian historians, while watching to protect their scientific independence, put their discipline in the service of the idea of European unification. The study is more particularly interested in the way the historians, with the support of the authorities, contributed to the improvement of the links between the countries of Benelux and have worked on the reconciliation with Germany<sup>32</sup>. This revision of the past is encouraged by the initiatives of the Council of Europe. From 1952 onwards, historians of western countries try to define the historic reality on which leans the European community feeling and to understand what are the factors which, in the national stories, exercise a positive or negative influence. Central values in the publications of Belgian historians of the postwar period, that is Rule by law, individual liberty, separation between Church and State, Human rights, science and knowledge as conditions of progress, etc., are identified from now on as major features of the European public-spiritedness.

Practically, the way of a better shared history is full of pitfalls as the revision of the pages of textbooks dedicated to Germany demonstrates it<sup>33</sup>. The most used of them after WWI presented the Germans as barbaric, cruel, disdainful of everything and everybody, cowards and exciting the spirit of revenge<sup>34</sup>. This so negative vision certainly was fought by the pacifists until the beginning of the second world war<sup>35</sup> but they were the Germans to im-

31. BRUNO BENVINDO-BENOIT MAJERUS-ANTOON VRINTS, *La grande guerre* cit.

32. ELS WITTE, *Voor vrede, democratie, wereldburgerschap en Europe. Belgische historici en de naoorlogse politiek-ideologische projecten (1944-1956)*, Kapellen, Uitgeverij Pelckmans, 2009. One can find a summary of this book in French: *Les historiens belges et la construction européenne (1944-1956)*, in *Courrier hebdomadaire du Crisp* n°2217-2218, Brussels, Crisp, 2014.

33. There, pp. 45-51.

34. C. ISTASSE, *La Grande Guerre vient couvrir la Belgique de gloire et de ruines*, in BÉATRICE ROCHET-AXEL TIXHON (Eds.), *La Petit Belgique dans la Grande Guerre: une icône, des images. Actes du colloque, Namur, 24-27 novembre 2010*, Namur, Presses universitaires de Namur, 2012, pp. 79-98.

35. CHRISTOPHE BECHET, *La révision pacifiste des manuels scolaires. Les enjeux de la mémoire de la guerre 14-18 dans l'enseignement belge de l'entre-deux-guerres*, in *Cahiers d'histoire du temps*



pose the review of the textbooks during the occupation. That is to say that after the capitulation of Nazi Germany, an abyss is opened between public opinion hit two times in twenty years from the Germans and good part of the historians looking for to promote the European good citizenship. The existence of this abyss is illustrated by the storm caused by the publication, certainly truncated, of the results of the German-Belgian conference for the revision of textbooks organized to Brunswick in August 1954<sup>36</sup>. The central argument of the violent journalistic campaign unchained against the revisionist scholars is the point of view of these on the responsibility of the release of the great war, their justification of the violation of the Belgian neutrality by considerations of military and psychological nature, and, at the end, their silence on the German crimes. Let us add, without stopping us on the details of this big debate, that one of its main results was a renewal of the Belgian and German historiographies dedicated to WW I<sup>37</sup>. Having said that, the difficulties to which gives rise the return on the past of the relations with Germany does not have to hide the reality of the slow movement towards Europeanization which characterizes the world of the Belgian historians since the 1950s.

On this aspect, an example may be mentioned. It is the one of the relations between Belgian and Italian historians that leads, in a European context, to the birth of the Belgian section of the *Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano*, best known as Belgian committee of history of the Risorgimento. In Italy, as reminded by Fausto Fonzi in 2001

“after the second world war, many Italian researchers, the youngest in particular, rebelling against the nationalist and illiberal padlocks of the previous period looked towards Europe and believed very strongly in freedom. And about “freedom like in Belgium”, we had spoken a lot, as did also Cavour, between liberals and Catholics during the nineteenth century. After 1945, after Resistance, struggle for national and individual liberation, we looked therefor with sympathy in Italy at the nineteenth century Belgian movement towards independence and at the

*présent*, vol. 20, 2008, pp. 49-101.

36. E. WITTE, *Les historiens* cit., pp. 52-56.

37. There, p. 57.

building in that country of a regime of freedom through conflict but also cooperation between lay people and Catholics.”<sup>38</sup>

The aspiration “at the opening” to which Fausto Fonzi refers finds its point of organ in the organization in Rome in 1955 of the International Congress of Historical Sciences. Organized at the instigation of Federico Chabod, this congress constitutes in fact the result of the efforts of the Italian historian for “the reintegration of Italian historiography in world historiography”<sup>39</sup>. It is in this context that the Belgian section of the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano chaired by Alberto Maria Ghisalberti is founded in January 1957. His Belgian interlocutors are Robert Van Nuffel and two ecclesiastics: Aloïs Simon and Roger Aubert. All the three have participated since 1953 in one or more annual conferences on the history of the Risorgimento organized by the Institute<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, on the wake of the Conference of 1955, Fonzi, after Giuntella, came in Belgium in order to work with Aubert and Simon. In January 1957, Simon explains why a Belgian section of the Institute should be created:

“Belgium and Italy, this last one considered from the point of view of the Risorgimento are lands of freedom. And we discover the same liberal phenomenon, the same liberal aspiration in both countries. Therefore, it would be particularly interesting to study the relationship between Italian liberalism and Belgian liberalism, their reactions ones to the others for ideological, religious, political and social reasons.”<sup>41</sup>

This said, Simon details the four objectives of the Belgian section which are to: 1. establish a scientific contact between Italian and Belgian historians of contemporary history; 2. promote the European cultural contacts; 3.

38. FAUSTO FONZI, *Italia e Belgio. Memorie di una tradizione di relazioni culturali per la storia del Risorgimento*, in *Supplemento alla Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, a. LXXXIX (2002), fasc. 3 (Atti del convegno internazionale *Italia e Belgio nell'Ottocento europeo. Nuovi percorsi di ricerca*) by ANDREA CIAMPANI, PIERRE TILLY, VINCENT VIAENE, pp. 171-172.

39. FRANCO VENTURI, *Chabod, Federico*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 24, Rome, Treccani, 1980, p. 256.

40. Van Nuffel in Florence (1953), Simon and Van Nuffel in Messina (1954) and Aubert in Turin (1956).

41. Archives of the Comité belge d'histoire du Risorgimento, minutes of the meeting of 12 January 1957.

prepare a history of the relationship between Italy and Belgium; 4. begin a general history of European liberalism in the 1800's<sup>42</sup>. Pointing out that Simon twice refers to the European dimension of the project, let us say that we are very far not only from the polemical vision of formerly in connection with the Roman question but also of the commemorative approach adopted in the name of the Italian-Belgian friendship born from the First World War.

Going back to the Belgian historiography on the great war we must emphasize at least four characteristics: 1. The Europeanist trend born in the years 1950 led to many bilateral initiatives thus encouraging a first setting in network of historians and the realization of common work. 2. These common initiatives relate to however only very little the First World War whose historiography in connection with Belgium is especially the work of foreign historians, mainly German but also American<sup>43</sup>. 3. We have to expect the second half of the years 1990 to note a renewed interest of the Belgian historians for the First World War. 4. This renewed interest is due for a great part to the influence of foreign historiographies engaged themselves in renewed approaches. These last ones insist on the brutalization of the societies and privilege a transnational reading of the events and phenomena as illustrated by Horne and Kramer<sup>44</sup> but also by Geert Buelens in his book entitled "Europa! Europa!" devoted to poetry as a mirror of the violence and the anguish born of the war<sup>45</sup>.

As a result of these remarks, we may say that Belgian historiography became increasingly more important during the twenty last years, as well from the quantitative point of view as from the qualitative one. Focusing on social and cultural studies while participating in the debate on the place of the Belgian case in total war that lies at the heart of foreign works, some Belgian historians, sharing the opinion of John Horne, strongly criticized the absence of the European dimension in the celebrations of the cente-

42. *Ibidem*.

43. BRUNO BENVINDO-BENOIT MAJERUS-ANTOON VRINTS, *Les historiens* cit., p. 185, n. 46.

44. JOHN HORNE-ALAN KRAMER, *German Atrocities, 1914. A History of Denial*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2001, translated in French: *1914, les atrocités allemandes*, Paris, Tallandier, 2005; 2011.

45. GEERT BUELENS, *Europe Europe! Over de dichters van de Grote Oorlog*, Amsterdam, Ambo Anthos, 2008.

nary before they took place<sup>46</sup>. That means that it would be interesting to know if the criticisms formulated before June 2014 are verified during the summer of the same year.

Speaking in London on 12 October 2012 at the Imperial War Museum about the commemorations planned from 2014 to 2018 in the United Kingdom, David Cameron explains the three reasons why they are justified according to him. Answering the question of why spend so much money at the time it is missing for other sectors more important than the memory of a war which all the fighters are now dead, the Prime minister says: "The first reason is the sheer scale of the sacrifice (...). This was the extraordinary sacrifice of a generation. It was a sacrifice they made for us, and it is right that we should remember them." The second reason is "the impact that the war had on the development of Britain and, indeed, the world as it is today (...). To fail to recognize the huge national and international significance of all these developments during the First World War would be, frankly, a monumental mistake." The third and last reason is that "there is something about the First World War that makes it a fundamental part of our national consciousness (...). This matters not just in our heads, but in our hearts (...). That mixture of horror and courage, suffering and hope; it has permeated our culture." Concluding this part of his speech, Cameron adds: "From such war and hatred can come unity and peace, a confidence and a determination never to go back. However, frustrating and however difficult the debates in Europe, 100 years on we sort out our differences through dialogue and meetings around conference tables."<sup>47</sup>

This speech is almost exclusively national as are the commemorative events since 2014. Certainly, it has been spoken about reconciliation in Mons where English and German soldiers are buried in the same cemetery<sup>48</sup>. But beyond this manifestation, sign of a bilateral Anglo-German reconciliation that played the same role that the commemoration of Gal-

46. J. HORNE, *La Grande Guerre: quelles perspectives pour le centenaire? Conférence faite aux Grandes conférences catholiques 6 novembre 2013*. [<http://www.grandesconferences.be/files/060606.pdf>] (15.03.2016)

47. *Transcript of the speech given by Prime Minister David Cameron on Thursday 11 October [2012] about plans to mark the First World War centenary*. [<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-at-imperial-war-museum-on-first-world-war-centenary-plans>] (15.03.2016)

48. MARIA MILLER, *Press release*, 13 June 2013 [<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/maria-miller-sets-out-how-government-will-mark-first-world-war-centenary-in-2014>] (15.03.2016)

lipoli on 25 April 2015 marking the Anglo-Turk reconciliation, we must emphasize that the English government has rejected the use of the European symbols – European anthem, flag – and the reference to the European Union “that has afforded to avoid the war” in the manifestations to which the United Kingdom would participate officially. The British attitude is the consequence of the use of European symbols and speeches on the occasion of the celebration, in June 2014, of the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landings which London considers abusive<sup>49</sup>. Somehow, the British Government won the battle of the symbols at the end of that same month of June. Speaking about the European Council held in Ypres, Cameron updating the House of Commons, says that “the Council began (...) with a moving ceremony at the Menin Gate to mark the 100th anniversary of the gunshots in Sarajevo that led to the First World War.”<sup>50</sup> In a less diplomatic way, the Prime Minister could have told the MP’s that Britain had won the battle of the symbols because everybody knows that the Menin Gate is a monument dedicated to the memory of the British and Commonwealth soldiers fallen or disappeared *in Flanders fields*<sup>51</sup>.

On the contrary of Cameron, the German Chancellor, having reminded that “half a million lives were lost in the vicinity of Ypres” and specified that those lives were Germans, British, French and Belgians, and “included a large number of soldiers from the states that today make up the Commonwealth”, says: “I believe that this once again shows us how lucky we are to live today – thanks to the European Union and thanks to the fact that we have learned from history.”<sup>52</sup> The contrast between Cameron and Merkel in this occasion is significant as is it the silence of Paris. The report of the French Council of Ministers of 2 July 2014 dedicated to the European Council restricts to say that “it met (...) to commemorate the centenary

49. PETER DOMINICZAK-JAMES KIRKUP, *Keep EU flag out of War centenary, France told*, in *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014, and E.A., *Londres ne veut pas voir le drapeau européen*, in *Le Monde*, 27 June 2014.

50. European Council June 2014: David Cameron’s statement, 30 June 2014 [<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/european-council-june-2014-david-camersons-statement>] (15.03.2016)

51. The Menin Gate, a monumental gate across a moat, was designed in classical style by Reginald Blomfield. The war memorial for soldiers from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth bears 56,896 names of soldiers killed or missing. Since 1928, a bugler sounds the “Last Post” every day at 8 p.m.

52. EU-Regierungschefs erinnern an Weltkrieg [<https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2014-06-26-er-ypern.html>] (15.03.2016)

of the World War I “<sup>53</sup>. This French discretion echoes in a way the silence observed by the Council in its conclusions passed on to the national delegations. This document of 21 pages does not contain a single word about the ceremony of Ypres<sup>54</sup>!

The silence observed at the end of the month of June is broken at the beginning of August. The French and German presidents pronounce a speech at the memorial of the *Vieil Armand* (*Hartmannswillerkopf*) in Alsace on August 3. Both speeches are differently entitled – “Franco-German ceremony of commemoration” for Hollande; “Visit to the memorial” for Gauck – but have a similar content. The French president insists on “Patriotism, i.e. the will to live together in defending the same values”, adding that “Patriotism does not away from Europe” and “helps to understand the project”<sup>55</sup>. Meanwhile, president Gauck says: “The concept of nation is precious – no-one knows that better than the French. However, it can also be taken too seriously, indeed to the extreme. Extreme nationalism drove us Germans into two world wars – and twice it incited our two peoples to fight one another.” Going on, he specifies: «Our shared Europe and our shared European institutions are not an accident of history. Rather, they bear witness to the fact that we have learned the lessons of history. They protect us from aberrations and temptation. One of the great tasks of the present and of the future will be to highlight time and again the profound and absolutely vital importance of our common European institutions, indeed our entire common European policies.”<sup>56</sup> Coming to the conclusion Joachim Gauck says: “Europe has a long history, a history which, however, is primarily told in the individual histories of nations and peoples, of coun-

53. [<http://www.gouvernement.fr/conseil-des-ministres/2014-07-02>] (15.03.2016). Let us note that in Italy, the communiqué n°22 of 30 June 2014 of the *Presidenza del Consiglio* does not say a single word about the meeting of the European Council.

54. [[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/it/ec/143494.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/it/ec/143494.pdf)] (15.03.2016)

55. *Discours à l'occasion de la cérémonie de commémoration franco-allemandes du centenaire de la Grande Guerre au Monument national du Hartmannskopf*, 3 août 2014, p. 5.

[<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-a-l-occasion-de-la-ceremonie-de-commemoration-franco-allemande-du-centenaire-de-la-grande-guerre-au-monument-national-du-hartmannswillerkopf/>] (15.03.2016)

56. *Gedenkstätte Hartmannswillerkopf, Wattweiler, Frankreich*, 3. August 2014, p. 2. [<http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2014/08/140803-Gedenken-Hartmannswillerkopf.html>] (15.03.2016)

tries and regions. We have still not learned to tell our European history as a shared history<sup>57</sup>. The aftermath of this Franco-German ceremony, i.e. on 4 August, three commemorations are organized in Belgium. That of Mons is Anglo-German<sup>58</sup>, that of Louvain is before all German insofar as the president Gauck said in his speech at the University of this city: “With my visit, I also mean to recall the immense harm caused by the German invasion of neutral Belgium.”<sup>59</sup>

Finally, it is in Liège that the commemoration becomes multilateral, at least formally and not without specifying that president Hollande makes two speeches. In first, delivered to the attention of the people of Liège, the head of the French State remembers “that the battle of Liège created a tie of blood between France and Belgium”. Speaking about the city of Liège as the “sister of Verdun”, he adds: “France has never forgotten [and] wants today to express its fidelity, its respect, its acknowledgment, its gratefulness to Belgium and the *Cité ardente*”<sup>60</sup>. The tone is different from the one adopted on the same day by the same speaker at the Cointe memorial where the king of the Belgian, the German president and prince William, representing the Queen of England, take also the word. The address of the latter is short. After having spoken of Belgium and Belgians, remembered the name of Edith Cavell and emphasized the importance of the very symbolic presence of the German and Austrian presidents, he concludes: “Not only is war between us unthinkable, but former adversaries have worked together for three generations to spread and entrench democracy, prosperity and the rule of law across Europe, and to promote our shared values around the world.”<sup>61</sup>

King Philippe on his side insists on the European project, the responsibility of political leaders, yesterday like today, and on the role of “the Euro-

57. *There*, p. 3.

58. JOHN HENLEY, *Enemies in life, comrades in death: a century to count the cost of war*, in *The Guardian*, 5 August 2014.

59. *Discours du président fédéral à l'Université catholique de Louvain, lundi 4 août 2014*, p. 1. [<http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2014/08/140804-Gedenken-Loewen.html>] (15.03.2016)

60. *Discours du président de the République à hôtel de Ville de Liège, 4 août 2014*, p. 5. [<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-a-l-hotel-de-ville-de-liege/>] (15.03.2016)

61. [<http://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/2014080420258/prince-william-makes-speech-belgium/>] (15.03.2016)



pean memory which reminds us that no peace can be durable if there is not a State of mind that exceeds the supported suffering, the issue of guilt and that does not look to the future”<sup>62</sup>. Without saying it so clearly, the German president acknowledges the guilt of Germany towards Belgium and pointed out that “Europe is now governed by the strength of the law rather than by the law of the strong.” And he concludes, somewhat as the King did: “We are therefore not only united here today in commemoration (...) but also as witnesses (...) to the fact that peace and reconciliation are possible [and] that we share responsibility for the world.”<sup>63</sup> More political than that of the other speakers, the speech of Holland is openly pro-European. The half of it is devoted to the model of cooperation and progress which is at the origin of the European project. Unfortunately, the president says, “the major risk that threatens European is the return of national egoisms, separatism, xenophobic folds.” He adds: “We cannot simply be the guardians of peace, of evocative remembrance. We cannot simply evoke the cult of memory. We are also face up to our responsibilities.” And coming to the conclusion, he has this formula that suggests: “Europe must especially (...) never be tired of peace”<sup>64</sup>.

The difference between the two speeches delivered in Liège by the French president is huge. It confirms that the speech varies not only according to the location from which one speaks but also on the basis of the public for which it is intended. In this regard, while his speeches of Liège are respectively bilateral and multilateral, it is interesting to stop briefly at the speech by Hollande on November 11<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Ablain-Saint-Nazaire on the occasion of the inauguration of the Notre-Dame de Lorette international memorial, also called “ring of remembrance”. The French president was looking forward for the presence of Merkel and Cameron. Both were absent. The first one because it was difficult for her to commemorate the Great War two days after the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The second one because the British had been surprised not having been invited in the celebrations of the battle of the Marne, on September 12th,

62. *Discours de Sa Majesté le Roi. Commémoration de la Première Guerre Mondiale, 4 août 2014.* [<https://www.monarchie.be/fr/agenda/discours-de-sa-majeste-le-roi-commemoration-de-la-premiere-guerre-mondiale-fr-de>] (15.03.2016)

63. [<http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Joachim-Gauck/Reden/2014/08/140804-Gedenken-Luettich.html>] (15.03.2016)

64. [<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/allocution-au-memorial-de-cointe/>] (15.03.2016)

after France commemorated with Germany the beginning of World War I, on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. In spite of this disappointment, president Hollande after saying that the objective of the commemoration was “not simply to honour the dead or highlight the suffering, but also to reconcile people”, explains that “patriotism is not a nostalgia, it is a will; the will to make France enter the world at the forefront in safeguarding its identity”. Quoting François Mitterrand – “France is our fatherland and Europe remains our future “, the French president says also that “patriotism is the Republic”. In other words, “patriotism is never being tired to serve France”<sup>65</sup>.

If, from Cameron to Hollande, everybody does agree to say that memory has to serve in order to prepare the future, one is not only surprised by the different perceptions of the European project by Europeans who do not share the same memory of the war but also by the absence in the commemorations of the European Union as such. An absence that coincides with a serious crisis of the European project. The difficulties arising from the Greek crisis have given priority to those caused by the influx of refugees which raise a lot of questions, in Belgium like elsewhere, about the respect of the founding values of the European Union. This is to say that the historians do not manifest themselves in the debate on the crisis of refugees while the historiography is full of excellent works on the exile of hundreds of thousands of Belgians fleeing war in 1914<sup>66</sup>. As a reader writes it in a letter to *The Guardian* with regard to the arrival of 100.000 Belgians in England between August and November 1914: “This episode is not quite forgotten as an aspect of the first world war, but too few lessons have been learned from it because it has never been given the attention it deserves”<sup>67</sup>.

“Too few lessons have been learnt from the past”. The formula may seem outdated. However, the contrast between the observation made by an English newspaper reader and many political speeches of the summer 2014 relating to the memory of the great war is spectacular. It reminds and

65. [<http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-a-l-occasion-de-l-inauguration-de-l-anneau-de-la-memoire/>] (15.03.2016)

66. MICHAËL AMARA, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'exil. Les réfugiés de la Première Guerre mondiale en France, en Angleterre et aux Pays-Bas*, Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2014. See also, written in a more journalistic style: MISJOE VERLEYEN- MARC DE MEYER, *Augustus 1914: België op de vlucht*, Antwerpen, WPG- Manteau, 2013.

67. *Lessons to be learned from how Britain handled to refugee crisis in 1914*, in *The Guardian*, 18 September 2015.

should lead historians to remind that the present having a past, we may not forget that our time will become in turn a past. From this point of view, knowing that the historiography has enriched recently of revisionist works dealing with the theses about the unilateral responsibility of Germany in the outbreak of the first world war, it is certainly useful to revisit the political culture of European leaders of a century ago. But it is equally important to try to determine which are, today, the common elements and those who are not in the culture of the leaders of our time.



Carolina García Sanz

## Neutrality throughout the Great War. An Insight from Spanish International History

### Rethinking Neutrality in Regional Perspective

Recent surveys of the number of publications related to the Great War revealed more than 25.000 academic contributions in that field<sup>1</sup>. However, if one considers the panorama of contributions specifically focused on neutral case studies, the evidence clearly suggests that these had received little attention. Overall, neutrality topic has traditionally been secondary to research goals connected to war experiences<sup>2</sup>.

Firstly, scholars had to fight against the acceptance of “*They were neutral! What is the point of studying that?*”<sup>3</sup> Secondly, they had to contend with specific problems posed by the historical research of the topic. There are multifarious forms in which neutrality may be addressed against the First World War backdrop and the research question is not always easy to approach. Indistinct and undefined ideas upon the subject, depending on moving on different levels of analysis, require to be tackled. Secondly, while

1. See, for instance, the reference given in CHRISTOPHER CLARK, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe went to War in 1914*, Londres, Allen Lane, 2012, p. xxv; cit. in JAVIER RODRIGO, *Su Majestad la Guerra. Historiografías de la Primera Guerra Mundial en el siglo XXI*, in *Historia y Política*, 32 (2014), p. 19.

2. Against this background, the academic commemorations of the centennial of the conflict have had remarkable outcomes. Two recent collective books specifically dealing with neutrality in Europe and America should be noted here: for the Iberian case - study XAVIER PLA, MAXIMILIANO FUENTES CODERA, FRANCESCO MONTERO, *A Civil War of Words. The cultural impact of the Great War in Catalonia, Spain, Europe and a Glance at Latin America*, Bern (CHE), Peter Lang, 2016; from a Euro-American perspective: JOSE LEONARDO RUIZ SÁNCHEZ, INMACULADA CORDERO OLIVERO, CAROLINA GARCÍA SANZ, *Shaping Neutrality throughout the First World War*, Sevilla, Universidad de Sevilla, 2015.

3. See what leading scholar in neutrality pointed out concerning Dutch experience in 2006; MAARTJE ABBENHUIS, *Art of Staying Neutral. The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006, pp. 17-21.

historians of the conflict have persistently marginalized the role of neutrals in belligerent war aims, historians of neutrality failed to pay enough attention to the contentious role of belligerent interference in domestic developments. This, for example, has long been the case of Spain<sup>4</sup>.

Contrasting with other academic traditions on the subject based in the North of Europe, Spanish specialists in the conflict still do not know much about the way in which the so-called “third option” was politically articulated and culturally represented against a Mediterranean context<sup>5</sup>. Neutrality did not there seem to be a suitable guarantee for surviving intact between 1914 and 1918. However, we find few studies that comprehensively deal with the subject and almost none compares national experiences on the regional scale. Overall, case studies tend to relate to local experiences and do not cover the broad-spectrum of neutrality implications, neither at a domestic level nor at an international level.

While geographical factors were decisive for the maintenance of the neutral status in the North of Europe, the same factors seemed to count against it in the South. In Greece, in the midst of the crossfire between

4. Actually, the reader shall note that this paper summarizes and takes arguments from my previous works on the same topic: C. GARCÍA SANZ, *Repensar la neutralidad en la Gran Guerra. Una lectura en clave europea*, in PEDRO RUIZ TORRES (ed.), *Volver a pensar el mundo de la Gran Guerra*, Zaragoza, Institución Fernando el Católico, 2016, pp.183-208; C. GARCÍA SANZ AND M. FUENTES CODERA, *Toward New Approaches to Neutrality in the First World War: Rethinking the Spanish Case-study*, in J. L. RUIZ SÁNCHEZ et alii, *Shaping Neutrality* cit., pp. 40-50; C. GARCÍA SANZ, *The Marginalia of the History of Neutrality in the First World War. Southern Europe in comparative perspective*, in *Neutrals at war, 1914-1918. Comparative and transnational perspectives*, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Royal Netherlands Historical Society, 2015.

5. Holland, the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland would respectively have fought for their neutrality, not only as their right to have an autonomous international policy but also as the foundation for their national self-identity and integrity. Bordering neutrals had to learn at their cost that their status entailed severe disadvantages. They were inevitably “caught in the middle” of warring pressures. The Dutch experience has extensively been studied from this perspective. Actually, one of the most interesting aspects of civilian experiences bordering on war was the elaboration of a memory and collective understanding of neutrality in connection with the effects of the conflict on their day-a-day life. The harshness of war experiences and humanitarian calamities would finally make full sense of a neutral stance. See collective books: JOHAN DEN HERTOOG AND SAMUËL KRUIZINGA (eds.), *Caught in the Middle. Neutrals, Neutrality and the First World War*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2011; CLAES AHLUND (ed.), *Scandinavia in the First World War: Studies in the War Experience of the Northern Neutrals*, Lund, Nordic Academic Press, 2012; ROMAN ROSSFELD, THOMAS BUOMBERGER AND PATRICK KURY (eds.), *La Suisse et la Grande Guerre*, Baden, Hier + Jetzt, 2014.

belligerent sides, war came as the extension of the operations in the Balkan front. In other cases, nationalist irredentism carried more weight in tipping the balance in favor of one side. This was the case of Italy and her aspirations in the Adriatic or the case of Romania with her ambitions in Transylvania. Both countries fought against former allies: the Central Powers. Unlike in Northern Europe, there was a clear regional imbalance in favor of the Entente due to the overwhelming naval hegemony of France and Great Britain. It would seem that there was little German counter-leverage in political, social and economic collective responsibilities either in neutrality or in belligerency. This is what made neutrality in the Mediterranean region during the Great War so unique.

As a rule, the evolution of the internal politics worked in warmongers favor. Militarists and radical jingoists, despite being a political minority, successfully mobilized the domestic public opinion towards the Allies in the name of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This also happened for instance in Portugal, whose belligerency is particularly worthy of attention because it had an imperial dimension but also because it was connected with the Spanish politics. In August 1914 Portugal mobilized her military forces in Africa, defending her colonial empire in Mozambique against German and British expansion equally. However, in Africa, the self-defensive objectives to achieve were rather different from those in the European theatre of war after March 1916. The latter were, namely, consolidating the new republican system and bringing the King of Spain's chimeras of Iberian unity to an end.

Generally, collective dilemmas between neutrality and belligerency in Southern Europe are explained in view of inflammatory domestic backgrounds. Local societies would have fluctuated between the deadweight of oligarchic liberal systems and *sui generis* aspirations for democracy or revolution. This implies that social notions and ideas about neutrality as a conscious "third option" in a large-scale armed conflict would have been ruled out owing to acute national schisms. Strangely enough, the active defence of the neutral stance was immediately identified as pro-German<sup>6</sup>.

6. Nonetheless, as William Mulligan recently argued, there was also a neutral battlefield in the general struggle for Peace, W. MULLIGAN, *The Great War for Peace*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2014.



Furthermore, national scholarliness approached to neutrality periods according to the steps made to respective belligerencies. Whereas Italy remained neutral for ten months, Portugal for a year and seven months and Greece (on paper) for nearly three years, only Spain remained neutral throughout the conflict. Nonetheless, for almost a hundred years after those decision-making processes in the region, a full range of questions remains open. So, particularly for the Spanish case, one may wonder not only why but also how neutrality worked against a background in which neutrality could not successfully be maintained

### An Overview of the Spanish Case

Firstly, the Spanish neutrality issue brings into question the Spanish foreign policy before 1914. Had Spain got nationalist dreams of territorial expansion to accomplish with, would Spanish warmongers have checkmated neutralists? When the war broke out, Spanish colonial ambitions revolved around Tangier and the hope that the French recognized a Spanish protectorate in Morocco, to which Paris Governments had firmly been opposed since November 1912. Then, the Spanish had only achieved a “zone of influence” separated from the French protectorate. That is, precisely, the reason why in August 1914 the Romanonist faction of the Liberal Party thought it was necessary to publicly decry neutrality. Romanones argued that the country should enter the war alongside the Allied forces, complying with its own national interests in the Mediterranean theatre as well as with preferential relations with France and Great Britain, allegedly endorsed by the so-called “Cartagena Agreements”<sup>7</sup>. However, contrary to what Romanonists’ propaganda argued, the meeting between Edward VII and Alfonso XIII in Cartagena in April 1907 had only proved that “Spain had friends but not allies”<sup>8</sup>. The Cartagena declarations only guaranteed a token Mediterranean *status quo* as long as the French and the British did

7. The famous article *Neutralidades que matan* was published in the *Diario Universal*, August 19, 1914. It is attributed to Juan Pérez Caballero (Liberal leader Count Romanones’ right-hand man).

8. ANTONIO NIÑO, *El rey embajador. Alfonso XIII en la política internacional*, in JAVIER MORENO LUZÓN (ed.), *Alfonso XIII. Un político en el trono*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2003, p. 256.

not decide to change it<sup>9</sup>. Entering the war alongside “her friends” would actually have been a risky choice for Spain, given that Britain might only satisfy Spain’s ambitions in Morocco at the expense of her main war ally, France. Consequently, conservative policy makers at Madrid would set about benevolent neutrality looking forward to gaining advantage from the potential winners of the conflict. In other words, Eduardo Dato’s cabinet improvised a “neutral ally” police. A term that we may well apply to this case borrowing it from Olav Riste’s classic work on Norway<sup>10</sup>.

Secondly, the failure of the Spanish warmongers had also much to do with the internal situation of the country. Whereas the Germanophile side, acting together, successfully campaigned for neutrality, the divisions among the Spanish liberals and left-wing radicals, in a climate of collapse of the Restoration system, hindered campaigns for intervention. Later on the Spanish unrest, with the military insubordination (*Juntas Nacionales de Defensa*), political challenge to the system (*Asamblea de Parlamentarios* in Barcelona) and the revolutionary general strike, strengthened the neutralist stance in the second half of the war. Neutral speeches were thus identified as pro-German and conservative since many Spaniards saw neutrality as a legal subterfuge used by discredited rulers to keep control as well as to silence people demands for democracy.

The civil “war of words” between *Germanófilos* and *Aliadófilos* that flared up, showed the ideological gap between the ruling elite and the outsiders in the oligarchic political system, prefiguring the climate of civil war in the thirties. Accordingly, the Spanish historiography on the First World War was long dominated by a national perspective, focusing on the collapse in the oligarchic system between 1917 and 1923<sup>11</sup>. From this

9. Worth mentioning here are two recent contributions on this subject. On the one hand, JAVIER PONCE MARRERO, *La política exterior española de 1907 a 1920: entre el regeneracionismo de intenciones y la neutralidad condicionada*, in *Historia Contemporánea*, 34 (2007), pp. 93-116. On the other hand, Fernando García Sanz argues that the Spanish political class placed too much emphasis on the Cartagena Declarations in terms of its content, which was used as propaganda against Germany, FERNANDO GARCÍA SANZ, *Between Europe and the Mediterranean Spanish-Italian Relations, 1898-1922*, in RAANAN REI (ed.), *Spain and the Mediterranean since 1898*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 37.

10. OLAV RISTE, *The Neutral Ally. Norway’s relations with belligerent powers in the First World War*, London, Allen&Unwin, 1965.

11. See, for instance, pioneering works by CARLOS FORCADELL, *Parlamentarismo y bolchevización: el movimiento obrero español, 1914-1918*, Barcelona, Crítica, 1978; GERALD H. MEAKER, *La*

point of view, neutrality has mainly been seen as a preparation phase for war and/or revolution. Connected with this traditional line of analysis, we should highlight here the recent work of Maximiliano Fuentes Codera on Spanish intellectual debate in response to the evolution of the European conflict, in comparison with other national cases<sup>12</sup>.

Members of Spanish liberals and leftish circles considered neutrality at two different levels: the state should remain neutral while there was no room for neutrality on social and cultural grounds. As a rule, intellectuals agreed with the “state neutrality” until mid-1915. In the social sphere, quite the contrary, the Spanish people were consented to have their own preferences and take one side or the other. The concept of neutrality would be of polyvalent character onwards. Papers started to discuss about “benevolent neutralities”, “political neutralities”, “moral neutralities”, even “critical neutralities”<sup>13</sup>. At the same time, there was a focal and crosscutting point in all public speeches, from the “*integrist*” (fundamentalist) right to the revolutionary left: flaws in national policies made belligerency unfeasible. But this entirely domestic approach to neutrality tends to neglect a different dimension of the question regarding Spain during the war: transferences between neutrals and belligerents and vice versa.

#### Spanish Relations with Belligerent Powers, a Fruitful Line of Study<sup>14</sup>

Looking at Spain’s international relations throughout the conflict, belligerent interferences have been one of the most extensively studied

*izquierda revolucionaria en España, 1914-1923*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1978; ID., *A Civil War of Words: The Ideological Impact of the First World War on Spain, 1914-1918*, in HANS H. SCHMITT (ed.), *Neutral Europe Between War and Revolution, 1917-1923*, Charlottesville, The University Press of Virginia, 1988, pp. 1-65.

12. M. FUENTES CODERA, *Imperialismo e Iberismos en España: perspectivas regeneradoras frente a la Gran Guerra*, in *Historia y Política*, núm. 33, Madrid, enero-junio (2015), pp. 21-48; ID. *España en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Una movilización cultural*, Madrid, Akal, 2014; ID., *La Gran Guerra de los intelectuales: España en Europa*, in *Ayer* 91 (2013).

13. This process of attributive or adjectival use of the word “neutrality” and its intellectual roots can be followed recently in M. FUENTES CODERA, *España en la Primera Guerra Mundial* cit., p. 47.

14. I am essentially reproducing in this section some points already made by myself in C. GARCÍA SANZ AND M. FUENTES CODERA, *Toward New Approaches to Neutrality*, cit..

subjects when it comes to the analysis of neutrality. Spain was one of the largest mineral and foodstuffs neutral markets in Europe (including key war supplies such as iron-ore, lead, pyrites, manganese, oxides...etc.) and kept a nodal location in Atlantic-Mediterranean merchant routes too. So, the study of Spain during the First World War also makes sense when it points to the comprehension of the belligerent's expectations for what Spain could offer them even as a neutral theatre. From the onset of war, the quest for neutral sources (raw material and minerals; foodstuffs; manufactures; shipping tonnage...etc.) and neutral public favour was very intense and one often overlooked. This was the starting point for new lines of research that opened up leading to further prospects for investigation in Spain and, at the same time, connecting the Spanish experience with the overall history of neutral countries. Precisely, in this section we will provide the reader with a general insight into the current state of the Spanish historiography of the Great War, focusing on international history.

Beginning with Romero Salvadó's book, *España 1914-1918: entre la guerra y la revolución*, it is considered as a turning point for the rediscovery of the Spanish Governments' stance on the conflict<sup>15</sup>. Romero Salvadó delved into pressing issues behind the regime's sustainability, dealing with the challenges that the international circumstances imposed on the volatile domestic situation due to the clash between the ruling class (the so-called *official Spain*) and the working-class (the so-called *real Spain*). In particular, he focused on Count Romanones' cabinet policies (between December 1915 and April 1917).

International propaganda also offered a perfect example of the extent to which foreign interference destabilized the country in the midst of an internal crisis<sup>16</sup>. Public opinion became one of the principal battlegrounds in Spain, where politicians seemed rather oblivious to the overall mood and opinions of the public. As a result, it comes as no surprise that the Germans were most interested in taking the lead in propaganda work.

On the one hand, between September and December of 1914, a full-on German propaganda was well underway in the capital and major Spanish

15. This book was originally published in English, FRANCISCO J. ROMERO SALVADÓ, *Spain 1914-1918: Between War and Revolution*, London, Routledge, 1999.

16. It also could be considered the flip side of "the war of words" that took place in Spain throughout the war. Gerald Meaker's work continues to be the most often quoted one on Spaniards' respective favoritism and phobia regarding the warring sides. See G. MEAKER, *A Civil War of Words* cit..

provinces. Jens Albes went into this issue in greater depth, analyzing German mobilization in Spain and some of their most innovative propaganda methods, such as film exhibitions<sup>17</sup>. The financing of the German propaganda was far more impressive than what the countries of the Entente were investing in their own programs, which were often based on mere counter-propaganda targets. In addition, Albes's work shed light on the role of the local elite in swaying the Spanish public opinion. Javier Ponce also dealt with these issues in some of his recent works<sup>18</sup>.

On the other hand, the antagonism between the concepts of *Kultur* and *Civilization* along with the state monopoly over the cultural initiatives abroad were key aspects of the French propaganda. Paul Aubert and Jean Marc Delaunay clearly suggested this hypothesis in their pioneer works. Aubert studied the structure of the propaganda services in Spain while Delaunay dealt with the role of *L'École des Hautes Études Hispaniques*, highlighting the institution's influence on the Spanish intellectual class that hoped to mirror European paradigms<sup>19</sup>.

Nonetheless, later research went a step further and addressed Spain's preferential relations with the Allies. The scope was a better understanding of the war dynamics, like those of propaganda, which bred on the Spanish soil between 1914 and 1918. New variables of historical analysis that largely remained unknown to Spanish historiography, as was the case with the study of the intelligence services, were then incorporated to research

17. JENS ALBES, *La propaganda cinematográfica de los alemanes en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial*, in *Mélanges de la Casa Velázquez*, 31 (1995), pp. 77-101.

18. J. PONCE MARRERO, *Propaganda and Politics: Germany and Spanish Opinion in World War I*, in TROY R.E. PADDOCK, *World War I and Propaganda*, Middletown, Connecticut State University, 2014, pp. 292-321.

19. PAUL AUBERT, *Les intellectuels et le journalisme en Espagne (1898-1936)*, in P. AUBERT and JEAN-MICHEL DEVOIS, *Les élites et le presse en Espagne et en Amérique Latine des Lumières à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, Madrid, Casa Velázquez, 2001, pp. 189-210. JEAN MARC DELAUNAY, *L'action diplomatique des pays belligérants en direction de l'opinion publique espagnole durant la Première Guerre Mondiale*, in *Opinion Publique et Politique Extérieure en Europe. II. 1915-1940. Actes du colloque de Rome*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1984, pp. 229-234; ID., *L'École des hautes études hispaniques et la Casa de Velázquez au cœur des relations franco-espagnoles du XXe siècle (1898-1979)*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, 1994, pp. 91-122. Moreover, a recent reflection on these issues can also be found in EDUARDO GONZÁLEZ CALLEJA AND P. AUBERT, *Nidos de espías. España, Francia y la Primera Guerra Mundial (1914-1919)*, Madrid, Alianza, 2014.

proposals<sup>20</sup>. In particular, contributions dealing with industrial and commercial espionage operations of the British, the French and the Italian networks showed the extent to which Spain was caught in the middle of the belligerent crossfire<sup>21</sup>.

Similarly, research connected with severe belligerent interferences has shed light on inner dissensions between Spanish liberal and conservative policymakers. Foreign pressures limited the Spanish cabinets' ability to preserve the autonomy of the foreign policy as well as the national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Two recently published books are worth mentioning in this line, *Nidos de espías. España, Francia y la Primera Guerra Mundial (1914-1919)* and *España en la Gran Guerra. Espías, diplomáticos y traficantes* by Fernando García Sanz<sup>22</sup>. These works specifically deal with strategic reasoning behind neutral Spain's transformation into a war front where the Allies and the Central Powers respectively fought to keep the country on their side. In particular, we shall remark García Sanz' book that incorporates the Italian perspective in the analysis and provides full insight into Spain's relations with the Entente. While on the subject of Spanish international relations, we should also mention the contributions that analyze the course of action of Anglo-Saxon powers, namely Great Britain and the United States. The logistical needs behind the use of the

20. On these premises, Fernando García Sanz (the concurrence of my last name is purely coincidental) together with his team started in 2002 a new line of research based on Spain's preferential relations with France, Great Britain and Italy in the Mediterranean theatre of the Great War. His research proposal consisted of analyzing the Spanish position within the allied strategic, political, economic, naval and military schemes. This research was done as part of the following projects in which I actively participated: "Espionaje y relaciones internacionales: los servicios de información aliados en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial" (BHA2002-01143); "Contraespionaje, seguridad y relaciones internacionales en España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial" (I+D BHA 2006-01933) (2006-2009); y "El Mediterráneo en las relaciones internacionales de España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial" (HAR.2010-16680).

21. C. GARCÍA SANZ, *La Primera Guerra Mundial en el Estrecho de Gibraltar: Economía, Política y Relaciones Internacionales*, Madrid, CSIC, 2011; MARIA-DOLORES ELIZALDE, *Les relations entre la Grande-Bretagne et l'Espagne pendant la Première Guerre mondiale par le biais des services de renseignements: organisation et objectifs britanniques en Espagne*, in *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains: revue d'histoire*, 226 (2007), pp. 23-36; E. GONZÁLEZ CALLEJA, *Los servicios de información franceses en España durante la I Guerra Mundial*, in *Revista de Historia Militar*, 3 (2005), pp.179-226; F. GARCÍA SANZ, *Información, espionaje y contraespionaje en España durante la I Guerra Mundial*, in *Revista de Historia Militar*, 3 (2005), pp.147-178.

22. F. GARCÍA SANZ, *España en la Gran Guerra. Espías, diplomáticos y traficantes*, Madrid, Galaxia, 2014.



Gibraltar naval base and the allied navigation control in the Strait occupied a prominent position in the bilateral relationship between Great Britain and Spain<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, Spain provided the stage for an Anglo-American economic rivalry.

Actually, Spain's role in the British economic war represents one of the most original aspects of the analysis of belligerent powers' commercial and naval strategies in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>24</sup>. If we follow Soutou's arguments, the allied blockade can not only be seen as a self-defence mechanism against the aggressive plans of a Central European economic bloc, especially given its consequences for interallied relations in neutral arenas<sup>25</sup>. This phenomenon was also visible during the period when the U.S. remained neutral, as discussed in José Antonio Montero's works. The intelligence and propaganda apparatus hosted at the Madrid Embassy promoted the US commercial strategies in Spain<sup>26</sup>. Trade retaliation measures or black lists severely affected Spaniards' representations on total war. In fact, these studies stand out from some of the other works that have recently been published because they deal with the role of small and medium powers in the Mediterranean theatre and their capacity of resilience against external pressures<sup>27</sup>.

## Research Gaps

Despite Spanish research breakthroughs in the last decade, we should continue being constructively critical of our international history. There

23. C. GARCÍA SANZ, *La Primera Guerra Mundial en el Estrecho* cit..

24. C. GARCÍA SANZ, *Aliados en guerra: Gran Bretaña y el comercio neutral (1914-1916)*, in *Ayer*, 94 (2014), pp.147-173; ID., *British Blacklists in Spain during the First World War: the Spanish Case Study as a Belligerent Battlefield*, in *War in History*, 21 (2014), pp. 496-517.

25. GEORGES-HENRI SOUTOU, *L'or et le sang: Les Buts de Guerre Economiques de la Première Guerre Mondiale*, Paris, Fayard, 1989.

26. JOSÉ ANTONIO MONTERO JIMÉNEZ, *Imágenes, ideología y propaganda: la labor del Comité de Información Pública de los Estados Unidos en España (1917-1918)*, in *Hispania*, 228 (2008), pp. 221-234; ID., *Diplomacia económica y balanza de pagos: los pactos Hispano-Estadounidenses de 1918*, in *Revista de Historia Económica - Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, 26 (2008), pp. 243-276.

27. See for instance the collective volume already cited J.L. RUIZ SÁNCHEZ, I. CORDERO OLIVERO, C. GARCÍA SANZ, *Shaping Neutrality* cit.



is still a significant lack in comprehensive analyses that would better link external elements of pressure in Spain with the internal conditions of the neutrality policy.

Firstly, in terms of Spain's relations with other great powers, for instance, the German case remains rather understudied. Generally, the German policy towards Spain has been quite overlooked so it needs to be measured itself against the allied strategies. Furthermore, even though we have learned about German propaganda and espionage activities in Spain, it was mostly from the British, French and Italian sources.

Ron Carden's book, *German Policy Toward Neutral Spain, 1914-1918* is still the most often quoted work<sup>28</sup>. Carden analyzed the German campaign to counteract the Allies: France and Great Britain overwhelmingly controlled Spanish mines, banks and sea trade<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, his principal argument rests on the idea of the Spanish neutrality as a German accomplishment. But Carden's work, first published in the 80s, should be reviewed to incorporate new research on Spanish politics and, in particular, on Alfonso XIII's role in the decision-making process. Oddly enough, there are very few works dealing with submarine warfare. In fact, German sinking of ships was the most dangerous challenge to the Spanish neutrality.

After the sinking of *San Fulgencio* steamer on 6 April 1917, Romanones' liberal cabinet seemed to be on the point of breaking diplomatic relations with the Central Powers. However, inner political dissensions forced Romanones to resign. The same can be said of diplomatic turmoil in September of 1918, after the sinking of *Ramón de Larrinaga*. All in all, Spain was one of the neutral countries that experienced the submarine warfare more severely. Hundred sailors were killed and approximately twenty percent of the national merchant navy's tonnage lost. Nonetheless, in this vein, Javier Ponce's recent contributions on German naval warfare should be remarked<sup>30</sup>.

28. RON M. CARDEN, *German Policy toward Neutral Spain, 1914-1918*, New York-London, Garland, 1987.

29. For instance, the tight British control over both the production and marketing of pyrites was guaranteed by the all-powerful *Río Tinto Co.* At the same time, the French controlled lead production through the *Société Minière et Métallurgique de Peñarroya*.

30. JESÚS PEREA RUIZ, *Guerra submarina en España (1914-1918)*, in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, 26 (2004), pp.193-230; J. PONCE MARRERO, *Commerce Warfare in the East Central Atlantic during the First World War: German Submarines around the Canary Islands, 1916-1918*, in *The Mariner's*

Secondly, despite the significant amount of sources currently available on the foreign propaganda activities in Spain during the Great War, we should also point out some limitations related to the subject in this section. Some of these have to do with the actual impact of the press subsidies or the extent to which they influenced and oriented journalists' opinions. Another important issue that remains quite understudied is the degree of which foreign propaganda infiltrated and manipulated the working-class media. Contemporary foreign reports on the Spanish situation cannot always be considered accurate. As some of the so-called insurrectionists, anarchist rebels or revolutionists admitted, the Germans infiltrated in their organizations. This challenges the dominant view on the mobilization of public opinion, for and against the Central Powers. Foreign interference played an important role in the social unrest from 1917 onwards, but the phenomenon was also deeply rooted in Spanish political, economic and social structures. As a result, the way in which the Spaniards represented themselves as neutrals suffering warring pressures in international and domestic arenas has been rather overlooked.

Thirdly, another aspect that remains to be tackled within this framework of lacks is the study of Spain's relations with the rest of the neutral countries, both within and outside Europe. We are basically referring to the analysis of the Spanish official position against the international neutral backdrop. Hipólito de la Torre's work on Portuguese and Spanish neutralities respectively represents a notable exception in the current state of research on the subject. Portugal and its ambiguous neutrality were a destabilizing factor for the Spanish neutrality and, in turn, affected the countries' relations with the regional hegemonic power, Great Britain<sup>31</sup>.

Furthermore, in terms of the Spanish neutrality's own implication in the whole international scheme, another research aspect to be pursued is the one concerning moral justifications behind the concept of neutrality as a feasible international policy. For example, the political construction of national identities based on the principles of international humanitarian-

*Mirror*, 100, 3 (2014), pp. 335-348; ID., *Logistics for commerce war in the Atlantic during the First World War: the German Etappe System in action*, in *Mariner's Mirror*, 92, 4 (2014), pp. 455-464; ID., *Neutrality and submarine warfare: Germany and Spain during the First World War*, in *War and Society*, vol. 24, nº4 (2015), pp. 287-300.

31. HIPÓLITO DE LA TORRE, *El imperio del Rey: Alfonso XIII, Portugal y los ingleses (1907-1916)*, Mérida, Junta de Extremadura, 2002.

ism and pacifism has been widely debated in the case of Scandinavia and Switzerland. Against this backdrop, Alfonso XIII's actions in favor of the war prisoners, already studied by Pando, could pave the way for new and more extensive lines of research on the Spanish position within the political framework of humanitarianism in wartime<sup>32</sup>. There was also a remarkable circulation of ideas and intellectuals through both margins of the Atlantic Ocean, feeding the public controversies on the Great War. Spain became a key reference for Argentine neutralists when that foreign policy was severely challenged. As a result, alternative identity models began to gain acceptance, as Latin-Americanism and Hispanism versus Latinism (it is clear the connection between the Italian warring course of action not being able to be applied to Spain and the promotion of the Iberoamericanism in the Aliadophile sector)<sup>33</sup>. Similarly, the hypotheses of a Latin mediation promoted by the Spanish King in contrast to the North American peace initiative in December of 1916 have not been studied in detail either. These are all issues that have been extensively researched in other European countries. So, this could be the basis for a discussion on why these have traditionally been treated as marginal issues by the Spanish scholars.

### Some Final Reflections

It is clear that the diversity of neutral societies and “neutralities” during the First World War can only be properly valued and understood through their comparison, but also by connecting them with the all-encompassing experiences of the war. This paper shows that new studies on the Spanish

32. See JUAN PANDO, *Un rey para la esperanza. La España humanitaria de Alfonso XIII en la Gran Guerra*, Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 2002. Nonetheless, But the truth is that, diplomatically, Alfonso XIII exhibited contradictory behaviour as military operations evolved and was rather interested in learning new war methods to fight against the rebel tribes in the North of Africa. PABLO LA PORTE, *La práctica internacional de las disculpas de estado: España, Marruecos y el Rif en el centenario del protectorado (1912-2012)*, in *Revista Electrónica de Estudios Internacionales*, 24 (2012), pp. 1-18.

33. We follow María Inés Tato's thesis on the contemporary polarization of the intellectual field in both countries within a nationalization process, see MARÍA INÉS TATO, *La Gran Guerra en la historiografía argentina. Balance y perspectivas de investigación*, in *Iberoamericana. América Latina – España – Portugal*, vol. XIV (2014), n° 53, p. 97; ID., *La disputa por la argentinidad. Rupturistas y neutralistas durante la Primera Guerra Mundial*, in *Temas de Historia Argentina y Americana*, n° 13, 2008, pp. 227-250.

case have contributed to enrich the understanding of the conflict through belligerent struggle for monitoring neutral countries. Nonetheless, until now, we might hardly find general patterns of explanation of how neutrality worked between 1914 and 1918. The current state of knowledge would be the result of the research on cases, basically, in the North and the Centre of Europe. This is a main reason why a specific new research line for the South of Europe will significantly be productive.

To begin with, the collective crisis of conscience experienced in the region by the end of XIX century. The British ultimatum of 1890 to the Portuguese in Africa; Spain's loss of last colonies in America and Asia in 1898; and the Italian defeat at Adwa in 1896 impacted deeply on their respective national public opinion<sup>34</sup>. Actually, those circumstances brought about political and social stances on the conflict in 1914. But, it turns out the Spanish case seems rather singular against this regional context. Unlike in Portugal or in Italy, where the external insecurities and lack of social consensus about the political system tipped the balance toward war, these were exactly the reasons alleged by the vast majority of Spanish politicians and intellectuals for not taking the step toward belligerence (at least until well into 1917). Overall, the Spanish opinion tended to agree that neutrality was the only choice in view of the national weaknesses.

However, these existing historical narratives of neutral experiences in the South of Europe during the Great War (this would also apply to the Greek case) are partial and constructed on local accounts, in teleological relation to respective domestic evolvments in the twentieth century. So, the fragmentation of academic contributions (generally they turns into a collection of national cases) has also prevented from comparative perspectives and transnational approaches to either *failed* or *successful neutralities*. On the one hand, the aggression against the Belgian neutrality set one of the primary stages for European discussions on issues of legal liability and moral culpability, with also significant developments in the field of momentous propaganda. Public feelings and emotions like anger grew at unequal "sacrifices" and selfishness of equidistance from "the legitimate cause" and "illegitimate cause". Thus,

34. The thesis of the decline of Latin powers at the beginning of the XX century tended to be most popular among Spanish diplomatic historians. See JOSÉ MARÍA JOVER ZAMORA, *1898: Teoría y práctica de la redistribución colonial*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1979; differing from this view through a comparison between the Spanish and Italian cases before the war, F. GARCÍA SANZ, *Historia de las relaciones entre España e Italia. Imágenes, comercio y política Exterior (1890-1914)*, Madrid, CSIC, 1994.

we find vivid representations of neutrality in the political, social, intellectual and artistic discourses and practices of belligerent societies as well. On the other hand, the war became a quest for neutral sources (raw material and minerals; foodstuffs; manufactures; shipping tonnage...etc.) and neutral public favour. The transferences and interactions between belligerents and neutrals were so intense that small and medium powers could hardly keep an autonomous foreign policy consistent with their own national interests against a context marked by profound dynamics of dependency towards great powers, such as those in the Mediterranean region. In addition, the harshness of war experiences and humanitarian calamities for non-combatants, such as the effects of naval blockade and the submarine warfare, had to be counteracted with moral resilience arms, which in the end would have made sense of the neutral choice for Spain. As the Italian case showed in the region, entering war with the winning side was not always a guarantee of achieving national targets. Moreover, strangely enough, circulation of ideas about neutrality across European people has not extensively received attention by the academia until very recently.

Bearing in mind that war was justified because of the failure of an idea of proper and lawful behaviour among nations, public minds turned out to be relative and adaptable depending on interpretations of particular and collective interests at stake between 1914 and 1918. In this sense, the comparative method has the virtue of putting case studies into a broader picture and offering the possibility of finding connections with other contemporary processes developing in different spatial scenes. At the same time, it prevents the temptation to proclaim alleged national exceptionalities, something usual in strictly national narratives.

Constructive discussions should therefore be sought for a space of symmetric perspectives in which the study of national cases can be undertaken in a well-adjusted ground for convergence and divergence. Common denominators as well as singularities of both social and political experiences of the conflict shall always be considered in each case. In my opinion, this is precisely the research track that we should follow in the coming years; on the one hand, consolidating the Spanish scholarship in neutrality and, on the other hand, actively participating and discussing the topic in international forums dedicated to the Great War. This was specially the case with the scientific meeting *La Grande Guerra: un impegno europeo di ricerca e di riflessione*, held in Rome, at the Vittoriano, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.



## Italian Historiography

As Daniele Menozzi wrote, in the preface of the volume he edited in 2010 with Giovanna Procacci and Simonetta Soldani about civil mobilization, Italian studies on Great War have developed by a wide comparison with the results of international research, building up one of the most innovative and dynamic fields of the contemporary historiography in our country<sup>1</sup> and, as noted Martin Gilbert in 1998, one of the fields in which «the number of the books about First World War is so huge that nobody could read them in his life»<sup>2</sup>. In the analysis of the historiographical trends that featured WW1 studies, I'll highlight those that impacted much more than others and developed in connection with the results of international research, making a selection of them.

After the clash of the patriotic paradigm, Italian historiography is living, from the 1990s, a smart season of studies that led to a more complex vision of the war<sup>3</sup>, already introduced by the volume published by Il Mulino, that collected the essays from a convention, that took place in Rovereto, focused on social and cultural history during Great War that left a mark on following two decades<sup>4</sup>. The studies of the last decade of the Twenti-

1. DANIELE MENOZZI, *Presentazione*, in D. MENOZZI, GIOVANNA PROCACCI, SIMONETTA SOLDANI (eds.), *Un paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)*, Milano, Unicopli, 2010, p. 7.

2. MARTIN GILBERT, *La grande storia della prima guerra mondiale*, Milano, Mondadori, 1998, p. 657.

3. MARCO MONDINI, *L'historiographie italienne face à la Grande Guerre: saisons et ruptures*, in *Histoire@Politique, Politique, culture, société*, n° 22, janvier-avril 2014 [www.histoire-politique.fr, date accessed 10 ottobre 2015].

4. DIEGO LEONI e CAMILLO ZADRA (eds.), *La grande guerra. Esperienza, memoria, immagini*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1986. The volume referenced the studies of Paul Fussell (*La grande guerra e la memoria moderna*, trad. it., Bologna, il Mulino, 1984) and ERIC LEED (*Terra di nessuno. Esperienza bellica e identità personale nella prima guerra mondiale*, trad. it, Bologna, il Mulino, 1985)



eth century showed a new interest in Great War theme and came from a historiographical current introduced, in some aspects, by Mario Isnenghi and Giovanni Procacci<sup>5</sup>: they pinpointed among subaltern classes, simple soldiers, countrymen, women, the stakeholders of historical plot and, at the same time, they found the focus of new researches related to the impact of the war into society that highlight dissent and resignation about war<sup>6</sup>. In this interpretative frame, soldiers, laborers or countrymen, emerged as an estranged subject from the causes of war, motivated by resentment toward authoritarian state and its own subversive laws, subjected to war discipline and psychologically estranged from the mechanisms of the war like aggression and violence that, in some situations, generated desertion or fraternization with the enemy. In 1991 Antonio Gibelli published *L'officina della guerra. La Grande Guerra e le trasformazioni del mondo mentale*<sup>7</sup>, a work destined to become a real break among the studies about WW1 in Italy: the writer, welcoming the ideas by Paul Fussell, Eric Leed and Jay Winter (recently translated in Italy at that time) used different sources apart from tradition and, in particular, autobiographical, literary and psychiatric. In this well known volume, whose historiographical fame led to 2015 enlarged version, the focus was on material and psychic disturbance caused by war among soldiers and on the process that upset their minds, acting in the deep. The rescue of the soldiers' memory (on the background of the western clash of civilization) was not only related to the violent event between soldier-victim and army-persecutor, but sketched the complexity and the modernity of the war experience and its impact on the soldier's mind, contemplating the Great War as the first large common experience

and it introduced a new anthropological and psychoanalytic approach linked to phenomenon of war violence. See also ANTONIO GIBELLI, *Guerra e follia. Potere psichiatrico e patologia del rifiuto nella Grande Guerra*, in *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1980, 4, pp. 441-464, e Id., *La guerra laboratorio. Eserciti e igiene sociale verso la guerra totale*, ivi, 1982, 3, pp. 335-350, BRUNA BIANCHI, *Predisposizione, commozione o emozione? Natura e terapia delle neuropsicosi di guerra (1915-1918)*, in *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 1983, 3, pp. 25-38.

5. MARIO ISNENGHI, *Operai e contadini nella Grande Guerra*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1982 e GIOVANNA PROCACCI, *Stato e classe operaia in Italia nella prima guerra mondiale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1983.

6. PAOLO GIOVANNINI, *Di fronte alla grande guerra. Militari e civili tra coercizione e rivolta*, Ancona, l'Ancora, 1997.

7. A. GIBELLI, *L'officina della guerra. La Grande Guerra e le trasformazioni del mondo mentale*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2015 (1 ed. 1991).

for Italian people and a strong phenomenon of national integration as Gibelli asserted in *La guerra grande. Storia di gente comune*<sup>8</sup>.

Over the last twenty years, the scholars of WWI wondered how the conflict contributed to national common identity<sup>9</sup>. Despite their critical position (founded on nationalizing footprint imprinted by war as a final moment of Risorgimento, from both territorial and collective mindset point of view), Isnenghi, Rochat<sup>10</sup> and Gibelli, with a quite soft judgement, insisted on the idea of a further nationalization caused by war during the 1980s, like Angelo Ventrone at the beginning of the 2000s who, dissecting the theme of demonization of the enemy<sup>11</sup> (one of the values of war propaganda)<sup>12</sup>, chose this point of view, recently resumed by Francesco Perfetti<sup>13</sup>.

Nevertheless, as Nicola Labanca indicated, nationalizing action put in place during the conflict has some limits (until the start of the war), as Isnenghi demonstrated in *Giornali di trincea*<sup>14</sup>; at the same time, Giovanna Procacci underlined that the effects of the war (psychological trauma and human loss) didn't cement grass-roots masses and leaders<sup>15</sup>.

The bottom-up rescue of memory by the progressive and endless publication of letters, diaries, memoirs by soldiers from countryside and working class (that had a boost with the works by Antonio Gibelli and Giovanna Procacci, then resumed by Fabio Caffarena), let us to understand the idea of war among lower classes, in particular among

8. A. GIBELLI, *La guerra grande. Storie di gente comune*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2014 and ID., *La Grande Guerra degli italiani 1915-1918*, Milano, Sansoni, 1998.

9. NICOLA LABANCA, *Militari tra fronte e paese. Attorno agli studi degli ultimi quindici anni*, in *Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa*, G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra*, XXVIII (2013), p. 107.

10. M. ISNENGHI, GIORGIO ROCHAT, *La Grande Guerra 1914-1918*, Milano, Sansoni, 2004.

11. See ANGELO VENTRONE: *Il nemico della nazione e la ricerca di "una nuova politica"*, in N. LABANCA e C. ZADRA (ed.), *Costruire un nemico. Studi di storia della propaganda di guerra*, Milano, Unicopli, 2011, pp. 17-26; ID., *La seduzione totalitaria. Guerra, modernità, violenza politica (1914-1918)*, Roma, Donzelli, 2003; ID., *Piccola storia della grande guerra*, Roma, Donzelli, 2005 and ID., *La grande guerra degli italiani 1915-1918*, Milano, Sansoni, 1998.

12. ANNIE MORELLI, *La grande guerra: all'origine della propaganda moderna* and M. MONDINI, *La propaganda contro il nemico nell'Italia della Grande Guerra: l'organizzazione militare*, in N. LABANCA e C. ZADRA (eds.), *Costruire un nemico. Studi di storia della propaganda di guerra*, pp. 3-15 and pp. 27-46.

13. FRANCESCO PERFETTI, *Prefazione to La Grande Guerra e l'identità nazionale. Il primo conflitto mondiale nella politica e nelle istituzioni*, edited by F. PERFETTI, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2014, pp. 5-10.

14. M. ISNENGHI, *Giornali di trincea 1915-1918*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977.

15. G. PROCACCI, *Introduzione*, in EAD. (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., p. 29.

countrymen, that formed the majority group of Infantry. Thanks to the Genoese historian, the soldiers (considered in the past as a passive subject) revealed to historians their ability to transmit the memory of war, affected by writing bulimia (like everybody who wear a uniform in a war context). The memory of humble people give us a more complex war experience compared with middle class soldiers, with an higher cultural level but more sensitive to patriotic rhetoric (as Adolfo Omodeo highlighted in *Momenti della vita di guerra*)<sup>16</sup>. The bottom-up rescue of memory led to the birth of *Archivio ligure della scrittura popolare* at Genova University, directed for a long time by Antonio Gibelli, and made possible to know (thanks to the work of a group of scholars connected to *Materiali di lavoro*, di Rovereto, like Camillo Zadra<sup>17</sup> and Diego Leoni<sup>18</sup>, and to the Archivio della Scrittura Popolare di Trento directed by Quinto Antonelli<sup>19</sup>; perceptions and war life of Italian soldiers in Austro-Hungarian Army recently entered into academic historiography, becoming no more a matter for

16. ADOLFO OMODEO, *Momenti della vita di guerra. Dai diari e dalle lettere dei caduti*, Bari, Laterza, 1934.

17. Innovative the work of C. ZADRA, *Quaderni di guerra. Diari e memorie autobiografiche di soldati trentini nella grande guerra*, in *Materiali di lavoro*, 1985, 1-3, pp. 209-236. See also: *Archivio della scrittura popolare. Scritture di guerra*, 10 voll. Trento-Rovereto, Museo storico italiano della guerra di Rovereto-Museo del risorgimento e della lotta per la libertà di Trento, 1994-2002; FABRIZIO RASERA, C. ZADRA, *Patrie lontane. La coscienza nazionale negli scritti dei soldati trentini (1914-18)*, in GIANLUIGI FAIT (ed.), *Sui campi di Galizia (1914-1917). Gli Italiani d'Austria e il fronte orientale. Uomini popoli culture nella guerra europea*, Rovereto, Museo storico italiano della guerra, 1997, pp. 317-358.

GIUSEPPE BRESCIANI, *Una generazione di confine. Cultura nazionale e Grande guerra negli scritti di un barbiere rivano*, a cura di G. FAIT, pref. di M. ISNENGHI, Trento, Museo del Risorgimento e della lotta per la libertà, 1991.

18. D. LEONI, *Il popolo scomparso*, in *Il popolo scomparso. Il Trentino, i Trentini nella prima guerra mondiale*, Rovereto, Nicolodi, 2003 and QUINTO ANTONELLI, D. LEONI, LUCIANO BETTINI, F. RASERA, *La città mondo. Rovereto 1914-1918*, Rovereto, Osiride, 1998.

19. Q. ANTONELLI, DONATA SEGATA (eds.), *Kriegsnotizien. La grande guerra nei diari dei soldati austriaci*, Trento, Fondazione Museo storico del Trentino, 2004; Q. ANTONELLI *I dimenticati della grande guerra. La memoria dei combattenti trentini (1914-1920)*, Rovereto, Il Margine, 2008 and ID., *Storia intima della Grande guerra. Lettere, diari e memorie dei soldati dal fronte*, Roma, Donzelli, 2014. On the soldiers of Litorale see FABIO TODERO, *La Grande Guerra e la Venezia Giulia. Prefazione - The Great War and Venezia Giulia. Preface*, in *Quale storia*, 2014, 1-2, *La Grande Guerra ai confini: italiani d'Austria e comunità di frontiera 1914-18 - The Great War on the borders: Italians of Austria and border communities 1914-1918*, pp. 91-96.

local historians as the works by Alessio Quercioli, Roberto Todero<sup>20</sup>, Federico Mazzini demonstrated<sup>21</sup>.

In a global perspective, war writing (now experienced also by language scholars)<sup>22</sup>, enlarge itself into an endless subjectivity coming from the battlefield to the village, into a galaxy made up of letters, diaries, memoirs still in listing. War writing is an egotistic lens digging up into individual experience but very useful to understand the history of Italian individuals and society during WW1.

During the 1990s, Giovanna Procacci started a new research flow, publishing in 1993 *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra*<sup>23</sup>. In this book she describes how 600.000 Italian prisoners (captured by Austro-Hungarian and German Empire) were subdued to censorship and war law<sup>24</sup>. This work is formed by unpublished archives materials and reconstructs the conditions of war prisoners, highlighting the low profile behavior of Italian Government and underlines, by masses of quantitative data, the inability to restrict «the repressive vocation of military power» and its progressive extension in civil field<sup>25</sup>. The work of Giovanna Procacci

20. ROBERTO TODERO, *Dalla Galizia all'Isonzo. Storia e storie dei soldati triestini nella Grande Guerra. Italiani Sloveni e Croati nel K.U.K. I.R. Freiherr von Walstätten Nr. 97 dal 1883 al 1918*, pref. di Marina Rossi, Gaspari, Udine, 2006. See also GIUSEPPE M. GOTTARDI, *Eroi o traditori? I soldati trentini nella Prima guerra mondiale*, Rovereto, Osiride, 2007; Q. ANTONELLI, *Chi siamo noi? Autoritratti di combattenti trentini nella Grande Guerra*, in F. RASERA (ed.), *Trento e Trieste. Percorsi degli italiani dal '48 all'annessione*, Rovereto, Accademia degli Agiati di Rovereto-Edizioni Osiride, 2014, pp. 377-394.

21. FEDERICO MAZZINI, *Cose de l'altro mondo. Una cultura di guerra attraverso la scrittura popolare trentina 1914-1918*, Pisa, ETS, 2013.

22. RITA FRESU (ed.), *«Questa guerra non è mica la guerra mia». Scritture, contesti, linguaggi durante la Grande Guerra*, a cura di Roma, Il Cubo, 2015 and LUCIANO GRAZIUSO, *Le parole nuove della Grande Guerra*, in *Eunomia*, n.s., IV (2015), 2, pp. 557-570.

23. G. PROCACCI, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1993. See also ALESSANDRO TORTATO, *La prigionia di guerra in Italia 1915-1919*, Milano, Mursia, 2004; DANIELE CESCIN, *Grande guerra europea e violenza contro i civili. Una prospettiva comparata e il caso italiano*, A. TORTATO *Un'altra faccia della modernità: la prigionia di guerra in Italia dal 1915 al 1919* and ALBERTO BURATO, *Le sofferenze e il destino dei prigionieri italiani*, in LEONARDO RAITO (ed.), *Il conflitto della modernità. La grande guerra in Italia 1915-18*, Roma, Aracne, 2009, pp. 13-44, pp. 157-168, pp. 169-194.

24. MARCO DI GIOVANNI, *Un profilo di storia della storiografia*, in M. ISNENGHI, D. CESCIN (ed.), *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. III, t. 2, *La Grande Guerra: dall'intervento alla «vittoria mutilata»*, Torino, UTET, 2008, p. 954.

25. G. PROCACCI, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 20-54.

reveals a concentration universe, experienced not only by Italian people, and considered an ideological process useful to correct any deviance from patriotic obligation. For Procacci, WW1 (very far from being a laboratory for national unity) exasperated the inner conflicts into Italian society and broke the evolution toward democracy<sup>26</sup>. Confirming this idea, she recently demonstrated that total mobilization transformed into a violation of human rights, preparing the conversion of war into an authoritarian involution sealed by Fascism<sup>27</sup>.

From the 1990 historiographical analysis focused also on the idea of rejection of the war, not only from a pacifist point of view<sup>28</sup>, but mostly on the analysis of disciplinary management and consequences on soldiers' mind. It's a current that evolved in fifteen years and that has its own roots in the works by Antonio Gibelli e and Bruna Bianchi, aligning the Italian historiography to the international trends (in particular Anglo-Saxon historiography), in which the interest for anthropological content is strong, as for the fall-out on soldiers, rooting and management of memory.

Collective behaviors and individual experiences induce to study the war from social history point of view, even though there are jabs about political history<sup>29</sup> and international relations<sup>30</sup>; the look of the historian lands on a complex field, in which institutional<sup>31</sup> and economic<sup>32</sup> transformation,

26. EAD., *"L'Italia nella Grande Guerra"*, in GIOVANNI SABBATUCCI, VITTORIO VIDOTTO, (eds.), *Storia d'Italia, 4: Guerre e fascismo 1914-1943*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998, pp. 3-99.

27. G. PROCACCI, *Warfare-Welfare. Intervento dello Stato e diritti dei cittadini (1914-1918)*, Roma, Carocci, 2013.

28. B. BIANCHI, *Pacifismo*, Milano, Unicopli, 2004 and EAD., *"L'ultimo rifugio dello spirito di umanità"*. *La Grande Guerra e la nascita di un nuovo pacifismo*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 81-102.

29. GIAN ENRICO RUSCONI, *L'azzardo del 1915. Come l'Italia decide la sua guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2005.

30. DANIELA ROSSINI, *Il mito americano nell'Italia della Grande Guerra*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2000 e LUCA RICCARDI, *Alleati non amici. Le relazioni politiche tra l'Italia e l'Intesa durante la prima guerra mondiale*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 1992.

31. ALDO G. RICCI, FRANCESCA SCARDACCIONE (eds.), *Il Ministero per le armi e munizioni. Decreti di ausiliarietà*, Roma, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1991.

32. P. DI GIROLAMO, *Produrre per combattere. Operai e mobilitazione industriale a Milano durante la grande guerra 1915-1918*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2002; LUIGI TOMASSINI, *Lavoro e guerra. La mobilitazione industriale italiana 1915-1919*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1997; MARIA CONCETTA DENTONI, *Annona e consenso in Italia 1914-1919*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1995.

communication, public and private elaboration of memory, the mental frame of mass and individuals (that lived the experience of a destructive and standardizing modernity) are mixed together<sup>33</sup>.

In this way the idea of war-laboratory extend itself<sup>34</sup>, as a reflexion and consequence of a great event that modified institutions, society, people; the war like an “apocalypse of modernity” that led to investigate (by its hard violence) the effects on each person and the dimension of general mourning, public and private, as Fabrizio Dolci and Oliver Janz<sup>35</sup> did in *Non omnis moriar* and many authors told in a lot of works about Unknown Soldier<sup>36</sup>.

Bruna Bianchi, instead, investigated the themes of opposition to war and dissent: she provided documentary evidence about opposition forms like escape, desertion, insubordination, neurosis<sup>37</sup>. However, as Marco Mondini asserted (following the studies by Giorgio Rochat)<sup>38</sup>, the research of a continual objection in every part of the Italian Army, risks to force the events, because the passage of Italian soldiers into foreign armies between 1915 and 1918 were only 2000<sup>39</sup>. Paolo Giovannini resumed this kind of studies<sup>40</sup>, as Leonardo Raito<sup>41</sup> and Andrea Scartabellati, who between 2003

33. M. DI GIOVANNI, *Un profilo di storia della storiografia*, in *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, p. 966.

34. A. GIBELLI, *La guerra laboratorio: eserciti e igiene sociale verso la guerra totale*, cit., pp. 335-350.

35. FABRIZIO DOLCI e OLIVER JANZ, *Non omnis moriar. Gli opuscoli di necrologio per i caduti italiani nella Grande Guerra. Una bibliografia analitica*, Roma, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003; F. DOLCI, *Le pubblicazioni di necrologio in memoria dei caduti italiani nella Grande Guerra*, in *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome*, 112 (2000), 2, pp. 567-576.

36. EMILIO FRANZINA, *Storia (quasi vera) del milite ignoto. Raccontata come un'autobiografia*, Roma, Donzelli, 2014; ALESSANDRIO MINIERO, *Da Versailles al Milite Ignoto. Ritualità e retoriche della Vittoria in Europa 1919-1921*, Roma, Gangemi, 2011; ANDREA BARAVELLI, *La vittoria smarrita. Legittimità e rappresentazioni della Grande Guerra nella crisi del sistema liberale*, Roma, Carocci, 2006; L. CADEDDU, *La leggenda del soldato sconosciuto all'Altare della patria*, Udine, Gasparri, 2001.

37. B. BIANCHI, *La follia e la fuga. Nevrosi di guerra, diserzioni e disobbedienza nell'esercito italiano 1915-1918*, Roma, Bulzoni, 2001 and EAD. (ed.), *Crimini di guerra e contro l'umanità: Le violenze ai civili sul fronte orientale (1914-1919)*, Milano, Unicopli, 2012.

38. G. ROCHAT, *La fuga e la follia*, in *Il mestiere di storico*, 2001, III, p. 135.

39. M. MONDINI, *L'historiographie italienne face à la Grande Guerre: saisons et ruptures* cit., pp. 10-11.

40. P. GIOVANNINI, *Le malattie del corpo e della mente*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 283-302.

41. L. RAITO, *Gaetano Boschi. Sviluppi della neuropsichiatria di guerra (1915-1918)*, Roma, Carocci, 2010.



and 2010, published a series of works about the relationship between Great War and psychiatric culture<sup>42</sup>; Sergio Luzzatto and Matteo Ermacora, on the other side, studied the origins of military psychology<sup>43</sup>. In the meanwhile, the studies by Giovanna Procacci and Alberto Monticone about military justice found new life in the work by Irene Guerrini and Marco Pluviano about rough executions<sup>44</sup>.

From 2000, the debate on WW1 was extended to the war culture paradigm which represented one of the most innovative key to understand European conflict in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>45</sup>. In the deep of this view, developed by French<sup>46</sup> and Anglo-Saxon culture, we can find some common points: the total mobilization for modern war, the involvement of every portion of population in the war effort and, obviously, the general consent as a key for the success. The cultural paradigm shifted his attention toward discourse analysis (and no more toward political and economic mechanisms) in order to explain how was possible obtain and keep the consent in the nations involved in the First World War (with the revealing example of Czarist Russia).

The themes of total war and violence against civilians led to find a link between the First and the Second World War: this is the idea of “European

42. ANDREA SCARTABELLATI, *Intellettuali nel conflitto. Alienisti e patologie attraverso la grande guerra (1909-1921)*, Bagnaria Arsa, Edizioni Gogliardiche, 2003 e Id. (ed.), *Dalle trincee al manicomio. Esperienza bellica e destino di matti e psichiatri nella Grande Guerra*, Torino, Marco Valerio, 2008.

43. MATTEO ERMACORA, *Tecnici e chierici. La formazione della psicologia militare (1904-1915)*, in *Storia e politica, Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa*, XXV, 2010, pp. 163-176; MARIA VITTORIA ADAMI, *Dalla trincea all'ospedale psichiatrico, gli effetti di una guerra moderna*, in L. RAITO (a cura di), *Il conflitto della modernità. La grande guerra in Italia 1915-18* cit., pp. 45-52; SERGIO LUZZATTO, «Un chierico grande vestito da soldato». La guerra di padre Agostino Gemelli, in M. ISNENGHI e D. CESCHIN (eds.), *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. III, t. 1, *La Grande Guerra: dall'intervento alla «vittoria mutilata»*, pp. 452-462. See also CLAUDIO RISÉ, *Psicanalisi della guerra*, Como, Red, 1997.

44. MARCO PLUVIANO, IRENE GUERRINI, *Le fucilazioni sommarie nella prima guerra mondiale (1915-1918)*, pref. di G. Rochat, Udine, Gaspari, 2004 and *La giustizia militare durante la Grande Guerra*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 137-147.

45. FABIO CAFFARENA, *Le scritture dei soldati semplici*, in STÉPHANE AUDOIN-ROUZENAU, JEAN JACQUES BECKER, *La prima guerra mondiale*, italian traslatino edited by A. Gibelli, II, Torino, Einaudi, 2007, pp. 633-649.

46. J.J. BECKER, *1914 l'anno che ha cambiato il mondo*, Torino, Lindau, 2007 and S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, ANNETTE BECKER, SOPHIE COEURÉ, VINCENT DUCLERT, FRÉDÉRIC MONIER (sous la direction de), *La politique et la guerre. Pour comprendre le XXe siècle européen*, Paris, Noesis, 2002.



civil war” or “European 30 years war”<sup>47</sup> by poet Paul Claudel<sup>48</sup>, who created the idea of an ongoing experience between WW1 and WW2 and the shaping of war culture, based on the brutalization of public life, political violence, feelings and emotions produced by war patriotism, that opened the way to violence against civilians and to the atrocity of WW2<sup>49</sup>. In this sense WW1 seemed to be bound to evolve, from one side, into something destructive like totalitarianisms; on the other side, into transformations of social rights often impoverished by a continual erosion of civil rights (e.g. limitations of foreign citizen’s rights or internment as Giovanna Procacci underlined in her works, preluding what happened during Fascism and WW2)<sup>50</sup>. According to French and Anglo-Saxon scholars, Italian historiography accepted the war culture paradigm linking it to the practices and representations of the war by intellectuals and individuals, characterized by different gender experiences, classes, education, origin<sup>51</sup>. This *topos* has been revisited by some Italian scholars<sup>52</sup>.

The use of cultural category in the study of war (that was- as Emilio Gentile underlined- a “cultural apocalypse”)<sup>53</sup>, made possible to avoid a simple chronological or political history point of view and treat war violence in a diachronic way and, in particular, its survival outside the war time that made possible to understand genesis and dynamics of «brutalization», according to George Mosse<sup>54</sup>, who inspired many works in Italy.

47. Cited in M. MONDINI, *Introduzione* a M. MONDINI, GURI SCHWARZ, *Dalla pace alla guerra. Retoriche e pratiche della smobilitazione nell'Italia del Novecento*, Sommacampagna (VR), Cierre edizioni, 2007, p. 11.

48. On this enunciation see ENZO TRAVERSO, *A ferro e a fuoco. La guerra civile europea 1914-1945*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2007, p. 29.

49. LUCIANO CANFORA, *1914*, with an annotation of SERGIO VALZANIA, Palermo, Sellerio, 2006.

50. G. PROCACCI, *Warfare-Welfare. Intervento dello Stato e diritti dei cittadini (1914-1918)* cit.; see also EAD., *Il fronte interno. Organizzazione del consenso e del controllo sociale*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (eds.), *Un Paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)* cit., pp. 15-22.

51. J.-J. BECKER, *Histoire culturelle de la Grande Guerre*, Parigi, Coline, 2005.

52. GUIDO FORMIGONI, PAOLO POMBENI, *Una guerra civile europea 1914-1945?. Note introduttive*, in G. FORMIGONI and P. POMBENI (eds.), *La guerra civile europea dei trent'anni: una rivisitazione, Ricerche storiche*, n.s., XVIII, 2/2015, pp. 129-136.

53. EMILIO GENTILE, *La Grande Guerra della cultura*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., p. 38.

54. See LISA BREGANTIN, *Per non morire mai. La percezione della morte in guerra e il culto dei caduti nel primo conflitto mondiale*, preface of G. ROCHAT, Padova, Il Poligrafo, 2010 and MARCO

So, in this way, were highlighted the total aspects of WW1 and have been analyzed massacres and violences committed by enemies in occupation zones (in Italy, e.g. the zones passed under Austrian occupation after Caporetto); at the same time another theme has been studied: the violence by Italian authorities toward soldiers during summary trials, decimations, shootings and the effects of the war on different aspects of life; in addition, the links between military mobilization and total war, fighting and vicissitudes of the population involved in the war in every dimension of everyday life<sup>55</sup>.

From this point of view, the epos of refugees after Caporetto have been widely studied, event that preluded the forced exoduses during and after WW2, internments<sup>56</sup>, hard labor by civilians<sup>57</sup>. Events that inspired many essays on the on-line magazine by Cà Foscari *DEP-Deportate, Esuli, Profughe* in a bigger perspective than the Italian one, making the focus of the volume by Bruna Bianchi, that contains an international frame about violence against civilians during Great War<sup>58</sup>.

The war culture historiographical rule introduced new parameters that made possible to understand ideas, emotions, feelings coming from war<sup>59</sup>, moving the interest on perception of the war and on its representations rather than on experience, into a perspective that Giovanna Procacci defined «of a social history of political» and of a «psychology of politics»<sup>60</sup>

BIZZOCCHI, *Nuove prospettive storiografiche sulla Grande guerra: violenze, traumi, esperienze*, in *E-Review. Rivista degli Istituti Storici dell'Emilia Romagna in Rete*, (date accessed 4 maggio 2015).

55. ALBERTO MONTICONE, (ed.), *Esercito e popolazioni nella Grande guerra*, Udine, Gasparri, [2008].

56. SARA MILOCCO, GIORGIO MILOCCO, *Fratelli d'Italia. Gli internamenti degli italiani nelle terre liberate durante la Grande Guerra*, pref. di PAOLO MALNI, Udine, Gaspari, 2002.

57. M. ERMACORA, *Cantieri di guerra. Il lavoro dei civili nelle retrovie del fronte italiano (1915-1918)*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2005. On the refugees of the Habsburg Empire see P. MALNI, *La storia*, in *Gli spostati. Profughi, Flüchtlinge, Uprchlici. 1914-1919*, Rovereto, Laboratorio di storia di Rovereto, Trento, Presidenza del Consiglio della Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 2015.

58. B. BIANCHI (ed.), *La violenza contro la popolazione civile. Deportati, internati, profughi*, Milano, Unicopli, 2006.

59. CRISTOPHE PROCHASSON, *Émotions et politique: premières approches*, in S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, A. BECKER, S. COEURÉ, V. DUCLERT, F. MONIER (sous la direction de), *La politique et la guerre* cit., pp. 431-449.

60. G. PROCACCI, *Introduzione*, in EAD., (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra*, p. 24 and of the same author see *Gli effetti della guerra sulla psicologia della popolazione civile*, in *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 10, 1992, pp. 77-91.

who followed the ideas by French historians. The fast translation by the French scholars and Italian edition of the opera by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau e Jean-Jacques Becker<sup>61</sup>, edited by Antonio Gibelli, played an important role on the evolution of Italian historiographical trends as on the volumes edited by Isnenghi *I luoghi della memoria*<sup>62</sup>, that mix together national memory and political history. Common memory and political history are very linked in the opera by Fortunato Minniti dedicated to Piave, in the shape of cultural history of its myth<sup>63</sup>, but also in a big collective work in 2008, under scientific direction of Mario Isnenghi, in the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of war: *Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*<sup>64</sup>; this book supplements the big synthesis by Isnenghi and Giorgio Rochat<sup>65</sup> published in 2000. The opera, which title let to note less attention to military history, is closer to cultural dimension rather than the political one; in addition, the second part of the third volume dedicated to *La Grande guerra dall'intervento alla vittoria mutilata*, following a new historiographical trend, has a specific section dedicated to *Immagini, rappresentazioni, percorsi*, in which many contributors investigate the field of war culture and its representations in media, literature and art. In the same front of studies we can find *Le guerre degli italiani. Parole, immagini, ricordi 1848-1945*<sup>66</sup> by Mario Isnenghi and the works dedicated to cinema by Giaime Alonge<sup>67</sup>.

61. S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, J. J. BECKER (eds.), *La prima guerra mondiale*, Italian traslation of A. GIBELLI, 2 voll., Torino, Einaudi, 2007 and S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, J. J. BECKER, *La violenza, la crociata, il lutto. La Grande Guerra e la storia del Novecento*, Italian traslation, Torino, Einaudi, 2002.

62. M. ISNENGHI, *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998; ID., *I luoghi della memoria. Strutture ed eventi dell'Italia unita*, Roma- Bari, Laterza, 2010.

63. FORTUNATO MINNITI, *Il Piave*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2000.

64. *Italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, sotto la direzione scientifica di M. ISNENGHI, 5 voll., Torino, UTET, 2008.

65. M. ISNENGHI, G. ROCHAT, *La Grande guerra 1914-1918*, Bologna, il mulino, 2014 (Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 2000<sup>1</sup>).

66. M. ISNENGHI, *Le guerre degli italiani. Parole, immagini, ricordi 1848-1945*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2005.

67. GIAIME ALONGE, BARBARA BRACCO (eds.), *Orizzonti di guerra. Il primo conflitto mondiale e il cinema del Novecento*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2015; G. ALONGE *Cinema e guerra. Il film, la Grande guerra e l'immaginario bellico del Novecento*, Torino, UTET, 2001; RENZO RENZI (ed.), *Il cinematografo al campo. L'arma nuova nel primo conflitto mondiale*, Ancona, Transeuropa, 1993. On the war photography see LUIGI TOMASSINI, "Conservare per sempre l'eccezionalità del presente".

The cultural approach, as Nicola Labanca highlighted, sometimes evolved into a *sub specie* view of national education<sup>68</sup>, propaganda<sup>69</sup> and, in particular, of the history of intellectuals facing the war, a special theme that Emilio Gentile faced in *Apocalisse della modernità*<sup>70</sup> and recently revisited in a European dimension in a volume edited by Vincenzo Calì, Gustavo Corni, Giuseppe Ferrandi in 2000<sup>71</sup>. At the same time the *Atlante della letteratura italiana* by Sergio Luzzatto and Gabriele Pedullà described the position of intellectuals about war<sup>72</sup> and, with the same approach, we can find different essays in the last issue of *Bollettino di Italianistica* dedicated to WWI<sup>73</sup>. A new essay by a Middle Age scholar, Tommaso Falconieri di

*Dispositivi, immaginari, memorie della fotografia nella grande guerra*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra*, cit., pp. 321-340.

68. FRANCESCA LONGO, *Il sistema scolastico nella Grande Guerra*, in *Eunomia*, n.s., IV (2015), 2, pp. 571-588; S. SOLDANI, *Una scuola per la patria in armi*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (ed.), *Un paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)* cit., pp. 135-146; ANDREA FAVA, *Mobilitazione patriottica, assistenza all'infanzia, educazione nazionale nella scuola elementare dell'Italia in guerra (1915-1918)*, ivi, pp. 147-182; ESTER DE FORT, *La scuola elementare dall'Unità alla caduta del fascismo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1996, pp. 311-324.

69. BEATRICE PISA, *La propaganda e l'assistenza al fronte interno*, in *Dizionario storico della Prima guerra mondiale* directed by N. LABANCA, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2014, pp. 218-229; N. LABANCA, C. ZADRA, *Introduzione* a N. LABANCA, C. ZADRA (eds.), *Costruire un nemico. Studi della propaganda di guerra* cit., pp. III-VIII; M. MONDINI (ed.), *Parole come armi. La propaganda nell'Italia della Grande guerra*, Rovereto, Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, 2009; D. ROSSINI (ed.), *La propaganda nella Grande Guerra fra nazionalismi e internazionalismi*, Milano, Unicopli, 2007.

70. E. GENTILE, *Apocalisse della modernità. La Grande Guerra per l'uomo moderno*, Milano, Mondadori, 2008.

71. VINCENZO CALÌ, GUSTAVO CORNI, GIUSEPPE FERRANDI, *Gli intellettuali e la Grande Guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2000. More recently SIMONETTA BARTOLINI, *L'epica della Grande Guerra. Il fallimento degli intellettuali*, Milano, Luni editrice, 2015; C. PROCHASSON, ANNE RASMUSSEN, *Au nom de la Patrie. Les intellectuel et la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris, la Découverte, 1996; MICHEL OSTENC, *La guerre et le mythe de la «résurrection» chez les intellectuels italiens. Réforme morale et révolution nationale (1902-1915)*, in *Guerres mondiale set conflicts contemporaines*, 2007, 227, pp. 23-41.

72. S. LUZZATTO, GABRIELE PEDULLÀ, *Intellettuali*, in DOMENICO SCARPA (ed.), *Atlante della letteratura italiana*, III, *Dal Romanticismo ad oggi*, Torino, Einaudi, 2011. See also F. TODERO, *Le trincee della persuasione: fronte interno e forme della propaganda*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 321-340.

73. GIORGIO NISINI, *La cultura letteraria della Grande Guerra*, in *Bollettino di Italianistica. Rivista di Critica, storia letteraria, filologia e linguistica*, n.s. XI, 2, 2014, pp. 5-8; ALESSANDRO GIARRETTINO, *Letteratura e ideologia nel «mito» della Grande Guerra*, ivi, pp. 64-87; ANDREA CORTELLESA (ed.) *Le notti chiare erano tutte un'alba. Antologia dei poeti italiani nella Prima guerra mondiale*, preface of M. ISNENGHI, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 1998.

Carpegna, resumed the cultural history approach: analyzing a wide range of sources, he highlighted the big amount of medieval ideas widespread in Europe during WW1, focusing on war rhetoric code and demonstrating how the main features of Middle Age were so common in this era: barbarity, chivalry and crusade<sup>74</sup>. After all, it is known that many young soldiers enrolled as volunteers, coming from middle class and this cultural *humus*, shared the idea of a patriotic, exciting and short crusade<sup>75</sup>.

The research by Barbara Bracco (also linked to culturalist approach) highlighted the relation between war and soldier's body: here, the image of war wounded underlines the historic passage of WW1 that sanctify the injured body of soldiers as a symbol of sacrifice and "hurt nation", transforming it in a real national cult<sup>76</sup>. Moreover, Bracco had a particular merit: she rebuilt not only institutional events of the Ufficio Storiografico per la mobilitazione industriale (where Gioacchino Volpe e Giuseppe Prezzolini collaborated) but she also highlighted its educational project and history vision connected to it<sup>77</sup>.

Historiographical answer to total mobilization led to an enlargement of research themes opening many studies about the articulations of the inner front with contributors that move from the militarization of production to civil mobilization and propaganda, from administration to war law, to militarization of society for war purposes<sup>78</sup>: in this studies emerged

74. TOMMASO FALCONIERI DI CARPEGNA, *Il medievalismo e la Grande Guerra*, in *Studi Storici*, 2015, 56, 1, pp. 251-276.

75. PATRIZIA DOGLIANI, GILLES PÉCOUT, ALESSIO QUERCIOLO (eds.), *La scelta della patria. Giovani volontari nella Grande Guerra*, Rovereto, Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, 2006. On the unredeemed volunteers see: F. TODERO, *Morire per la patria. I volontari del "Litorale austriaco" nella Grande Guerra*, Udine, Gaspari, 2005, pp. 19-53; A. QUERCIOLO, *I volontari trentini nell'Esercito Italiano*, Rovereto, Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra, 2006, pp. 21-46; ROBERTO PIGNATARO, *Il «primo volontario»: il mito di Guglielmo Oberdan e la Grande guerra*, in *Qualestoria*, 2014, 2, pp. 131-154.

76. B. BRACCO, *La patria ferita. I corpi dei soldati italiani e la Grande guerra*, Firenze, Giunti, 2012; EAD., *Memorie di guerra e rituali della nazione nella crisi dello Stato liberale italiano*, in MAURIZIO RIDOLFI (ed.), *Rituali civili. Storie nazionali e memorie pubbliche nell'Europa contemporanea*, Roma, Gangemi, 2006, pp. 168-175 and EAD., *Il corpo e la guerra tra iconografia e politica*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra* cit., pp. 303-320.

77. B. BRACCO, *Memoria e identità dell'Italia della grande guerra. L'Ufficio Storiografico della mobilitazione (1916-1926)*, Milano, Unicopli, 2002.

78. B. BIANCHI, *La Grande Guerra nella storiografia italiana dell'ultimo decennio*, in *Ricerche storiche*, 1991, 3, pp. 639-745.

the break in popular consent (operated by war) and a State that showed an authoritarian and repressive *facies*<sup>79</sup>, which make the knowledge about total mobilization richer and deeper. In the same way Giovanna Procacci investigated the imbalance between military power and civil power (with the subordination of second in front of the first, in particular in Italy)<sup>80</sup> and the militarization of Italian society<sup>81</sup>; in addition, we have to remember the work by Carlotta Latini about full powers and war law<sup>82</sup>. In this frame, industrial mobilization, related to war purposes (that fascinated historians during the 1990s)<sup>83</sup>, seems to be obsolete in comparison with themes coming from culturalist approach: common memory and war-as-a-museum idea<sup>84</sup>, “monumentalization” of fallen soldiers, a concept underlined by Renato Monteleone, Paolo Sarasini<sup>85</sup> and Mario Isnenghi during the second half of 80s and 90s<sup>86</sup>. A public memory, highlighted also by Vittorio Vi-

79. G. PROCACCI, *Stato e classe operaia durante la prima guerra mondiale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1983.

80. EAD., *L'Italia nella grande guerra*, in *Storia d'Italia*, 4. *Guerre e fascismo*, pp. 20-29 e pp. 68-74 and EAD., *Il fronte interno e la società italiana in guerra*, in N. LABANCA, OSWALD ÜBEREGGER (eds.), *La guerra italo-austriaca (1915-1918)*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2014, pp. 187-214.

81. G. PROCACCI, *La società come una caserma: La svolta repressiva nell'Italia della Grande Guerra*, in *Contemporanea*, 3, 2005, pp. 423-445.

82. CARLOTTA LATINI, *Governare l'emergenza. Delega legislativa e pieni poteri in Italia tra Otto e Novecento*, Milano, Giuffrè, 2005 and EAD., *I pieni poteri in Italia durante la prima guerra mondiale*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (eds.), *Un paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)* cit., pp. 87-104. See also C. LATINI, *Cittadini e nemici. La giustizia militare giustizia penale in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2010.

83. LUIGI TOMASSINI, *Gli effetti sociali della mobilitazione industriale. Industriali, lavoratori, stato*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (eds.), *Un paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)*, cit., pp. 25-58.

84. ALESSANDRO GUALTIERI e GIOVANNI DELLE FUSINE (eds.), *I musei della Grande Guerra*, Chiari (BS), NordPress, 2009; MASSIMO BAIONI and CLAUDIO FOGU (eds.), *La Grande Guerra in vetrina. Mostre e musei in Europa negli anni Venti e Trenta*, Roma, Carocci, 2001. See the innovative essays of PIERO DEL NEGRO, *Da Marte a Clio. I musei militari italiani dalle origini alla Grande Guerra* and of C. ZADRA, *I musei della Grande Guerra: risultati di una prima indagine*, in *I musei della Grande Guerra dalla Valcamonica al Carso*, Rovereto, Museo della Guerra di Rovereto, 1995, pp. 5-24 e pp. 111-115.

85. RENATO MONTELEONE, PAOLO SARASINI, *I monumenti italiani ai caduti della Grande Guerra*, in D. LEONI, C. ZADRA (eds.), *La Grande Guerra. Esperienza, memorie, immagini* cit., pp. 631-662.

86. M. ISNENGHI (ed.), *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1996; ID., *L'Italia in piazza. I luoghi della vita pubblica dal 1848 ai giorni nostri*, Milano, Mondadori, 1994.



dotto<sup>87</sup>, that focused on the transformation of (in the postwar) Vittoriano in “altare della patria” after the burial of the Unknown Soldier, the most important state commemoration of fallen soldiers, in opposition to private mourning analyzed by Oliver Janz e da Fabrizio Dolci<sup>88</sup>. Monuments, tombstones, memorials *post eventum* became the public *facies* of memory, changing urban landscape of towns and villages, in which the war arrives in the neighbourhoods by patriotic toponymy<sup>89</sup>, but also wide spaces in war zones<sup>90</sup>. Here, we can find war cemeteries, like Redipuglia<sup>91</sup>, and all war evidences so called “open air museums” (artillery squares, artillery places, encampments, communication trenches, foxholes, paths)<sup>92</sup> becoming itinerary and educational sites where young people and public audience can talk about war memory<sup>93</sup>, in the wake of Walter Schaumann’s works<sup>94</sup>. This is a research field enriched by many contributions<sup>95</sup>, also thanks to WWI

87. V. VIDOTTO, *La vittoria e i monumenti ai caduti* in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 2000, 112/2, pp. 171-183.

88. O. JANZ, *Tra memoria collettiva e lutto privato. Il culto dei caduti nella borghesia italiana durante la prima guerra mondiale*, in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 2000, 112/2, pp. 227-241 and F. DOLCI, *Le pubblicazioni di necrologio in memoria dei caduti italiani nella grande guerra*, *ivi*, pp. 242-254.

89. LUCIO FABI, *Immobili come pietra. Riletture recenti e passate su monumenti, vestigia, memorie*, *ivi*, p. 71.

90. LUCA QUATTROCCHI, *Montagne sacre. Architettura e paesaggio simbolico nei sacrari militari*, in N. LABANCA (ed.), *Pietre di guerra. Ricerche su monumenti e lapidi in memoria del primo conflitto mondiale*, Milano, Unicopli, 2010, pp. 21-27.

91. L. FABI, *Redipuglia. Storia, memoria, arte e mito di un monumento che parla di pace*, Trieste, Lint, 2002 e O. JANZ, *Il culto dei caduti*, in M. ISNENGHI, D. CESCIN (ed.), *Italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. III, t. 2 cit., pp. 905-916.

92. C. ZADRA, *Una guerra da museo*, in N. LABANCA (ed.), *Pietre di guerra* cit., p. 20.

93. L. FABI, *Le strade della memoria. Itinerario storico e sentimentale sui luoghi della Grande guerra*, Cremona, Persico edizioni, 2008. See also MAURO PASSARIN, *Quale turismo nei luoghi di guerra*, in N. LABANCA (ed.), *Pietre di guerra* cit., pp. 79-86 and M. MONDINI, *Andare per i luoghi della grande guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008.

94. WALTER SCHAUMANN, *La Grande guerra 1915/18. Storia e itinerari*, Italian traslation, Bassano del Grappa (VI), Ghedina e Tassotti, 1984.

95. MARIA MANGIAVACCA, *Monumenti per ricordare. I risultati di un censimento*, in N. LABANCA (ed.), *Pietre di guerra* cit., pp. 107-118; LUIGI AVINO, SALVATORE CICENIA, *La memoria degli assenti. Monumenti ai caduti del Salernitano nella Grande Guerra*, Baronissi (SA), DEA Edizioni, 2010; DARIO DI GIOIA, GIUSEPPE LASORELLA, *Il monumento ai caduti della prima guerra mondiale di Rutigliano*, Bari, Edizioni dal Sud, 2009; M. MANGIAVACCA, LAURA VIGNI (eds.), *Lontano dal fronte. Monumenti e ricordi della Grande guerra nel Senese*, Siena, Nuova Immagine, 2007; DANIELA DE ANGELIS, *I monumenti ai caduti della Grande Guerra nei Castelli Romani. La luce e l'ombra*, Roma, Gangemi, 2006; P. DOGLIANI, *I monumenti e le lapidi come fonti*, in *Stru-*



historical heritage law (2001)<sup>96</sup> that led to a regional rescue of memory in particular in North-East Italy by the creation of a local museums network, the efforts of town administrations in the restoration of war sites, in the developments of scientific publishing industry supported by a lot of scholars involved in this memory rescue (unlike the rest of the country that lost this memory, as Nicola Labanca underlined in the final essay of his *Dizionario storico della prima guerra mondiale*)<sup>97</sup>. A memory, which has to be, according to Tuscan historian, a plural memory, because social subjects who are “memory holders” are always different “and different are times”, passing from the moment of pain and mourning to Fascism and its totalitarian memory, and then to a review and transformation of it, increasingly vanished.

Another important theme, linked to civil mobilization, is the impact of war on female population as “real and symbolic mutation” of women and childhood conditions affected by war in different ways<sup>98</sup>. The first one is a theme on which historiography wondered for a long time<sup>99</sup>, where the war as an emancipation reason catches the *inedito protagonismo* of women in familiar, working and social frameworks that took out from houses also those women that didn’t come from organized group, in particular in big town of North and Central Italy<sup>100</sup>, representing a “self-mobilitazion”, as

*menti e Fonti*, Roma, Archivi di Stato, 2006, pp. 261-275; SABINO FRANZOLINI (ed.), *Monumenti ai caduti in guerra nella provincia di Novara e nella provincia del Verbanio Cusio Ossola*, Novara, ANCR, 2006.

96. MARCO LATTANZI, *Il progetto “Grande Guerra. Censimento dei monumenti ai caduti della prima guerra mondiale”*, in RITA BERNINI (ed.), *Il patrimonio storico della prima guerra mondiale. Progetti di tutela e valorizzazione a quattordici anni dalla legge del 2001*, Roma, Gangemi, 2015, pp. 108-115; MINISTERO PER I BENI E LE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI-DIREZIONE REGIONALE PER I BENI CULTURALI E PAESAGGISTICI, *La Campania e la Grande Guerra. I monumenti ai caduti nella provincia di Salerno*, edited by MARIA ROSARIA NAPPI, Roma, Gangemi, 2009.

97. N. LABANCA, *Monumenti, documenti, studi*, in *Dizionario storico della prima guerra mondiale*, directed by di N. LABANCA cit., pp. 439-440.

98. A. GIBELLI, *I bambini*, in *Dizionario storico della prima guerra mondiale*, directed by N. LABANCA, cit., pp. 291-300; ID., *Il popolo bambino. Infanzia e nazione dalla Grande guerra a Salò*, Torino, Einaudi, 2005; IVANO IURLI, *Bambini nella Grande guerra*, Udine, Gaspari, 2003; B. BIANCHI, *Crescere in tempo di guerra. Il lavoro e la protesta dei ragazzi in tempo di guerra (1915-1918)*, Venezia, Libreria editrice cafoscarina, 1995.

99. B. PISA, *Italiane in tempo di guerra*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (eds.), *Un paese in guerra. La mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)* cit., p. 59; BARBARA CURLI, *Italiane al lavoro 1914-1920*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1998.

100. B. PISA, *Italiane in tempo di guerra* cit., p. 64.

Beatrice Pisa wrote, “the real heart of female claims”<sup>101</sup>. If war job involved, at the same time, noble/ upper class and middle/lower class women, the first group mobilized itself for national obligation than for political and ideological reasons (Red Cross nurses, *visitatrici*, war Godmothers, directors of war laboratories); the women of the other group directed laboratories in which old clothes, magazines, old tissues and all kind of refuses were recycled. With smartness and creativity women became one of the pillars of inner front, able to relieve the atrocity of war<sup>102</sup>, (e.g. voluntary service at Ufficio per le Notizie alle famiglie dei combattenti in Bologna)<sup>103</sup>, but, at the same time, victims of war, mourning icons<sup>104</sup>, activists (an aspect studied by Stefania Bartoloni<sup>105</sup>, Beatrice Pisa, Augusta Molinari<sup>106</sup>, Emma Schiavon<sup>107</sup>, Simonetta Soldani<sup>108</sup>, in a comparison between Italian and American experience, as in a recent volume edited by Daniela Rossini)<sup>109</sup>. Female activism during war, in particular in big urban centers, highlights

101. *Ivi*, p. 79.

102. ANNA BRAVO, *Simboli del materno*, in EAD., (ed.), *Donne e uomini nelle guerre mondiali*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1991, pp. 55-72.

103. ELISA ERIOLI, *L'Ufficio per le Notizie alle famiglie dei militari. Una grande storia di volontariato femminile bolognese*, in *Bollettino del Museo del Risorgimento*, 50 (2005), pp. 75-89.

104. SIMONA URSO, *Le icone della madre e del figlio. Margherita e Roberto Sarfatti*, in M. ISNENGHI, D. CESCHIN (eds.), *Italiani in guerra. Conflitti, rappresentazioni, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. III, t. 1 cit., pp. 479-484 e EAD., *Margherita Sarfatti. Dal mito del Dux al mito americano*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2003, pp. 87-100. See also MARINA D'AMELIA, *La mamma*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2005.

105. STEFANIA BARTOLONI, *La mobilitazione femminile*, in *Dizionario storico della prima guerra mondiale*, directed by pp. 279-290 e EAD., *Italiane alla guerra. L'assistenza ai feriti 1915-1891*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2003. See also of the same author *L'associazionismo femminile nella prima guerra mondiale e la mobilitazione per l'assistenza civile e la propaganda* in ADA GIGLI MARCHETTI, NICOLETTA TORCELLON (eds.), *Donna Lombarda 1865-1945*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1992, pp. 65-91.

106. AUGUSTA MOLINARI, *Una patria per le donne. Mobilitazione femminile nella Grande Guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2014 and EAD., *Donne e ruoli femminili nell'Italia della Grande Guerra*, Milano, Selene edizioni, 2008. See also of the same author *La Buona Signora e i poveri soldati: Lettere a una madrina di guerra (1915-1918)*, Milano, Paravia, 1998.

107. EMMA SCHIAVON, *Interventiste nella Grande Guerra. Assistenza, propaganda, lotta per i diritti a Milano e in Italia (1911-1919)*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2015.

108. S. SOLDANI, *Le maestre nella grande guerra*, in D. MENOZZI, G. PROCACCI, S. SOLDANI (eds.), *Un paese in guerra la mobilitazione civile in Italia (1914-1918)* cit., pp. 183-211 e EAD., *Maestre d'Italia*, in ANGELA GROPPI (eds.), *Il lavoro delle donne*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1996, pp. 385-397.

109. D. ROSSINI (ed.), *Donne e propaganda internazionale. Percorsi femminili tra Italia e Stati Uniti nell'età della Grande Guerra*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2015.

the impact of war on Italian towns as Alessandra Staderini noted about Roma<sup>110</sup>, who recently analyzed other cases<sup>111</sup>, Barbara Bracco<sup>112</sup> and Alceo Riosa<sup>113</sup> in Milano, Lucio Fabi in Trieste<sup>114</sup> and the volume *Fronti interni*, a reconstruction about suburbs, town institutions and Italian people abroad<sup>115</sup>. The attention for urban society in the last two decades Italian historiography reflects the influence of Anglo-Saxon scholars related to Jay Winter and *Cultural History*<sup>116</sup>.

The attention toward military history never lacked, as confirmed the works by Giorgio Rochat, Piero Del Negro and Nicola Labanca who, in his *Introduzione* to the volume edited with Oswald Überegger and focused on italo-austrian war, explains transnational approach to the war between Italy and Austro-Hungarian Empire<sup>117</sup>. According to Labanca, WWI could still be defined as a Italo-Austrian war because Italian tasks were on Austrian territory, and the relations with nationalities that formed Habsburg Empire were close, and democrats (together with everybody still believe in Risorgimento feelings) supported the idea that they must transform in independent states following self-determination principle.

The military dimension of war produced many works about Armed Forces that didn't led to new interpretations<sup>118</sup>, becoming a theme han-

110. ALESSANDRA STADERINI, *Combattenti senza divisa. Roma nella Grande Guerra*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1995 e A. STADERINI, LUCIANO ZANI, FRANCESCA MAGNI (eds.), *La Grande Guerra e il fronte interno. Studi in onore di George Mosse*, Camerino, Università di Camerino, 1998.

111. A. STADERINI, *Le città italiane durante la prima guerra mondiale*, in G. PROCACCI (ed.), *La società italiana e la Grande Guerra*, pp. 249-264.

112. B. BRACCO (ed.), *Combattere a Milano (1915-1918). Il corpo e la guerra nella capitale del fronte interno*, Milano, Il Ponte, 2005.

113. ALCEO RIOSA (ed.), *Milano in guerra. Opinione pubblica e immagini delle nazioni nel primo conflitto mondiale*, Milano, Unicopli, 1997.

114. FRANCO CECOTTI, *Trieste 1914-1915. Feriti, morti e la scoperta della guerra moderna*, in *Quale storia*, 2014, 2, pp. 111-130.

115. A. SCARTABELLATI, M. ERMACORA, FEDERICO RATTI (eds.), *Fronti interni. Esperienze di guerra lontano dalla guerra 1914-1918*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2014.

116. FABIO DEGLI ESPOSTI, *Nutrire la popolazione*, in S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU e J.-J. BECKER (eds.), *La prima guerra mondiale*, t. 1 cit., pp. 513-525; ID., *Stato, società ed economia nella prima guerra mondiale. Una bibliografia*, Bologna, Patron, 2001; JAY WINTER, *Il lutto e la memoria. La grande guerra nella storia culturale europea*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1998; J. WINTER, JEAN-LOUIS ROBERT, *Capital cities at War. Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919. A Cultural History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997-2007.

117. N. LABANCA, O. ÜBEREGGER (eds.), *La guerra italo-austriaca (1915-1918)* cit., pp. 14-18.

118. N. LABANCA, *Militari tra fronte e paese* cit., p. 111.

dled by local scholars like Alessandro Massignani, Paolo Pozzato, Paolo Volpato, linked to little specialized publishers like Gaspari in Udine, NordPress in Chiari (BS), Istresco in Treviso. According to Nicola Labanca, Italian military historiography is late in comparison with international settings coming from “new military history” and from “combat history” still focusing on leading commanders and not on lower levels (regiments, battalions, troops) to find a bigger “combat effectiveness”; in other words a bigger sensibility towards soldiers and their wellness and a bigger will to avoid human losses<sup>119</sup>.

Studies about Caporetto by Paolo Pozzato followed this stream, becoming not a memory of military defeat but of Italian people that fought under their Captains’ command<sup>120</sup>. Caporetto, for Pozzato, becomes a series of different battles, not linked each other, that saved each division although they didn’t save national honor, stopping the opposed Army<sup>121</sup>. The new work by Lucio Fabi didn’t focus, instead, on Generals but on the big amount of soldiers: the author, after *Genti di trincea* (that in the middle of 1990s shifted the attention on soldiers and civilians)<sup>122</sup>, retraces the histories of many infantrymen and their experiences, purposing an itinerary of memory places<sup>123</sup>.

Between 2014 and 2015, connected with centenary, Italian historiography received a lot of contributions with a political profile, focused on neutrality like an interesting and rich volume edited by Fulvio Cammarano that takes a picture of neutralist world and makes a map of its events in 37 “local cases” from north to south of Italy<sup>124</sup>, discovering the numbers of neutral phenomenon<sup>125</sup>; Antonio Varsori, instead, focused on *Maggio radioso*, in other words, on the moments before the war; Paolo Pombeni,

119. *Ivi*, p.125.

120. PAOLO POZZATO, *La verità su Caporetto*, Udine, Gaspari, 2012 and *Id.*, *Le bugie di Caporetto. La fine della memoria dannata*, pref. di G. Rochat, Udine, Gaspari, 2011.

121. N. LABANCA, *Militari tra fronte e paese* cit., p. 125.

122. L. FABI, *Gente di trincea. La grande guerra sul Carso e sull’Isonzo*, Milano, Mursia, 2009 (1<sup>a</sup> ed. 1994)

123. *Id.*, *Soldati d’Italia. Esperienze, storie, memorie, visioni della Grande guerra*, Milano, Mursia, 2015.

124. FULVIO CAMMARANO (ed.), *Abbasso la guerra! Neutralisti in piazza alla vigilia della Prima guerra mondiale*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2015.

125. SALVATORE BOTTA, *Le cifre del neutralismo*, in F. CAMMARANO (ed.), *Abbasso la guerra!* cit., pp. 601-606.

furthermore, edited a collective work about the “five years war” in various countries and on transformations coming from it<sup>126</sup>.

Moreover, Marco Mondini, underlines the specificity of the Italian case during conflict, highlighting the international historiography behavior that always considered Italian war as a less important experience or, very often, ignored the role of Italy during WW1<sup>127</sup>, (e. g. the *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre* edited by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Jean-Jacques Becker in 2004<sup>128</sup> or in *The Cambridge History of the First World War* edited by Jay Winter that contains only an essay about Italy by Nicola Labanca)<sup>129</sup>. In *La guerra italiana*, Mondini (using a big amount of sources coming from books and archives) put together military history details and the interest for cultural history, pointing out representations, discourses, the hard research of consent among masses.

Although Pacifism had a negligible role in historiography (in comparison with other themes), in the last two decades it has been resumed by some scholars like Lucio D'Angelo<sup>130</sup>, Renato Moro<sup>131</sup>, Silvia Salvatici<sup>132</sup> and di Bruna Bianchi<sup>133</sup>. Some other scholars, instead, resumed other themes like

126. P. POMBENI (ed.), *I cinque anni che sconvolsero il mondo. La prima guerra mondiale*, Roma, Studium, 2014.

127. M. MONDINI, *La guerra italiana. Partire, raccontare, tornare. 1914-1918*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2014.

128. *Encyclopédie de la Grande Guerre. Histoire et culture*, sous la direction de S. AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, J. J. BECKER, Paris, Bayard, 2004.

129. N. LABANCA, *The Italian Front*, in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 1, *Global War*, edited by J. Winter, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 266-296.

130. LUCIO D'ANGELO, *Pace, liberismo, democrazia. Edoardo Giretti e il pacifismo democratico nell'Italia liberale* Milano, Franco Angeli, 1995

131. RENATO MORO, *Sulla storia della pace*, in *Mondo Contemporaneo*, 3, 2006, pp. 97-140 and B. PISA, *Percorsi di pace e di guerra fra Ottocento e Novecento: movimenti, culture e appartenenze*, in *Giornale di Storia Contemporanea*, 12, 2009, 2, pp. 3-178.

132. SILVIA SALVATICI, *Nel nome degli altri. Storia dell'umanitarismo internazionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2015.

133. B. BIANCHI, *I pacifisti*, in *Dizionario storico della prima guerra mondiale*, directed by N. LABANCA cit., pp. 241-252; EAD., *Donne e uomini di pace in tempo di guerra*, in M. ISNENGHI E D. CESCHIN (eds.), *Italiani in guerra. Conflitti, rappresentazioni, memorie*, vol. III, t. 1 cit., pp. 129-138.

the role assumed by Holy Seat<sup>134</sup>, religious assistance to troops<sup>135</sup>, soldiers and war prisoners<sup>136</sup>.

In conclusion, although there is no lack of essays about classical themes (e.g. Great Generals's biographies), Italian historiography about WW1 treats war experience and its consequences on society by specific and interdisciplinary works: it's very hard to make a global scheme of them, that have original themes and sources, considering individuals in war, soldier or civilians, not only like an actor in war but also as a psychological subject caught in his affective sphere.

In this sense, the studies about WW1 could be a great multidisciplinary laboratory of human sciences able to supply to historians less aseptic but not less revealing instruments.

134. D. MENOZZI (ed.), *La Chiesa italiana nella Grande Guerra*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2015.

135. VITTORIO PIGNOLONI (ed.), *I cappellani militari d'Italia nella grande guerra*, Torino, Edizioni San Paolo, 2014; MARIO TOSCANO, *Religione, patriottismo, sionismo: il rabbinato militare nell'Italia della Grande Guerra (1915-1918)*, in *Zabor. Rivista di storia degli ebrei d'Italia*, VIII/2005, pp. 77-133; GIUSEPPE LASCALA, *Diario di guerra di un cappellano metodista durante la prima guerra mondiale*, edited by GIULIO VICENTINI, pref. di G. ROCHAT, Torino, Claudiana, 1996; G. ROCHAT (ed.), *La croce e la spada. I cappellani militari nelle due guerre mondiali*, Atti del 34 Convegno di studi sulla Riforma e sui movimenti religiosi in Italia (Torre Pellice, 28-30 agosto 1994), Torre Pellice, Società di studi valdesi, 1995; ESTER CAPUZZO, *Gli ebrei nella società italiana. Comunità e istituzioni tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Roma, Carocci, 1999, pp. 119-143.

136. A. MONTICONE, *La croce e il filo spinato. Tra prigionieri e internati civili nella grande guerra 1914-1918. La missione umanitaria dei delegati religiosi*, Soveria Mannelli (CZ), Rubbettino, 2015.





## Part II

### A European Perspective on Italy during the Great War



## Italy in the Great War as seen from Germany

This chapter on Italy in the Great War as seen from Germany might be very brief. The German discourse on Italy during the First World War was an on-going, gigantic complaint about the so-called Italian betrayal<sup>1</sup>.

The Germans considered Italy's intervention in 1915 as a flagrant, inexcusable betrayal. They felt abandoned by an allied Power in the midst of a world war, therefore this attitude was not surprising. Italy was bound to Austria-Hungary and to Germany in the Triple Alliance, created in 1882<sup>2</sup>. Thus, it was allied to the Central Powers for 33 years. A first disappointment came in August 1914 when the Italian government decided to remain neutral. Thereafter Italy denounced the Triple Alliance on May 3 1915 and declared war on Austria-Hungary on May 23 1915.

German contemporaries condemned Italy for abandoning its allies in the hour of danger – and then in May 1915 for making an alliance with the enemy powers. The Italian intervention created an extremely serious situation for Germany and Austria-Hungary. It drastically reduced the

1. The issue of 'betrayal' is discussed in GIAN ENRICO RUSCONI's essay: *L'azzardo del 1915. Come l'Italia decide l'intervento nella Grande Guerra*, in *L'entrata in guerra dell'Italia nel 1915*, edited by Johannes Hürter and Johannes Hürter, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2010, p. 15-63.

2. HOLGER AFFLERBACH, *Der Dreibund. Der Dreibund. Europäische Großmacht – und Allianzpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für die Neuere Geschichte Österreichs, Band 92), Vienna 2002 (my arguments here are based on this book); ID., *Der Dreibund als Instrument der europäischen Friedenssicherung vor 1914*, in *Der "Zweibund" 1879. Das deutsch-österreichisch-ungarische Bündnis und die europäische Diplomatie*, edited by Helmut Rumpel and Jan Niederkorn, (Zentraleuropa-Studien, Band 2), Vienna 1996, p. 87-118; FRITZ FELLNER, *Der Dreibund. Europäische Diplomatie vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Wien, 1960; LUIGI SALVATORELLI, *La Triplice Alleanza. Storia Diplomatica 1877-1912*, Milan, ISPI, 1939; ERNST E. BERGER ("Italicus"), *Italiens Dreibundpolitik 1870-1896*, München, 1928; RINALDO PETRIGNANI, *Neutralità e Alleanza. Le scelte di politica estera dell'Italia dopo l'Unità*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1987.

Central Powers' chances of winning the war, and seriously increased their risk of losing it<sup>3</sup>. For these reasons it is understandable that the discourse on the Italian 'betrayal' was dominant during the War not only in government circles in Austria-Hungary, but in Germany as well. However, I do not wish to stop here. By analysing German opinion on Italy in detail, we see a much more complex picture.

## 1. German opinion on Italy during the Triple Alliance

Clearly, any German opinion on Italy during the First World War did not spring into being in 1914 or 1915; it also reflected the opinions that German government circles had held regarding Italy in the previous decades, from national unity up until 1914, and especially during the period when the two countries and Austria-Hungary were together within the Triple Alliance. A first important element in German judgement on its Italian ally was a feeling of friendship.

This was hardly surprising. There were no conflicting political ambitions between Germany and Italy. Italy had been a German ally since 1882. They had common adversaries like France. The last renewal of the Alliance had been in 1912 and the next renewal date was in 1920<sup>4</sup>.

The feeling of friendship towards the Italian ally was also reinforced by the traditional love of Italy on the part of well-educated Germans, and by the always felt parallelism of the process of national unification.

However, during the entire period of the alliance successive German governments had been beset by doubts as to whether Italy was a loyal ally. Let me give an example: the German attitude towards Italy during the first Moroccan crisis<sup>5</sup>. The diplomatic behaviour of Visconti Venosta, the Italian representative at the 1906 Algeciras conference, was appreciated neither by German diplomacy nor by German public opinion, and was interpreted as double dealing on the part of Italy between the Triple Alliance and its new French and English friends. Doubt and suspicions of disloyalty resulted in

3. H. AFFLERBACH, *Entschied Italien den Ersten Weltkrieg?*, in *Deutschland und Europa. Außenpolitische Grundlinien zwischen Reichsgründung und Erstem Weltkrieg*, edited by Rainer F. Schmidt, Stuttgart 2004, p. 135-143.

4. H. AFFLERBACH, *Dreibund* cit., p. 709-720.

5. *Ivi*, pp. 547-575.

bursts of indignation when, from the German point of view, there came clear proof of their Italian ally's disloyal attitude.

Fig 1: The postcard showing the unity among the three states of the Triple Alliance, with the two emperors and King Victor Emmanuel III



These attacks of rage and disappointment were outbursts of anger and normally related to a specific event, such as the Algeciras conference. But another element in German judgment was permanent, and that was open contempt for Italy. German government circles did not consider Italy a truly great power. Bismarck continued to speak about the European pentarchy (thus excluding Italy from this illustrious group), frequently making negative comments on the Italian parliamentary system and its military weakness and saying that Italy had an enormous appetite but bad teeth. This opinion was universally shared throughout the period, and by everyone. At the end of his secondment, the last German military attaché in Italy before the outbreak of the War, Major v. Kleist, said: "From the military point of view, Italy is utterly incapable, according to our own standards"<sup>6</sup>. This contempt was accompanied by severe criticism of the Italian aspira-

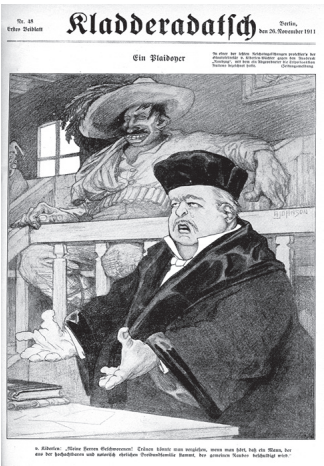
6. *Ivi*, p. 783.

tions, considered to be immoral and over-ambitious, especially during the Libyan War in 1911/12.

Fig 2. “Die treue Freundin – The faithful friend” – a caricature from the magazine “Kladderadatsch”, showing Italy as Germany’s mistress, while exchanging letters with France and England.



Figs. 3 and 4: German caricatures during the Libyan War: the first criticises Italy’s “colossal ambitions”. The second shows the German Foreign Minister, von Kiderlen-Wächter, as Italy’s lawyer in court. While Kiderlen is claiming that his client and partner is honourable, Italy is shown as a brigand.





To conclude, before 1914, a certain feeling of friendship for the Italian ally was intermingled with doubt, contempt and occasionally even rage. Such opinions are to be found in any diplomatic source, in political speeches and in the newspapers of the time.

Nevertheless, these elements do not give a clear and complete picture when taken alone and in isolation. I return to the subject of the first Moroccan crisis: German public opinion, the emperor Wilhelm II and German diplomacy were deeply disappointed in the lack of Italian support during the Algeiras conference. However, the voices clamouring for a break with Italy, such as that of the Ambassador to Rome, Count Monts, were still in the minority. Shortly afterwards, Germany renewed the Triple Alliance<sup>7</sup>. The German government even signed the latest renewal of the Triple Alliance after the Libyan War had created countless diplomatic inconveniences for Germany, which was forced to choose between an allied power, Italy, and a friendly power, the Ottoman Empire<sup>8</sup>. Without the war of 1914, Germany would have remained loyal to the Triple Alliance until 1920 and probably even longer. The reason was not only friendship for Italy, but above all pragmatism. Italian actions were accepted because the German government felt that it needed Italy as an ally, and this pragmatism was stronger than all critical voices and negative sentiments.

## 2. German opinions on Italy during the war

It is not surprising that we find the same elements in German opinions on Italy during the First World War: friendliness towards the ally, doubts, contempt, anger, disappointment, and perhaps above all, pragmatism.

We will start with a moment when friendship dominated: towards the end of July 1914, large crowds assembled in front of the Italian Embassy in Berlin to cheer the allied power. People thought that, should war break out, Italy would fight on the side of its allies<sup>9</sup>. However, what did the German government have in mind at the time? Sources offer an ambiguous

7. *Ivi*, p. 547-567.

8. *Ivi*, p. 687-720.

9. *Ivi*, p. 845; H. AFFLERBACH, *Italy's Decision not to go to war in 1914*, in *The Serbs and the First World War 1914-1918*, edited by Dragoljub R. Zivojinovic, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2015, pp. 175-186.



picture and there are differing opinions among historians as to whether the Berlin government thought that Italy was ready to help in a European war. During the first part of the crisis in June-July 1914, German diplomacy believed it could isolate the war of Austria against Serbia; therefore, it considered informing Italy unnecessary. After the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia and after the Serb refusal it became clear to everyone that the crisis could end in a European war, thus the question of *casus foederis* became of paramount importance and extremely urgent. Italy had been militarily weakened by the Libyan War and the Italian Chief of Staff, Gen. Alberto Pollio, had given up the Triple Alliance war plan of sending three army corps to Germany, in line with agreements set up at the time of Crispi. In spite of this, the German High Command counted on Italian troops being on the German frontier with France. One example: Rupprecht, the crown prince of Bavaria and commander of the Sixth German Army, found in his written instructions in August 1914 a part that concerned the Italian troops; troops, as we know, did not come since the Italian Government declared neutrality on August 4 1914.

This was a nasty surprise and a first massive shock creating a huge surge of discontent against Italy, with anger and disappointment. German discontent was so strong and obvious that Italian politicians feared reprisals should the Central Powers gain a speedy victory in the war. King Victor Emmanuel III sent telegrams oozing hypocrisy to Berlin, feigning to desire Germany's military success and a quick victory<sup>10</sup>.

The battle of the Marne in September 1914 halted the German army and the outcome was a European stalemate<sup>11</sup>. German diplomacy immediately elaborated a new, more practical attitude towards Italy since the latter held a key position in the European deadlock. Italy was now a determining factor. From autumn 1914 on, Erich Falkenhayn, Chief of Staff, and Bethmann Hollweg, Imperial Chancellor, did their best to guarantee permanent Italian neutrality<sup>12</sup>. They knew that Italian intervention on the side of the Central Powers was practically out of the question for strate-

10. H. AFFLERBACH, *Dreibund* cit., p. 845.

11. H. AFFLERBACH, *Entschied Italien den Ersten Weltkrieg?* cit., pp. 135-143.

12. H. AFFLERBACH, *Falkenhayn. Politisches Denken und Handeln im Kaiserreich*, München, Oldenbourg 1994; second edition 1996, pp. 266-285.

gic reasons, particularly because of Great Britain's naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

As of autumn 1914, the Italian government demanded compensation for its neutrality in the form of territorial concessions from Austria-Hungary. Not only the government (Salandra and Sonnino) but also the opposition (Giolitti and his famous '*parecchio*') believed such concessions to be possible and necessary<sup>13</sup>.

Figs. 5 and 6: Bethmann Hollweg and Falkenhayn



The German government was absolutely convinced that Italy should remain neutral; otherwise, the Central Powers would risk losing the war. They exerted pressure on Vienna to cede the Trentino to Italy<sup>14</sup>. The German government was even prepared to cede part of Silesia to Austria to

13. H. AFFLERBACH, *Da alleato a nemico. Cause e conseguenze dell'entrata in guerra dell'Italia nel maggio 1915*, in *L'entrata in guerra dell'Italia nel 1915* cit., pp. 75-104.

14. See also H. AFFLERBACH, *Vom Bündnispartner zum Kriegsgegner. Ursachen und Folgen des italienischen Kriegseintritts im Mai 1915*, in *Der Kriegseintritt Italiens im Mai 1915*, edited by Johannes Hürter und Gian Enrico Rusconi, München, 2007 (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte), pp. 53-69, sowie "... vain and terrible holocausts of human life" 'Luigi Bongiovannis Warnungen vor dem Kriegseintritt Italiens im Jahre 1915', *ivi*, pp. 85-98.

convince the Austrians to cede the Trentino to Italy<sup>15</sup>. Distrusting Austrian diplomacy, the German government sent the former chancellor Bernhard von Bülow to Rome in order to exploit Bülow's connections within Italian political circles to create an agreement with Italy<sup>16</sup>.

Fig 7. The ex-chancellor Bernhard von Bülow and his wife, the daughter of Marco Minghetti



Austria-Hungary did not give way in time; in March 1915 Sonnino initiated negotiations with the *Triple Entente*, concluded the “patto di Londra” in April 1915, denounced the Triple Alliance (an act that legally was not possible) and declared war on Austria-Hungary on May 23 1915.

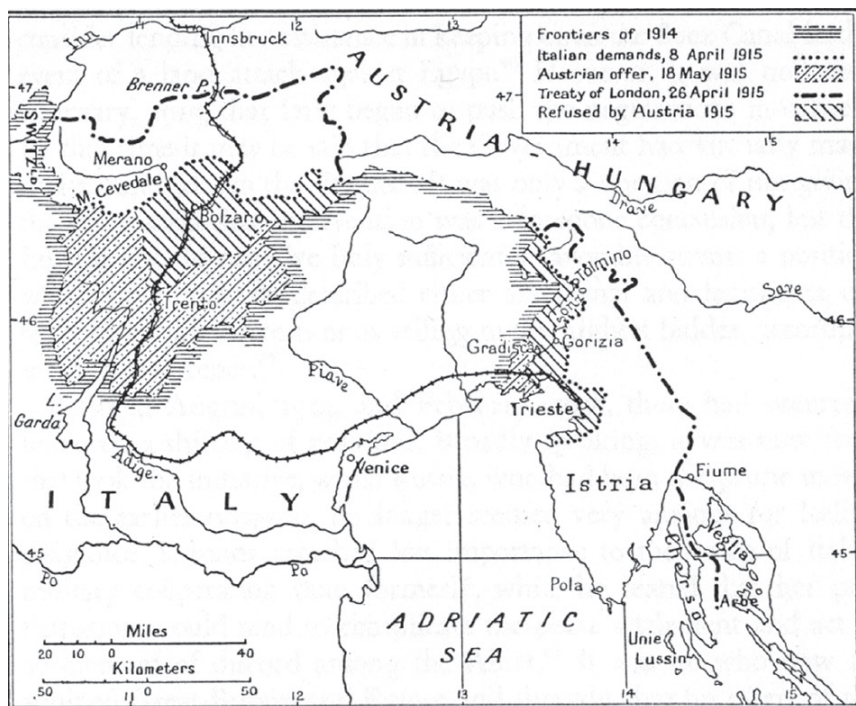
This Italian measure was very poorly prepared. The Austrians had made increasingly generous offers: they had offered the Trentino and a rectifi-

15. EGMONT ZEHLIN, *Das schlesische Angebot und die italienische Kriegsgefahr*, in Id., *Krieg und Kriegsrisiko. Zur deutschen Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Düsseldorf, 1979, pp. 234-263.

16. ALBERTO MONTICONE, *La Germania e la neutralità italiana, 1914-1915*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1971.

cation of the frontier on the Isonzo River; and they had made their offers public. Ignoring such offers and declaring war seemed to be a 'disloyal, fatal act' or an 'act of madness', not only to Austria-Hungary or Germany, but also in the eyes of many Italians<sup>17</sup>.

Fig 8: The Austria-Hungary offers in the spring of 1915 (Harold William Vazeille Temperley. Londra, 1921 e Mario Toscano, Bologna, Zanichelli, 2a ed., 1934)



#### I. NEGOTIATIONS IN 1915: ITALIAN DEMANDS FROM AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, AUSTRIAN OFFER; TREATY OF LONDON

The lines in this map are taken from Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*: Toscano. *Il patto di Londra*.

17. H. AFFLERBACH, *Dreibund* cit., pp. 849-874. G. E. RUSCONI's criticisms, *Lazzardo*, p. 61-62. My counter-arguments: H. Afflerbach, *Da alleato a nemico* cit. pp. 75-104; p. 99.

## German anger and disappointment

The reaction in Germany was a wave of anger. Bethmann Hollweg made a speech in the Reichstag on May 28, 1915 commenting on the Italian intervention and he used many words similar to those used by the Austrians (for example, by the Emperor Franz Joseph): “Now the Italian government has given proof of its infidelity that will go down in the book of world history”<sup>18</sup>. He announced that Italy would have to fight against the German army as well, saying amidst the frenetic applause of Parliament: “It dare not touch the German Tyrol!”

However, the speech should actually be read in full. Bethmann made it clear that the majority of the Italian people and even of Italian M.Ps. were against intervention. The Chancellor saw the responsibility for the war and the disloyal policies as being that of the Salandra/Sonnino government, not of the Italian people, nor of politicians such as Giovanni Giolitti.

Rage, fear, disappointment and contempt were great, yet greater still was pragmatism once more. Germany did not declare war. The government wished to avoid going to war against Italy, leaving the Austrians alone. German reasons were clear and easily explained:

1. The German government and German diplomacy secretly understood the reasons for Italian intervention. Even in German eyes, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was considered a model of a state with no future. The Hapsburg Empire was considered by liberal Italians such as Gaetano Salvemini as a peoples’ prison and the Germans called Austria-Hungary ‘the dying camel’. The Germans also doubted whether the Austrians had done everything possible to satisfy the Italians and avoid intervention.
2. Their idea was to use Italy to import materials they lacked due to the English blockade. This was probably the most important, dominant reason<sup>19</sup>.
3. Certain diplomats, Prince von Bülow in particular, had the idea that Italy could become a German ally again after the war (an idea of Bülow’s, who after the first Moroccan crisis had created the image of the “ex-

18. [http://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k13\\_bsb00003402\\_00152.html](http://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k13_bsb00003402_00152.html)

19. ERICH V. FALKENHAYN, *Die Oberste Heeresleitung 1914-1916 in ihren wichtigsten Entschlüssen*, Berlin, 1920, p. 82.



tratour”), considering that this was an episode that would not exclude future cooperation<sup>20</sup>.

These motives caused a very serious diplomatic rupture on May 23 1915, although there was no declaration of war on the part of Germany. Nor did Italy declare war, for similar reasons. The Italian government wanted a war exclusively against Austria, not against Germany. Only towards the end of August 1916, due to enormous pressure exerted by the *Entente*, did the Italian government finally declare war on Germany<sup>21</sup>.

### German Opinions on Italy after May 1915

The Italian intervention could not decide the war in the spring of 1915. The German and Austrian victory at the battle of Gorlice Tarnow on May 2 1915 had profoundly changed the strategic situation of the war. Italian intervention did not decide the war, but it did restore the military equilibrium between the opposing camps. Without the Italian intervention it is likely that the Central Powers would have won the war militarily, or at least forced the *Entente* to come to a compromise peace.

In May 1915 it became clear that Italy could not decide the war. For the rest of the war, Italy did not get the same attention from Germany again. Naturally, there were German comments on the Italian army, and they were somewhat negative. Falkenhayn wrote in his autobiography that Italian efficacy in war was “extraordinarily low”<sup>22</sup>. His sarcastic remarks were typical and in line with the German attitude before 1914.

From 1916 to 1918 Germany considered Italy as a secondary front, a problem and military responsibility of Austria-Hungary. Every now and then there were thoughts on the possibility of an offensive on the Italian front, but this was considered by the Germans bereft of any decisive prospect, even should it be a total success.

20. H. AFFLERBACH, *Dreibund* cit., pp. 867 ff..

21. LUCA RICCARDI, *Alleati non amici. Le relazioni politiche tra l'Italia e l'Intesa nella prima guerra mondiale*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 1992.

22. E. VON FALKENHAYN, *Oberste Heeresleitung* cit., p. 83.

The Austro-Hungarian Chief Command asked more than once if the Germans would be willing to take part in a strong offensive against Italy, but this idea was refused, especially in spring 1916. Only in the autumn of 1917 was the German High Command ready to send troops to the Italian front to help to stabilise the Austrian front that seemed in danger of collapsing<sup>23</sup>. The result was the grand victory of Caporetto, a success much greater than expected or planned. The German high command and public opinion were not surprised; the Italian defeat only went to confirm the old prejudice on Italian military inefficiency.

During the First World War the German command had no desire to engage on the Italian front; the only massive intervention - that of Caporetto - was a reaction on a military emergency in which German military aid appeared essential to prevent an Austrian collapse.

It could be said that from 1915 onwards the Germans and the Italians fought a parallel war. They fought against each other only when it was inevitable due to pressure from their allies. Even after the war, at Versailles in 1919, Italy – Orlando being one of the “Big Four” at the Paris peace conference – and the delegation of defeated Germany had totally different outlooks: German diplomacy was interested in the conditions of peace, the issue of blame for the 1914 War (“Kriegsschuldfrage”, Art. 231 of the treaty), and reparations. Italian diplomacy spoke almost exclusively about Fiume and the Adriatic<sup>24</sup>.

Also later there was not much discourse between the two historiographies on the topic of the Italian intervention of 1915. There were a few books and articles – from “Italicus”, Alberto Monticone, Egmont Zechlin, Gian Enrico Rusconi, and the present author. But all in all there is little of what might deserve to be called a “dialogue” or a “debate”. There is some specialised work, but not a proper discussion between German and Italian historiographies, and there are few bi- or trans-national works on the topic of “Italy and Germany in the Great War”.

23. MANFRIED RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918*, Wien, 2013, pp. 799-834.

24. H. AFFLERBACH, “...nearly a case of *Italy contra mundum*?” *Italien als Siegermacht in Versailles 1919*, in *Versailles 1919. Ziele - Wirkung - Wahrnehmung*, edited by Gerd Krumeich, (Schriften der Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Neue Folge, Band 14), Essen 2001, pp. 159-173



## Italy in the Great War as seen from France

This jointly authored article, evidence of our renewed effort to promote a serious dialogue between historians of Italy and Italianists, aims at understanding French perceptions of Italy from the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914 to the start of military operations by the Kingdom of Italy in 1915. We have identified six issues that fall into two distinct but related categories, each focusing on a particular aspect of relations between the two countries. The idea that we develop in the first part is that the French attitude, or to be more precise, the attitude of its diplomacy, governing class, economic elites, and, lastly, its high-ranking military officers, changed progressively from one of high regard toward the policy of Italian neutrality to one of diffidence. We will try to explain why this transformation occurred. In the second part, we emphasize the active contribution to the Franco-Italian rapprochement made by three singularly positioned groups, because they offer a unique French perspective on Italian affairs. These three groups are: French cultural specialists dealing with Italian affairs; Italian literary figures “transplanted” to France; Italian volunteer fighters and workers in France. We will try to understand how these three elements contributed to the war effort on both sides of the Alps.

### 1. Diplomatic Relations: A Difficult and Unsuccessful Search for a New Kind of Propaganda.

An optimist by nature and proud of what he had accomplished, Camille Barrère wrote to French Foreign Minister Delcassé in November 1914 that “les relations établies entre nos deux pays ont eu une repercussion si profonde dans l’opinion publique (italienne) que l’amitié avec la France est de-

venue *un article de foi*”<sup>1</sup>. However, as seen from Rome, the rapprochement with Paris meant, above everything else, a normalization of diplomatic relations with the French Republic that did not put in doubt the validity of the Triple Alliance. The Kingdom of Italy, no longer a newcomer among nations, had no intention of falling once again under the tutelage of Paris. Its pursuit of a policy of independence was evident in the efforts at mediation undertaken by Rome at the Algeciras Conference (April 1906). As Enrico Decleva’s valuable study shows, the idea that the decision of 1906 anticipated the choice made in 1915, when Italy aligned itself with the Triple Entente, was based on an erroneous concept of Italian foreign policy, whose guiding principle was the search for peace based on the balance of power among states. In fact, in the years preceding the outbreak of the Great War, relations between Paris and Rome were anything but excellent.

As had happened in 1878, the tension between Rome and Paris manifested itself in the area of colonial policy: the confrontation then had been over Tunisia, while now it was over Morocco. Without raising questions about the accords of 1900, it is certain that Paris looked askance at Italy’s military campaign in Libya, which at that time was subject to the Sublime Porte. Diplomatic relations between the two countries took a turn for the worse after the Italian navy intercepted the French ship *Carthage* on January 16, 1912 in the belief that the airplane it was carrying was destined for Turkey, while the French authorities claimed that it was bound for Tunis. A few days later, the interception of the French ship *Manouba*, that the Italians directed toward the port of Cagliari, and the arrest of twenty-nine Turkish officers on board, detained in spite of Poincaré’s assurance to Tittoni that they were Red Cross officials, unleashed waves of francophobia and italophobia in the press, reminiscent of what had happened at the time of the Aigues-Mortes tragedy. Even the daily *La Stampa*, very close to Giolitti and known for its moderate tone, claimed that “la mentalità dei francesi è così fatta che ai loro occhi l’amicizia franco-italiana non può significare che vassallaggio alla Francia.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Translated by Roland Sarti.

Letter from Camille Barrère to Théophile Delcassé dated November 11, 1914, quoted in ENRICO DECLEVA, *Da Adua a Sarajevo. La politica estera italiana e la Francia (1896-1914)*, Bari, Laterza, 1971, p. 261. Our emphasis.

2. Article of January 29, 1912, cited, p. 413.

Until the outbreak of the Great War<sup>3</sup> in August 1914, the image of France was therefore fairly negative in Italian public opinion<sup>4</sup>, which continued to perceive France as an arrogant nation determined to deprive Italy of its proper “place in the sun” because it regarded it as a “younger sister” that had no right to pose as a rival, especially in the Mediterranean and Adriatic areas. At the same time, Italy regarded France as a weak country, corrupted by the Masonic radicalism of the republicans in power; in other words, in Italian eyes the France of Napoleon III had become the France of Madame Caillaux. It is important to point out, however, that this latter image of France as a decadent nation was particularly diffused *by* and *in* pro-German conservative quarters and nationalist circles.

After the first French-German military clashes of the summer of 1914, this negative vision of France gave way to a more positive one that envisaged France as having rediscovered its Catholic, military, and even monarchist traditions, after having been purged by the test of fire. In short, in the eyes of nationalists and conservatives, the Paris of Madame Caillaux disappeared, and was replaced by the all-encompassing perception of Maurice Barrès. The various interventionist currents of the Italian left had a mostly positive view of France for having had the courage to break off diplomatic relations with the Holy See, but there were limits to how much support they were willing to give once France went to war. Hence, although after the invasion of Belgium the old refrain of Latin brotherhood regained momentum, it took time for the sense of solidarity felt by the interventionists of the left toward France to lead to something more substantial than the commitment of the *garibaldini*<sup>5</sup>. More generally speaking, with the exception of hotheads like the Futurists, the governing class and part of the Italian intellectual élite

3. For an overall view of relations between France and Italy, see PIERRE MILZA, *Français et Italiens à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Aux origines du rapprochement franco-italien de 1900-1902*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1981; GILLES BERTRAND, JEAN-YVES FRÉTIGNÉ, ALESSANDRO GIACONE, *La France et l'Italie. Histoire de deux nations sœurs, de 1660 à nos jours*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2017.

4. On this topic, see the stimulating comments in *Opinion publique et politique extérieure*, I, 1870-1915, and II 1915-1940, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1981 and 1984.

5. On the commitment of the *garibaldini* in France, see HUBERT HEYRIÈS, *Les garibaldiens de 14: splendeurs et misères des Chemises rouges en France de la Grande guerre à la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Nice, Serre, 2005; ANTONINO ZARCONI, *I precursori. Volontariato democratico italiano nella guerra contro l'Austria: repubblicani, radicali, socialisti, riformisti, anarchici e massoni*, Rome, Annales Ed., 2014.

believed that foreign policy should be conducted entirely in the interests of the country and not be guided by sentimental or ideological motives.

There was a striking gap between the shadings, or divergences, present within Italian public opinion on the one hand, and the esteem that almost all sectors of French public opinion expressed toward Italy on the other. The French press looked upon the choice of neutrality as a prelude to the decision to go to war on the side of the Triple Entente. The memories of the tensions stemming from the tragedy of Aigues-Mortes, and the more recent ones related to the incidents of the Italian occupation of Libya, appear to have been replaced by accounts of episodes of fraternization between Italian emigrants and the French population, as happened in Savoy in summer of 1914 and spring of 1915, all taken as signs of French italophilia.

Relying on this perception easily evident from a simple reading of the French press, the diplomats of the Quai d'Orsay realized that the time had come to launch a new kind of propaganda in Italy, one that was realistic, and took into account the expectation of Italian authorities that the French would acknowledge their right to reach diplomatic and military decisions independently; in other words, that they no longer regarded Italy as a junior partner, but as a sovereign power capable of deciding its own destiny in accordance with its own interests. This notion of Italy is what the journalist and diplomat Charles Benoist (1861-1936) perfectly summed up in a letter that he wrote to Delcassé in February 1915, when he undertook an exploratory trip to Italy: "l'Italie est majeure. Elle sait ce qu'elle a à faire. Elle est excédée des donneurs de conseils [...]. Il faut qu'elle réfléchisse. Elle ne prendra de résolutions que dans le silence. Laissons-la donc tranquille."<sup>6</sup>

"Laissons-la donc tranquille" is a striking expression meant to convince the Quai d'Orsay that the time for old-style prattling was over and that what was needed was a more modern and realistic form of propaganda. There were some elements, either directly or indirectly tied to French diplomacy, that to their credit were receptive to that message and acted accordingly. For

6. Quoted by JEAN-PIERRE VIALLET, *Aspects de la propagande française en Italie pendant la première guerre mondiale*, in *La France et l'Italie pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale*, edited by Pierre Guillen, Grenoble, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1976, p. 207. On the theme of the revision of French propaganda toward Italy, see also JEAN-YVES FRÉTIGNÉ, *L'Italia nel 1914-1915: una nazione maggiorenne per i francesi?*, in *1914-1915: il liberalismo italiano alla prova. L'anno delle scelte*, a cura di Aldo A. Mola, Centro europeo Giovanni Giolitti per lo studio dello Stato, 2015, pp. 181-192.

French diplomacy, Italy, like Spain, was a land that needed a form of propaganda more attuned to the psychology of the population. The Propaganda Bureau was thus founded thanks to Delcassé's patronage; it was succeeded by an agency bearing the same name that was connected to the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. The key figure in these bodies was the deputy Etienne Fournol (1871-1940)<sup>7</sup>, who was at the origin of the Inter-parliamentary Union created in 1889, and who, in his capacity as Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies from 1911 to 1912, was the person most qualified to take charge of these two committees. But inadequate funding prevented them from developing an effective plan of action. One can only take note of the fact that France lagged behind Germany in committing adequate financial and human resources to win Italian support during the period of neutrality. It thus became necessary to formulate a new type of propaganda that bridged the gap between the official policy of the Quai d'Orsay and the initiatives promoted by figures in society at large, or by members of the political leadership.

A Franco-Italian League was established in France in 1887. Two years after its foundation it was led by the deputy, and later senator, from the Isère, Gustave Rivet (1848-1946), who remained at its head for forty years, until 1931. With few members and short on funds, this league deserves credit for fostering a climate of friendship between Paris and Rome in good and bad times, starting with the era of Crispi when relations were extremely tense. But it was no longer particularly effective on the eve of World War I. With the exception of its Lombardy section, which succeeded in organizing demonstrations in favor of Italian intervention on the side of the Triple Entente, the Franco-Italian League could do little more than insist on the theme of Latin brotherhood and sing the praises of the *garibaldini*, who were its living symbols, but whose initiatives at that particular moment did not fail to annoy diplomats and military leaders on both sides of the Alps. Far more effective was the France-Italy Committee, which we will consider in the second part.

Camille Barrère was the other major intellectual figure who understood the necessity to develop a new type of propaganda that was both realistic and respectful of Italy. Working with him was the diplomat Henri Gonse

7. On this little-known figure, see the sketch by JULIEN LUCHAIRE, *Confessions d'un Français moyen (1876-1950)*, Florence, Olschki, 1965, p. 24.

who became director of the Press Bureau in Rome in the first months of 1915. His main charge was to keep track of and cultivate contacts in the Italian press. He deserves major credit for attracting members of the *Ecole Française* in Rome, which at that time teemed with intellectuals committed to promoting Franco-Italian friendship<sup>8</sup>, as indicated by the testimony of its director, Monsignor Louis Duschene<sup>9</sup>: “L’Ecole française de Rome n’a évidemment aucun rôle à jouer, ni dans la politique, ni dans la diplomatie; cependant, elle contribue, par le seul fait de son existence, à entretenir dans le domaine de la science et du haut enseignement ces rapports d’estime et de bienveillance par lesquels se resserrent l’entente et la fraternité des nations latines.”<sup>10</sup>

These and other similar initiatives yielded very modest results due to organizational difficulties, inadequate funds, and competition from German and even English rivals. Nevertheless, as important as these factors were, in our opinion we cannot disregard the reality that the French mentality, among the elites and the population at large, could not, outside the narrow circles of italphile intellectuals, accustom itself to the idea that Italy was a fully mature nation. This attitude revealed itself in the very strong diplomatic and military tensions between the two countries in the Balkans on the one hand, and, on the other, in the maneuvers taking place in French economic circles that aimed at gaining an important role in the Italian economy.

## 2. On the Brink of Rupture Over the Question of Serbia

The signature of the Treaty of London on April 26, 1915 seemed to put the seal of approval on the reconciliation between the two Latin sisters<sup>11</sup>.

8. On the history of the EFR, see *A l'école de toute l'Italie. Pour une histoire de l'École française de Rome*, edited by Michel Gras, Rome, coll. dell'École française de Rome, 2010; also *Construire l'institution. L'École française de Rome 1873-1895*, a cura di M. Gras and Olivier Poncet, Rome, École française de Rome, 2013, available only online (8 January 2014, <http://www.openedition.org/6540>).

9. Director from 1895 to 1922.

10. LOUIS DUCHESNE, *L'École française de Rome*, in *Nouvelle revue d'Italie*, n.16, 1919, p. 112.

11. Although the treaty was drawn up in French, signing it in the English capital was meant to reassure Italy of maximum reserve. But it was in the interests of Paris to leak information, which is precisely what happened, to compromise Italy and prevent it from going back on its word.

Convinced that Italy's intervention on the side of the Triple Entente would hasten the end of the war, the Quai d'Orsay showed itself very receptive to Italy's demands. Clémenceau<sup>12</sup>, who was anything but pro-Italian, praised Italy, and, like most of the French press, insisted not so much on the strictly national-interest motives of the Italian decision, as on the community of values between the two nations in fighting against German barbarism. The abandonment of the Triple Alliance was not seen as a betrayal, but as a choice by a people that had come of age and was motivated by its own national interest and spirit. Few paid attention to the words of Maurice Paléologue, the French ambassador to Saint Petersburg, who noted that Italy's ambitions threatened to create serious problems with Serbia, the other privileged ally of Paris. Paléologue concluded his telegram of March 11, 1915 with these words: "Puisque d'après les renseignements de Votre Excellence l'Italie penche de plus en plus pour l'intervention aux côtés de la Triple Entente, nous pouvons assurément nous montrer plus accueillants à ses prétentions quitte à n'y souscrire ensuite qu'en proportion de son concours."<sup>13</sup> Prophetic words because, without going into details<sup>14</sup>, the discussions on Bulgarian neutrality, and even more the ones on the rescue of the Serbs, created rather strong tensions between Paris and Rome. A telegram sent by Briand to Barrère on November 20, 1915 lists all the grievances toward Italy:

1. Absence of its signature on the pact of September 2, 1914;
2. Refusal to declare war on Germany.

These two starting criticisms reveal the profound divergences between the expectations of the Entente which, in the words of English Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and his Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Arthur Nicolson, could not accept the provision of "limited liabilities" and the expectations of the Kingdom of Italy, which intended to go to war against Berlin only if first attacked by the Germans;

3. Light military involvement against Turkey;

12. JEAN-BAPTISTE DUROSELLE, *Clémenceau et l'Italie*, in *La France et l'Italie pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale* cit., pp. 492-511.

13. Ministère des affaires étrangères, *Documents diplomatiques français: 1915*, tome I (1er janvier - 25 mai), Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2002, p. 430.

14. On Franco-Italian relations in the Balkans, see FRÉDÉRIC LE MOAL, *La France et l'Italie dans les Balkans 1914-1919. Le contentieux adroitique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2006.



4. Selfish concern for the preservation of its space in Albania, which exposed Franco-English troops in Salonika and Macedonia to the risk of being massacred.

It is significant that Briand concluded his catalog of grievances by reiterating Paléologue's idea that a refusal of Italian collaboration in the Balkans implied refusal to treat Italy as an equal, not only with regard to the terms of any future peace settlement, but also in the conduct of military operations. This meant that even in strictly military matters Italy was to be considered as a secondary ally, and not part of the inner circle that made important decisions. These grievances, normally circumscribed to civil and military circles, were publicized in the press. The well-known italophobe Philippe Berthelot, director of Briand's cabinet and later Secretary General of the Quai d'Orsay, in his capacity as censorship director allowed the publication of articles hostile to Italy.

No sooner was the Pact of London signed that it was already in trouble. The Serbian crisis left deep scars: Italy appeared to be concerned only with defending its own interests. Was it Sonnino's fault? Perhaps, but Delcassé was also to blame for his pro-Serbian policy, for excluding the Italians from the negotiations with Bulgaria, preventing any major military operation by the Italian army, denying it the logistical support that it needed. Although this crisis did not lead to an outright rupture between the two countries, it does explain the difficulties encountered in the peace negotiations of 1919. It also illustrates, on the one hand, why Paris was reluctant to consider Italy as an independent ally and, on the other, why Italy failed to gain the friendship and full respect of France.

The same pattern can be seen in military matters. One should not forget that following the fifth renewal of the Triple Alliance (1912-1915), Italy's military plans were directed against France, to the extent that Cadorna considered sending five or six army corps and two or three cavalry divisions to Alsace, transporting them through Austria, in support of the Schlieffen Plan's lightning strike<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, the analysis of the documents of the Western Sector Office (*Ufficio Scacchiere Occidentale*) shows that, while Italian officers had the greatest respect for the French army, the French

15. MARIANO GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale dall'Unità alla Grande Guerra (1861-1915). Piani e studi operativi italiani verso la Francia durante la Triplice Alleanza*, Rome, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito. Ufficio storico, 2005, pp. 279-337.

General Staff showed little regard, and sometime expressed downright contempt, for the Italian army, to the point that for a brief period of time before Caporetto, both the French GQG and the Supreme Command waged separate wars to safeguard their autonomy<sup>16</sup>.

### 3. Problematic Economic Relations

Similar difficulties also affected economic relations between the two countries. Between August 1914 and the beginning of 1916 France attempted to wage an offensive to regain a leading position in the Italian economy. The first plan was at the highest level and resulted in the founding of the Banca Italiana di Sconto under Italian control – note the concern for respecting Italian susceptibilities about their independence – but with the presence of ten French members on its board. The banker Louis Dreyfus wanted to push further in his offensive against the Banca Commerciale, the stronghold of German finance in Italy. The difficulty of reconciling the will of the foreign minister (Aristide Briand) with that of the commerce minister (Etienne Clémentel), meeting the expectations of high finance (Bank of Paris and the Low Countries), and finally those of big industry (the Creusot) produced a series of mutually competing projects, none of which came to anything concrete. The two principal projects were by Guiot, the representative of high finance, and Davies, the Creusot's director. They agreed on one point only: a massive intrusion of French capital in the Banca Commerciale would be too costly and would offend Italian national self-regard. Beyond that there was no agreement. Guiot in effect intended to change the board of the Banca Commerciale, while Davies aimed at creating French-Italian groups in the various economic sectors, with France furnishing capital and technical know-how, and Italy providing the labor force. It was a plan based on the assumption of collaboration between a developed and industrialized country on the one hand, and an underdeveloped one on the other. The only effective result was the exclusion from the board of the Banca Commerciale of the representatives most closely tied to

16. FILIPPO CAPPELLANO, "Les relations entre les armées italienne et française pendant la Grande guerre, in *Revue Historique des Armées*, n. 250, 2008, pp. 53-65.

the interests of German finance and industry. The Italo-French industrial union envisaged by Devies existed only on paper.

Why such mediocre results? For two fundamental reasons, the first being that business circles in France were still in the grip of old-fashioned notions inherited from the time when Italy was not an economic power and that, consequently, it could not play a major diplomatic and political role on the international scene. The colonialist attitude toward Italy seemed strongly rooted in the minds of French industrialists at the start of the Great War. The other fundamental reason that explains the failure of plans for cooperation between the two economies is that on the eve of war, thanks to the formidable development experienced during the Giolittian era, Italy had achieved economic independence and its production was sufficient to meet the demands of numerous sectors of the domestic market. Furthermore, Italy's economic and political leaders had no intention of breaking off relations with Berlin and consigning themselves, with their hands and feet tied, to the industry and finance of Paris or London. Furthermore, they were aware that the French economy was not robust enough to play the role of privileged partner, and that economic exchanges could no longer occur with only one country. Better, therefore, to maintain ties with Berlin and, above all, with London, which could guarantee deliveries of coal and wheat, provide shipping and, most of all, extend the loans necessary to finance the war effort. Rome, in fact, did ask for a "small" English loan of some sixty million pounds to finance its purchases on the British market and the markets of neutral countries. Rome wanted to avoid the political dominance that the Allies might be able to exercise in return for extending economic aid. This is what explains the failure of the discussions of 1917 between Clémentel and Nava on the subject of a possible customs union in the immediate aftermath of the war<sup>17</sup>.

17. For a more probing discussion of economic relations between France and Italy during the First World War, see PIERRE MILZA, *Les rapports économiques franco-italiens en 1914-1915 et leurs incidences politiques*, in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, January-March 1967, pp. 31-52; ID., *Les relations financières franco-italiennes pendant le premier conflit mondial*, in *La France et l'Italie pendant la guerre* cit., pp. 292-318; GEORGES-HENRI SOUTOU, *La politique commerciale et industrielle de la France en Italie pendant la première guerre mondiale*, Ibidem, pp. 319-334; VALERIO CASTRONOVO, *Le relazioni tra la Fiat e il governo francese durante la guerra*, Ibidem, pp. 335-347; FABIO DEGLI ESPOSTI, *L'economia di guerra italiana*, in *Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa. Storia e Politica*, XXVIII, 2013, pp. 187-211.

In this first part we have illustrated the difficulties encountered by French propaganda in its efforts to change the colonialist mentality of the French toward Italy, underscoring that although the French showed esteem toward Italy, they were nevertheless reluctant to consider it a fully mature nation. Nevertheless, the massive Italian presence on French soil before the outbreak of the war and during the war itself helped to bring the two people closer together and to prosecute the war in the name of the “Latin alliance.” An active propaganda role was also played by intellectual and academic *italianisants* acting as cultural interlocutors between France and Italy.

#### 4. The Double Recruitment of French Specialists on Italy.

The moment the conflict broke out French Italianists were strategically situated to develop new forms of action, including propaganda for Italian intervention. Professors of Italian in France engaged in voluntary initiatives or were mobilized in support of the Franco-Italian war alliance<sup>18</sup>.

In Paris, Charles Dejob had created at the end of the century the first *Société d'études italiennes*, which published a review of major relevance for Italian studies in France, the *Bulletin italien* (1901-1918). In 1910, Henri Hauvette, a professor at the Sorbonne, took it over, and the review became more politically engaged after the outbreak of the war. For instance, in 1915 Hauvette published a highly laudatory piece on D'Annunzio as interventionist<sup>19</sup>. The scholarly review of Paris' Italianists was thus transformed into an instrument of war. In 1916, the social sciences professor at the University of Bordeaux, Gaston Richard, harked back to Mazzini and Garibaldi to justify Italy's participation in the European war<sup>20</sup>, and in 1917

18. JÉRÉMIE DUBOIS, *L'enseignement de l'italien en France 1880-1940*, Grenoble, Ellug, 2015, pp. 321-335.

19. HENRI HAUVETTE, *Gabriele d'Annunzio, poète national*, in *Bulletin italien*, t. XV, 1915, n. 3-4, pp. 157-169.

20. GASTON RICHARD, *Le credo religieux, politique et social de Joseph Mazzini, dans ses rapports avec le Risorgimento et la politique contemporaine*, in *Bulletin italien*, t. XVI, 1916, pp. 27-44.

Andrea Sorrentino accused the Germans of having arrogantly exploited the Latin cultural heritage<sup>21</sup>.

The Franco-Italian military alliance gave rise to an italophile current among French intellectuals and in university circles that Henri Hauvette sought to control and channel into a new association, the *Union Intellectuelle Franco-Italienne*, that he founded in June 1916 in Paris. The Minister of Public Instruction Paul Painlevé co-presided over its honorary committee alongside the Italian ambassador to Paris Tommaso Tittoni. The range of support for Italian studies thus grew and became politicized during the war, also drawing subsidies from Italy to support the new association as a center of pro-Italian propaganda in France. Although the new association asserted its non-political nature, it worked to improve relations between French Italianists and Italians interested in using wartime propaganda to spread knowledge of their language in France and to win the support of industry.

In Grenoble, where the study of Italian had grown in competition with Paris, Professor Julien Luchaire, the first real specialist of Italian contemporary history and culture, was the driving force behind the founding of an important Franco-Italian research center. In 1907, Luchaire founded the French Institute of Florence with its review, the *Bulletin Franco-Italien*, expanding its sphere of influence on Italian territory<sup>22</sup>. In February 1913, the professor from Grenoble spearheaded the creation of the *Comitato Francia-Italia*<sup>23</sup>, which sought to extend its influence to the field of diplomacy and politics, meeting with only limited success. Presided over by Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon, the *Comitato Francia-Italia* included among its members many prominent cultural and political figures, such as Ernest Lavisse, Louis Barthou, Joseph Reinach, Maurice Faure, Georges Clémenceau, Gabriel Hanotaux, and Edouard Herriot. The *Comitato Italia-Francia* founded a few months later was equally prestigious. Under

21. ANDREA SORRENTINO, *Gian Battista Vico e le razze mediterranee*, in *Bulletin italien*, t. XVII, 1917, pp. 96-101.

22. JEAN-PIERRE VIALLET, *Une création originale: l'Institut Français de Florence (1907-1913)*, in *Il Risorgimento*, I, 1987, pp. 33-62; *La cultura francese in Italia all'inizio del XX secolo. L'Istituto Francese di Firenze, Atti del Convegno per il centenario (1907-2007)*, edited by Maurizio Bossi, Marco Lombardi and Raphaël Muller, Florence, Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G.P. Viesseux, Studi, vol. 19, 2010.

23. ENRICO DECLEVA, *Relazioni culturali e propaganda negli anni '30: i comitati 'France-Italie' e 'Italia-Francia'*, in *Il vincolo culturale fra Francia e Italia negli anni trenta e quaranta*, edited by J. B. Duoselle and Enrico Serra, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986, pp. 108-157.

the honorary presidency of Emilio Visconti Venosta, it included Salvatore Barzilai, Eugenio Chiesa, Guglielmo Ferrero, Leonida Bissolati, and Ettore Ferrari, as well as Vittorio Emanuele Orlando and Luigi Luzzatti. A review with the simple title of *France-Italie* saw the light under the auspices of these two committees; significantly, it ceased publication as soon as Italy entered the war. Starting in July 1914, Luchaire won the backing of the French ministry to set up a veritable “war machine” in Italy<sup>24</sup>: he received an extraordinary subsidy of 4,000 francs to open a branch of the French Institute of Florence in Milan. This branch was never a center of studies but served rather as a propaganda agency that produced newspaper bulletins intended to inspire headlines in France and Italy and to further reciprocal understanding. The Florence Institute also transformed itself into an active propaganda center in favor of Italian intervention. In 1915, the names of Luchaire and Camille Barrère appeared next to those of Giuseppe Prezzolini, Ugo Ojetti, and Benito Mussolini on posters urging Italians to vote in favor of interventionist candidates.

Luchaire defended Italian irredentism in the French press to justify Italian intervention<sup>25</sup>. Finally, the professor from Grenoble agreed to serve in Italy as an agent of the *Comité parlementaire d'action à l'étranger*, a semi-official organization financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sponsored by Delcassé. From 1915 to 1918 Luchaire organized propaganda conferences open to the public<sup>26</sup>, and, together with Guglielmo Ferrero, directed the *Rivista delle Nazioni Latine* (May 1916-April 1919), which planned to build on the concept of “*latinità*” to improve cooperation among Latin nations, particularly France and Italy, against the influence of “*germanesimo*”<sup>27</sup>.

Luchaire charged the professor of Italian and army officer Henri Bédarida with holding conferences to the Italian army, while Lieutenant Paolo Arcari was assigned a similar role to the French army. Bédarida went on to serve as interpreter on the Italian front in 1917-18 with a mixed brigade

24. ISABELLE RENARD, *L'Institut français de Florence (1900-1920): un épisode des relations franco-italiennes au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 2001, pp. 313 and following..

25. See his article *Aspirations italiennes, sympathies françaises*, in *La Grande Revue*, Paris, April 1915, p. 9.

26. See the complete list in I. RENARD, *L'Institut français de Florence* cit., p. 446.

27. SALVO MASTELLONE, *L'Idée di latinità (1914-1922)*, in *Italia e Francia dal 1919 al 1939*, edited by J.-B. Duroselle and E. Serra, Milan, ISPI, Franco Angeli, 1990, pp. 144-159.

of French forces in Italy. Other students of Luchaire, including Edmond Barincou, Jean-Thomas Paolantonacci, and Jacques Langlais, helped train Italian fighters by serving as instructors with the garibaldini volunteers that reached France in 1914. Langlais, mobilized to serve as officer and interpreter to the General Staff, was put in charge of the foreign press and became chief of the Italian section in October 1915, before leaving for the Italian front. Decorated by both countries, he is an example of the singular role played by professors of Italian in France, who served contemporaneously in both countries<sup>28</sup>.

## 5. The Latin Alliance as seen by the “Transplanted.”

Many distinguished intellectuals of the Italian avant-garde, who had moved to Paris or had lived there for long periods of time, also found themselves in a peculiar position after the outbreak of war.

There had been close intellectual rapport since the beginning of the century, particularly between Paris and Florence<sup>29</sup>. Aldo Palazzeschi, Giovanni Papini, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Ardengo Soffici, and Giuseppe Prezzolini were inserted in French intellectual circles and had participated in Parisian cultural life<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless, the Italian intellectuals preserved their own distinct identity. Ricciotto Canudo, who was responsible for covering Italian literature in the review *Mercure de France*, had coined the term “transplantés” (transplanted) in 1913 to describe the Italians in Paris<sup>31</sup>. The members of the avant-garde took on an important role as mediators between France and Italy, particularly as collaborators to Italian reviews like *La Voce* (1908) and *Lacerba* (1913-1915), and French

28. J. DUBOIS, *L'enseignement de l'italien en France 1880-1940* cit., p. 327.

29. See the special number of the *Revue des Études Italiennes* on the topic “Paris-Florence (1900-1920): aspects du dialogue culturel,” edited by F. Livi, t. 43, N. 3-4, 1997.

30. ANNE-CHRISTINE FAITROP PORTA, *Parigi vista dagli italiani 1850-1914*, Moncalieri, 1995.

31. From the homonymous novel. For a typology of Italian artists and writers in Paris at the beginning of the century, see F. LIVI, “Le saut vital”. *Le monde littéraire italien à Paris au début du siècle (1900-1914)*, in *Le Paris des étrangers depuis un siècle*, edited by André Kaspi and Antoine Marès Paris, Editions de l'imprimerie nationale, 1990, pp. 313-328; ID., *Classicisme et avant-garde: la littérature italienne dans les revues parisiennes (1900-1915)*, in *Revue des Études Italiennes*, t. 47, n. 1-2, 2001, pp. 47-62.



reviews like the *Mercur de France*, where Giovanni Papini took over from Canudo in 1914.

Before the outbreak of the war the “transplanted” intellectuals had dreamed of creating an international alliance of writers and poets based on a shared nationalism and on the Latin alliance, particularly among the Parisian avant-gardes and the Florentine and Milanese Futurists.

We are referring to the dialogues that took place between Giuseppe Prezzolini and Romain Rolland, and that between Giovanni Papini and Guillaume Apollinaire in *La Voce*<sup>32</sup>, or again between Papini and Jean-Richard Bloch in *Lacerba*. The Italian avant-gardes made their French counterparts aware of the nature of the Italian cause, arguing that Italy had to wage a war if it was to achieve its “fourth Risorgimento.”

Conversely, the pro-French feelings of the Italian nationalists worked on behalf of intervention, as evident, for example, in the panegyric of France published by Papini when war broke out<sup>33</sup>. However, before not long the Italian intellectuals found themselves in disagreement with the pacifist positions of some of their French friends, as in the case of Romain Rolland, who distanced himself sharply from them after publishing his famous essay *Au-dessus de la mêlée*, prompting a ferocious reply from Papini. Marinetti’s Futurists were also marginalized by the outbreak of the war<sup>34</sup>.

Gabriele D’Annunzio was the one who played an important role in French intellectual circles on behalf of Italian intervention. He was among the rare Italian authors who were known and appreciated by a broad segment of the French public in the first decades of the century. A resident of France since 1910, where he had continued to write in both Italian and French, D’Annunzio witnessed and described the outbreak of the war in France in 1914 in his notebooks, written between August 2, 1914 and May 3, 1915<sup>35</sup> and in verses written in French<sup>36</sup>, including the *Ode pour la*

32. HENRI GIORDAN, *Romain Rolland et le mouvement Florentin de “La Voce”*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1966.

33. GIOVANNI PAPINI, *Ciò che dobbiamo alla Francia*, in *Lacerba*, September 1, 1914.

34. AMOTZ GILADI, *Marginalisation de l’avant-garde littéraire italienne en France, 1900-1920*, in *Transeio*, 1, 2010 ([www.transeio-review.eu](http://www.transeio-review.eu)).

35. GUY TOSI, *D’Annunzio en France au début de la Grande Guerre (1914-1915)*, Florence-Paris, Sansoni –PUF, 1961; GABRIELE D’ANNUNZIO, *Diari di guerra*, edited by Annamaria Andreoli, Milan, Mondadori, 2002.

36. Later included in *Canti della guerra latina*. NICOLAS VIOLE, *De France et d’Italie. Patrie et Latinité: héros, héritages et perspectives des ‘vers de gloire’ de Gabriele d’Annunzio*, in *Desirs & debris*

*résurrection latine*, published by *Figaro* on August 13, 1914, in which he summoned Italy to join the fight, and “Sur une image de la France croisée peinte par Romaine Brooks” (*Figaro*, May 5, 1915). D’Annunzio visited the French frontline as correspondent for the *Corriere della Sera*, spearheading an intense propaganda campaign aimed at convincing public opinion in the two countries that Italy should go to war on the side of France. Thus, on September 24, 1914 he published in *Le Gaulois* the article *La chanson de Saucourt*, and on September 30, 1914 the article *Fluctibus et Fatis* in the *Journal*, in which he urged his compatriots to intervene, claiming that the Triple Alliance no longer existed. The article had important repercussions and D’Annunzio’s name became synonymous with intervention. The poet played a role in the formation of the Garibaldi Legion in August-September 1914 and in the project to have the “*legione garibaldina*” stage a demonstration landing in Liguria to captivate public opinion and hasten Italy’s entry into the war. Before returning to Italy to celebrate the departure of The Thousand from Quarto, he delivered an incendiary speech before three hundred people gathered in the Lutetia Hotel in Paris, in which he proclaimed the “certainty of the Italian war”:

“[...] aujourd’hui, si les pressentiments du poète sont plus profonds que la *cécité du politicien*, si la vertu du sang est plus forte que les ferments de la *corruption*, si la voie romaine est toujours la plus droite et si le ciment romain est toujours le plus efficace pour lier les pierres de toute grandeur civile, aujourd’hui je vous *annonce la certitude qui est pour moi fatale comme l’éclosion du printemps, comme l’entrée du soleil dans le signe du Bélier, la certitude de notre guerre, de celle que je prêche depuis vingt-cinq ans*. Je me suis considéré ici, et je me considère encore, comme un otage volontaire, comme l’otage volontaire d’un pacte idéal. Je n’ai pu quitter la ville sublime ni pour un jour ni pour une heure, ni sous la menace barbare ni dans la fierté de la rescousse. Cet otage ne sera délivré que par ce que nos anciens appelaient *foedus ferire*, ne sera libéré que par le jet du javelot romain teinté de sang. Il ne sera rendu à sa patrie première que le premier jour du printemps héroïque, sous le signe du Bélier *proecephs*, qui se précipite en avant»<sup>37</sup>.

*d’épopée au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, edited by Saulo Neiva, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 99-118.

37. G. TOSI, *D’Annunzio en France* cit., p. 100.

The most visible and influential Italian intellectuals “transplanted” in France were without doubt the interventionists, who planted in French public opinion the conviction that Italy would be France’s “sister” in the struggle.

## 6. Italian Volunteers and Workers in France in 1914-1915.

We must finally consider those Italians who were not content with “looking” at Italy from France, but who contributed directly to the war effort in France. According to the latest research by Hubert Heyriès<sup>38</sup>, we are dealing with almost 120,000 Italian civilian and military workers and more than 40,000 fighters. The Italians made up the single largest contingent of foreign fighters in France. This is understandable given the importance of the Italian community in France: with its 419,234 immigrants, amounting to 36.1% of the entire foreign population in 1911, mainly concentrated in the three departments of the South (around Nice, Toulon, and Marseilles), and in Savoy, Lyon, and Paris, it was the most important foreign community in France.

In July 1914, after France entered the war, many Italian workers returned to Italy<sup>39</sup>, but there were also many Italian emigrants, particularly of the second generation, who served in the regular French army, in the republican legion of Nice (the “Mazzini Company”), or in the fourth regiment of the Foreign Legion. In the majority of cases, Italian emigrants showed themselves to be true francophiles, due no doubt to feelings of gratitude toward the country that had taken them in, whether with or without reservations, but due also to their desire to become part of French society. While the most in-depth recent studies of French perceptions of Italian immigrants may convey a more nuanced picture of French italo-

38. HUBERT HEYRIÈS, *Les travailleurs militaires italiens en France pendant la Grande Guerre – “Héros de la pelle et de la truelle” au service de la victoire*, Montpellier, Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2014. See, also, JULIEN SAPORI, *Les troupes italiennes en France pendant la première guerre mondiale*, Perçay-sur-Vienne, Anovi, 2008.

39. On the exodus of Italian immigrants from France during the First World War there is an important paper by Pierre-Louis Buzzi in the proceedings of the meeting on *Guerre et déplacements de populations. Regards croisés sur l'Europe aux 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Institut Historique Allemand à Paris, April 8-9, 2015, in course of publication.

phile sentiments in 1914-1915, it is unlikely that those sentiments will be questioned *ab imis*<sup>40</sup>.

There is the specific case of the Garibaldi Legion volunteers<sup>41</sup>: after the outbreak of war in France, thousands of Italian volunteers joined the Foreign Legion. Italians in Paris quickly began to plan for the formation of a separate corps of volunteers; Garibaldi's son, Ricciotti, volunteered to organize a free corps. The project for the formation of the Garibaldi Legion that was finally presented on August 22, 1914 proposed that it be led by Peppino Garibaldi, Ricciotti's oldest son, with the support of his five brothers. A large number of volunteers from Italy joined the volunteers from France, for a total of 2,300 recruits, which included the young Karl Suckert, pseud. Curzio Malaparte<sup>42</sup>. The *garibaldini* fought bravely in the Argonne on December 26, 1914 and in January 1915, losing a third of their effectives; the casualties included two of Garibaldi's grandsons, Bruno and Costante. The death of two descendants of the Hero of the Two Worlds led to an unprecedented spurt of propaganda activity: the French eulogized the dead and covered them with honors, urging Italians to join them in the fight; the Italian interventionists used the losses to rail against the neutralists and force Italy into the war. The theme of Latin brotherhood gained currency on both sides of the Alps. The dissolution of the Garibaldi Legion in March 1915 was a strategic move intended to motivate the former combatants into coercing Italy to enter the war.

On May 22, 1915 all Italians between the ages of 18 and 39 were mobilized both in the peninsula and abroad, where there were approximately 5.8 million Italian expatriates. Approximately 200,000 repatriated between May and December 1915, 30% of whom came from France, the highest proportion in Europe<sup>43</sup>. The analyses of emigrants have produced divergent

40. *Les italiens en France de 1914 à 1940*, edited by P. Milza, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1986; CAROLINE DOUKI, *Les émigrés face à la mobilisation militaire de l'Italie*, in *Démobilisations culturelles après la Grande Guerre, 14-18 aujourd'hui*, n. 5, Paris, Noesis, 2002, pp. 158-181; STÉFANIE PREZIOSO, *Les Italiens en France au prisme de l'engagement volontaire: les raisons de l'enrôlement dans la Grande Guerre (1914-1915)*, in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 81, 2010, pp. 147-163.

41. H. HEYRIÈS, *Les Garibaldiens de 14* cit. See, also, PIERRE MILZA, *La légion des volontaires italiens dans l'armée française: une antichambre du fascisme?*, in *Les Italiens en France de 1914 à 1940* cit., pp. 143-154.

42. See MAURIZIO SERRA, *Malaparte, vies et légendes*, Paris, Grasset, 2011.

43. C. DOUKI, *Les émigrés face à la mobilisation militaire* cit.; see, also, PATRIZIA SALVETTI, *Il movimento migratorio italiano durante la prima guerra mondiale*, in *Studi Emigrazione*, 1987, 87,

results: there are those who insist on the high number of renitent emigrants (but these numbers have been shown to be inflated), and those who point instead to the motives of the returnees, who are said to have been more in favor of intervention than the population at large, and whose patriotic sentiments were supposedly more pronounced<sup>44</sup>.

On French soil, a great contribution to the victory of the Allies was made not only by Italian combatants, but also by workers behind the lines. According to Heyriès, we should not separate one group from the other because workers behind the lines and soldiers on the frontlines often overlapped, as in the case of the *Centurie operai militari italiani* (COMI), which were sent to the rear in the fall of 1917 and during the winter of 1918. However, the idea of calling on Italian military workers took form only in the course of 1917, when war weariness was at an all-time high among the Allies.

## Conclusion

We can draw six lessons from this analysis of the period running from the summer of 1914 to the days of May 1915.

The first concerns the differing perceptions that the French had of Italy and the Italians had of France. The French regarded Italy somewhat uncritically as an allied nation. The choice of neutrality came as a great relief to France as it was preparing to defend Paris in the famous *bataille de la Marne* (while the plan envisaged by Cadorna would have made a victory on the Marne practically impossible). Italy, on the contrary, had a vision of France that was much more critical and articulated. Due in part to the complexity of its diplomatic position, Rome was tied since 1882 to Vienna and Berlin in a defensive alliance; it was also bound by the accords of 1887 with London, by the 1902 pact of non-aggression with Paris, and by the understanding of 1909 with Russia concerning the entire area of the Balkans.

pp. 287-291.

44. BRUNELLO VIGEZI, *L'Italia del 1914-1915, la pace, la guerra e i problemi dell'emigrazione*, in *L'émigration politique en Europe aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 1991; GIOVANNA PROCACCI, *La neutralité italienne et l'entrée en guerre*, in *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 179, 1995, pp. 83-98.

The second lesson concerns the growing awareness on the part of the French authorities of the need to organize a modern form of propaganda based on respect for Italian independence, a preferred theme over the more classic one of “Latin brotherhood,” which nevertheless remained operational. However, this new type of propaganda proved hard to realize because it stumbled against various obstacles. Inadequate funding, lack of qualified organizers, and differences over strategic objectives, particularly with regard to the economy, stood in the way of changing course. Also important was the persistence of a colonialist mentality on the part of the industrialists, who continued to regard Italy as a source of manpower rather than as an economic partner.

The third lesson is that the events of the summer of 1915 anticipate the break between the two countries that became manifest in the discussions leading up to the peace treaties of the postwar years. The first warning signs were the political, economic, and psychological hindrances that stood in the way of adopting a new type of propaganda. In fact, the Pact of London of April 26, 1915 was already replete with equivocations – as was the case with the accords of Saint Jean de Maurienne signed by France, Italy, and the United Kingdom in April 1917. The Pact of London required the signatories to commit all their resources to the war being waged “in common” with France, Great Britain, and Russia against “all enemies.” Italy did not honor that clause until August 27, 1916, when it declared war on Germany.

The fourth lesson is that both the emergence of the study of Italian culture (*italianismo*) as a distinct discipline and the teaching of the Italian language in France had a notable impact on Franco-Italian relations during the conflict, because Italian specialists operated in a double capacity, implementing programs for the shared use of resources by the two allied countries. For many promoters of the Italian language in France, this was a first step toward their integration in the decision-making circles of the two countries.

The fifth lesson is that the Italian literati “transplanted” in France, particularly the Nationalists and Futurists, played a far from negligible role in preparing the ground for Italy’s intervention; their propaganda in favor of a Latin alliance was taken up and promoted by French newspapers and by Parisian cultural circles, before moving on to the peninsula in the course of the “radiant days” of May. Nevertheless, the very success achieved by

the interventionists resulted in the marginalization of the Italian literary avant-garde in France.

Finally, the sixth lesson is that the Garibaldi red shirts of 1914, and many times that number of Italians, experienced the First World War on French soil, side by side with French soldiers and civilians. The Italians, who made up the most important foreign community in France before the war, contributed more than any other nationality to the French war effort. The war worked in favor of their integration, to the point that there were cases of fraternization, especially in Marseilles, between Italian and French workers against the recently arrived immigrants from the colonies<sup>45</sup>. Many Italian immigrants who had come to France as children had not wanted to fight on the Italian front in the name of Italy because they felt estranged from their native land; that was the sentiment of the last surviving *poilu*, Lazare Ponticelli, who in 1915 refused to shed the French uniform and had to be accompanied to Turin by two gendarmes.

Many people in France, including many Italian immigrants, did not regard the “young Italian nation” as an equal partner, but rather as a “younger sister” not yet sufficiently mature and strong enough to be a reliable ally, one capable of making a decisive contribution to the war effort: it could offer resources, but it had to be controlled and its movements had to be limited.

That may be the reason why Italians entertained mixed feelings of admiration and resentment toward the French. This is what Gaetano Salvemini had in mind when, with his usual incisive judgment, he wrote in his paper *L'Unità* on August 2, 1917 that “Italy and France must get over this spiritual malady that makes them say, as Catullus said to Lesbia: *nec tecum vivere possum, nec sine te*.” Franco-Italian relations during the first years of the Great War may not have aggravated the malady, but neither did they advance its cure.

45. LAURENT DORNEL, *Les étrangers et la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, La Documentation Française, 2014.





## Italy in the Great War as seen from Great Britain

How did the British press picture Italy in the years of the First World War? The topic clearly has nothing to do with understanding the relations between two countries, but with the more mobile, insidious idea of the formation of public opinion at a time when the press, thanks to its wide circulation and authority, was the only source able to reach the differing layers of the population, influencing convictions and visions. How Italy was presented in the newspapers emerged from the description of politics and the society of the country in the years from its neutrality to the end of the war; its importance is not in being “true” or exhaustive, but only in the realisation that it was in fact the only picture to which a great part of British public opinion had access. From this viewpoint, the limited differences in positions on politics and ideals among the various newspapers typical in a climate of national unity imposed by the war effort appear of little relevance. Understanding this portrayal therefore means reconstructing part of the route along which British public opinion and its idea of the war was formed. Awareness that such a process in turn influenced public opinion in Italy, through the contamination due to reciprocal reproduction of the news, indicates the importance of this sensitive game of mirrors.

The outbreak of the World War was the occasion for a return to cordial relations between Italy and Great Britain after all the tensions of 1911-1912 caused by the Libyan war and by the early renewal of the Triple Alliance that the Italians, since it had been first laid down in 1882, had always wanted to bind to a pro-British interpretation (even when overt mention of the fact got omitted in subsequent drafts)<sup>1</sup>. The lack of direct controversies

1. This was an aspect recalled by the British ambassador Rennell Rodd; in a despatch to the Foreign Secretary Edward Grey he wrote that “although there was no written understanding to the effect, it was clearly laid down by the Marquis di Rudini that in no case could Italy consent to

and the historical link in relations between Great Britain and Italy since the Risorgimento therefore made direct communication possible between Rome and London, and this, in the hours after the Sarajevo shooting, had the practical result that both countries did their utmost to seek a road to moderation and mediation. After the outbreak of hostilities, the Italian decision against intervening on the side of its allies prompted members of parliament in London to organize “a remarkable and most unusual demonstration of friendliness [...] Others prominent in the political and social world, and thousands of passers-by joined in the cheering”<sup>2</sup>. Salandra chose to contact London (with whom “our contacts were closer”) and considered the Foreign Office “the most stable and safe intermediary in the passage towards the Triple Entente”<sup>3</sup>, while Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, “in tones of the utmost cordiality”<sup>4</sup>, immediately told Italian ambassador Imperiali of his sympathy for Italy and her decision.

This declaration started a long period of courtship of a country, which, from being a possible enemy, had straight away turned into an unimpeachable witness to the burning question of assigning responsibility for the outbreak of war; above all, by means of careful political diplomacy, Italy might become a useful ally<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, for the first time since the Reign of Italy had existed, Great Britain seemed to be taking Italy into serious consideration as a power, setting aside opinions as to her international role, which for the last thirty years had at the very least hovered between irritation at her unexpected activism in the Mediterranean and low esteem<sup>6</sup>. Great Britain was aware that her own infantry, based on voluntary recruitment, would require a great deal of time to achieve full efficiency and this, at least in part, convinced

place herself in open hostility to England, and this tacit principle was quite well known to her ally” (*British Documents on the Origins of the war 1898-1914*, vol. XI, London, 1926, p. 349).

2. Cf. *Italy will not fight*, in *The Washington Post*, August 8 1914.

3. ANTONIO SALANDRA, *La neutralità italiana*, Milan, A. Mondadori, 1935 (1928), pp. 153-4 e 412.

4. FERDINANDO MARTINI, *Diario 1914 – 1918*, Milan, Arnoldo Mondadori, 1966, p. 30.

5. Cf. FULVIO CAMMARANO, *Regno Unito*, in *Osservata Speciale. La neutralità italiana nella Prima guerra mondiale e l'opinione pubblica internazionale 1914-1915*, edited by Riccardo Brizzi, Firenze-Milano, le Monnier, 2015, pp. 199-219.

6. LUIGI ALBERTINI, *Le origini della guerra del 1914*, Gorizia, Libreria editrice goriziana, 2010 (1942-43), vol. II, p. 454.

Grey of the “extraordinary importance”<sup>7</sup> of any Italian intervention; in a situation of military deadlock the Italian infantry might make a sizable impact, a “turning-point in the war”<sup>8</sup>. At that critical point, the weight of Italy drew British public opinion towards the country, although “there are critics, especially in England, who do not hesitate to say that Great Britain, France and Russia really do not care whether Italy joins them or not”. Such criticism, however, was “made for the purpose of belittling Italian help and of driving a hard bargain, if the Entente should be successful. It seems scarcely probable that two millions of Italians, although possibly not as efficient as the same number of Germans, or Frenchmen, or Englishmen, can fail to have a very important, even if not decisive influence upon the outcome of the war”<sup>9</sup>. Italy therefore found herself suddenly in a previously quite unknown situation: “she is in the delightful position of being feared and courted by all, with nothing to lose and everything to gain by her neutrality”<sup>10</sup>. “The Italian papers,” wrote the *Times*, “say that their position of neutrality is evidently advantageous, and are strengthened in this opinion both by the flattering way in which the German Press refers to their maintenance of neutrality in spite of and by the efforts made by the British and French press to allure Italy to their side. The pressure has given the Italians a magnified sense of importance”<sup>11</sup>. The whole world – wrote a reader of the *New York Times* – “is now anxiously waiting to see what steps Italy will take”<sup>12</sup>.

The British newspapers in 1914, evidently addressing public opinion in their own country, were generally very aware of the fact that their opinions

7. MARIO TOSCANO, *Il Patto di Londra. Storia diplomatica dell'intervento italiano (1914-1915)*, Bologna, Nicola Zanichelli editore, 1934, p. 35.

8. CHRISTOPHER SETON WATSON, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism 1870-1925*, London: Methuen and Co., 1967, p. 430. On the assessment of the Italian military weight: *A student of war, Italian Intervention: the Military aspect*, in *The Manchester Guardian* (henceforth *M.G.*), January 26, 1915; W.T. MASSEY, *Italy's Army. The Supply of Men and Munitions*, *M.G.*, May 7 1915. In December Asquith had reminded ambassador Imperiali that the critical period for the United Kingdom “will last until February; even should we, in this time, decide to put in act the intentions expressed last August, *it will make the whole difference* in the eyes of the British nation” (SIDNEY SONNINO, *Carteggio 1914-1916*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1974, p. 125).

9. GEO. B. MCCLELLAN, *War stirs Italy to new Ideals*, in *New York Times*, May 16, 1915.

10. *Italy as mediator*, in *The Review of Reviews*, November 1914, p. 356.

11. *Overtures to Italy*, in *The Times*, September 3 1914.

12. A.M., *Italy's Purposeful Neutrality*, in the *New York Times*, January 27 1915.

on the events and conduct of Italy (and of the other neutral countries, Greece and Romania in particular, for whom the Foreign Office had drawn up what amounted to a plan of attraction)<sup>13</sup>, would produce a broad resonance within Italian decision-making groups<sup>14</sup>. The whole British community was committed to making the German military push less effective, and for this reason, Italy's unexpected neutrality seemed an opportunity first to be seized<sup>15</sup> and thereafter steered towards pro-Entente intervention<sup>16</sup>.

Italy's declaration of neutrality was also put down to the impossibility of her siding with Austria against Great Britain. The Anglo-Saxon press kept returning to the Triple Alliance and the legitimacy of the Italian decision in the light of the clauses of the Triple Treaty<sup>17</sup>. It was not only a question of supporting Rome's self-justificatory arguments, but of defending Italy from the charge of 'betrayal', partly with an eye to the much more demanding request that she enter the war against her ex-allies. The liberal weekly *The Spectator*, for example, reported a reader's comment against the attempts to push Italy towards war: "If Italy chooses of her own free will to turn against her own allies, so much the better for us; but to my mind it is not seemly that we, who profess to be fighting for the maintenance of treaty obligations, should urge her to take such a course. Such action on our part could hardly be regarded by neutrals as strictly honourable"<sup>18</sup>.

This is a topic the English press frequently dwelt on: the sensitive issue of the value and trustworthiness of any Italian intervention. The accusation of cunning opportunism, never explicitly expressed but certainly not infre-

13. Cf. VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON, *Twenty-five years 1892-1916*, vol. 3, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1935.

14. Among the many examples see F. MARTINI, *Diario 1914 - 1918* cit., p. 30.

15. Cf. *Italy's Decision*, in *The Times*, August 7 1914, *Italy's Refusal to Aid her Allies*, in *M.G.*, August 7, 1914. Throughout the war the owner of *The Times* "had only one thought - how best to damage and defeat the enemy." (H. WICKHAM STEED, *Through Thirty Years. 1892-1922*, Vol. II, London, William Heinemann, 1924, p. 44).

16. Cf. *What will Italy do?*, in *M.G.*, August 10, 1914.

17. Cf., among many, *What will Italy Do?*, in *M.G.*; *Italy and the War*, in *The Observer*, August 16, 1914; *Crispi's Memoirs throw light on Italy's neutrality*, in the *New York Times*, September 20, 1914; *Italian Interests in the War*, in *The Times*, August 11, 1914.

18. *The position of Italy*, in *The Spectator*, September 26, 1914. This point had been faced and solved politically from the start by Ambassador Rodd's written declaration to the Foreign Secretary: "Germany and Austria not having observed the engagements of the Triple Alliance, Italy's attitude is juridically correct and politically loyal" (*British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914* cit., p. 349).

quently implied by the press of both blocs<sup>19</sup> (reflecting deep-seated convictions in European political and diplomatic circles)<sup>20</sup>, was counterbalanced by an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of defending one's own interests.

As a letter to the Editor of *The Spectator* recalled, "there is first the ethical side of the question. Though the Italian can be cynical enough at times, [...] he also likes to maintain the decencies of political intercourse, and it must be admitted that it would be rather outrageous for the Italian Government, after a union of twenty years, to stab their old ally in the back in order to secure the eastern shore of the Adriatic. [...] The Italians may very well argue that Italy has already done enough to entitle her to very favourable consideration in the divisions of spoils [...]. Had Italy kept her place in the Triplice, France must have retained a large army in the south-east to repel a possible Italian invasion [...]. Taking these factors into account, it may be fairly maintained that the friendly neutrality of Italy has on balance increased the relative strength of France [...]. You may say that Italy does this, not for any love of France, but because of her hatred of Austria [...] but it would not be the first time that a neutral has demanded and obtained 'compensation' for just such conduct. It may be immoral [...] but it is 'business' – on Bismarckian lines. Remember, too, that Italy is not out to vindicate a high moral standard, but to get the most she can as cheaply she can, and I do not know what nation in Europe is in a position to blame her for looking after her own interests". The Editor in answer chose to extend the issue: "we shall be friends of Italy in in any case [...]. We also believe that the British Government will be in any case favourable to Italy's claims, even if she does not stir a finger. But does our correspondent really believe that France and Russia, after all the blood they

19. "Those who come from Vienna and Berlin tell me that the name of Italy is scarcely ever mentioned without an execration, but so well schooled is the Press in both capitals that not a hint of this attitude is dropped in public" (*On the Austrian frontier*, in *The Times*, October 15, 1914). Even on the pages of the English papers there was very little reference, and then only indirectly, to irritation at Italy's 'wait and see' attitude. Italy "is determined to [act...] only when the chances are largely in favour of immediate success" (*War in the Balance*, in *M.G.*, September 29, 1914).

20. Grey himself had several outbreaks of temper at the Italian attitude: "Italy wants to bargain; holding out too much it will achieve something more at the cost of our friendship (S. SONNINO, *Diario 1914-1916*, Bari, Laterza, pp. 31-32).

will have spilt, will take such a view? Besides, what if Germany and Austria win, and win because Italy did fail to move?"<sup>21</sup>

The question of the "right moment" when Italy was psychologically ready for military intervention was discussed several times, to explain to the British public why uncertainty hung over Italy's long-awaited decision. From November on, after San Giuliano's death in October, the issue had been in the hands of his successor, the almost pathologically impenetrable Sonnino. For the editor of *The Times*, "criticisms upon the inaction of Italy in the present war which have appeared in some newspapers do not make allowance for the difficulties of the position in which the sudden outbreak of hostilities has placed her. She has been for many years in close alliance for certain purposes with Germany and Austria-Hungary [...]. They have made [...] alluring offers, but she has refused to be allured. She hastened to declare her neutrality. What more could she have done? [...] Was it reasonable to expect that she would have forthwith assailed her Allies, before any of her own interests were directly menaced? What judgement would her self-respect have pronounced upon such action? [...] She will make her own decision in her own time, and when it is borne in mind what issues for her depend upon the result of this war, little doubt can be felt as to what that decision will be. No Italian Government could induce Italy to fight side by side with Austria"<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, "Those who say that the attitude of Italy in this crisis [...] has been timid overlook the fact that, of all the Powers of Europe [...] Italy was the most unprepared for war. [...] Italy followed her best interests when she adopted an attitude of strict neutrality pending the reorganisation of her forces and her finances."<sup>23</sup>

The original praise of "wise neutrality"<sup>24</sup> quickly changed to "friendly" warnings as to the limited range of choice, very much in the spirit if not the letter of the initial diplomatic contacts between Italy and the Entente<sup>25</sup>. "There are signs that the Allies feel that Italy has not done enough for them

21. E. STRACHAN MORGAN, *Letters to the Editor: Italy and the war*, in *The Spectator*, August 22, 1914.

22. *The attitude of Italy*, in *The Times*, August 27, 1914.

23. *Italy's Position*, in *The Irish Times*, March 15, 1915.

24. *Italy's neutrality*, in *The Times*, August 15, 1914.

25. In this regard see the *Corriere della Sera's* long interview with Théophile Delcassé (about to become French Foreign Minister) fully reported in *The Times: German Blindness*, in *The Times*, August 24, 1914.



to make her position indisputable. The tone of the British press [...] has perceptibly changed, and though it is still friendly it is also a little admonitory. This has been more marked since the entry of Turkey upon the war. Italy is reminded that is a serious menace to her interests in the Balkans and in Tripoli, which can best be met by a coalition with the Allies"<sup>26</sup>. It now seemed clear to most Italians "that their vital interests must become involved in the settlement after the war, and there seems to be a general feeling that any State which stands out and fails to declare itself will not secure a proper hearing when men of peace begin to talk"<sup>27</sup>. In an editorial, *The Times* recalled how, "neutrality may for the moment seem a right and sufficient policy; but the memories of the Congress of Berlin, from which Italy returned with 'clean' but empty hands, [...] may well suggest to Italian statesmen the expediency of not standing aloof from the present struggle until too late"<sup>28</sup>. Reflecting this point of view was the *Giornale d'Italia*'s interview with Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, reprinted in all the English newspapers; he repeated, on behalf of France as well: "we do not desire any further expansion, having all the territory we require in the Mediterranean [...] If Italy were our ally her interests would be England's interests."<sup>29</sup>

The interview with the chief of the British Navy did not come about by chance, since Franco-British operations had just begun in the Adriatic; according to the *Times* editor, these had had the effect of modifying "the position of Italy from what it was in the first weeks of war. There her interests are very directly involved, and she must know that their future depends upon her conduct". On the one hand (and in face of German propaganda as to the danger of Anglo-French dominance in the Mediterranean), Churchill's words were meant to reassure Italy of the non-aggressive intentions of the Entente's naval power and the legitimacy of Italian aspirations in the Adriatic, though also to alarm the government, for Italy was being asked to "reflect what would be the consequences to her prestige and to her power were these Fleets to liberate the Slavs [...] and even the Italians in Dalmatia and of Istria, while she stood idly by. [...] And besides the Adriatic question,

26. *Italy's Problem*, in *New York Times*, November 23, 1914.

27. *The War Day by Day. Italy and Intervention*, in *The Times*, September 23, 1914.

28. *Italian Interests in the war*, in *The Times*, August 11, 1914.

29. *Mr. Churchill and Italy*, in *M.G.*, September 24, 1914.

the Mediterranean question must be before her eyes”<sup>30</sup>. It seemed to the British press that the broadening of horizons and consequently of appetites might rouse the Italian government from the torpor of neutrality<sup>31</sup>.

But a war of such proportions required an appeal to something different from material conquests and national interests. For consensus-seeking propaganda to appeal in a fundamentally neutralist country<sup>32</sup>, idealist motivations needed to be brought into play. Having dealt in the interview with the complex military sides to the conflict, Churchill went on: “we want this war to settle the map of Europe on national lines [...]. After all the blood that is being shed, we want a natural and harmonious settlement which liberates races, restores the integrity of nations [...] and permits a genuine and lasting relief from the waste and tension of armaments under which we have suffered so long. Some day the natural and true frontiers of Italy must be restored”<sup>33</sup>; he therefore invited Italy to “mark the triumph of the principle of nationalities and the suppression of Irredentism”<sup>34</sup>. Furthering the nationality principle was soon to prove a sensitive topic for the government in negotiations with the Entente; it was the most concrete example of the war for civilisation that both sides claimed to be waging, accusing their adversaries of barbarity and materialism. A *Times* editorial wondered: “what have the progressive democracy of Italy to do with the cause of aggressive militarism, of absolute domination, and of feudal reaction against the progress, the enlightenment, and the civilization of free England and free France?”<sup>35</sup> Italy had by then become part of that group of nations who fought “for the cause of civilisation, which is her own”<sup>36</sup>. As their motivation for war, such appeals focused on Austrian aggression towards the small state of Serbia, and above all Germany’s brutal invasion

30. *The Attitude of Italy*, in *The Times* cit.

31. *Italian Interests and German Offers*, in *The Times*, March 23, 1915.

32. Among the many notes on the subject there is one, above all suspicion, from Ambassador Imperiali, a staunch supporter of intervention with the Entente. In December, he reported to Sonnino that Grey had questioned him on the “general tendency of Italian public opinion, an impression that I, in my private capacity, gave him saying that to me it appears a tendency in favour of neutrality” (S. SONNINO, *Carteggio* cit., p. 98).

33. *Italy and the war. Mr. Churchill views*, in *The Times*, September 25, 1914.

34. *Mr. Churchill and Italy*, in *The Times* cit.

35. *The attitude of Italy*, in *The Times* cit.

36. *The new development*, in *M.G.* Mar 6, 1915.

of Belgium; they took good care never to touch on the autocratic behaviour of the embarrassing Russian ally.

A number of these ideals, such as defence of the nationality principle, were bound to collide with the claims of Salandra's "sacred egoism". In April 1915, at the moment when news first leaked out of the agreements in London between Italy and the Entente powers, a new obstacle arose to imperil the long-awaited intervention: the resistance of Russia towards Italian claims for compensation in Dalmatia to which "eyes are turned [...] more than they were a few weeks ago"<sup>37</sup>. The Italian interventionist press had been insisting for some time on the strategic importance of controlling "the Eastern Adriatic shore"<sup>38</sup>. This point filtered into the English press by triangulation of news from the Russian and Italian press; that it was the most controversial of the issues debated by British papers in favour of Italy joining the war was clear from the conflicting opinions of British commentators.

The *Giornale d'Italia* had a ready answer for those who condemned Italian insensitivity to the nationality principle; the argument was simply inconsistent, in view of the territories occupied by Russia. "France and England are also in possession of strategic points in defiance of the principle of nationality. Why should Italy alone be required to sacrifice her vital interests to this principle?"<sup>39</sup> *Così fan tutte*, quipped a professor of economic history in the *New York Times*; being free to express himself untrammelled by any embarrassment, he declared that Italy was acting in her own exclusive interest exactly as all the other countries were doing, without exception. The only difference was her direct way of declaring "real intentions, even to the point of cynicism", which appeared "in marked contrast to the practice of Teutonic peoples, including the Germans, the British and ourselves, who always like to gild the pill of national selfishness with sounding phrases and lofty sentiments". "The English," continued the professor in his lesson on political realism, highlighting certain British convictions dissembled as propagandist tactics, "have never been able to understand the Italian point of view, and are inclined to consider the present attitude toward the war as being cynical and selfish, because Italy is openly playing for her own hand,

37. *Prince Bulow's Mission*, in *The Times*, April 2, 1915.

38. *Italian Security*, in *The Times*, April 20, 1915.

39. *Ibidem*.

instead of disguising her purposes behind a mark of alleged altruism in the interests of the suffering and oppressed. In 1911 Italy went to war with Turkey for the possession of Tripoli, with no hypocritical announcement [...] but frankly and honestly because in her scheme of national development she considered it essential to have a foothold on the African shore of the Mediterranean [...]. And so the course of Italy in the present war [...]. It is perfectly true that Italian policy is purely selfish, but the spirit of nationalism itself is, and can be nothing but national selfishness. And [...] she is doing no more, and no less, than all the nations of Europe have done [...].” The August neutrality satisfied needs at that stage, but since then “a vast amount of water has flowed under the mill, and public opinion has changed very radically, [...] the old irredentism of the late nineteenth century has given way to a new and larger Italian nationalism which has united Italy as it has never been united before [...]. The new nationalism seeks Italian expansion, not only in behalf of the 600,000 alien Italians, but in the interest of the whole of Italy”<sup>40</sup>.

Italy needed to be pushed to greater aggressiveness towards Germany. In May, the London daily therefore attempted to fuel anti-German sentiment which was still at low ebb in Italy, although growing rapidly<sup>41</sup>. It played down the responsibility of Austria, victim in her turn to the one and only real puppeteer behind all Italian failures on the international scene since the time of the Risorgimento<sup>42</sup>.

The English press, *The Times* in particular, often recalled Cavour and Garibaldi as symbols of political planning who had known how to take risks for the good of the nation - witness their participation in the Crimea mission and the Expedition of the Thousand<sup>43</sup>. Cast together for propa-

40. GEO. B. MCCLELLAN, *War stirs Italy to new ideals*, in *New York Times* cit. A similar view of moralism was expressed by Salandra in his memoirs: “Italy decided her policy as other states decided theirs; perhaps I was wrong in declaring this candidly instead of dressing up as the defender of humanity”. (A. SALANDRA, *La neutralità italiana* cit., p. 387). On this subject: GAETANO SALVEMINI, *Opere. La politica estera italiana dal 1871 al 1915*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1970, p. 424.

41. Cf. *Peace Manoeuvres in Italy*, in *The Times*, May 14, 1915. For a brief comment on certain aspects of the anti-German turn, including cultural points, (ROSARIO ROMEO, *L'Italia unita e la Prima guerra mondiale*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1978, pp. 130-140).

42. Cf. *The Sword of Italy*, in *The Times*, May 22, 1915. *Germany's Record in Italy's 'Risorgimento'*, in *The Scotsman* cit.; H. WICKHAM STEED, *Trent'anni* cit., *passim*.

43. See, among many, *Italy and the war*, in *The Times* cit.; *Italy and Rumania*, in *The Times* cit.; *The Valley of Decision*, in *The Times*, May 15, 1915.

ganda purposes, the two hostile leaders of the Italian Risorgimento were depicted as champions of one of two poles in a long battle culminating at that juncture, an issue “that has gone one since the country became united. It is asked [...] whether Italy can afford the sacrifices demanded of a Great Power. That is called ‘being practical’ and the ‘practical’ men decry the bolder spirits as ‘visionaries’. In the past Italy has owed great things to her dreamers. Here, as everywhere, they have been ‘the movers and shakers’. To-day again the issue lies between those who dream and those who dread – those who dream of a greater Italy and they who dread the price. The Italian Government has to decide, and the burden of choice is heavy”<sup>44</sup>.

Visionaries versus conservatives, a dichotomy raking up a twenty year-old debate where “megalomaniacs” were pitted against “micromaniacs”. Such dualism had run throughout the country’s history. The British were inured to surly expansionist demands from the Italy of Crispi and Sonnino (now turned nationalistic and democratic). Not so long before, they would have had little doubt which side to favour given the need to pour oil on the Italians’ fiery yet impotent tempers.

But in 1915 the moment called for a new ‘turn’, fuelling the interventionists to the detriment of the institutions, as at once emerged after the government crisis on May 13. Salandra’s unexpected resignation prompted a furious reaction from *The Times*; the editor’s leading article ferociously attacked Giolitti as the real instigator of a crisis intended to keep Italy neutral. It launched a direct appeal to the people against parliament: “At the eleventh hour, Signor Giolitti, who has never set much store by political morality, has flown to the rescue of the discomfited. His power for evil is great”<sup>45</sup>.

Egging on the people against Parliament was unquestionably out of tune with traditional British rhetoric, however acceptable it might seem to Italy: “The Italians,” wrote Trevelyan at the time “though a Liberal, are not a Parliamentary people. To them a general election is a formality, not, as in England, a creative convulsion. [...]. For the Italian elections represented the indifference, the caution, the local and material interests of the race, not their soul, or their higher conception of themselves as Italia. [...] The Italians are not a great parliamentary nation, but they are a great democratic

44. *The Choice of Italy*, in *The Times* Mar 13, 1915.

45. *The Valley of Decision*, in *The Times*, 15 May, 1915.

nation. And in times of political crisis like 1860 and 1915 the people were endowed with remarkable sense and vigour. [...]"<sup>46</sup>

"The people of Italy, who last week revolted with clairvoyant fury against the treasonous intrigues that sought to turn the feet of the nation from the path of moral greatness, instinctively recognize that the hour of destiny has struck, and that they cannot be deaf to the call which summons them to put forth their might on behalf of European liberty. Yet it is not for Europe alone that Italy will fight. She fights for herself [...]. She fights to escape from the subtle thralldom of the Germanism, which had begun to enslave and to benumb her noblest faculties. She fights to complete what the Risorgimento began. [...] the spirit of Garibaldi, of Mazzini, and of Cavour is abroad in the land. It will guide her to freedom, to her second emancipation from the Teutonic yoke. It will restore her faith in the principle of nationality, to which she owes her national existence [...]. It will lead her into closer communion with the liberal nations of the earth, and will vindicate her right to rank with them as a saviour of civilization [...]. The British nation, which watched with sympathy the birth of New Italy, which gave asylum to her persecuted sons [...], and has never lost faith in the sterling virtues of the Italian race, welcomes Italy as its sister in arms."<sup>47</sup>

After Italy entered the war, the English press carried views on the momentous symbolic meaning of that act. Romolo Murri in the *Contemporary Review* spoke of the radical change brought about by the war: for Italy it was a turning point revealing her new role in the world, with Britain taking the place of Germany as the international reference point. It was in fact the United Kingdom rather than France and Russia that was the "special" alliance characterising this turn. "Sweeping away the Giolitti system, Italy has taken her place among the civilised and civilising nations of Europe". She emerged from the crisis rejuvenated because the fault lay within the country. From an operative point of view, therefore, Italy should not stop at making "her" war on Austria, but should commit herself to a battle against Germanic imperialism, thus placing herself at the service of British power: "we may give England time to win", our victory would not be certain without the victory of Great Britain. "The world of liberty and justice, which

46. G. M. TREVELYAN, *Scenes from Italy's War*, London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1919, pp. 2-17. Cf. also ALDO BERSELLI, *L'Italia dall'età giolittiana all'avvento del fascismo*, Bologna, Patron, 1970.

47. *The sword of Italy*, in *The Times* cit.

'shall come from the sea,' that sea which the powerful fleets of England are guarding while the Continent is in a terrible convulsion of war"<sup>48</sup>. In summer the subject of liberating Italy from the German yoke in all sectors, from the commercial to the cultural, bulked large in the Anglo-Saxon press, together with the special relationship with Great Britain and the reasons for Italy's detachment from the Triple Alliance<sup>49</sup>.

It was that "betrayal" of the Triple Alliance which spread the image of an Italy at war solely for reasons of opportunism, or so it seemed to the American press. "With Italy," declared the ex-Mayor of New York, McClellan, "war is business only". Typically the American newspapers enjoyed greater freedom to express thoughts that were often shared by the English though they were forced to be more diplomatic. In rejecting the charge, the Italians claimed that intervention in the war was not the result of calculation but a movement of popular indignation in defence of the principle of nationality and of freedom<sup>50</sup>. At the end of 1915, however, the British press was already muttering in discontent at the limited scope of Italian war operations and her failure to declare war on Germany. This last point they found incomprehensible even from the restricted Italian outlook. Italy, they said in so many words, was different from the other allies. She had one enemy: Austria. And so the traditional incomprehensions were aired once more: in Italy this was a war wanted by the population, not by governments, if it were true that Salandra himself had tried to avoid going to war; furthermore, Italy's appetite was less than proportional to her military results in the field. In the *Contemporary Review* it was again pointed out that the country hesitated to "co-operate with her friends", preferring to carry on a "lateral war", only on the Isonzo, in the Carso and in Albania, but not in the Balkans in spite of having objectives there too. Overall, therefore, "relations towards the Entente [are] casual and unsatisfactory" but it was hoped they would change, especially on the sensitive topic of non-declaration of war on Germany. The attitude towards Berlin was incomprehensible and "one seeks in vain for arguments by which it

48. ROMOLO MURRI, *Italy and England*, in *The Contemporary Review*, July 1, 1915, pp. 545-554, *passim*.

49. Cf. E. J. DILLON, *Italy's New Birth*, in *The Fortnightly Review*, July 1, 1915, pp. 1-15; An Italian, *Italy and European Conflict*, in *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1 1915, pp. 60-77.

50. *The Spirit of Italy*, in *Outlook*, September 22 1915, p. 168; HORATIO F. BROWN, *The Italian People and the War*, in *The Times*, June 17 1915, p. 7.



can be defended”<sup>51</sup>. There was no lack of support for Italy playing “her part in the operations in a thoroughly well-considered and serious manner” and forcing Austria onto the defensive<sup>52</sup>. Again, it “ought never to be forgotten” – said the odd voice here and there – that Italy entered the war at the worst time for the Entente, when the “fortunes of the Allies were at a particularly critical point.”<sup>53</sup>

The illusion of a lightning war was by then a thing of the past. It was the time of monotonous routine military operations, exasperating to the impatient. Italy, wrote the correspondent from the *Illustrated London News*, had the best mountain troops in the world, yet they were not enough against nature’s implacable hostility<sup>54</sup>. The more expert commentators recalled that in themselves the Alpine frontiers (drawn up in 1866 by the Austrians with a realistic view to some future attack on their own part)<sup>55</sup> and the unfavourable strategic conditions besetting Cadorna’s army rendered Italian commitment difficult and justified their unwillingness to tackle smaller fronts. “To the average Britisher one of the most difficult questions to-day is to arrive to a proper understanding of the attitude of Italy towards the war and of the highly important role which is being played by her to-day.”<sup>56</sup> For this reason there was a general feeling of distrust, such that the new premier, Paolo Boselli<sup>57</sup>, blamed the British tendency to “indulge in hasty judgements based on an imperfect comprehension of the facts” – this in reference to English commentators and intellectuals who supported Slav interests and belittled the role of Italy with a view to future peace agreements. As of 1916, in fact, a rift sprang up in the British press between those who defended the Italians’ view and those who wanted a

51. E.J. DILLON, *Italy and the Triple Entente*, in *The Contemporary Review*, January 1, 1916, pp. 18-34, *passim*.

52. *Italy’s share in the war*, in *The Review of Reviews*, April 1916, p. 334.

53. MARY A. WARD, *England and Italy*, in *The Living Age*, September 15, 1917. This is a speech delivered on July 9 1917 at the First Annual Meeting of the British-Italian League.

54. Cf. JULIUS M. PRICE, *What Italy is doing*, in *The English Review*, April 1916.

55. *The part of Italy*, in *The Times*, May 23 1916.

56. H. CHARLES WOODS, *Italy in the War*, in *The Review of Reviews*, May 1916, p. 419.

57. The fall of the Salandra government was interpreted solely in the light of lack of parliamentary support for the Prime Minister, thus ruling out any doubt on popular support for the war (*A new Government in Italy*, in *The Times*, June 14, 1916; *The Italian National Government*, in *The Times*, June 20, 1916).

peace that would favour the birth of the Yugoslav nation<sup>58</sup>. Between spring and summer, however, the papers commented on the ups and downs of the Italian front and, when the Italian troops entered Gorizia in August, *The Times* wrote emphatically that the regeneration of military power in Italy fills their hearts with joy<sup>59</sup>. Very soberly, joy and satisfaction were expressed a few days later in *The Times* at the announcement of Italy's declaration of war on Germany<sup>60</sup>. The picture of a new Italy was given a good deal of space in the press, in spite of the prejudiced view that southern peoples were capable of undertaking initiatives but not of consolidating them; yet this time the Italians seemed to know how to keep the positions they had won. The image of a new Italy was being conveyed, a modern country rather than an open-air museum: "To the English or French visitor Italy may still represent the home of artistic treasures belonging to past ages; to the Italian himself Italy represents a new country with tremendous present and future possibilities"<sup>61</sup>. According to the British press, Sonnino was the real political soul of the country, the reference point of the government<sup>62</sup> and considered the "most far-seeing statesman that Italy has had since Cavour"<sup>63</sup>.

Doubts regarding Italy's military role continued to beset the allies, however, although the British press did not magnify them. Although the disastrous retreat from Caporetto in October 1917 produced fears and disorientation in English political circles, the newspapers chose to put out a reassuring message, evidently in anti-panic mode. "Our request to the Italian people is to resist, for help will surely arrive". A message directed above all to the people of northern Italy: "We trust that the civil population of Northern Italy will continue meanwhile to preserve their composure, and will endeavour to realize that France and Great Britain are doing everything possible to them."<sup>64</sup>. Caporetto was viewed by the English papers, at this stage effectively represented by *The Times*, as a highly dangerous moment yet heralding a change in the mentality of the Italians

58. Cf. *Our friend and ally Italy*, in *The Saturday Review*, December 9, 1916, pp. 550-551.

59. Cf. *The Campaign of Italy. A Great Achievement*, in *The Times*, August 19, 1916.

60. Cf. *Italy at war with Germany*, in *The Times*, August 28, 1916.

61. *Italy*, in *The Spectator*, September 23 1916; *Italy as Pioneer*, in *The Review of Reviews*, July 1915.

62. *Italy's Silent Minister*, in *The Review of Reviews*, January 1916 that republished an article by Dillon appearing in the *Contemporary Review* at the end of 1915.

63. *An Italian, Italy and the European Conflict*, in *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1, 1915.

64. *The Position of Italy*, in *The Times*, November 17, 1917.

with not only a change in the governing, political and military elite, but above all a new patriotic, anti-German mentality issuing from the north<sup>65</sup> and a different approach to the war, at last according it an international character that Italy had previously rejected<sup>66</sup>. Although some voices, one being that of the South African General Ian Smuts, belittled the strategic impact of the collapse of the Italian front<sup>67</sup>, the prevalent idea was that “an extended invasion of Italy at this juncture would affect the whole Allied cause”<sup>68</sup>. All in all, it could not be ignored that “the invasion of Italy is for the time being a serious blow at the whole Allied cause”<sup>69</sup> since “her fate is linked indissolubly with our own. The Allies stand together”<sup>70</sup>. Support also meant expressing confidence in Italian military capabilities, as did the representatives of the British Allied Parliaments Committee; almost as if to gainsay the rumours put about by certain circles of the High Command on the moral untrustworthiness of the Italian infantry, the Committee wrote to the editor of *The Times* to declare that the recent defeats had not shaken faith in the Italian soldiers. Germany would not succeed in her attempt to break the morale of the Italian people. Italy entered the war in a dark hour for the British people so in good times and bad she must know that they are with her<sup>71</sup>. Clearly the defeat and the military divisions sent to support the Italian army implied a more active role for the Allies in managing the war in Italy. The creation of an Allied War Council in early November, as decided after the Rapallo Conference among the Entente powers, was in fact the signal for a modicum of compulsory participation in army leadership which ended in the removal of High Command chief, Major Luigi Cadorna, to be replaced by Armando Diaz. This move was

65. Cf. *A new “Risorgimento”*, in *The Times*, November 14, 1917.

66. Towards the end of the war, the poet Sem Benelli also dwelt on this point as reported in *The Times*: “Before the retreat, when she was winning, Italy did not understand the great stake at issue [...]. The first impression of the arrival of British troops was one of bitterness that Italy could not defend herself. The second impression was that it was not Italy’s war alone, but an international war, and the unity of the Allies was then understood” (*Warfare and War Poets*, in *The Times*, September 12, 1918).

67. The general drastically declared that “The war was not decided in Serbia or in Rumania, nor will it be decided in Italy” (*General Smuts on Italy*, in *The Times*, October 30, 1917).

68. *The German Blow at Italy*, in *The Times*, October 27, 1917.

69. *The Situation in Italy*, in *The Times*, November 13, 1917.

70. *The Invasion of Italy*, in *The Times*, October 29, 1917.

71. Cf. *Witness from Italy*, in *The Times*, November 6, 1917.

presented in the English press as a changing of the guard to make room for younger military leaders to replace Cadorna, who was “promoted” to Italian representative on the Allied Council<sup>72</sup>.

With the front stabilised and the danger of another Austro-German push averted, the interest of the British press moved swiftly on to the delicate problem of relations between Italy and the then forming Yugoslav nation. Sensing a possible end to the conflict, in the summer of 1918 the English papers embarked on a sort of moral suasion campaign designed to curb future contrasts with the peoples of the Balkan area, and with an eye also on the new American allies, who were sensitive to the claims of the Slavs. From September 20<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> London fêted its Italian ally with a series of events widely reported in the press. In particular, on September 20<sup>th</sup>, anniversary of the taking of Rome, the Italian flag flew alongside the Union Jack on the Tower of Westminster. The comparison between the Italian liberal Risorgimento and the ‘Blood and Iron’ with which Bismarck had forged Germany afforded an opportunity to praise the Italian government’s forthright statement that “the movement of the Yugo-slav peoples towards independence and towards their constitution into a free State corresponds to the principles for which the Entente is fighting and to the aims of a just and lasting peace”<sup>73</sup>. Five days later, Great Britain proclaimed Italy’s Day; this was celebrated with a series of public events, a Requiem Mass for the fallen in Westminster Cathedral, a banquet at the Savoy Hotel where the English were represented by the Crown and the government and Italy by the Princes Borghese and Colonna as well as by Senator Marconi, and ending with a concert by the Band of the Carabinieri in the Albert Hall<sup>74</sup>. During the celebrations, Marconi confirmed Italian support for a free Yugoslav state, but not for a state controlled by Austria. Balfour underlined the importance of Italy recognising Yugoslavia not just for the support given by the Americans to this cause, but also because such reciprocity would reduce the weight of Austria in the region<sup>75</sup>. The end of the war brought with it some incomprehension as to the role actually played in the final

72. Cf. *Italy’s New Chiefs*, in *The Times*, November 10, 1917.

73. *Venti Settembre*, in *The Times*, September 20, 1918.

74. Cf. *Honour to Italy*, in *The Times*, September 25, 1918 and *Italy’s Day*, in *The Times*, September 25, 1918.

75. “*Del Primato degli Italiani*”, in *The Times*, September 26, 1918. See also *Valenciennes and Fiume*, in *The Times*, October 26, 1918.

offensive by the British troops present in Italy. Certain circles within His Majesty's army saw fit to magnify<sup>76</sup> such accounts, but were opposed by the Rome correspondent of *The Times* who recognised how these versions stemmed from "loss of the sense of proportion" since the merit was mainly that of the Italians<sup>77</sup>. By way of symbolising the 52-month journey that had seen Italy at the centre of British concerns, on November 5 *The Times* published the translation of Armando Diaz's Victory Bulletin under the headline 'Italy's Great Victory': "those left of that which was one of the most powerful armies in the world are in disorder and without hope, returning along the valleys from which they descended with haughty assurance"<sup>78</sup>.

All in all, considering that during the war period a large part of the European press was subject to severe censorship and information control by political and military authorities, the British papers retained an unusual freedom of expression. Together with highly detailed descriptions of events in progress, *The Times* and *The Guardian* particularly, with their correspondents in Rome, were able at times to circulate different opinions and encouraged authoritative readers to take part in the debate on Italy's role, though their views varied on certain topics.

All in all, these five years in the British press portray an Italy both cautious and ambitious, on which the United Kingdom, without fear of inconsistency, expended the symbolic vocabulary of liberal constitutionalism. Such tones seemed a necessary harbinger of modernity and civilization, and above all an antidote to the siren song of wild nationalist ambitions to territorial expansion. This cultural "safeguard" was designed to redress the meaning of nationality, which would have its day of crisis when peace negotiations opened at Versailles.

76. Cf. *British Forces in Italy*, in *The Times*, October 23, 1918.

77. Cf. *Italy's Effort*, in *The Times*, November 5, 1918.

78. *Italy's Great Victory*, in *The Times*, November 5, 1918.

## Italy in the Great War as seen from Austria

After May 23 1915 Italy was no longer neutral; no longer was she outside the gates of the Great War, she was within. The declaration of war on Austria-Hungary came after ten months' struggle among the political parties and after a crescendo in the publicity campaign from the interventionists. The Hapsburg monarchy replied with the imperial manifesto that same May 23, clearly laid down some time before<sup>1</sup>. It contained the famous words on the "felony of which there is no equal in history", and continued: "After more than thirty years of alliance, during which she had been able to increase her territorial possessions and achieve un hoped for prosperity, Italy abandoned Us in the hour of danger and passed with flags flying to the side of Our enemies. We did not threaten Italy; we did not dim her prestige, we did not touch her honour and her interests." It continues mentioning the wars of the Risorgimento: "The new, perfidious enemy in the south is no unknown adversary to her [the Austro-Hungarian Army]: the great memories of Novara, Mortara, Custoza, Lissa, which make up the glory of My youth, the spirits of Radetzky and of the archduke Albrecht and of Tegetthoff, [...] pledge to Me that we shall victoriously defend the frontiers of the Monarchy to the south as well."<sup>2</sup>

In recalling the Risorgimento wars, the imperial manifesto followed the ideological vein of hereditary enmity. This concept was then adopted both to define the relations between Italy and Austria and those between France and Germany, and among other countries and peoples. In fact, enmity between States does not exist, unless in certain periods as a psychological factor. Enmity, viewed at close quarters, always comes down to

1. *Wiener Zeitung, Extra-Ausgabe*, n. 118, May 23 1915, p. 1.

2. Italian translation on the internet site: <http://www.lagrandeguerra.net/ggschieramento.html> (last consulted: 26 aprile 2016).

prejudices and to the interests of various social groups. With the words placed in the Emperor's mouth, the government undoubtedly played on the emotions of most of the political spectrum. The newspapers over the next few days were full of reproaches and offensive words. One Tirolean paper had prepared an article under the headline "The "loyalty" of Italy" – the word "loyalty" in inverted commas – on the various episodes of broken faith in the past, starting right back in the fifteenth century<sup>3</sup>. This is not the place to analyse who was right, Italy or the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the logic of the time, and in that of those in power, both were right: it was the logic of expansionism, of nationalism, of war as the continuation of politics by other means.

The Austrian attitude towards Italy in the following months and years remained solid, fuelled again and again by war propaganda. Not the newspapers alone, but also other means of communication prove this to a great extent, like the propaganda post-cards<sup>4</sup> or the propaganda cinema, the film *Heldenkampf in Schnee und Eis* for example that glorified the White War in the Dolomites<sup>5</sup>. Adam Wandruszka wrote that "for the Austrians the war against their neighbour to the south of the Alps was the only war they really felt."<sup>6</sup> The most terrible picture of contempt and hatred produced under the shadow of this attitude is the infamous photograph of the hanged Cesare Battisti with the grinning face of the hangman<sup>7</sup>.

Not the whole of the political spectrum in Austria, however, was of the same mind. I am not thinking only of the great man of letters Karl Kraus who theorised the monstrosity of war through that photograph of the dead Battisti in his tragedy *Gli ultimi giorni dell'umanità*<sup>8</sup>. It is in general

3. *Der Tiroler*, n. 117, 24 May 1915, p. 3.

4. HANS WEIGEL, WALTER LUKAN, MAX. D. PEYFUSS, *Jeder Schuss ein Russ, jeder Stoss ein Franzos. Literarische und graphische Kriegspropaganda in Deutschland und Österreich 1914-1918*, Vienna, 1983.

5. Cf. the internet site: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heldenkampf\\_in\\_Schnee\\_und\\_Eis](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heldenkampf_in_Schnee_und_Eis) (last consulted: April 26 2016).

6. SILVIO FURLANI, ADAM WANDRUSKA, *Austria e Italia. Storia a due voci*, Second edition, ed. by Maddalena Guiotto e Stefan Malfèr, Bologna, 2002, p. 172.

7. CLAUS GATTERER, *Impiccate il traditore. Cesare Battisti, a novant'anni dalla morte*, Bolzano, Praxis 3, 2006.

8. KARL KRAUS, *Gli ultimi giorni dell'umanità. Tragedia in cinque atti con prelude ed epilogo*. Italian edition ed. by Ernesto Braun and Mario Carpitella, with an essay by Roberto Calasso, Milan, Adelphi, 2007.



a mistake to speak of countries as if there were living beings that act in a certain way. It was neither Italy nor Austria-Hungary to declare war, but their governments in representation of certain social classes and orders of interest. In both countries there were opposition groups who had a totally different outlook on events from their governments' view.

Speaking of Italy in the Great War as seen from Austria, we need to remember that there were two interpretative and opposing threads<sup>9</sup>. The first was that so far mentioned, the expansionist or imperialist and nationalist type, which explained history through concepts of great or average power, expansion, strength, the imagined right of single nations (not to be mistaken for international law). This thread in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries had taken possession of the biological and Darwinian concept then in vogue. Poor Darwin, known as a religious man and a researcher first of all, was exploited and abused in order to explain and defend the policy of strength. Peoples were seen as characters or genera in biological development. The strongest survive<sup>10</sup>.

Looking through the Austrian newspapers around May 23 1915, there is a great difference to be found between the *Neue Freie Presse* or a conservative or official paper, or else the paper of the workers' movement, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* or another socialist paper. For example, we read the large headline in the democratic socialists' gazette for Styria and Carinthia *Arbeiterwille* (the Workers' Will) of May 21 1915: "The war session of the Italian Chamber – Only the Socialists for peace". There follows a piece of news from the Agenzia Stefani of May 20 on the session: "D'Annunzio enters the auditorium, great applause. *Only the Socialists do not take part*. Salandra's declaration, tumultuous shouts of 'Viva l'Italia' and 'Viva the war', *only the Socialists remain seated in silence*."<sup>11</sup> The editorial deplors

9. I leave aside the well-known and much-debated question of nationalities (*Nationalitätenproblem*). The representatives of the different nationalities followed one of the two types until, towards the end of the war, the centrifugal policy arose that led to the dissolution of the monarchy. Cf. ANGELO ARA, *Il tramonto della monarchia asburgica*, in ID., *Fra nazione e impero. Trieste, gli Asburgo, la Mitteleuropa*, Milan, Garzanti, 2009, pp. 145-167.

10. Examples of biological discourse STEFAN MALFÈR, *Die Rede vom Anderen. Italien und Österreich im politischen Diskurs nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, in FLAVIO ANDREIS, GUALTIERO BOAGLIO, MICHAEL METZELTIN, *Testualità e Mito. Il discorso politico italiano dall'ottocento ad oggi*, Vienna, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 2000, pp. 135-152.

11. The two sentences in italic are in bold type in the newspaper.

that the war minister and war supporters allegedly used violent means to suppress the manifestations for peace by the Italian socialists<sup>12</sup>.

The *Arbeiter-Zeitung* of May 23 expresses the sadness and depression caused by the declaration of war on the part of Italy which “until today was the single great power not to be dragged into the turmoil of war, whose mission would have been to prepare peace”. In the editorial under the heading “To the Socialists of Italy”, it movingly addresses its companions in a word of farewell. It will not be forgotten, continues the editorial, what the Italian Socialists did before the war broke out. The article thus terminates: “Before the first shot rings out, may our salute sound once more to the south of the Alps: Long live the great future peace of peoples! Long live international Socialism!” Two days later the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* analyses the text of the Italian declaration of war. It finds it to be full of ambiguities. It seems to speak of present and future threats, therefore the war declared would appear defensive. At the same time it seems to speak of national aspirations, therefore the war was offensive. The article finishes thus: “An unprecedented crime will require huge new bloodshed, the responsibility for which lies fully with the potentates and war-mongers”. Which means not with Italy and the Italians, but with those who sought the war!

This attitude also remained valid and did not change during the war, although it had perforce to take a back seat, almost going underground. It was not only a question of fellow-feeling between parties, but also a rooted attitude on strong, far-sighted ideas. It was no chance that in the very next year, 1916, a book came from the pen of the Austrian historian and member of the social-democrat party Ludo Moritz Hartmann, entitled *Cento anni di storia italiana 1815-1915. Le basi dell'Italia moderna*<sup>13</sup>. The book brought together a collection of articles from the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* starting before entry into war, in which Hartmann showed understanding for the Risorgimento movement. A historian of our own time, Giovanni Schininà, assesses the book as follows: “Hartmann in his text gave a historical reconstruction of the Risorgimento process, assessing on the one hand the modernising elements and progress but also, on the other, the defects

12. *Arbeiterwille*, n. 140, 21 May 1915, p. 1.

13. LUDO MORITZ HARTMANN, *100 Jahre italienischer Geschichte (1815-1915). (Die Grundlagen des modernen Italien)*, Munich, 1916.

and limitations. Thus he foreshadowed, however summarily, a number of the crucial issues of successive interpretations [...].”<sup>14</sup>

During the war years two ways of viewing Italy from Austria remained unchanged. The first way was the official one, supported by propaganda, repeated in the papers, believed by many. The other way was less strong, less publicised. In the second half of 1918 things began to precipitate. The Austro-Hungarian Empire entered its final stage. The Czechs, the southern Slavs, the Hungarians left their common home, and on November 12 the Austro-German republic was proclaimed. Before and after that date, Austria was two completely different things, a great multi-national empire before, a small national state afterwards. Post-war needs – hunger, a crisis in the economy and many other problems – forced the new-born republic to cooperate with Italy, seated at the table of the victors. There was also, however, a change of prospect. The fall of the old empire and the new political constellation had brought to power the social-democratic party, which formed a coalition government with the Christian-socialists from 1918 to 1920. With that, the social-democrats’ attitude towards Italy, an almost underground thread until that moment, for a brief period became the official Austrian line. In April 1920 the Austrian Chancellor, Karl Renner, visited the President of the Council of Ministers, Saverio Nitti, in Rome<sup>15</sup>. In this regard, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* made the following comment, fully reflecting the second interpretative line of Austria towards Italy:

“Ancient debts exist between Italy and us. The Empire of the Hapsburgs was for centuries Italy’s enemy and oppressor. Only through revolutions and bloody wars against the Hapsburgs were the Italian people able to achieve freedom and unity. Once achieved, the old enmity was not finished. For Italy, Austria remained the enemy of centuries, still in possession of Trento and Trieste. And for the Hapsburgs and their followers, Italy was the kingdom that had destroyed the temporal power of the pope. [...] Only the republic, in a position to refuse any responsibility for the centuries-old guilt of the Hapsburgs [...], to which Garibaldi and Mazzini are

14. GIOVANNI SCHININÀ, *Ludo Moritz Hartmann e l'immagine del Risorgimento nella storiografia austriaca*, in ID., *L'Austria contemporanea tra crisi e trasformazione. Quattro saggi di storia e storiografia*, Rome, Artemide, 2013, p. 96.

15. STEFAN MALFÈR, *Wien und Rom nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Österreichisch-italienische Beziehungen 1919-1923*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs 66, Vienna/Graz/Cologne 1978.

closer than Radetzky and the Hapsburg Albrecht, a republic that decisively broke the traditional anti-Italian policy of the blacks [the clergy] and the yellow-blacks [the monarchists] can forge the links of friendship”<sup>16</sup>.

Unfortunately, a few months later the social-democrats left the government and became an opposition party for the whole of the so-called first Austrian republic. However, even more harmful was the peace treaty of St. Germain which established the frontier at the Brenner Pass and with the southern Tyrol gave Italy a territory inhabited by a purely German population. The nationalist and Fascist policy of Italy towards minorities was utterly disastrous. If the loss of the German-speaking part of the southern Tyrol, from the Brenner Pass to Salorno, was a trauma for the Austrians, the growing Italianisation policy towards minorities during the Fascist period was felt to be an injustice and an on-going violation of common sense. Thus arose the Alto Adige or South Tyrol issue. It was the direct consequence of Italy's entry into war and the nationalists' war objectives<sup>17</sup>.

In regard to this problem also, however, it would be a mistake to speak of Italy as a uniform country. Not only had the Italian socialists been against entering the war in 1915, they also voted in 1920 against the annexation of the new provinces of Trentino, Alto Adige and Venezia Giulia. In the debate in the Chamber of Deputies on August 9 1920 on the draft law *Approval of the Peace Treaty of San Germano and annexation to the Kingdom of the territories attributed to Italy*, the deputy Claudio Treves expressed the dissent of the socialists to the treaty in general, and to annexation in particular:

“The gift, for which we should bow to the treaty, is essentially the solution of the Trentino question, and above all the constitution of a strategic line on the German Tyrol, which, according to the Government, is destined to ensure us, with the

16. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, n. 103, April 14 1920, p. 1; STEFAN MALFÈR, *Immagini dell'altro: austriaci e italiani in Risorgimento*, a cura di Alberto Mario Banti - Paul Ginsborg, Storia d'Italia, Annali 22, Turin, Einaudi, 2007, pp. 855-856.

17. UMBERTO CORSINI, RUDOLF LILL, *Alto Adige 1918-1946*, Bolzano, Provincia, Assessorati alla pubblica istruzione e cultura in lingua italiana tedesca e ladina, 1988; UMBERTO CORSINI, *Problemi di un territorio di confine. Trentino e Alto Adige dalla sovranità austriaca all'accordo De-gasper-Gruber*, Trento, Comune di Trento, 1994.

oppression of explicitly German elements, military security. Now, we refuse the gift [...]. We call for the self-determination of the peoples [...].”<sup>18</sup>

Treves set the following agenda: “The Chamber [...] states that every decision regarding the annexations must be preceded by the free consultation of the populations”<sup>19</sup>. In the opinion of Filippo Turati, another socialist deputy, the occupation of a foreign country did not correspond to the principles of freedom and nationality. When it came to the vote, 170 deputies approved the treaty and the annexations, the forty-eight socialist deputies voted against them<sup>20</sup>. The Austrian socialists took note of their attitude<sup>21</sup>.

We will leave aside the years of dictatorships and false friendships among the various *duci*. The fact that the Brenner frontier was confirmed after the Second World War led to the continuation of feelings of hereditary enmity in Austria towards Italy. For the Austrians it was almost impossible to remember Italy in the Great War without coming back to the South Tyrol question. In spite of the De Gaspari-Gruber Agreement of September 5 1946, the issue proved unresolved<sup>22</sup>. Things changed only very, very slowly, and eventually in the late Sixties and the Seventies a solution to the Southern Tyrol question was found<sup>23</sup>. It was not by chance that the decisive attempt to resolve the Alto Adige noose was broken by two politicians from the socialist area, Bruno Kreisky and Giuseppe Saragat<sup>24</sup>.

Another person from the left, the journalist and historian Claus Gatterer, in his 1972 book entitled *Erbfeindschaft Italien – Österreich* eventually opened the critical debate on the concept of hereditary enmity between

18. *Atti parlamentari. Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura XXV, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 2<sup>nd</sup> round of voting, August 9 1920*, p. 5296.

19. *Ivi*, p. 5306.

20. *Ivi*, p. 5319.

21. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, n. 223, 14 August 1920, p. 4.

22. Cfr. per esempio MARIO CASTELLI S.J., *La questione altoatesina*, Milano, Centro Studi sociali, 1961; GIUSEPPE CAPROTTI, *Alto Adige o Südtirol? La questione altoatesina o sudtirolese dal 1945 al 1948 e i suoi sviluppi: studio degli archivi diplomatici francesi*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1988.

23. The so-called *packet* with an *operative calendar* of 1969 which led to the modified and broadened *Statute of autonomy* for the Trentino-Alto Adige Region of 1972, ANTONY EVELYN ALCOCK, *Geschichte der Südtirolfrage. Südtirol seit dem Paket 1970-1980*, Vienna, 1982; PIERO AGOSTINI, GIANCARLO ANSALONI, MAURIZIO FERRANDI, *Alto Adige. Ottant'anni di storia. Cronologia essenziale dall'annessione all'Italia al dibattito sull'Euregio*, Bolzano, Praxis 3, 1995.

24. *Ivi*, pp. 26-27.

Italy and Austria<sup>25</sup>. Gatterer's reasons and instruments to promote the discourse were comprehension of the adversary, recognition of one's own mistakes, clearing up prejudices, and the task of sincere reflection on one's own past<sup>26</sup>. Other Austrian historians joined the re-assessment process, often in direct discourse with Italian historians and politicians. I recall the names of Adam Wandruszka, Leo Valiani, Silvio Furlani, Angelo Ara, Brigitte Mazohl, Marco Meriggi, Stefan Malfer, Maddalena Guiotto. In a meeting in Pavia Maddalena Guiotto correctly spoke of "a post-war generation between Austria and Italy and their contribution towards overcoming reciprocal prejudices"<sup>27</sup>.

An addition to this historiographical and human effort of the late years of the last century came with a new, in-depth overview in general on the First World War. In Italian historiography the Great War was not only the last, victorious war of the Risorgimento, in Austrian historiography not only the traumatic cause of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. Indeed, what was seen and is seen today in the years from 1914 to 1918 was first of all a massacre, the collapse of the system of international peace and indirectly the reason for another massacre even greater and more tragic, the Second World War. Detailed research on the responsibilities for the war, new questions such as the repercussions on the civilian population, military justice, refugees, women in war and so on became and are still today, in these very centenary years, at the heart of common interest<sup>28</sup>.

The most visible signs of change, both in historiography and in public consciousness, are various commemorative actions unimaginable before. I am thinking of the *Paths of Peace* on the Dolomite front, begun by

25. CLAUD GATTERER, *Erbfeindschaft Italien – Österreich*, Vienna/Munich/Zurich, 1972; Italian translation: ID., *"Italiani maledetti, maledetti austriaci". L'inimicizia ereditaria*, Bolzano, Praxis 3, 1986.

26. RENATE LUNZER, "Una macchiavellica spartizione del lavoro?" *Il Risorgimento italiano visto dallo storico Claus Gatterer, in 150 anni dall'Unità d'Italia. Rileggere il Risorgimento tra storia e cultura*, edited by Fulvio Salimbeni, Udine, Forum, 2012, pp. 91-108.

27. MADDALENA GUIOTTO, *Una generazione postbellica tra Austria e Italia e il loro contributo al superamento dei pregiudizi reciproci*, in *Felix Austria Italia infelix? Tre secoli di relazioni culturali italo-austriache*, edited by Nicoletta Dacrema, Rome, Aracne, 2004, pp. 149-161.

28. Cf., for Austria, the paper by STEFAN WEDRAC in this book. It is impossible to cite the vast historiographical production on the Great War. For Austria see the book *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg. Der Kampf um die Neuordnung Mitteleuropas*, Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, vol. XI, edited by Helmut Rumpler, Vienna, 2016.

Walther Schaumann in the 1980s<sup>29</sup>, or the new production of exhibitions and war museums. The museum of military history in Vienna has renewed its gallery on the Great War<sup>30</sup>. In the *Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra* in Rovereto, the third war of the Risorgimento is no longer mentioned, but the reasons are illustrated for calling “the 1914-1918 conflict the ‘Great War’: the industrial effort, mobilisation of millions of men and women, the development of aviation and the new means of communication, the revolution in propaganda, the violence on civilians, the invention of terrible new weapons”<sup>31</sup>.

To summarise briefly, I wish to return to the beginning of my paper. The Austrian interpretative line referring to the idea of great power saw in Italy the enemy and traitor that had brought about the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. For a long time primary and dominant, this thread was loosened, or rather went underground (since ideas do not completely disappear). The other interpretative line, expressed mainly by the left, has become over the years the primary thread. Starting out not from the state or from the nation, but from the social classes and the individuals, this deplored the outbreak of the war. The enemy was not the other people, but the injustice of the power systems. With regard to the disapproval of Italy’s nationalist, fascist policy towards the German-speaking minority in Alto Adige in the Twenties and Thirties there was no difference between the two interpretative threads in Austria. It was a problem, although rooted in the Great War and its outcome, that concerned the post-war period. *Italy in the Great War as seen from Austria*. With a few dry words the great headline of the social-democrat newspaper *Arbeiterwille* cited above could be modified<sup>32</sup>: Italy again goes to war against us, at least the socialists voted for peace.

29. Cfr. il sito internet: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedenswege> (last consulted: April 26 2016).

30. Cfr. il sito internet: <http://www.hgm.at/> (last consulted: April 26 2016).

31. Cfr. il sito internet: (<http://www.museodellaguerra.it/visita/museo/>) (last consulted: April 26 2016).

32. See note 12.





## Italy in the Great War as seen from Hungary

It is a fairly well-known historical fact that at the outbreak of the Great War Italy was bound to Austria-Hungary and Germany by the Triple Alliance: a defensive military pact signed in 1882 and renewed time by time, counterpoising the Anglo-French-Russian alliance system of the Entente. A month after the shooting at Sarajevo of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Countess Sofia Chotek, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared war; and Italy – as we know – stayed out of the conflict, declaring its neutrality. As time passed, the questions to be answered by the government of the Reign of Italy were the following: who would win this war? How long would this war last? Who would offer more, should Italy decide to take the part of one side or the other? By how much would Italy's military intervention bring forward the end of the war? And lastly, what would happen to the country, should it remain neutral<sup>1</sup>?

On the Italian commemorative site of the centenary of the First World War<sup>2</sup>, a young Italian, Davide Sartori, no historian but an impassioned enthusiast of history, uses expressive words to tell us of the Italian political attitude of the time; or better, words “up-dated” to our day:

“We Italians had kept our feet in two different shoes; now we have to decide which fits better. We tried, we went to the Austrians and to the Germans with a good deal of cheek and an excellent idea in mind: ‘Excuse us, would you hand over the Trentino area, Trieste and total supremacy in the Adriatic in exchange for our neutrality?’ That didn’t work. At this point, everything appears easier for

1. MARIO SILVESTRI, *Isonzo 1917*, Milano, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 2007 p. 5.
2. <http://www.centenario1914-1918.it> (consulted on March 15 2016).

us: we choose the Entente. On Monday, April 26 1915 Italy signs the ‘Treaty of London’<sup>3</sup> with the powers of the Triple Entente.”<sup>4</sup>

The situation had now radically changed: “the dance of desire”<sup>5</sup> – as it was referred to many times in Italian newspapers – was finished. Italy declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

If a life-long friend becomes an enemy

In the evening hours of the first day of Pentecost 1915, news spread throughout the Hungarian capital that the Italian ambassador to Vienna, Giuseppe Avarna di Gualtieri, at 3.30p.m. on May 23 had presented himself at the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and delivered the declaration of war to the Dual Monarchy. The next day, May 24 1915, Italy entered the war against Austria-Hungary<sup>6</sup>. Victor Emmanuel II’s proclamation to the royal Italian army and the royal Italian navy rang out victoriously:

“Soldiers on land and sea! The solemn hour of our national demands has sounded. Following the example of my Great Forefather, today I assume the supreme command of the forces on land and sea with certain faith in victory, which your valour, your abnegation, your discipline will bring to us. The enemy you are about to fight is armed and ready, and is worthy of you. With the advantage of the land

3. In exchange for Italy’s entry into war and in the case of the victory of the Entente powers, Italy was to obtain the Trentino area, the South Tyrol, the Trieste area, the Gorizia and Gradisca regions, the Istrian peninsula as far as the Kvarner Gulf and the town of Volosko and the islands of Cres and Lošinj, as well as the Dalmatian islands, with the historical towns of Zadar, Sibenik and Trogir, the town of Vlorë and the island of Sazan, sovereignty over the Dodecanese, recognition of areas of influence in Asia Minor, and the rectification of certain frontiers in Italian Africa. In TARJÁN M. TAMÁS, 1915. *április 26. A londoni titkos szerződés aláírása* [http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldalak/1915\\_aprilis\\_26\\_a\\_londoni\\_titkos\\_szerzodes\\_alairasa/](http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldalak/1915_aprilis_26_a_londoni_titkos_szerzodes_alairasa/) (consulted on June 20 2016) and also <http://www.itinerarigrandeguerra.it/Il-Patto-Di-Londra> (consulted on June 20 2016).

4. <http://www.centenario1914-1918.it/fr/node/21> (consulted on April 20 2016).

5. <http://accaddeoggi.centenario1914-1918.it/accaddeoggi/19150503> (consulted on June 26 2016).

6. BARTÓK BÉLA, *Olaszország ellenünk*, in [http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2015/05/22/olaszorszag\\_ellenunk\\_az\\_olasz\\_haduzenet\\_szovege](http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2015/05/22/olaszorszag_ellenunk_az_olasz_haduzenet_szovege) (consulted on May 15 2016).

and of the expert fieldwork of science, he will oppose tenacious resistance, but your indomitable enthusiasm will unquestionably overcome it. Soldiers! To you the glory of setting the flag of Italy on the sacred boundaries affixed by nature at the borders of our homeland. To you the glory of achieving the work begun with such heroism by our fathers.”<sup>7</sup>

The Italian stance was anything but unexpected, yet – or perhaps for this very reason – it was taken by all, from Franz Joseph I down to the last of the soldiers who had been at war for the past ten months as a “betrayal the like of which is unknown in history”<sup>8</sup>. In effect, the Manifesto of the emperor-king (*An meine Völker! / Népeimhez!*), launched in Vienna to his peoples the day Italy entered the war, proclaimed that:

“Italy abandoned us in the hour of danger and passes with flags flying over to the enemy. We do not threaten Italy; we do not threaten its authority; we do not touch its honour and its interests. We have always faithfully complied with our duties in the alliance; and we have assured it of our protection when it has entered the field. We have done more; when Italy turned covetous eyes towards our frontiers, in order to preserve our relations of alliance and peace we determined upon great and painful sacrifices that particularly touched our paternal heart. But the greed of Italy, believing it could exploit the moment, was not to be silenced. Destiny therefore must change [...] The new, perfidious enemy in the south is no unknown adversary: the great memories of Novara, Mortara, Custoza, Lissa, which make up the glory of my youth, the spirits of Radetzky and of the archduke Albrecht and of Tegetthoff, which with the forces on land and sea live for all eternity, are our guarantee that we shall victoriously defend the frontiers of the Monarchy to the south as well. I salute my victorious troops, prepared and ready, and I place full trust in them and in their leaders. And I place my trust in my people whose unequalled spirit of sacrifice deserves my most profound thanks. I pray the Almighty to bless our flags and to take our cause under His benign protection.”<sup>9</sup>

7. <http://accaddeoggi.centenario1914-1918.it/it/accaddeoggi/19150526> (consulted on February 17 2016).

8. <http://cronologia.leonardo.it/storia/a1915e.htm> (consulted on March 23 2016).

9. *Ivi*.

Meanwhile public opinion in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy waited with bated breath for news of the historical session of the Italian Parliament on May 20. After that fateful decision on the part of Rome, the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Albert Berzeviczy<sup>10</sup>, the greatest expert on the language, culture and history of Italy, wrote in his diary with the utmost distress:

“It is done. Yesterday the Italian Parliament, with scarcely any contrary vote and amidst manifestations of delirious patriotic jubilation, approved the proposals for entry into war on the basis of a government bill; they are nothing but a disgusting web of lies, a monument of cowardly excuses, hypocrisy and ambiguous, irrational words. Whether for us this will mean the extension or the abridgement of the war, the increase of the hardships we shall have to undergo victoriously, or catastrophe, is a question which today cannot be answered. Tisza<sup>11</sup>, ever the optimist, believes that we can courageously take a defensive lead against Italy, and that Romania and Greece will remain stable. Hazai<sup>12</sup>, ever the pessimist, in my presence yesterday gave an interview claiming that our frontier with Italy is not sufficiently guaranteed and that in answer to their 800,000 men we can deploy 30,000 soldiers.”<sup>13</sup>

The news from Rome plunged Berzeviczy into a state of deep depression:

“For me this is a completely personal distress, a disappointment, a moral crisis. I feel as if I had lost a person very close to me, either through death, or – even worse – through a grievous insult from him. As if from now on I had been banned from a home that I frequented day by day to relax, to cheer myself up, to console myself. This experience not only robs me of a future from which I can no longer expect much, but also injects poison into my dearest memories.”<sup>14</sup>

10. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/berzeviczy-di-berzevicze-albert/> (consulted on March 23 2016).

11. Count István Tisza (1861-1918). Twice, from 1903 to 1905 and then from 1913 to 1917, he was president of the Hungarian Council.

12. Baron Samu Hazai (1851-1942), Hungarian Defence Minister from 1910 to 1917.

13. TAMÁS PINTÉR, *Új ellenség a láthatáron*, in [http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2015/05/20/uj\\_ellenseg\\_a\\_lathataron](http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2015/05/20/uj_ellenseg_a_lathataron) (consulted March 15 2016).

14. *Ivi.*

Berzeviczy, a great scholar and lover of Italy, had held important political appointments before the war (as member of parliament, under-secretary of state, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies, Minister of Cult and Public Education) and later, in 1920, he was to be the founder and first president of the Mattia Corvino Society<sup>15</sup>, which, in the name of the centuries-old friendship between Italy and Hungary, was to propose the development of political-cultural relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile the military doctor, Dr. Gyula Kemény, of the IV Battalion of the 37th common regiment of Nagyvárad (today Oradea, Romania), with his troop, at nine o'clock in the morning of May 24 1915, reached Podemlec, (Slovenia): "We land here and immediately proceed forward in unbelievable heat. We learn that Italy has declared war on us. [...] Right from the hill above Prapetno, at a quarter past eleven in the morning of Whit Monday, May 24 1915, we hear the first cannon fire. These are elating moments. We look at each other. The war is back, who will survive it? We actually joke about it and take our leave, as usual."<sup>16</sup> At the same time, on the Russian front the soldier Gergely B. Sárközy noted in his diary: "They say that tomorrow or the day after we leave for Italy, since the Italians have also declared war on us. If this is true, it is a terrible thing. God only knows when the war will end. Perhaps we will never be saved..."<sup>17</sup>

Italy's entry into the war was a psychological shock for the Hungarian intellectuals who "suffered from Italomania"<sup>18</sup>. The writer Miksa Fenyő, the academics József Kaposi and György Király were unable to hide their enormous distress. The greatest poet of the time, Mihály Babits, during those months was already translating Dante's *Divina Commedia*<sup>19</sup>; after his

15. For details on the foundation see STEFANO SANTORO, *L'Italia e l'Europa orientale: diplomazia culturale e propaganda 1918-1943*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2005 p. 98-99.

16. Dr. Kemény Gyula naplója az olasz fronton [http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2012/03/12/dr\\_kemeny\\_gyula\\_naploja\\_1\\_resz](http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2012/03/12/dr_kemeny_gyula_naploja_1_resz) (consulted on March 24 2016).

17. B. Sárközy Gergely visszaemlékezése [http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2011/07/18/b\\_sarkozy\\_gergely\\_visszaemlekezese\\_29\\_resz](http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2011/07/18/b_sarkozy_gergely_visszaemlekezese_29_resz) (consulted on March 23 2016).

18. The expression "Italomania" comes from Babits himself. In 1908 he wrote to his colleague Gyula Juhász that since returning from Italy he had suffered from "Italomania" in 176.o. PÉTER SÁRKÖZY, *Olasz-magyar két jóbarát. A magyar-olasz kulturális kapcsolatok alakulása az I. világháború előtt és után*, in <http://www.hitelfolyoirat.hu/sites/default/files/pdf/19-sarkozy.pdf> (consulted March 22 2016).

19. This translation of Babits' is traditionally held to be the most correct and perfect Hungarian literary translation, even though eight years ago Prof. Ádám Nádasy of the University of Budapest

beloved Italy had sided with the Entente powers in the conflict he wrote: “From the first time we heard it until the very end we did not want to believe it. The wind had arrived by then, the clouds were making it dark, the first warm drops fell onto our faces”<sup>20</sup>. No – we repeated – it is not possible: this is just a cloudlet; empty; in a while it will go away. We know it – we said – beautiful clouds come from there, they are the good-weather cumulus clouds, white, they do not bring the storm. It is a happy, lovely land: from there no rain comes. What a delusion it was – the Italian war!”<sup>21</sup> Babits even accepted the armed struggle with Italy, with his second homeland: “we, we did not want war, maybe we could find the right words to convince Italy, this wayward old child! But he understands only smacks, and he is ready to break his lovely toys”<sup>22</sup>. Many years later, in 1940, Babits received the Sanremo Literary Prize for his above-mentioned translation of Dante.

The Hungarian newspapers that carried anti-Italian propaganda continued to use strong, offensive words on the stance taken by Italy. Zsigmond Szöllösi, a well-known reporter of the historical informative weekly *Vasárnapi Újság* [The Sunday Newspaper], a week after the Italian declaration of war against Austria-Hungary wrote: “The Italian bandit, before going out to steal and kill, devoutly prays the Virgin Mary for aid in its undertaking. This time too they have composed a fantastic oration for their heroic soldiers, who are marching out to stab their ex allies in the back while they are surrounded by enemies. This really is doing things the Italian way. This is their morality. This is their ethic of military action, we believe in all faith, and this will be the outcome. Always the same.”<sup>23</sup> And in the same issue

(ELTE) re-translated Dante’s masterpiece. The very brief biography in Italian of Babits gives further information: his poems were also inspired by his beloved Italy, among which *Recanati*, Zrínyi Velencében [*Zrinyi in Venezia*], Itália [*Italy*], *Pictor Ignotus*, *La canzone della campagna*, *Recitativ* [*Recitative*] in [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mihaly-babits\\_\(Enciclopedia\\_Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mihaly-babits_(Enciclopedia_Italiana)/) (consulted on March 20 2016).

20. Sárközy Péter: *Olasz-magyar két jóbarát. A magyar-olasz kulturális kapcsolatok alakulása az I. világháború előtt és után*. in <http://www.hitelfolyoirat.hu/sites/default/files/pdf/19-sarkozy.pdf> (consulted on March 22 2016), p. 177.

21. P. SÁRKÖZY, *Olasz-magyar két jóbarát. A magyar-olasz kulturális kapcsolatok alakulása az I. világháború előtt és után*. in <http://www.hitelfolyoirat.hu/sites/default/files/pdf/19-sarkozy.pdf> (consulted on March 22 2016).

22. *Ivi*, p. 179.

23. ZSIGMOND SZÖLLÖSI, *Háborús hullámok, sacred selfishness in Vasárnapi újság* [The Sunday Newspaper] 1915. május 30. 350.o. in [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03210/pdf/VU\\_EPA00030\\_1915\\_22.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03210/pdf/VU_EPA00030_1915_22.pdf) (consulted on June 22 2016).



the newspaper asked ironically: “Can we, must we, be afraid of an army with no historical tradition, whose forebears have not fought for centuries and centuries, and which is now, after the ‘triumphant’ results of Tripoli, devoting itself to the conquest of half Europe?”<sup>24</sup>

And what were the first encounters like between the soldiers confronting each other in the trenches? On May 31 1915 Dr. Kemény’s battalion, mentioned above, in the vicinity of Mount Krn in the Julian Alps, captured the first Italian prisoners of war. This is what the Hungarian doctor noted concerning the Italians:

“The Italian prisoners are interesting. They are small in stature with greasy, cunning faces. Each soldier possesses a tin star, the badge is on his arm. A sub-lieutenant was one of the prisoners. To our questions they answer that they were forced to go to war because that is what the people wanted, although the *intelligentsia* did not. They say that our soldiers are courageous on the offensive. Among them, three captains have fallen. We have captured most of the Italian soldiers from the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion of the 41<sup>st</sup> regiment of the Italian infantry; in the same place the 46<sup>th</sup> [battalion] saved two platoons of the 80<sup>th</sup>. Seeing that one platoon of the 80<sup>th</sup> found themselves in a forward position exposed on a hill, these Italians ran away shouting, or else were captured.”<sup>25</sup>

Now I would like to concentrate on the first stages of the huge clashes between Italian and Austro-Hungarian troops. On July 11 1915, a month and a half after the beginning of the first battle on the Isonzo, Italian military power once again dominated the debate in act within Hungarian public opinion. The *Vasárnapi Újság* wrote at the time:

“The Italian offensive began almost a month and a half ago. When our offensive against Russia had lasted the same amount of time, it had already provided history with blood-strewn, unforgettable data, victorious and grievous data. While we had had no chance to prepare an attack for ten months and we did not stab in the back an enemy that had for ten months been in a continual, infernal fight against

24. Az olasz katona [The article on the Italian soldier with no author indicated] in *Vasárnapi Újság* [The Sunday Newspaper] 1915. május 30. 354.o. in [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03210/pdf/VU\\_EPA00030\\_1915\\_22.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03210/pdf/VU_EPA00030_1915_22.pdf) (consulted on June 22 2016).

25. Dr. Kemény Gyula naplója az olasz fronton [http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2012/03/26/dr\\_kemeny\\_gyula\\_naplója\\_3\\_resz](http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/2012/03/26/dr_kemeny_gyula_naplója_3_resz) (consulted on March 24 2016).

a power greater than itself, now, after six weeks and a terrible defeat, the Italian offensive is still blocked there, on the same spot where it was six weeks before.”<sup>26</sup>

After the Caporetto debacle, on October 25 1917 the Italian Parliament refused a vote of confidence in the government under Paolo Boselli, who was then forced to resign. On October 30 the government was re-constituted under the leadership of Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. During talks over the previous few days, the latter had already asked the king for the removal of Cadorna. On November 18, the *Vasárnapi Újság* presented a subjective portrait of the supreme commander of the Italian army. The outgoing general, according to the Hungarian newspaper, “is a mediocre general, whose main characteristic is above all the precision of an engineer; he has ideas, he knows everything he needs to know, yet he lacks the determination of genius.”<sup>27</sup> Naturally, besides the Italian supreme commander, simple Italian soldiers also appear on the pages of the paper, “who happily become prisoners of war and who welcome the quiet of internment”<sup>28</sup>.

Out of curiosity, I shall stop at this point since I must mention the unpublished memoirs<sup>29</sup> of Gyula Simó, the first Hungarian ambassador to Rome after the revolution of 1956. In these pages Simó tells us of his encounter on November 18 1958 with Amintore Fanfani, leader of the Italian government, to present his credentials. On the occasion of this first visit, the Italian premier told the head of the Hungarian embassy that his father had been made a prisoner by the Austrians in the Great War. The poor circumstances and the treatment undergone until that moment changed suddenly after the Italian prisoners ended up in Hungary in the Somorjapuszta prison camp. Once the severity and permanent imprisonment had ceased, even the food improved significantly. It is no surprise,

26. Z. SZÖLLŐSI, *Háborús hullámok, Isonzónál Cadorna in Vasárnapi újság* [The Sunday Newspaper] 1915. július 11. 446.o. [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03216/pdf/VU\\_EPA00030\\_1915\\_28.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03216/pdf/VU_EPA00030_1915_28.pdf) (consulted on March 25 2016).

27. JÁNOS JÁKÓ, Cadorna in *Vasárnapi Újság* [The Sunday Newspaper] 1917. november 18. 736.o. [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03338/pdf/VU\\_EPA00030\\_1917\\_46.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03338/pdf/VU_EPA00030_1917_46.pdf) (consulted on March 24 2016).

28. Z. Szöllősi, *Olaszok in Vasárnapi újság* [The Sunday Newspaper] 720.o. in [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03337/pdf/VU\\_EPA00030\\_1917\\_45.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/03337/pdf/VU_EPA00030_1917_45.pdf) (consulted on March 27 2016).

29. Simó Gyula visszaemlékezései (kézirat) in *Politikatörténeti Levéltár* [Archive of Political History of Budapest] PIL 867f./s-257.

therefore, that Fanfani's father respected the Hungarian people and became their firm friend, asking his family to follow his example<sup>30</sup>.

## Conclusion

I will go no further. The fact that fraternal Italy had entered the war and that, at the war's end, Hungary with its thousand years of history was broken up, was then a serious trauma or, in the words of Miksa Fenyő, a "schizophrenic situation"<sup>31</sup>.

"Today, November 3 at 3 p.m., we accepted the conditions of the armistice. We signed the relative agreement." Such was the laconic communication of General Weber concerning the historical events that took place during the intense hours spent in Padua at Villa Giusti, and at the General Command of the Austro-Hungarian Army. With regard to Italy and these exceptionally stringent clauses, we cite Cecile Tormay, Hungary's iconic writer immediately after the First World War, a person still much debated today for her political convictions:

"We are losing the coast, Dalmatia, the dreaming isles, the fleet whose flags recall so much glory. [...] The Karst Plain, burnt and silent, the wild pastures of stone under the blue sky, the great, rustling forests and the silver ribbon of the Luigia Road, the sea below and on its shore white coral and shells: Fiume, the Hungarian port on the Oceans. Oh Italy of the hundred ports, why are you robbing us? We possess not one! It was a small fishing village, like many another on the Kvarner sea, we made it what it is today. Thriving thanks to Hungarian labour, the gold of Hungarian harvests was poured into it to build walls, to raise embankments, to work miracles among the stones. Fiume is our only port town..."<sup>32</sup>

However, beyond these moving words and the unquestionable beauty and importance of Fiume, I believe that over the coming months and years

30. *Ivi*, volume II. p. 261.

31. P. SÁRKÖZY, *Olasz-magyar két jóbarát. A magyar-olasz kulturális kapcsolatok alakulása az I. világháború előtt és után*. in <http://www.hitelfolyoirat.hu/sites/default/files/pdf/19-sarkozy.pdf> (consulted on March 22 2016), p. 180 in <http://www.hitelfolyoirat.hu/sites/default/files/pdf/19-sarkozy.pdf>

32. CÉCILE TORMAY, *Bujdosókönyv*, Budapest, Lazi Kiadó, 2012 p. 67.

the possible loss<sup>33</sup> of the city was not the most serious question for the rulers of Hungary. Quite different problems assailed them, such as for example the issue of the many other infinitely more painful territorial annexations later inflicted on the country.

33. Through article 53 of the Trianon Peace Treaty of June 4 1920, Hungary officially gave up Fiume and neighbouring territories; see the text of the Treaty in *Sorsdöntések Kiegyezés 1867, Trianon 1920, Párizs 1947*, edited by Gerő András, Budapest, Göncöl Kiadó, 1989 p.177.

Rudolf Dinu

## Romania, the Issue of the War against the Central Empires and the Relationships with Italy (1914-1916)

### Romania's Diplomacy and Security Policy before the July Crissis: Selective Background

In the eve of the Balkan crisis Romania was the only state aligned in Southeastern Europe in terms of the power structure of the international system. It had the most important tangible and intangible power potential among the Balkan states, except for the Ottoman Empire, but was positively constrained in its external action by its defensive alliance with the Central Powers.

The alliance with the Central Empires (1883), joined by Italy on May 9, 1888<sup>1</sup>, was the underlying element of Romania's foreign and security policy until the outbreak of the First World War. The system of alliances to which Romania became part in 1883 was not negotiated in preparation for a war, but as a political and military agreement designed to ensure long-term peace and security. Established 30 years before the outbreak of the First World War, the *Dreibund* covers the era of an entire generation, either actors or decision makers. In all the relevant critical situations which took place in Europe between 1885 and 1914, the Triple Alliance played a fundamental role, from the Bulgarian crisis, 1885-1887, till the Moroccan crisis, the Libyan war and the Balkan wars<sup>2</sup>. The Triple Alliance was, however paradoxical it may seem at first glance, a reliable and serious

\* A previous version of this paper was published in *Revista istorică*, tom XXVII, 2016, nr. 1-2, p. 5-28.

1. RUDOLF DINU, *Italian-Romanian Relationship Inside of the Triple Alliance. The 1888 Agreement*, in ID., *Studi italo-romeni. Diplomazia e società, 1879-1914*, București, 2009<sup>2</sup>, pp. 65-148.

2. HOLGER AFFLERBACH, *La Triplice Alleanza tra politica di Grande Potenza e politica di alleanza*, in *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento*, anno LXXXVIII, supplemento al fasc. IV, 2001, pp. 161-175, 163.

tool against war<sup>3</sup>. The *Dreibund*, similar to the Franco-Russian alliance or the later *Entente*, was defined primarily by security guarantees and not by provisions related to territorial acquisitions. Certainly the latter were not absent from the text, but they referred to well defined matters, which did not require a European war. The availability of the member states of the *Dreibund* or the *Entente* to follow their allied in actions meant to enhance ones power or to conquer new territories was almost zero<sup>4</sup>.

The alliance with the Central Powers tempered therefore the Romanian foreign policy, implicitly increasing the degree of stability and security in the area. In almost all regional crises after 1883, from the Rumelian question to the Balkan wars, the Triple Alliance shaped, constrained and moderated Romanian foreign policy, transforming the small danubian kingdom into a factor of stability in South-Eastern Europe. The obligation to consult its alliance partners (for whatever related to international action and security policy), together with an excessive cautiousness of King Carol I, were the key elements of a foreign policy that made Romania a guarantor of peace in the Balkans<sup>5</sup>. The Alliance placed Romania on a peaceful path, offered her security, safety, prestige, and thanks to a «protective shield», the possibility to prosper.

Ultimately, complying with the provisions included in the Treaty of 1883 and, especially, the obligation to follow the line of international conduct set by default by the Great Powers allies were elements that constituted a conceptual differentiation of Romanian foreign policy from the policies of the Balkan states, depriving it of adventurous actions in a region and period that did not lack temptations and opportunities at any time.

The security instrument created in 1883 was far from perfect. Without being from the beginning a critical issue in Romanian-Austrian-Hungarian relations, the situation of the Romanians in Hungary, the original defect of the alliance, evolved over time to such a stage that the agreement between

3. See PAUL SCHROEDER, *The 19th-Century International System: Changes in the Structure*, in *World Politics*, 39, n. 1, October 1986, p. 10.

4. H. AFFLERBACH, *La Triplice Alleanza tra politica di Grande Potenza e politica di alleanza* cit., 163.

5. RUDOLF DINU, *Romanian Foreign Policy from Berlin to Sarajevo, 1878-1914. Some characteristics*, in *Romanian and European Diplomacy. From Cabinet Diplomacy to the 21st Century Challenges*, ed. by Gheorghe Cliveti, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu, Adrian Vițalariu, Ionuț Nistor, Triese-Iași, Beit-Editura Universității din Iași, 2012, p. 214.

the two states finally came to depend only on the will of an ethereal decision making group, the same that decided it<sup>6</sup>. The secret character of the treaty, stated in art.6 and obstinately assumed with every renewal, was equally a fundamental flaw, as it made its impact on the public opinion (in Romania and Hungary) almost zero. Due to this secrecy, the partnership with the Triple Alliance remained for the real Romania a superficial experience, as the Romanian society, unlike the Italian one<sup>7</sup>, was not subject to the consequences derived from this relationship. The arcane character of the treaty and the political-military elite of the Old Kingdom, predominantly francophone and gradually contaminated by nationalism, made managing this alliance a nightmare for Romanian decision makers and fuelled an incompatibility in relation to Austria-Hungary (envisioned by some even since 1883-1884<sup>8</sup>) which would lead, through a continuous erosion, to a blockage of the security mechanism<sup>9</sup>.

In particular, the national problem, whenever was activated prior to the First World War, brought tension in relation with the main ally. And due to the fact that it acted systemically, shaking the entire system of alliances, this issue tested Romania's relations with the dualist Monarchy as well as with Germany, and inevitably influenced the security strategy. At the beginning of the tenth decade, the aggravating situation of the Romanian population in Transylvania and the repression of the «Memorandum» movement (June 9, 1892 –May 1894) brought such a critical time in Romania's relations with the allied empires<sup>10</sup>. However, the «Memorandum» issue of the mid 90's did not structurally change Romanian foreign policy, nor condition the alliance with the Central Empires<sup>11</sup>. The security strategy continued to rely – also due to the fact that it represented the product of

6. KEITH HITCHINS, *România, 1866-1947*, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1994, p. 158.

7. In Italy, the existence of the alliance treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary was publicly confirmed once with the Spring 1883's Parliamentary debates. On the contrary, in Romania the alliance with the Central Powers remained unknown to the public until July 1914.

8. CAROL I, *Correspondența privată*, ed.by Sorin Cristescu, Bucureşti, Tritonic, 2005, p. 172-174, Carol I to Karl Anton von Hohenzollern, Bucharest, January 24/February 5, 1884.

9. R. DINU, *Romanian Foreign Policy from Berlin to Sarajevo* cit., p. 219.

10. KEITH HITCHINS, *Austria-Hungary, Rumania, and the Nationality Problem in Transylvania, 1894-1897*, in *Rumanian Studies*, vol. IV (1976-1979), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1979, pp. 75-87, 75.

11. RUDOLF DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom (1878-1914)*, in DINU C. GIURESCU, RUDOLF DINU, LAURENȚIU CONSTANTINIU, *Romanian Diplomacy. An Illustrated History, 1862-1947*, Bucureşti, Monitorul Oficial, 2010, pp. 63-188, 140.



a small decision group – firmly and unilaterally on the collaboration with the Central Powers. From this point of view, redefining the foreign policy was rather a matter of nuance, i.e. return to the old fixed idea of preferential relations with Germany. Otherwise, the principles remained the same, as they belonged to a generation primarily preoccupied with preserving the newly created state and not with territorial acquisitions, a generation that was actually aware of Romania's fragile geopolitical position and the necessity of a protective shield<sup>12</sup>.

The solutions for the problems sprouting in the relationship with Austria-Hungary were varied and came successively, as the overall image started gaining shape in the minds of Romanian decision makers. In the short term, the reaction of the Bucharest government to the free fall in Romanian-Austro-Hungarian relations meant diverting the attention of the informed public towards an alternative national program – defending the national identity of the Romanians from the Balkan Peninsula (Macedonia) – which was to be promoted by a strong and successful foreign policy<sup>13</sup>.

The long-term remedies were intended to be based on two major principles of Romanian foreign policy. «The first of them was that of preserving the alliance with Austria-Hungary and defending the territorial integrity of the Dual Monarchy, which was seen as a vital element in the security system that Romania was a part of. The second postulated the development of a special partnership with Germany, seen by the little Kingdom as being «the only secure and firm fulcrum»<sup>14</sup>.

As a consequence of Romanian reconciliation efforts after 1895, based on the above stated principles, towards the end of the 19th century the Transylvanian issue disappeared for a few years from the official agenda of relations between Romania and Austria-Hungary. The structural conditions that had generated the Transylvanian Romanian issue remained unchanged, however. They were superseded only for a little while by other issues.

Taking up the Aromanian issue as a priority in Romania's foreign policy was the immediate reaction of the cabinet in Bucharest to the deterioration in relations with Austria-Hungary. In 1903, Romanian politician Take

12. *Ibidem*.

13. R. DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom* cit., p. 141.

14. *Ibidem*.

Ionescu summarized this Balkan policy as follows: «No Romanian politician aspires to annex Macedonia, or to found there a Romanian state. We do wish for the nationality of the Romanians in Macedonia to be preserved, and for them to have the guarantee that they can get an education in their own language in freedom»<sup>15</sup>. A good portion of the Romanian political elite supported this policy without reservations, with different emotional tones, depending on the circumstances of the domestic political struggle or on other interests. Less involved sentimentally, or simply more pragmatic, the Sovereign looked at the entire matter in purely strategic terms, as a ploy to ensure Romania's continual involvement in the Balkans in order to preserve the status quo. «This policy – wrote later in his memoirs prince Dimitrie I. Gr. Ghica, former Romanian general consul to Salonika – was well liked by King Charles, who was eager to see public opinion turning its attention away from the persecutions suffered by our brothers beyond the Carpathians under the Hungarian yoke. In the same spirit, Vienna was willing to support our action»<sup>16</sup>.

It is not less important to underline that the active nationalists, meaning Romanian statesmen like Ion I. C. Brătianu, opposed from the beginning the negative policy of defending the status quo. They argued that the expansion, if any, of the Slavic states in Macedonia and in the Balkans in general, was a reality that could be studied only in connection with the equivalent compensation of Romania with «strategic» territorial acquisitions. As is well known, in the context of the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 the Romanian government acted in such manner as to put this principle in practice.

The policy of supporting the Romanians in Macedonia inevitably caused a direct collision with the more substantial and aggressive Balkan Slavic nationalisms, aggravated and damaged the relations with these countries, evolving from a lethargic neighborhood to an active but negative interaction<sup>17</sup>.

Dissatisfaction, resentment and bitterness was equally present in the relation with Greece, or better said Greek's behavior in Macedonia was equally despicable and violent as the Bulgarian one, as the phenomenon

15. ION BULEI, *Atunci când veacul se naște. Lumea românească, 1900-1908*, București, Ed. Eminescu 1990, pp. 286-87.

16. DIMITRIE I. GR. GHICA, *Memorii*, Iași, Institutul European, 2004, pp. 57-58.

17. R. DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom* cit., p. 147.

of ethnic cleansing ultimately reached a similar degree. Greeks' persistence in pursuing the assimilation or annihilation of Aromanian elements was not less than the one proved by the Bulgarians. Just that in relation with Bulgaria, the dissatisfaction and irritation turned to fear, and mutual fear of a Bulgarian / Romanian aggression exacerbated the Romanian-Bulgarian antagonism in the mind of the decision makers in Bucharest and Sofia. An explanation is the territorial proximity as well, which in relation to Bulgaria, compared with Greece, turned in a greater ability to project power and threat.

Reestablishing the Russian-Bulgarian relations in 1896 brought Romania back into becoming a «possible avenue between the two Russias», increased in direct proportion to the existing tension in the relation between the two countries, and led to a combined fear of Russia and Bulgaria in the mind of the decision makers in Bucharest. The Russian-Bulgarian reconciliation brought with itself a lasting change in the balance of power in the Balkans, affecting both the political and strategic positions of the Triple Alliance in the East. In particular, the fact that the united Bulgaria became a «tool of Russia» or a «tool of the Russian-French *Entente*» again, made Romania's political and strategic situation much more difficult and more exposed than before<sup>18</sup>.

Subsequently, the refusal of the Romanian decision-makers to accept a territorial expansion of Bulgaria without an equivalent compensation on behalf of their country, as well as Austria-Hungary's tendency – increased after 1903 – to transform Bulgaria into the central point of its policy in the Balkans, slowly became the main elements which gradually fueled the incompatibility of the strategies pursued by the two allied countries in South-East Europe.

The Bosnian crisis clarified the divergence between the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary (pro-Bulgarian, as an anti-Serbian factor, and, indirectly, anti-Romanian) and that of Romania (pro-Serbian, as an anti-Bulgarian factor). This divergence became chronic in the context of the Balkan crisis of 1912-1913, against a background of unprecedented hysteria in the ranks of the urban public, which deeply damaged the relationship between Romania and Austria-Hungary<sup>19</sup>.

18. *Ibidem*.

19. R. DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom* cit., p. 162.

Romanian foreign strategy, reported Italian Plenipotentiary in Bucharest, Baron Fasciotti, in the summer of 1912, was closely linked to the general aspect of the balance of power in the Balkans: «It's a canon, in fact, of Romanian foreign policy that the three main Balkan states (Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece) should not be increased without Romania having a similar increase, in such a manner as to keep the prevalence of population, territory and wealth currently enjoyed»<sup>20</sup>.

During the time of the Balkan Wars, Romania was governed by three conservative parties - Petre P. Carp's government (December 29, 1910 – March 27, 1912); Titu Maiorescu's 1<sup>st</sup> government (March 28 to October 14, 1912), Titu Maiorescu's 2<sup>nd</sup> government (October 14, 1912 - December 31, 1913). All these governments represented moderate decision-making formulas, both in terms of external options and the intellectual profile. These were as well the last substantial presence in the government of some of the leaders historically and conceptually belonging to the generation that participated in the construction of the modern and independent Romanian state. But the most important aspect was that the leaders of these governments were among the creators of the security system to which Romania became a part of in 1883: Petre P. Carp and Titu Maiorescu. Both of them, acting as prime ministers in the period between 1911 and 1913, were preeminent Germanophiles<sup>21</sup>.

This decision making group continued to perceive the threat as coming from Russia and its satellites (Bulgaria), and was less influenced by nationalism. It favored a moderate approach for its Balkan political agenda: preserving the pre-existing status quo and Romania's preeminence in the area. Strategic territorial compensation was an option for Titu Maiorescu's conservative government, but this was to be achieved not through a preventive war but rather with the support and grace of the Great Powers following wise negotiations and a moderate international conduct agreed with the Allied powers. Maiorescu, along with Carp and the King, were

20. *35 anni di relazioni italo-romene, 1879–1914. Documenti diplomatici italiani*, ed. by R. Dinu – Ion Bulei, București, Univers Enciclopedic, 2001, p. 514, n. 456, Fasciotti to San Giuliano, Bușteni, June 6, 1912.

21. RUDOLF DINU, *L'«asse latino» della Triplice Alleanza ai tempi delle Guerre balcaniche. La Romania e i rapporti con l'Italia (1912-1913)*, in ANTONIO D'ALESSANDRI e RUDOLF DINU, *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche*, Roma, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 2014, pp. 30-31.

primarily interested in preserving the existing construct, instead of its territorial expansion. Thus, Romanian Government was genuinely inclined to defend the status quo in place and act as a moderator regarding the Balkan initiatives<sup>22</sup>.

The government was not prone to adventure, radical programs aimed at altering the existing order. Radical options were nevertheless favoured by the active nationalists, alike Ionel Brătianu. For reasons of internal political struggle, this choice of foreign policy was taken to the street and in the public debate, insisting in the idea of a preventive war and even blackmail in relation to the allied Great Powers. As in other situations (such as the Transylvanian Memorandum movement of the mid-nineties), the politicization of the Silistra issue by the opposition – strongly reclaiming a strategic border rectification with a mandatory inclusion of Silistra city – was primarily a weapon in the internal battle between the political parties, a way to «take down» the Conservative government and attain the power. The National Liberal Party, which had a great freedom of speech being in opposition, put unprecedented pressure on the decision making group, eventually forcing it to slowly migrate (from autumn of 1912 to summer of 1913) to a position of strength, more and more rigid, both in dialogue with Bulgaria and the Great Powers<sup>23</sup>. «If we do not get Silistra» – told Ion I. C. Brătianu, the leader of the liberal opposition, to the Austro-Hungarian minister, in February 1913, offering an example of his opportunistic strategy which he will practice with great success after the July 1914 crisis – „it means the Triple Entente is much stronger than the Triple Alliance and we will go with the stronger ones»<sup>24</sup>.

The aggressive campaign supported by the liberals, especially after April 1913, against the conservative government and backfiring against the Austro-Hungarian ally, stigmatized for its pro-Bulgarian policy, lead to an outburst of Austrophobia among the general public, which contributed decisively to increased tension in the relations with the dual Monarchy.

The context of the Balkan Wars was one of those rare moments in the diplomatic history of the Old Kingdom when the Romanian decision making group had to face an important exclusively urban public opinion,

22. *Ivi*, p. 31.

23. *Ibidem*.

24. *Ivi*, p. 35.

instrumentalized and maneuvered by the opposition mainly for reasons of domestic politics. Thus, it managed to exercise increasing pressure on the government and limit its room for maneuver and, ultimately, its foreign policy choices<sup>25</sup>.

Romania's intervention in the Second Balkan War and the subsequent Treaty of Bucharest marked a new stage in its relationship with Austria-Hungary, a profoundly negative one. The Romanian government asked its Austro-Hungarian ally for total unconditional support in its conflict with Bulgaria, which it understood as being a part of the alliance agreement. The Vienna government, on the other hand, persevered in its pro-Bulgarian policy, and, early in the summer of 1913, ended up losing control over the actions of the Bucharest government. The attempt to impose a revision of the Treaty of Bucharest deepened the rift between the two states, and sparked widespread hostility among the urban public. Foreign observers agreed that the refusal to support Romania in the conflict with Bulgaria and the pro-Bulgarian stance it maintained afterward were the decisive factors in alienating Austria-Hungary from the King and his government, the last pillar of the alliance that was binding Vienna and Bucharest. The corollary of such a development was that Austria-Hungary lost its supremacy over Bucharest in the autumn of 1913<sup>26</sup>.

Vienna did not remain passive faced with such a deterioration of the situation. In the autumn of 1913, it became a priority for Austria-Hungary to restore the relationship to Romania to its previous state, since its loyalty and support were paramount for the Empire, and in their absence, the Serbian problem was impossible to settle. The Austro-Hungarian government sought remedies, and the Czernin mission to Bucharest, together with the Romanian-Hungarian negotiations that opened early in 1914 were a step in that direction. Both, however, utterly failed in the spring of 1914, managing to irretrievably boost irredentism<sup>27</sup>.

25. *Ivi*, p. 31-32.

26. R. DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom* cit., p. 162.

27. *Ibidem*. See KEITH WILSON, *Problems and Possibilities. Exercises in Statesmanship, 1814-1918*, Tempus, 2003, p. 192; KEITH HITCHINS, *The Nationality Problem in Hungary: István Tisza and the Rumanian National Party, 1910-1914*, in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 53, nr. 4 (Dec., 1981), pp. 619-651; GARY W. SHANAFELT, *Activism and Inertia: Ottokar Czernin's Mission to Romania, 1913-1916*, in *Austrian History Yearbook*, XIX-XX (1983-4), pp. 189-214.

At the end of 1913, a national euphoria had gripped certain circles in Bucharest, visibly elated by the successes scored in the summer, and «momentarily drunk» on the idea of «Romania *farà da se*». Nevertheless, as Austro-Hungarian Military Attaché Hranilovič noted in the autumn of 1913, Romanian irredentism did not present any military danger as long as the Romanian government did not support and encourage Transylvanian agitators, and the Romanian government, at least as long as King Carol I was alive, continued to favor alliance with the Central Powers<sup>28</sup>. The breakdown in relations with Austria-Hungary was compensated for by Romanian decision makers by shifting almost exclusively to courtship of Germany<sup>29</sup> and Italy.

Relations with Russia gradually improved starting in 1913, but cooperation with St Petersburg never became a viable security policy alternative or a means of fulfilling the national ideal, not even for Brătianu. Romania was willing to cooperate with Serbia and Greece to maintain the status quo created by the Treaty of Bucharest and to control Bulgaria, which, of course, coincided with Russia's wish to delay for a few years a final decision on the European Orient by freezing completely the situation created by the Balkan wars. However, Romania definitely did not wish for a break with the Triple Alliance, and wanted to switch sides and join Russia and the Triple *Entente* even less. King Carol I, even after the famous visit made by Czar Nicholas II to Constanța in June 1914, continued to see Romania as the intermediary that was supposed to bring about reconciliation between Austria-Hungary and Russia<sup>30</sup>.

One of the major changes brought by the long Balkan crisis to the structure of Romania's foreign policy was putting aside its Balkan strategy after a partial achievement of the initial objectives (with no prospects at all to endure). Disabling this particular strategy of foreign policy, beyond

28. RUDOLF DINU, *L'avamposto sul Danubio della Triplice Alleanza. Diplomazia e politica di sicurezza nella Romania di re Carlo I (1878-1914)*, Roma, Aracne, 2015, p. 190.

29. GABRIEL HANOTAUX, *Carnets (1907-1925)*, Paris, Pedone, 1982, pp. 96-97 (February 12, 1914). «J'y ai vu Lahovary, le ministre de Roumanie. [...] Lahovary m'a dit qu'il y avait notamment un rapprochement entre la Roumanie et la Russie, mais que cela n'impliquait nullement une rupture avec l'Allemagne, que, tout au contraire, il pouvait m'affirmer que le roi de Roumanie, dans cette circonstance, comme antérieurement, n'avait rien fait sans se mettre d'accord avec Berlin, et que, jamais, les relations entre la Russie et l'Allemagne n'avaient été plus confiantes et plus étroites. [...]».

30. R. DINU, *Diplomacy in the Old Kingdom* cit., p. 179.



a generic monitoring of the balance of power in South-Eastern Europe, created the circumstances, along with other factors, for reviving the Transylvanian issue. In other words, it favored the revival of an issue which most of the Romanian political and cultural elite assimilated with the «national problem». At the end of 1913, the situation of the so-called «Romanians from Hungary» ceased to be a «frozen», manageable affair, and rebecame an «active» matter which deeply divided the two allied governments. Any improvement of the relations between the two Cabinets – King Carol I declared to the Austro-Hungarian envoy, Czernin, on 7 December 1913 – required concessions from the government in Budapest in the Transylvanian problem<sup>31</sup>.

However, the most important transformation in Romania's foreign policy agenda setting had to do not with the lines-actions actively pursued by the government in Bucharest, but rather with the structure of the decision making group, reflected in the emerging as prime minister of Ion I. C. Brătianu, beginning with January 1914.

Brătianu was probably one of the active nationalists of the moment, clearly having an educational, political and ideological profile significantly different from that of His Majesty's previous advisors, at least for the fact that he was a Francophile, reformist and sought to obtain, from the outset, a position of parity with the King in the decision-making mechanism of foreign policy. His nationalism was probably as genuine as that of his father. What the son lacked was just the idealism specific for the age of national revival. The father was converted to political realism based on his experience with the government. The son, however, grew intellectually in the golden age of political realism. He was a *realpolitiker* especially due to his lack of scruples in public life and the opportunistic policy he practiced<sup>32</sup>.

The national project had in his imagination a more or less accurate ideal structure, focused on Transylvania, and was opportunistically and closely linked to domestic political imperatives. *In primis*, he was driven by the same ambition that his father had had, namely to link his name and

31. GERARD E. SILBERSTEIN, *The Troubled Alliance. German-Austrian Relations, 1914 to 1917*, Lexington, Kentucky, University Press of Kentucky, 1970, p. 34.

32. R. DINU, *L'«asse latino» della Triplice Alleanza ai tempi delle Guerre balcaniche* cit., pp. 67-68.

that of the Liberal Party of a grand national achievement<sup>33</sup>. After freezing the Balkan strategy and after the Conservative government succeeded in acquiring strategic territories in Southern Dobrogea, this great national project could not have been anything other than uniting the Romanian-inhabited territories under the rule of the Dualistic Monarchy<sup>34</sup>.

Indirectly, Brătianu's rise to government challenged Romania's security strategy. This was primarily due to his opportunistic thinking that made him believe that the security of the existing state was subordinated to the «national policy», whatever that policy meant. For reasons of prestige, his main concern was to focus on extending the borders of the modern state. In turn, this left very little room for finding security solutions that were going to become inevitably necessary for that Greater Romania, in the context of a hostile and continuously changing European environment as the one after 1914. His choice on matters of security, if we agree that he had one, was an emotional rather than a rational one. He had a French educational background and was emotionally attached to this Great Power as almost all politicians and statesmen of his generation. This also explains the speed with which France gained influence in Romania, after January 1914. This, together with the financial, economic and cultural potential that the Republic had set in motion in Romania and the Balkans, explains why French influence was already raging in urban areas in the spring of 1914<sup>35</sup>.

Naturally, Brătianu did not try at any time before the crisis in July 1914 to substantially alter the direction of the Romanian foreign policy, just as he did not dare to openly question the position of supremacy the King held in managing the country's foreign policy. On the other hand, he did not hide his pro-Western options and he explicitly favored the French influence, especially in the trade and economic sphere. More important is that the new prime minister did not seriously and genuinely try to do something to improve and save Romania's relations with the Central Empires. From this point of view, it is fair to say that his actions did not try to rush the breakaway from Austria. However, it is reasonable to believe that his inaction – strongly justified by referring to the anti-Hungarian sentiment

33. See KEITH HITCHINS, *Ionel Brătianu: Romania (Makers of the Modern World)*, London, Haus Publishing, 2011, p. 60, 63-64.

34. R. DINU, *L'«asse latino» della Triplice Alleanza ai tempi delle Guerre balcaniche* cit., p. 68.

35. *Ivi*, pp. 68-69.

of the people – favored the overturning of a perception in Romania, fundamental to the health of its relations with the Dual Monarchy: in 1914, the hate of the Romanian elite and general public towards Hungary, a result largely artificial, overtook the older fear of Russia. Which, as feared by Baron Aehrenthal since 1895, amounted to the elimination of *raison d'être* of the alliance concluded by the two countries in 1883.

Brătianu refused to take into account the solution of making public the treaty of alliance, as suggested by Austro-Hungarian government, and not because of fear of a backlash in public opinion but precisely to be able to maneuver freely between the two military alliances, looking for the most benefits. As the Austro-Hungarian envoy, Czernin, very correctly construed, keeping the alliance secret very much suited «Mr. Brătianu and Company» as it was bringing Romania all the benefits, while Austria assuming all the disadvantages. Romanian decision makers were, in fact, in a very comfortable position, knowing that the treaty bounds them to reliable allies, as a result of which temporarily they did not want anything but preserving a state of affairs that allowed them to move freely while bounding the Austro-Hungarians<sup>36</sup>.

The secrecy of the alliance with the Central Powers was favorable to the pro-Western Romanian officials – with one exception, all members of the cabinet, with Brătianu above all, had studied in France – and, indirectly, to the French-Russian *Entente*: «Besides the King, Brătianu and Maiorescu – the Austro-Hungarian envoy wrote – no one else throughout Romania knows about the extension of the treaty of alliance. For example, all Romanian diplomats accredited abroad believe they do not work at all against the intentions of their king, carrying out a policy that leads Romania into the arms of the Triple *Entente*. Among them are many who prefer the *Entente* powers rather than the Triple Alliance and, because they think the king, the government and their country are free, are carrying on this course of action»<sup>37</sup>.

36. *1918 la Români. Desăvârșirea unității național-statale a poporului român. Documente externe, 1879–1916*, București, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983, I, p. 398 ss., n. 73, Czernin to Berchtold, Bucarest, March 11, 1914.

37. *Ivi*, pp. 409–410.

## Romanian-Italian relations prior to the July Crisis

In the eve of the First World War, few countries like Romania could boast they have so many points in common with Italy in their foreign policy. Both countries, in fact, had an agreement with the Triple Alliance at that time. Italy had signed the pact in 1882 and renewed its adhesion several times (last in 1912), while Romania had signed a treaty with Austria-Hungary in 1883, to which Germany subscribed the same year, and Italy in 1888, a treaty which remained secret until 1914. Despite their commitment to the Central Empires, Italy and Romania were claiming territories within the borders of Austria-Hungary (Trentino and Venezia Giulia, and further towards South Tyrol, Istria and Dalmatia by the former; Transylvania, Bukovina and Banat by the latter). Both Italy and Romania had a good relation with Germany – whose military force admired (and feared) – and both had difficult relations with some of the countries which had joined the *Entente* or its satellites. In Italy, rivalry with France was not yet fully overcome and in the years before the World War there were fears of Serbian expansionism in the Balkans and the Adriatic. In Romania, hostility towards Russia (at least among the political elite) had rooted in nearly forty years ago when, after the war of 1877-1878, in which the two countries fought together against the Ottoman Empire, the government in St. Petersburg betrayed its former ally by taking away Bessarabia at the Congress of Berlin<sup>38</sup>.

Romania had territorial claims that aimed not only the Austro-Hungarian Empire but also Russia (the already mentioned Bessarabia) – a significant difference compared to Italy. Of course, Transylvania and Banat constituted much more desired lands, but supporters of ties with the Triple Alliance, or those who did not want to go to war with the *Entente*, had within their reach an alternative and an additional argument than Italy<sup>39</sup>.

Despite the similarity of the geopolitical positions of the two countries, their diplomatic relations in the decades prior to the outbreak of the Great War had been irregular and marked by a utilitarian approach on both sides.

38. EMANUELA COSTANTINI, RUDOLF DINU, *Romania. Che farà «la nostra sorella maggiore»? La stampa romena e la neutralità italiana (1914-1915)*, in *Osservata Speciale. La neutralità italiana nella Prima guerra mondiale e l'opinione pubblica internazionale (1914-1915)*, a cura di Riccardo Brizzi, (Quaderni di Storia), Milano, Mondadori Education, 2015, p. 225.

39. *Ivi*, p. 226.

For the government in Bucharest, Italy was «the big sister, the natural protector of Romanians» when it came for Romania to “ask something” from it. As such, it was a power cultivated by Romanian rulers only in times of need and not due to a natural inclination. The same kind of selfish and casual interest largely characterized the attitude Italian governments had towards the Romanian kingdom. As some of its diplomats used to highlight towards the end of the XIX century, Italy, not «yet an eagle but a little eagle», needed «to surround itself in defense with sparrows» such as Romania in order to increase its political weight in the international system and in relation to the Central Empires<sup>40</sup>.

In fact, in the late eighties of the XIX century Romania became something more to the Italian politics: it had transformed, under the auspices of the President of the Council of Ministers, Francesco Crispi, into a gateway to South-East Europe. This perspective led to the Italian government's decision to join the Austrian-Romanian treaty of alliance on May 9, 1888. The alliance with Romania meant for the Italian Prime Minister an additional assertion of Italy's status as great power and its interest in South-East Europe. The treaty with Romania could constitute a privileged channel through which Italian influence (political, economic and cultural) could infiltrate and manifest in this region. Moreover, the agreement with Romania and guaranteeing the territorial status-quo at the lower Danube region ought to emphasize even more clearly the desire of the Italian government to be permanently associated with those great powers bordering the area claiming exclusive management of South-East European affairs (namely Austria-Hungary and Russia)<sup>41</sup>.

However, because of its secret character, the Italian-Romanian treaty has not helped to increase awareness and intimacy between the two countries and the two peoples, nor to establish truly strong mutual ties<sup>42</sup>.

40. R. DINU, *Studi italo-romeni. Diplomazia e società, 1879-1914* cit., p. 327.

41. See RUDOLF DINU, *Italian-Romanian Relationship Inside of the Triple Alliance. The 1888 Agreement*, in ID., *Studi italo-romeni. Diplomazia e società, 1879-1914* cit., pp. 140-141.

42. RUDOLF DINU, *L'alleanza ideale: appunti per la storia delle relazioni italo-romene nell'ambito della Triplice Alleanza (1883-1903)*, in ID., *Studi italo-romeni. Diplomazia e società, 1879-1914* cit., pp. 34-35. For the government in Bucharest, the relation with Italy was both useful and necessary, *in primis*, because without this link Romania's presence alongside the Triple Alliance would have been impossible to explain to Romanian elite which, over time, became increasingly hostile towards Hungary and, by extension, Austro-Hungary. See ID., *L'Italia e l'Oriente Europeo. Iniziative politiche entro e fuori la Triplice Alleanza. Le relazioni con la Romania (1908-1911)*, in *Balcani 1908. Alle*

This was demonstrated during the second Balkan War, when during the Romanian-Bulgarian dispute over Silistra Italy did not take a firm position of support in favor of the Romanian government. While for Romania, Bulgaria represented the greatest threat towards the balance of power in the Balkans, for the Italian government it could constitute a counterweight to Greece's aspirations, seen as a rival in the Adriatic Sea and Albania. For this reason, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs Di San Giuliano supported Romania's cause during the mediation talks, he also proposed compensations for Bulgaria (including handing over Thessaloniki) to the detriment of Greece<sup>43</sup>.

At the outbreak of the war, both Italy and Romania decided to stay neutral, although they justified differently their decision not to comply with the obligations imposed by the treaty of alliance. In fact, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Salandra's Government, Antonino di San Giuliano, claimed that according to art. 7 of the founding Treaty of the Triple Alliance, part of the conditions set forth in the agreement for his country to take action were missing. More specifically, Austria-Hungary did not inform its ally, in advance, about its intentions and also offered no due compensation in the event of an Italian occupation of Serbia<sup>44</sup>.

Romania's position in relation to the war was decided on August 3, 1914, in a Crown Council attended, besides the king and the crown prince Ferdinand, by members of the Government, some former presidents of the Council, and representatives of the three main parties (liberal, conservative and conservative-democratic). Despite the King's will to respect the provisions of the agreement with the Central Powers, the vast majority of those present favored neutrality and Carol I complied with the opinion of the Crown Council<sup>45</sup>.

*origini di un secolo di conflitti*, ed. by Alberto Basciani and A. D'Alessandri, Trieste, Beit, 2010, pp. 76-77.

43. R. DINU, *L'«asse latino» della Triplice Alleanza ai tempi delle Guerre balcaniche* cit., pp. 35-36; ANTHONY DI IORIO, *Italy and Rumania in 1914: The Italian Assessment of the Rumanian Situation, 1907 to 1914*, in *Rumanian Studies*, vol. IV cit., pp. 158-159.

44. LUIGI ALBERTINI, *Le origini della guerra del 1914*, Gorizia, Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2011, III, pp. 294-314, 330-333; SEAN MCMEEKIN, *July 1914. Countdown to War*, London, Icon, 2014, pp. 171-172, 328.

45. See GLENN E. TORREY, *Romania and World War I. A collection of studies*, Iași-Oxford-Portland, Center for Romanian Studies, 1998, p. 48; R. DINU, *Romania's way from neutrality to war. An analysis regarding the evolution of Romanian foreign policy, 1912-1916*, in *La Grande Guerre*.

## July Crisis, Romania's neutrality and the Italian connexion (1914-1915)<sup>46</sup>

After the assassination in Sarajevo, the government in Bucharest braved the critical issue of war and peace with great indecision. The king's statements were lacking firmness, while those of the prime minister were hesitating, contradictory, and duplicitous<sup>47</sup>. As Luigi Albertini noted before, the Romanian government – similar to the Italian one – did not carry out the necessary steps in order to retain its Austrian-Hungarian ally from a course of action with devastating consequences for all. In other words, after July 23, 1914, the date on which the content of the ultimatum presented to Serbia became known to it, the Romanian government did not act vigorously in order to discourage Austria-Hungary and compel it to abandon the idea of a military intervention though clear and firm statements of non-involvement in a generalized war.

Clearer – but not more useful in the efforts to prevent a war – was the position of King Carol I. This may be summarized as follows: taking all necessary measures to limit the conflict, but in the event of its generalization, Romania was to fulfill with loyalty its commitments towards its allies.

In his reply to Franz Josef's telegram dated July 28, who informed him on the declaration of war presented to Serbia, King Carol I wrote:

«Thank you for the attention given to have personally informed me about the important declaration of war against Serbia. The attack which has deeply affected us all, as well the decisive impulse it had in deciding on the next step, explain the importance I attach to this declaration of war. Our intimate relation and my commitment ensure that I will follow the development of this serious crisis with sincere participation. May the divine presence watch over your precious health, determine a rapid and favorable course of the war and watch over peace in Europe.

*Histoire et mémoire collective en France et en Roumanie*, a cura di Christophe Prochasson – Florin Ţurcanu, Bucharest, New Europe College, 2010, pp. 9-17.

46. This part is based on my previous published study *Da alleata a nemica. La Romania e la questione della guerra contro le Potenze Centrali (1914-1916)*, in *La Grande Guerra e l'Europa danubiano-balcanica*, a cura di Francesco Guida, in *Il Velcro*, LIX, 2015, 1-6, pp. 47-72.

47. L. ALBERTINI, *Le origini della Guerra del 1914* cit., III, pp. 565-566; EMA NASTOVICI, *România şi Puterile Centrale în anii 1914-1916*, Bucharest, Ed. Politică, 1979, p. 54.



I wish also that my country, which gain its equilibrium in the Balkans with so many victims, remains unaffected»<sup>48</sup>.

The Romanian king made it clear that he wanted the balance of power resulted from the Peace of Bucharest to be maintained. Punishing Serbia was not supposed to strengthen and enlarge Bulgaria, to Romania's detriment. His message did not express, however, even the mildest criticisms towards the decision of the Austrian-Hungarian ally to start a preventive war against Serbia and, worse, did not explicitly showed that Romania would not engage in a war expanded by the highly probable intervention of Russia. Hoping in a local war – which transpires from the text of the telegram – was in vain and did not justify the absence of strong reactions from the Romanian government, as both the King and Brătianu knew as early as June, from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sazonov, that an Austrian-Hungarian aggression against Serbia would inevitably drawn Russia's military intervention<sup>49</sup>.

A telegram from the German Emperor Wilhelm II dated July 31, explicitly invited the King to fulfill his obligations pursuant to the treaty of alliance<sup>50</sup>. One day later, the German minister plenipotentiary in Bucharest, Waldburg, presented to the Romanian decision-makers an official note from his government requesting immediate engagement in the war alongside the Central Empires, also indicating that Germany guarantees Romanian's control over Bessarabia<sup>51</sup>. While King Carol I – who had just learned from the Italian Minister, Fasciotti, that his country does not consider itself obliged to intervene since the war was provoked by Austria – told the German representative, Waldburg, he will convene a Crown Council to decide whether the conditions of the *casus foederis* were met, Brătianu assured the same Waldburg he would do everything possible to fulfill the obligations foreseen in the treaty of alliance<sup>52</sup>.

48. Arhivele Naționale ale României, București, [ANR], *Casa Regală*, dosar 43, f. 1-2, T cifr. 533, Franz Josef to Carol I, Bad Ischl, July 28, 1914, 4pm; Carol I to Franz Josef, Sinaia, July 16/29, 1914, without hour, copy.

49. L. ALBERTINI, *Le origini della Guerra del 1914*, III cit., p. 561; E. NASTOVICI, *România și Puterile Centrale în anii 1914-1916* cit., pp. 55-56.

50. ANR, *Casa Regală*, dosar 44/1914, f. 1.

51. G. E. SILBERSTEIN, *The Troubled Alliance* cit., p. 38.

52. *Ibidem*; L. ALBERTINI, *Le origini della Guerra del 1914* cit., III, p. 575.

The main ally, Austria-Hungary, formally requested Romania's cooperation in the war against Russia on August 1, 1914, through a telegram addressed by Franz Josef to King Carol I: «I hope and believe that [...] you will keep your word and order your men to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with us against Russia»<sup>53</sup>.

With the rapid expansion of the conflict following the entry into war of Russia, Germany and France between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> August, Romanian ruling elite was faced with the immediate need to take a decision on Romania's international position.

Taking into account the public opinion and knowing the position of the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, Carol I felt obliged to convene the Crown Council, a body with a purely advisory role, which before had met only once in the history of the Old Kingdom, in 1877. It should be mentioned that constitutional rules did not explicitly obliged him to convene the Council and, in his capacity as head of state, could have alone taken a decision engaging Romania into war<sup>54</sup>.

All members of the Government together with the Prime Minister, the presidents of the two chambers of the Parliament, former prime ministers and the heads of the political parties were summoned in Sinaia, the king's summer residence, on August 3, 1914, at 5pm. The council met in order to establish to what extent was Romania obliged to respond to the calls received from its allies to intervene in the war. More specifically, the Crown Council discussed the existence, or not, of the *casus foederis* stipulated in the treaty of accession with the Triple Alliance.

In the opening remarks, King Carol I made known his position by reading a statement written in French (because it ensured a «better portrayal of nuances» and was going to be made public):

«[...] Une politique de sentiment me paraît inadmissible dans un moment où le sort de l'Europe toute entière est en jeu, de l'Europe, dont la Roumanie est devenue, grâce à sa sage politique, un facteur si important. La prudence est une grande vertu, mais elle ne doit pas être poussée trop loin. Dans les heures de suprême

53. ANR, *Casa Regală*, dosar 46/1914, f. 1, T 57, Vienna, August 1, 1914, without hour.

54. See ION MAMINA, *Consilii de coroană*, București, Ed. Enciclopedică, 2007; KRISTA ZACH, *Primul război mondial în dezbaterile consiliilor de coroană ale României*, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A. D. Xenopol"*, t. XLIX, 2012, Supliment, pp. 143-149.

danger, le courage et la décision priment tout. Nous devons donc nous décider quelle voie est à suivre. J'envisage en premier lieu comme possibilité la neutralité. Mais l'histoire prouve que les pays qui restent neutres dans une conflagration générale, sont réduits à figurer au second plan, et à être écartés des décisions prises à la conclusion de la paix. La Roumanie ne mérite pas d'être exposée à une pareille humiliation. L'autre hypothèse qui se présente, est celle de nous prononcer pour l'un ou pour l'autre des groupes qui se trouvent en guerre. Je doute que ce soit dans le sentiment du pays de nous ranger du côté de la Russie. Il ne nous reste donc qu'une troisième issue: celle de nous unir à la Triple Alliance. Cette dernière représente des forces militaires d'une telle importance, qu'il est hors de doute que dans cette guerre formidable elle ne sorte victorieuse. Depuis une trentaine d'années déjà l'orientation politique de la Roumanie a gravité vers la Triple Alliance, à laquelle nous lie depuis, lors un engagement formel, signé par nos hommes d'état les plus importants et accepté par tous les partis. C'est une question d'honneur pour tout pays que de respecter sa parole donnée. À cette seule condition nous pouvons compter sans réserve sur les puissances amies de la Roumanie. Il ne sera pas facile de faire comprendre à l'opinion publique la situation délicate et les engagements existants, d'autant plus que d'autres visées, actuellement irréalisables, ont été caressées par elle»<sup>55</sup>.

As such, his choice was clearly in favour of entering the war alongside the Central Empires and against Russia.

It is plausible to assume that the Romanian king was inclined to consider Russia's mobilization and declaration of war as an unprovoked aggression against Austria-Hungary, which would constitute a *casus foederis* for Romania. British historian Seton-Watson wrote after the war that King Carol I personally conducted a survey among Romanian officers, likely after the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was known. The result of the survey was that only 110 out of approximately 6,000 officers declared themselves in favour of waging war alongside the Central Empires<sup>56</sup>. It is hard to know to what extent this information may be considered truthful. It is certain,

55. ANR, *Casa Regală*, dosar 41, f. 3-4, July 21 / August 3, 1914, typed text with corrections made by King Carol I *in manu propria*.

56. ROBERT W. SETON-WATSON, *O istorie a Românilor. Din perioada romană până la desăvârșirea unității naționale*, Brăila, Muzeul Brăilei-Ed. Istros, 2009, p. 405, footnote 1.

however, that much of the military elite and Romania's higher military command structures were Francophile and, largely, Austrophobe.

With the exception of the conservative leader Petre P. Carp, a renowned Germanophile, no other participant endorsed the King's choice. The chief of the Conservative Party, Alexander Marghiloman, asked for an analysis of the article defining the *casus foederis* in the treaty of alliance and after reading it, concluded that there was no obligation to intervene in the war provoked by Austria-Hungary<sup>57</sup>.

Ion I. C. Brătianu intervened on behalf of the liberal government at the end, in favour of neutrality, as the most convenient solution at the time<sup>58</sup>. The prime minister was well aware, like Marghiloman, of the state of mind hostile towards Austria-Hungary which was dominating the country, especially since he had a direct contribution in fuelling it<sup>59</sup>. Personally, Brătianu was more in favour of the *Entente*<sup>60</sup>, but was not willing to immediately risk a war against the Central Empires before being sure of «national» gains. What he obviously wanted to avoid was to engage in war without compensations. He feared Germany, but at the same time he was not truly convinced of the combative force of the Western countries<sup>61</sup>.

In the Prime Minister's view, the obligation to engage in war based on the treaty of alliance was ruled out; the same regarding a spontaneous participation in the war as per the followings: 1. the population was hostile towards Austria-Hungary; 2. *for Romania the risk was far too large and disproportionate as compared to the potential benefits*; 3. the army was

57. ALEXANDRU MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924*, Bucharest, Ed. Institutului de Arte Grafice «Eminescu», 1927, vol. I, pp. 232-234; ION GHEORGE DUCA, *Amintiri politice*, Muenchen, Jon Dumitru-Verlag, 1981, I, pp. 54-55.

58. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., p. 234; I. G. DUCA, *Amintiri politice* cit., pp. 57-58.

59. HOLGER H. HERWIG, *The First World War. Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014<sup>2</sup>, p. 32.

60. Brătianu told the Russian minister Poklewskii since July 28, 1914, that Russia should not fear a hostile action from Romania. ALFRED J. RIEBER, *Russian Diplomacy and Rumania*, in *Russian Diplomacy and Eastern Europe 1914-1917*, a cura di Alexander Dallin, Merritt Abrash, Gifford D. Malone, Michael Boro Petrovich, James M. Potts, Alfred J. Rieber, (Columbia University Russian Institute Occasional Papers), New York, King's Crown Press, 1963, p. 241.

61. G. E. SILBERSTEIN, *The Troubled Alliance* cit., p. 38-39; *La Romania nella Grande Guerra: Documenti militari e diplomatici italiani: 1914-1918*, a cura di R. Dinu - I. Bulei, București, Ed. Militară, 2006, p. 42, n. 6.

not prepared<sup>62</sup>. We owe this summary of the point of view presented by Brătianu to Baron Fasciotti, who was in contact with the Romanian Prime Minister shortly after the Crown Council came to an end. In my opinion, it can also be considered more objective than other Romanian contemporary testimonies regarding the Council's debates (such as the testimony of the «Germanophile» A. Marghiloman; or that of I. G. Duca, a supporter of the *Entente*).

What essentially transpires from this synthesis is the unembellished opportunistic reasoning that motivated the actions of the Romanian Prime Minister. The offer made by the Central Empires was worth incomparably much less than what could be obtained at the expense of Austria-Hungary. Bessarabia was a secondary objective and had no value for Romania unless Russia would come out from the war very weakened so as not to be able to reconquer it<sup>63</sup>. Between a province with about one million Romanians, heavily Russified and hard to keep because of a permanent dangerous neighborhood with the Eastern Empire, and the Romanian territories within Austria-Hungary, with a Romanian majority population of approximately 6 million, the choice could be only one. It does not emerge in any way that Brătianu understood, then or in the following years, what dangers could arise at the end of the war from neighboring with a victorious Russia, unconstrained in its external action by another regional Great Power such as Austria-Hungary. In other (more direct) words, there was no place in Brătianu's national project for looking or even discussing security solutions that were absolutely necessary for a future Great Romania, especially in a hostile and unsteady environment like Europe after 1914.

After almost 3 hours of debate, the arrival of a telegram officially announcing that Italy had declared itself neutral – considering there was no *casus foederis* – influenced the discussion by expediting a resolution already outlined. The Crown Council concluded with a majority that the conditions of *casus foederis* are not met, and declared itself for an «armed neutrality» of Romania.

62. 1918 *la Români* cit., I, p. 445, n. 85, Fasciotti to Salandra, Sinaia, August 4, 1914.

63. L. ALBERTINI, *Le origini della Guerra del 1914* cit., III, p. 575. The same idea was expressed by the conservative leader Ion N. Lahovari within the Crown Council: “[...] A Russia with one hundred fifty million Slavic people at the East, seeking to take Bessarabia from us, which the Triple Alliance is offering us today in order to join her”. I. G. DUCA, *Amintiri politice* cit., p. 55.

It is important to note here that the position of Italy (although still not officially confirmed) was known to some of the participants in the Crown Council since the morning of August 3. Brătianu had learned this the day before<sup>64</sup>, but skillfully asked to have the official confirmation brought to him to Sinaia so he can make use of it in his action to impose neutrality as the only solution<sup>65</sup>. «Italy's Neutrality» - later wrote very candidly the liberal minister I.G. Duca - «was of great importance for Romanians [meaning for the liberal ministers – *author's note*] because those determined<sup>66</sup> to support neutrality in the Crown Council would have felt more at ease»; they would no longer have the «scruples that some of them were having, namely that by proclaiming Romania's neutrality they would appear in the eyes of the world as a country that broke its word»<sup>67</sup>. Brătianu will also make use of the «Italian example» later, in order to argue in favour of his own plans during the discussions at the second Crown Council in August 1916 (when the matter of entering the war alongside *Entente* was not debated, but merely communicated to the participants as a decision reached by the king and the premier)<sup>68</sup>.

Confronted with the view expressed by most participants, King Carol I declared that «being a constitutional king» he could not

64. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., p. 232.

65. ȘERBAN RĂDULESCU-ZONER, *Convergences des relations diplomatiques roumano-italiennes à la veille de la première guerre mondiale*, in *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, LXI, 1974, 3, pp. 427-445, p. 444.

66. Meaning the entire liberal government: «We returned to Sinaia fully determined, whatever the consequences, to support the neutrality in the Crown Council. Brătianu showed the King that what he has foreseen actually happened, namely that nobody wishes to follow him into a war alongside Austria - Germany. We got it started to see if we are able to secure a due majority around this solution». I. G. DUCA, *Amintiri politice* cit., pp. 49-50.

67. I. G. DUCA, *Amintiri politice* cit., p. 49. For what example of a decision Italy was offering at that time, see H. H. HERWIG, *The First World War* cit., p. 32. «Rome was in a state of chaos by 31 July–1 August 1914. The Navy was ready to mobilize for war. The Army War Minister General Dino Grandi declared, was not, owing to a shortage of uniforms. On 29 July General Cadorna asked Victor Emmanuel III for permission to send three Italian army corps to the Rhine. Two days later, the Cabinet voted for neutrality. On 2 August the King agreed to Cadorna's request, just as the Cabinet made its neutrality decision public»!

68. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., II, p. 149. «Brătianu: [...] Italy's abstention added to this, through which, and only with whose military contribution was stipulated that a Romanian army may stay next to an Austrian-Hungarian one. – I deny this. [...]».

declare war by himself and therefore accept their vote<sup>69</sup>. Based on the contemporary testimonies, it appears quite clear that King Carol I did not consider, neither during the Council's meeting nor later, that Romania abandoned, by its decision of neutrality, the alliance with the Central Empires or that he was willing to give up this alliance to wage war against Austria-Hungary<sup>70</sup>. According to the president of the Chamber of Deputies, Pherekyde, at the end of the Council Carol I pointed to the text of his statement saying it is his political testament<sup>71</sup>. The king wrote to Emperor Wilhelm II on August 14, 1914, that he hoped the opportunity would arise in the future to keep his word to his allies, and come into action on their side<sup>72</sup>.

The only concession made to the allies (the Central Empires) was the decision issued by the Government, convened immediately after the Crown Council (at 9 pm,) to abandon its position as intransigent defender of the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, in order to allow Bulgaria to intervene against Serbia without fearing Romanian retaliation<sup>73</sup>. This statement alone, even if made opportunistically only for the ears of the Central Empires, says it all about the depth and cordiality of the Romanian-Serbian relations, so much praised before the crisis of July 1914. In the Prime Minister's understanding, this concession would have kept Romania away from a Bulgarian aggression<sup>74</sup>.

Clearly, neutrality was not Brătianu's final choice, but merely a cover behind which the Romania's future entry into war had to be organized, on the side of those able to provide maximum gains. But as long as the King was upright on the issue of war against the Central Empires, the only possibility for the prime minister was to practice a policy of *doppia partita*:

69. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., I, p. 236; I. G. DUCA, *Amintiri politice* cit., p. 62.

70. R. SETON-WATSON, *O istorie a Românilor* cit., p. 408. See also A. J. RIEBER, *Russian Diplomacy and Rumania* cit., pp. 240, 248; A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., I, p. 240.

71. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., I, p. 237.

72. ANR, *Casa Regală*, dosar 48/1914, f. 2; E. NASTOVICI, *România și Puterile Centrale în anii 1914-1916* cit., p. 66.

73. G. E. SILBERSTEIN, *The Troubled Alliance* cit., p. 39; L. ALBERTINI, *Le origini della Guerra del 1914* cit., III, p. 566; G. E. TORREY, *Romania and the Belligerents, 1914-1916*, in ID., *Romania and World War I* cit., p. 10; R. SETON-WATSON, *O istorie a Românilor* cit., p. 406.

74. G. E. SILBERSTEIN, *The Troubled Alliance* cit., p. 39.



being «with Germany while with the King [in Sinaia - *Author's note*], with Russia in Bucharest»<sup>75</sup>.

«Armed neutrality» was not a permanent solution for the King either, who hoped, at least until the Battle of the Marne (September 25, 1914), for a sounding victory of the German armies intended to create the necessary conditions for Romania's entry into war alongside its legitimate allies. As it is well known, this hope died for good once with the passing of Carol I, two months later.

With the death of the sovereign, on October 10, 1914, the ultimate decision making unit, in the formula established by the developments of the last two decades, ceased to exist. «As long as the old King still lived – note Sir Winston Churchill in 1927 – his influence was fairly large to prevent Romania from declaring war on Austria, despite [the result of] the Battle of Lemberg and the advance of the Russian armies in Galicia»<sup>76</sup>.

In my opinion, the turning point in the diplomatic history of modern Romania, perhaps even more important than the decision on neutrality taken in August 1914, was the passing of King Carol I. The King's death led to the reconfiguration of the ultimate decision making unit, as the prime minister emerged as the predominant leader with all the consequences resulting from Ion I. C. Brătianu's intellectual and ideological features, choices, and background. Among these was also the decision to enter the world war alongside the powers of the *Entente*, in the summer of 1916 (after two years of exasperating delays and a double-dealing policy).

During neutrality, the daily management of foreign policy came under his exclusive responsibility and meant an even more pronounced isolation of decision-making. The premature disappearance of King Carol I, on October 10, 1914, made him all-powerful in a decision-making environment easily manageable and predominantly pro-*Entente*. The new king, Ferdinand I (1914-1927), was always a secluded and undecided character, and perhaps more than willing to abandon the dominant position in the decision-making group in favor of his prime minister. More energetic and

75. A. MARGHILOMAN, *Note Politice 1897-1924* cit., I, p. 236. "The King of Romania, Carol I" - noted in his diary the French ambassador to Petersburg, Maurice Paléologue, on October 12, 1914 – «died yesterday at the age of 76. [...] As long as he lived, we had no chance to join Romania to our cause». [...]. *România în timpul Primului Război Mondial. Mărturii documentare*, vol. I, 1914-1916, București, Ed. Militară, 1996, p. 270.

76. *România în timpul Primului Război Mondial. Mărturii documentare* cit., p. 60.

with very clear choices, Queen Mary was a substitute for the sovereign in the decision-making sphere, and at the same time, the main advocate of the cause of the *Entente*<sup>77</sup>.

Regarding the policy promoted by Brătianu during the two years of neutrality, the Romanian historiography wrote, invariably, that it was put in the service of the national ideal. Brătianu was – how else? – the creator of Great Romania, the skillful patriot, the clever and persistent diplomat, not at all a «master of Byzantine diplomacy»<sup>78</sup>. Somehow more nuanced, one of the best researchers of the topic, the American historian Glenn Torrey, tried to demonstrate that the Romanian prime minister envisaged the victory of *Entente* after Marna and sought to use this victory to achieve the national program. His diplomacy had therefore, from the very beginning, a clear and well-established objective – the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary – and involved a lengthy and cautious preparation in order to achieve it<sup>79</sup>.

Certain is the fact that, after the King's death, Brătianu was free to maneuver towards the desired political direction and develop a line of negotiations with the *Entente* powers and, in particular, with Russia, already secretly open immediately after the Crown Council of August 3<sup>80</sup>.

The Russian government made proposals of an alliance ever since the end of July 1914, seeking to obtain an immediate intervention of Romania alongside the *Entente*. Sazonov relied on the opportunism of the Romanian politicians, measured at its fair value, but he pushed for it at the wrong time (at the end of July and beginning of August 1914), not realizing that the liberal Prime Minister was not yet able to decide alone. «Romania and Italy suffer from megalomania» - was Sazonov's earlier opinion - «but

77. «Ce qui est certain c'est que personne au monde, pas même Elise [Eliza Brătianu – *Author's note*], ne connaît le fond de la pensée de Brătianu, mais quoiqu'il fasse la volonté et la poussée sont si fortes que ni lui, ni personne ne pourra lui résister. Le Roi est forcément plus maniable que son oncle, car s'il a les reins mieux portants, il les a moins solides. Il y a aussi quelqu'un qui veille dans l'ombre et dont l'influence croît chaque jour, c'est la Reine». ANR, *Fond Kretzulescu*, dosar 904, f. 211-214, Alexis Catargi to Alexandru Emanuel Lahovari, Bucharest, November 22, 1915. See also G. E. TORREY, *Romania and the Belligerents, 1914-1916* cit., p. 17.

78. SHERMAN DAVID SPECTOR, *România și Conferința de Pace de la Paris. Diplomația lui Ion C. Brătianu*, Iași, Institutul European, 1995, p. 13 ss.

79. G. E. TORREY, *Romania and the Belligerents, 1914-1916* cit., p. 14.

80. VLADIMIR N. VINOGRADOV, *Romania in the First World War: The Years of Neutrality, 1914-1916*, in *The International History Review*, vol. 14, 1992, 3, p. 454.

are not strong enough to achieve their plans openly; they must settle for an opportunistic policy, constantly seeking to find out on which side the power lies in order to pull towards it»<sup>81</sup>. The power lied with Russia and the Western allies, believed the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. With countries such as Italy and Romania it was to be negotiated aggressively, from the position of a partner sought by the others. Therefore, the government in Bucharest could have been offered the recognition of the applicability of the principle of nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian territories inhabited by Romanians, but only in exchange for immediate engagement. It could not hope for compensations in exchange for neutrality. «Nothing for nothing» was Sazonov's slogan in the discussions had with the Western allies on engaging Italy and Romania<sup>82</sup>.

This determination vanished pretty quickly, however, in the last days of July 1914, and turned into disarray and haste. On July 31, the Russian representative in Bucharest was instructed to offer concessions in exchange for Romania's intervention. Poklewskii, fearing a commitment of Romania alongside the Central Powers, rushed to reach an understanding and, during discussions with Brătianu, agreed with his proposal to consider Romania's neutrality as proof of a friendly attitude that could be compensated (August 2, 1914). By taking this step, Poklewskii informally gave up the main asset Russia had in the negotiations with Romania, in exchange for «nothing». But this was not less damaging to his government. In the next two months, all Sazonov's efforts to win Romania on the side of the *Entente* in the form of an immediate military intervention were weakened by the hasty promise of his envoy<sup>83</sup>.

Eventually, a formal Romanian-Russian agreement was signed only at the beginning of October 1914, in the form desired by Brătianu. In exchange for a benevolent neutrality, the Russian government undertook to recognize the right of Romania «*d'annexer les régions de la Monarchie Austro-Hongroise habitées par des Roumains*»<sup>84</sup>.

81. Cited in A. J. RIEBER, *Russian Diplomacy and Rumania* cit., p. 242.

82. VASILE POPA, *Misiunea Generalului Coandă la STAVKA (1916-1917)*, București, Ed. Militară, 2010, p. 60.

83. A. J. RIEBER, *Russian Diplomacy and Rumania* cit., p. 244.

84. See the Russian note, published in D. C. GIURESCU, R. DINU, L. CONSTANTINIU, *Romanian Diplomacy. An Illustrated History, 1862-1947* cit., p. 186. "Pétrograd, le 18 Septembre/1 Octobre 1914: [...] Pour ce qui a trait spécialement à la Bucovine, le principe de la majorité de la population

Brătianu knew from the outset that any future action against Austria-Hungary required coordination with Russia, but continued to delay – (first citing the fear of a Bulgarian aggression and then all the negative military developments of the Russian armies on the Eastern front) – as to have the maximum of Romanian's claims (Transylvania, Bukovina up to the river Prut and Banat up to the river Theiss<sup>85</sup>) recognized both by the Russian government and its Western allies. Only in the summer of 1916, the Brussilov offensive created again the favorable conditions necessary for an aggressive bargain with Romania.

Due to the similarity of the positions the two countries had with regard to the war, Brătianu watched Italy's movements very carefully from the beginning and sought to reach a formal agreement with the government in Rome in view of organizing a joint military and even diplomatic action. The Italian side showed the same type of interest, even since the end of July 1914<sup>86</sup>. As an outcome of this affinity, the two governments signed two agreements – on 23 September 1914 and on 6 February 1915, respectively – pledging to maintain neutrality, to consult each other and act jointly in case of changes in the international context, and not to abandon neutrality without at least 10 days prior notice<sup>87</sup>. In the end, both agreements remained a dead letter. The Italian Government did not comply with the agreement, as it did not inform the government in Bucharest either on the negotiations with the *Entente*, or on signing the London treaty. «Romania wanted simultaneous negotiations. Nothing was done. Why?» - the jour-

servira de base à la délimitation des territoires à annexer soit par la Russie, soit par la Roumanie. [...] La Roumanie pourra occuper les territoires su indiquées au moment qu'elle jugera opportun. [...] En échange de ce qui précède, la Roumanie, de son côté, s'engagera à observer, jusqu'au jour où elle occupera les régions de la Monarchie Austro-Hongroise habitées par des Roumains, une neutralité bienveillante à l'égard de la Russie. [...]».

85. *La Romania nella Grande Guerra* cit., p. 82, n. 39, Fasciotti to Sonnino, Bucharest, April 17, 1915; *Ivi*, p. 94, n. 48, Ferigo to the Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Bucharest, May 14, 1915; *Ivi*, pp. 264-265, n. 205, Ferigo to the Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Iași, September 16, 1917.

86. G. E. TORREY, *Romania and World War I* cit., p. 79.

87. ANR, *Casa Regală*, dosar 61, f. 1, 9; G. E. TORREY, *The Rumanian-Italian Agreement of 23 September 1914*, in *Slavonic and East European Review*, 64 (1966), pp. 403-20; Ș. RĂDULESCU-ZONER, *Convergences des relations diplomatiques roumano-italiennes à la veille de la première guerre mondiale* cit., pp. 427-445; E. NASTOVICI, *România și Puterile Centrale în anii 1914-1916* cit., p. 72, pp. 121-123. The second agreement stipulated that in the event of an unprovoked attack from Austria-Hungary, the two states should assist each other.

nalist Luigi Albertini was wondering in February 1916<sup>88</sup>. Because during the discussions between the two governments sense was undermined by the «sacred egoism» of the decision makers speaking on their behalf.

Brătianu was interested to legitimize a future engagement of Romania in the war using the Italian example and, at the same time, to strengthen its negotiation position with the *Entente* powers (in fact, Russia), showing that it acts in tandem with Italy. Until April 1915, however, when increasingly persistent rumors began to circulate about Italy's negotiations with the *Entente*, the Romanian prime minister did not seek to explicitly inform the Italian side what Romania's claims were<sup>89</sup>.

On the opposite side, the attitude of the Italian government towards Romania (prejudiced *a priori* by an earlier reference framework such as *Grande Potenza - Piccola Potenza*), was based on the same opportunistic-pragmatic approach: increasing its own diplomatic potential in the negotiations with the Allies in London by displaying a relationship of patronage with Romania. Italy was interested, therefore, in keeping Romania in its sphere of influence in order to strengthen its own negotiation position with the British and the French, but also to avoid a possible association of Romania with the Central Empires. The government in Rome avoided, however, to bring both irredentisms to the table during the discussions with the *Entente* and, especially, kept away from proposing a joint negotiation of the Italian and Romanian national claims.

Eventually, the two Latin countries proceeded to war asynchronous (from a temporal point of view and not in relation to their choices). Italy entered the war alongside the Western powers, in May 1915, while Romania continued to wait for «the right moment» for more than a year, until August 1916.

88. LUIGI ALBERTINI, *I giorni di un liberale. Diari, 1907-1925*, a cura di Luciano Monzali, Bologna, il Mulino, 2000, p. 200 (February 3, 1916).

89. *La Romania nella Grande Guerra* cit., p. 95, n. 48, Ferigo to the Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Bucharest, May 14, 1915.



## Italy in the Great War: a Perspective from Bulgaria. Nikola Genadiev's Visit to Rome

Since the revival of the Bulgarian state in 1878, relations between Rome and Sofia had been characterized by mutual interest and friendship. Bulgaria's rapprochement with the Dual Monarchy, further to the catastrophic outcome of the Balkan Wars, had roused Rome's uncertainty and fear: would Bulgaria be an asset for the Triple Alliance or just an ally of the dangerous neighbour Austria-Hungary? Once again the latter, its allied-rival, was Rome's major concern. Italy's position was once again that of a bridge between the two Triples: on the one hand it was not desirable that Vienna extend its influence in the Balkans, on the other hand it was feared that these could form a single Slavic bloc, with St. Petersburg as a general point of reference. Italy thought that the Balkan storm of 1912-13 could be weathered and that the balance, which Italy itself had managed to undermine with the Libyan war, could be restored. However it was only wishful thinking. Italy did not take a stand on the Franco-Russian initiatives aimed at curbing the Bulgarians' attempts to settle the score, nor did it do so on the Austro-Bulgarian rapprochement: it was a cautious wait-and-see policy typical of a state that still feels too small among great nations, as its conduct in the first months of World War I would prove.

For the Balkan countries Italy was an important player, and everyone was interested in the directions its neutrality would take, with its vigilant, prudent waiting: some were fearful, like Turkey and especially neighbouring Serbia and Greece; others, like Bulgaria and Romania, were hoping to gain its support for their national claims. Although Bulgaria was convinced that the new conflict could offer the hoped-for opportunity to recover territories lost with the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913, it initially maintained a neutral position. It was equally conscious, in fact, that not choosing between the two opposing camps would no doubt allow it to keep its military and economic resources untouched; at the end of the conflict, however, "it



would bring little or nothing”<sup>1</sup>. The Bulgarian government was therefore confronted with the difficult task of navigating the perilous waters of the superpowers’ diplomacy games, deciding between neutrality and intervention and, in the latter case, choosing with whom to ally themselves to get the desired results. At the time, the choice of neutrality was providential, but the government also had to consider the loan that, after being rejected by the French, they had to take out in July 1914 with a consortium of German banks. The harsh conditions under which it was granted, de facto bound Bulgaria to the German economy, but it did not force it to side with the Central Powers.

It was therefore a priority for the Bulgarian government to probe the provisions of the two sides on future payments, a matter on which the representatives of the belligerent countries accredited in Sofia had only given vague, even contradictory information. In an international context that appeared particularly complex, in which the positions of both belligerents and neutrals were not at all clear, prone as they were to continuously changing influences, Sofia’s uncertainty and hesitation were made worse by the increasingly insistent rumours of a possible switching of Italy and Romania, long-term allied of the Central Powers, to the Entente camp.

The Italians’ choice of neutrality had immediately attracted the attention of the Balkan kingdom’s government and public; recent news of a possible switching over to the other camp had made it imperative to gather first-hand information on the intentions of the two countries not yet at war, Italy and Romania. Hence the mission in Rome in early 1915 of a skilled politician and former foreign minister Nikola Genadiev (1868-1923), with

1. The present essay has been translated from Italian by Monica Boria. Quotations from original Slavic sources have also been translated via Italian.

A detailed overview of the Bulgarian attitude, both as an object and subject of the great diplomatic game during the first two years of the war is outlined in the volume by GEORGI MARKOV, *Goljamatata gonja, i bǎlgarskijat ključ za evropejskija pogreb*, 1914-1916 [The Great War and the Bulgarian Key to the European Powder Keg], Sofia, Akademičesko izdatelstvo “Prof. Marin Drinov”, 1995, p. 101. Among the numerous studies appeared on the topic, please refer also to: KEITH ROBBINS, *British Diplomacy and Bulgaria 1914-1915*, in *Slavonic & East European Review*, 49 (1971), pp. 560-585; ANNE CHRISTINE HOLDEN, *Bulgaria’s entry into the First World War. A diplomat study 1913-1915*, University of Illinois, Ph.D. thesis, 1976; RICHARD J. CRAMPTON, *Bulgaria 1878-1918*, New York, East European Monographs, 1983; RICHARD C. HALL, *Bulgaria’s Road to the First World War*, Boulder (Colorado) Eastern European Monographs, 1996; ELENA STATELOVA, STOJČO GRANČAROV, *Istorija na nova Bǎlgarija, 1878-1944*, Tom III, Sofija, Anubis, 1999, pp. 209-340.

the express purpose of “obtaining information about the actual state of affairs, the probable duration of the conflict, the objectives, the intentions of the Great Powers at the peace conference, the plans of the two sides at war for the future arrangement of the Balkan states, and Italy’s intentions before the crisis in general and with regard to the Balkan peninsula in particular”<sup>2</sup>.

Genadiev was born in Bitolja (Macedonia) in November 1868 in a Bulgarian family who actively participated in the Bulgarian Renaissance. His grandfather Genadij had taken an active part in the struggle for the autocephaly of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and was then elected Metropolitan of Debăr, Veles and Bitolja, while his father, a schoolteacher, had devoted his life to the promotion of the Bulgarian language and culture. In 1875, the Balkans had been the scene of uprisings of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian peoples still subjected to the sultan, and in April of the following year the Bulgarians had risen too. The Ottomans had easily had the better of them, and the ruthless repression that followed had forced survivors to flee. Genadiev’s family had moved to Plovdiv (the ancient *Philippoupolis*) capital of Rumelia where the young Nikola continued his studies. The Balkan situation was still far from a solution and only the war declared by Tsar Alexander II in April 1877 would force the Ottoman Empire to fall back to Constantinople and to accept peace. The treaty that followed, signed in San Stefano on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1878, would shape the new geopolitics of the peninsula where Greater Bulgaria would find its place, stretching from the Black Sea to the Aegean. It was a short-lived outpost under the Russian influence of South-East Europe, and was annulled by the Congress of Berlin in June of the same year, when the division of the Bulgarian lands into three parts was established as follows: the Principality of Bulgaria, with autonomous capital Sofia, the *vilayet* of Rumelia, with a Christian governor, and the regions of Thrace and Macedonia once again part of the Ottoman territory. The division had left Bulgarians deeply disappointed: several associations were born, among students too – and Genadiev was active in one of them – whose goal was the annexation of Rumelia, Thrace and Macedonia to the principality of Bulgaria. The pro-

2. Of his journey, the Bulgarian politician drew up a detailed report for his government on his return to Sofia. The report was reprinted several times over the years. The quotations here are taken from the first edition: *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev po missiata mu v stranstvo ot 18 aprilij 1915g.* (Report dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 1915 by Dr Genadiev on his mission abroad), Sofia, Pečatnica “Balkan”, 1919, p. 4.

claimed annexation of the Provinces to the Principality in September 1885 took place against the will of the Powers and neighbouring Serbia – fearful of seeing its position in the Balkans diminished by a big Bulgaria – and led to the brief Serbian-Bulgarian conflict, in which Genadiev participated as a volunteer. The Bulgarian victory ratified the Bulgarian-Rumelian union and exacerbated the hostility of the protecting power, Russia, whose opposition would result in an overt anti-Russian sentiment in Genadiev, and other politicians to be (Zahari Stoyanov, Stefan Stambolov and others), thus influencing their future choices.

After leaving the principality to study law in Brussels, Genadiev continued to follow closely the events in his country. His sympathies inevitably were with the Russophobic nationalist regime installed by the premier Stambolov. It was natural, therefore, on his return to Plovdiv in 1891, to continue, alongside the legal profession, with his political commitment, and work with his brother in the editorial team of the local paper *Balkanska Zora* (Balkan Dawn), which openly supported Stambolov's policy while criticizing his violent methods. Genadiev immediately distinguished himself for the moderate tones and neutral language of the articles, far from the abusive terms commonly found among other Bulgarian journalists. The following year, his meeting with Stambolov marked a decisive turning point in his life: he joined the National Liberal Party – in whose ranks he would remain even after the fall of the premier Stambolov (1894) – shortly becoming one of its major exponents. Elected deputy to the National Assembly in 1900, he would be noticed once again for his oratorical skills, balanced tones and persuasive speeches.

In the early years of the new century, at the time of the new crisis that shook the Balkans and in particular Macedonia, the National Liberal Party returned to power (May 1903 - January 1908) and Genadiev was appointed Minister of Justice and subsequently Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. The uprising of the Young Turks, who seized power in Constantinople in July 1908, had important repercussions in Bulgaria that, two months later, proclaimed its independence from the Ottoman Porte.

Forever oscillating between Vienna and St. Petersburg, in 1909 Sofia chose once again to strengthen its ties with Russia. Russophile governments were leading the country in the years that saw the sealing of the Balkan alliances, harbingers of the 1912 crisis. At the outbreak of the First Balkan War, though no longer young, Genadiev decided to participate as a

volunteer. The conflict had immediately laid bare the difficulties faced by Bulgaria which, exposed on several fronts, had failed to resolve any of the disputes with its allies, and had maintained a rigid attitude, confident of St. Petersburg's support. The Treaty signed in London on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1913 did not restore peace in the Balkans, quite the opposite: it would shortly lead to a new conflict in which Sofia would find itself under fire from Serbia, Greece, Romania and, later on, Turkey. It was the failure of Russophile party politics and of Russia itself, which had been in favour of a negotiated solution. In early July 1913, the leaders of the opposition parties Genadiev, Vasil Radoslavov, Dimităr Tončev, took the opportunity to put pressure on the sovereign, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, to ask for the support of Austria-Hungary, which had been actively forging a coalition of anti-Serbian Balkan countries since the spring. When, a few days later, before the imminent collapse of the country, the Russophile government resigned, the king decided to invite the three liberal parties to form the new government, with Radoslavov at the helm. Genadiev was appointed foreign minister. The Liberals would lead their nation towards the Central Powers causing their country's debacle and the definitive loss of Macedonia.

Bulgaria's defeat and the conclusion of the Treaty of Bucharest in August 1913 coincided with the least glorious moment of Genadiev's political life: accused of constitutional violations committed when he was minister of trade and agriculture, he was sentenced, but soon released. Despite these talked-about political involvements, the fame he enjoyed of an intelligent, capable politician, who boasted numerous international contacts and his renown as good speaker and confident leader determined to assert his ideas, made Genadiev the right man for an important albeit unofficial mission. In Sofia, as recalled by the same former minister in the introductory part of the report presented upon his return, it was hoped that he would be able to gather the information needed to "finally determine the strategy that the government should adopt so as not to expose Bulgaria to the risk of missing the opportunity to secure any territorial gains, as it was impossible to predict when and if one would present itself again after the terrible crisis was 'settled'"<sup>3</sup>.

The choice of Rome had been motivated by two sets of factors: firstly, the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry attached great importance to the Italian

position of the moment and its possible future directions; second, Rome was the capital of the only neutral power, where the most reliable information about the belligerents could be gathered. Almost all the powers involved in the conflict had sent their best ambassadors there, and it was presumed that other states would follow suit in the hope of dragging Italy to their side or convince it not to abandon its neutrality, all of which confirms the importance that the European powers attributed to the Italian capital whose eventual choice of camp would tilt the scales towards one of the two opposing sides. But Rome was also talked about as the venue for a possible peace conference. In short, it presented a series of favourable circumstances that would allow the gathering of information with the smallest margin for error.

Given the conflicting views and interests surrounding the future of the Balkans, Bulgarians believed that Italy could exert some influence in their favour. Having in mind the many common interests with Italy in the Balkan Peninsula, the government in Sofia had entrusted Genadiev, so he claims, with the task of probing the conditions under which it would be possible to get the Italians'support for the Bulgarian national cause<sup>4</sup>. To this end, it was paramount to understand the extent to which Italy was linked to Romania, and whether and how it would be possible to block Bucharest's attempts to isolate or harm Bulgaria<sup>5</sup>.

Genadiev departed from Sofia on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> December 1914 (according to the Julian calendar then used by Bulgarians, or 9<sup>th</sup> January 1915 according to the Gregorian)<sup>6</sup>. Before leaving, though, he had a brief meeting with the Italian envoy Fausto Cucchi Boasso, to inform him that he had received the assignment to go to Rome where he was to make contact with both the government and the various political circles. His mission, he added, had been decided suddenly and had no specific purpose<sup>7</sup>. There

4. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., pp. 3-4.

5. On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1914 the Romanian Prime Minister Brătianu and the Italian minister in Bucharest, Fasciotti, had signed an agreement which bound the two countries not to abandon their neutrality without preliminary mutual consultations. *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereafter DDI), Series V, volume I, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1914 - 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014, nn. 763, 774, 779. The DDIs are available on the Italian Foreign Office website: <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it>.

6. When quoting from the telegrams Genadiev sent to Sofia, the original date according to the Julian calendar will be indicated first, followed by the equivalent date in the Gregorian calendar.

7. DDI, the minister in Sofia, Cucchi, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Sofia, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1915, Series V, vol. II, doc. 601.

were actual aims, in fact, as we know, but that it was a sudden decision is confirmed by the fact that the Bulgarian special envoy in Rome, Dimităr Rizov<sup>8</sup>, had also been informed at the last moment.

The following day, even the Premier and Foreign Minister *ad interim* Vasil Radoslavov had wanted to meet Cucchi, to clarify certain aspects of the mission. Among other things he wanted to point out that the former minister was on his way to Rome as a “friend” of the Bulgarian government to study the international situation in what was then “the centre of Europe’s future politics”. He was therefore not authorized to speak on behalf of the government, which, in the event of any specific proposals, would directly address the Italian envoy in Sofia<sup>9</sup>.

The figure of Genadiev was well known to the Council not only for his past political activities but also for his present involvement in the Macedonian question. Just a few days before Genadiev’s departure, Cucchi had informed Sonnino that he was regarded as the key figure of the Macedonian movement<sup>10</sup>. According to James David Bouchier, the *Times*’ then correspondent from Sofia and very close to the Macedonian groups, Bulgaria was at the centre of an intensive diplomatic effort by the Austro-Germans. They were trying to persuade the Bulgarians, already in turmoil for the massacres that had taken place in Macedonia, to intervene in the neighbouring region, and the Bulgarian politician seemed to be playing along. However, among the foreign observers present in Sofia, Cucchi concluded, it was widespread belief that only a Russian defeat on the battlefield would leave a free hand to the Bulgarians in Macedonia.

On arrival, Genadiev preferred not to meet immediately with government officials out of respect for all Italians “greatly concerned” in the aftermath of the severe earthquake that at that time had struck Avezzano and a wide area of central Italy<sup>11</sup>. Only when it seemed appropriate, he

8. Special envoy in Rome from 18<sup>th</sup> June 1910.

9. DDI, the minister in Sofia, Cucchi, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Sofia, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1915, Series V, vol. II, doc. 608.

10. DDI, the minister in Sofia, Cucchi, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Sofia, 24<sup>th</sup> December 1914, Series V, vol. II, doc. 471.

11. *Diplomatičeski dokumenti po namesata na Bălgarija v evropejskata vojna. 1913-1915*, [Diplomatic documents for Bulgaria’s entry into the European war], hereafter DDB, Ministerstvo na Vănšnite Raboti i na Izpovedanijata, Sofija 1920, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radislavov, Rome 7<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 622, p. 333.



asked to meet with the Italian foreign minister Sidney Sonnino, who, to Genadiev's great satisfaction, arranged an appointment "immediately" (the same evening)<sup>12</sup>. The willingness shown by Sonnino and the fact that the audience, at which the special envoy Rizov was also present, had lasted a long time was interpreted by Genadiev as a sign of the interest that the Italian foreign minister must attribute to the relations with Bulgaria. Resorting to ideals and concrete interests, the former Bulgarian minister repeatedly stressed, during the conversation, the goal of his mission: it was in Bulgaria's interest to secure Italy's support, "whose unity had been made on the basis of the national principle" and from whom, he reminded him, "we [Bulgarians] received disinterested and sincere help"<sup>13</sup>. He also emphasized that, unlike Serbia and Greece, both overlooking the Adriatic Sea, Bulgaria had never had any conflicting interests with Italy, and it was easily foreseeable that this would remain so in the future. The Italian intervention in Vlore on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1914, continued the Bulgarian politician, had been well received by the government in Sofia, since the Italian presence on the Adriatic South-East coast would prevent the strengthening of Sofia's current "rival" countries, or rivals-to-be. With the measured language that had always characterized him, but leaving no room for doubt, the former Bulgarian minister had indicated what his country was expecting from Italy at the end of the conflict. It was about supporting his country to achieve its complete national unity, i.e. the annexation of Macedonia, which had been denied by the Treaty of Bucharest, a real injustice committed against the Bulgarians, "a cruel punishment for an entire people"<sup>14</sup>.

For Sonnino – according to Genadiev's reports – Italy's interests were not contrasting with Bulgaria's, and his country could expect its support. The Italian foreign minister had expressed his personal "full and sincere goodwill towards Bulgaria", a feeling that, he reassured him, was shared by the entire nation and which informed Cabinet policy. The "price paid by Bulgaria in this crisis – he added – is greater than people think"<sup>15</sup>.

12. *Ibidem*. The meeting took place on 6<sup>th</sup> January/19<sup>th</sup> January 1915.

13. Ivi, p. 334.

14. *Ibidem*.

15. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 7<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 622, pp. 334-336.



Sonnino had, however, refrained from promising anything concrete, in line with Italy's still undefined position<sup>16</sup>, and this had led Genadiev to explain, albeit cautiously, the reasons for his mission, i.e. to find out "if Italy, as a power interested in the Balkan peninsula, already had a plan, or were preparing one, for the future of the Balkans; if he expected an intervention and finally, if the Cabinet of Rome would find it appropriate (...) to share [with Sofia] this plan, (...) or a part of it, for an exchange of views and to identify any points for useful collaboration between the two parties"<sup>17</sup>. He emphasized that a balanced settlement in the Balkans would only be possible by overriding the Treaty of Bucharest, and this was the shared feeling of all Bulgarians.

On this point Sonnino had been clear: Rome would refrain from taking any action to reconcile the conflicting interests of the Balkan states<sup>18</sup>. Unlike other European powers – he was keen to stress – Rome had not done enough for those people to claim the right to exercise some influence. A clear reference to Russia, with which Italy intended to "avoid any misunderstanding on the issue"<sup>19</sup>, especially because, in Genadiev's view, "the cabinet of Rome had never thought of engaging in a venture [i.e. the Balkan bloc] whose success was doubtful, and did not wish to have differences with the government in St. Petersburg over a dispute Italy had no vital interests in"<sup>20</sup>.

The Italian Government's cautious attitude, incidentally not shared by the press, was for Genadiev tantamount to a refusal to make a clear commitment in favour of Bulgaria. When breaking the news to Sofia, the former minister preferred to abstain from commenting on the words used by the Council's leader, contrary to what he would do a few days later when Sonnino would again broach the subject before Genadiev himself and the three Entente ambassadors. During that meeting, the Italian Foreign Minister had reaffirmed that Italy would look favourably on any attempt at reconciliation between the Balkan countries, but it would not take any

16. DDI, telegram of the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, to the Ambassador in London, Imperiali, Rome 26<sup>th</sup> January 1915, Series V, vol. II, doc. 608.

17. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 7<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 622, p. 334.

18. *Ivi*, p. 335.

19. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., p. 7.

20. *Ibidem*.

action towards this. Sonnino, Genadiev explained, had found it necessary to reassure the Entente, which was actively negotiating with the various Balkan states, and to make clear that Italy would not have intruded and jeopardized the outcomes that they were hoping for. Once France, Russia and Britain had been reassured, Rome could, with greater chance of success, maintain a neutral position between the warring parties, one that would allow it to go about its interests without too much “noise”<sup>21</sup>.

In actual fact, among those in Italy who were in favour of a war against Austria, there were those who demanded that Rome act as a mediator in order to “bring the peoples of the Balkan to an agreement” and attract towards the Triple Entente both Romania and Greece, countries that otherwise might refrain from joining the war for fear of Bulgaria. They also argued that more efforts should be made to ensure that Bulgaria also came to a rapprochement with the Entente, so as “not to suffer risks and sacrifices for which the punishment [would be] Macedonia”.

Genadiev had in mind the articles written by the founder of the Italian Reformist Socialist Party, the interventionist Leonida Bissolati, who had proposed that Italy renounce its claims to Dalmatia in favour of Serbia in order to persuade Belgrade to cede Macedonia to Bulgaria, so that a Balkan bloc may be formed. The Russian government, however, had not looked on these proposals “with favour” and this reaction led Genadiev to realize, without any possibility for misunderstanding, the true meaning of Sonnino’s words: that other countries had done more for the Balkan peoples than Italy, and therefore they had the right to initiate a Balkan alliance.

From the conversations with Sonnino, Genadiev had failed to understand the Italian government’s intentions about a possible intervention in the conflict, but for him it was clear that if Italy were to join the war, this would only be on the side of the Entente. The only words that Genadiev had managed to drag out of Sonnino (to “provoke” as he himself said), was that “one cannot predict whether the neutral States will remain neutral until the end”, which the Bulgarian politician interpreted as “an allusion that was not about us [Bulgaria] but about Italy”<sup>22</sup>. To find out more, he asked for a meeting with the Prime Minister Antonio Salandra.

21. *Ibidem*.

22. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 7<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 622, p. 335.

During the “long talk” (in Genadiev’s words) that took place on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> /22<sup>nd</sup> January, both politicians repeated the salient ideas already covered with Sonnino. On two points – Italy’s entry into the conflict and the subsequent commitment with Romania – both of great interest to the Bulgarian politician, Salandra appeared less reserved than Sonnino<sup>23</sup>. While he could not ask directly whether Italy would join the war, the Bulgarian politician had however tried to provoke responses that would allow him to draw more reliable conclusions. From the tone of the conversation Genadiev guessed that the prime minister wished for Austria’s defeat, but had serious reservations about an Italian intervention. What was certain, in Genadiev’s view, was that if Russia had weakened Austria or if Romania had attacked it, Italy would almost certainly be forced to enter into war, irrespective of who was at the helm of its government; alternatively, if the military situation had remained unchanged and if Romania remained neutral, anyone who was at the head of the executive at that time would definitely not have changed their mind about Italy’s neutrality. Unlike Sonnino, “Salandra spoke at length in favour of an agreement between Romania and Bulgaria, both as a project in itself and as a *préface* to a common Balkan Agreement”, and mentioned three times the points which he considered most important. According to Genadiev, Salandra’s words betrayed his interest for a Romanian action aimed at occupying the Hungarian territories of Transylvania, an action that would be impossible without Bulgaria’s neutrality, in exchange for which Romania could make territorial concessions<sup>24</sup>. Salandra had not mentioned anything else, nor said if the Italian government would try to influence the Romanians so as to satisfy the Bulgarian claims. He had repeatedly stated that to get Romania to agree to cede territories to Bulgaria, the precondition was that the latter should no longer be bound to Austria and that nothing should block its freedom of action<sup>25</sup>. In any case – the prime minister concluded – he did not expect any response from his interlocutor about the future Bulgarian-Romanian relations. For its part, Genadiev had replied that those issues would have required a Bulgarian-Romanian preliminary

23. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 10<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 626, p. 340.

24. *Ibidem*. “As far as I know, – Salandra had said – Romania would be prepared to cede territories to Bulgaria [i.e. South Dobruja] only if Romania could expand towards Hungary”.

25. *Ibidem*.

agreement, and in that way he had avoided making any commitments on his country's future decisions.

Genadiev's meetings with the two leading representatives of the Italian government had caused concern to the British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, but in responding to the British diplomats, Salandra had minimized the events: it had only been about academic and informal discussions, no concrete proposals, nor responses. "They revolved around the idea, repeatedly expressed by Genadiev, that we could be the best guarantors of an agreement between Romania and Bulgaria, an idea that we have not denied nor confirmed, considering the uncertain character of the Bulgarian. And Genadiev is evidently suspected in Britain to be an indirect agent of the Central Powers; but he did not take on this role with us"<sup>26</sup>.

It was now certain that it was impossible to predict when or how the war would end, as the French Ambassador in Rome, Camille Barrère, had openly told Genadiev. And while he had not spared his advice on the action Sofia should take with regard to the conflict, Barrère was trying with almost excessive tenacity to find out about the issues addressed by Genadiev with the Italian ministers and what opinion he had formed on the intentions of Salandra's government. It was a clear sign, concluded the Bulgarian politician, of the importance that France attributed to Italy's intervention "or, more precisely, [that] it expected help and a way out"<sup>27</sup>. In the opposing camp, too – Genadiev wrote – the former Chancellor von Bülow, in Rome since December 1914 on a special assignment, was trying to get first-hand information and make pressure on Italy so as for it to remain neutral, in the certainty that its entry into the war alongside the Entente would have shortly been followed by Romania<sup>28</sup>. The Bulgarian politician preferred to maintain a prudent reserve with everyone and avoided to express his convictions by saying that his interlocutors were certainly better informed than him. Since his very first conversations with foreign diplomats, Genadiev became persuaded that the conflict, protracting for longer than initially anticipated, was creating apprehension among all belligerent parties. And

26. DDI, the Prime Minister, Salandra, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Rome 27<sup>th</sup> January 1915, Series V, vol. II, doc. 718.

27. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Rome 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 629, p. 343.

28. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 14<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 630, pp. 343-344.

this conviction he expressed to the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry in a telegram sent at the end of January 1915. "The superiority can be considered almost, perhaps even totally, secured by what belligerent party Italy will be prepared to join, that is to say Germany, if Italy remains neutral, the Triple Entente, if Italy, with its current daring spirit, declares war against Austria; and this is because Austria would have to fight against an army whose forces are intact, and because of the repercussions that Italy's entry will have on the neutral countries and on the French and the Russians"<sup>29</sup>.

Since his arrival in Rome, Genadiev had formed the conviction that the Italians unanimously shared favourable feelings towards Bulgaria, and a widespread willingness to support its cause. Among those who most openly showed friendship to the Balkan kingdom, Genadiev included Senator Benedetto Cirmeni who, during the Second Balkan War, had expressed in his articles full solidarity to the Bulgarians, without hiding his hostile feelings towards the Greeks and the Serbs<sup>30</sup>. An exponent of parliamentary and journalistic Giolittism and a champion of the Triple Alliance, Cirmeni had become a resolute neutralist at the outbreak of the European conflict, and had acted as the natural intermediary between the envoys of the Central Powers and Giovanni Giolitti, in negotiations aimed at warding off the Italian intervention on the side of the Entente. In line with his positions, Cirmeni had then expressed the view that the most reasonable solution for Italy would be to "come to an understanding" with Austria on the basis of territorial concessions, so as to pacify the Italian public, a solution strongly supported by the German ambassador von Bülow but not welcome in Vienna. As for the Balkans – Genadiev continued – Cirmeni thought that the Italian interests demanded a weakening of Greece, Italy's "archrival and opponent from time immemorial", an outcome that could be achieved only on condition that Bulgaria obtain territorial expansion. It was therefore Italy's interest to support Bulgaria in its national aspirations, because it was "a natural ally against Serbia, which, if it had expanded to

29. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 629, p. 343.

30. *Ibidem*. "Because not only he loves Bulgaria, but he also wants to harm the Serbs and the Greeks".

incorporate Dalmatia, would have also wanted Trieste, thus becoming a new dangerous enemy for Italy”<sup>31</sup>.

Much to his satisfaction, Genadiev conveyed to his government that the interventionist Leonida Bissolati, when talking to him, had judged Sofia’s claims as legitimate and had argued that Romania, Serbia and Greece should have to make some territorial concessions in its favour<sup>32</sup>. To convince Athens to take such a step, Bissolati had added, Italy would have had to promise Greece the Aegean Islands occupied with the Libyan war. Territories would be ceded in exchange for Bulgarian neutrality, which was seen by interventionists – Genadiev explained – as a necessary condition to let Romania into the war against Austria-Hungary, which would have made it impossible for Italy to remain neutral<sup>33</sup>.

While Genadiev had the opportunity to personally meet some of the most important journalists, in Bulgaria the echoes of the Italian press was coming through the publication of articles and correspondences in leading newspapers reported in Bulgarian by the *Pregled na čuždestrannija pečat* (Bulletin of the foreign press). Well-known were the *reportages* from Sofia and the Balkans from the correspondent of the *Giornale d’Italia* (Newspaper of Italy) Gubello Memmoli, (pseudonym of Count Giovanni Capasso Torre di Caprara), infused with sincerely favourable feelings towards Bulgaria and its national claims, that he called “legitimate”.

It soon became clear to Genadiev that the continued conflict was raising concerns on both sides and that all belligerents were placing their hopes on Italy whose entry into the war would ensure numerical superiority and new strength in one of the two coalitions. At that time, Rome’s neutrality was favouring German designs, while its intervention on the side of the Triple Alliance, in addition to acting as a catalyst for other neutral countries, would have created many problems to Austria-Hungary that would

31. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 628, p. 344.

32. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 10<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915, doc. 626, pp. 338-339.

33. For instance the article *Bălgarskata дума* (The Bulgarian word) published on the *Giornale d’Italia* and included in the *Pregled na čuždestrannija pečat* on the 2<sup>nd</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> January 1915; the article *Balkanskijat nacionalen vāpros* [The Balkan national question] in the same *Pregled* on 6<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> January 1915; *Edna strana tārsi svoja pāt* (A country looking for its own path) in *Pregled* on 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> January 1915 and others.

have had to fight against a fresh army<sup>34</sup>. From conversations entertained in Roman circles, and from the reading of the Italian press, it was clear that the government and the public were keen for good relations between Bulgaria and Romania to be restored, despite what had happened in the Second Balkan War. And that position was also well known in Sofia where the campaign for rapprochement between the two Balkan countries was supported in January 1915 by several newspapers, among them the *Concordia*, the *Vittoria* the *Secolo*, *La Stampa* (20 gennaio 1915), the *Corriere d'Italia*, and had been widely reported on the *Pregled na čuždestrannija pečat*<sup>35</sup>. Italy's interest was motivated by the possibility that Austria-Hungary could become the common enemy for Italy and Romania, as both countries had territorial claims. An eventuality that would find its emotional underpinnings in the common Latin heritage "cleverly exploited by our northern neighbours – Genadiev wrote – who have induced in the Italian public a generally widespread friendly attitude, and one that nobody is opposed to. Their friendship is strengthened by a shared antipathy, because this binds humans more closely than a shared liking for someone"<sup>36</sup>. It was logical, though, that if attacked or threatened by Bulgaria because of Dobrogea, Romania would no longer pose a serious threat to Austria-Hungary, whose position would be strengthened in the face of Italian claims. Anticipating a very likely Austrian inflexibility that could lead Italy to enter the war on the side of the Entente, Genadiev suggested to his government to seek an agreement with Turkey before becoming involved in a war against Athens and Belgrade (relations with Turkey were still tense, however, because of the territories beyond the Midia-Enos line, taken by the Bulgarians after the Treaty of London, and regained by the Turks at the end of the second Balkan war)<sup>37</sup>. An understanding with Turkey would have to be followed by one with Bucharest, in order to avoid a repeat of what had happened in the summer of 1913, when Bulgaria had found itself at war with all its neighbouring states. He commented bitterly: "If we had made arrangements with Romania back then, today Bulgaria would be great, strong and

34. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 629, p. 343.

35. *Pregled na čuždestrannija pečat* del 27<sup>th</sup> January /10<sup>th</sup> February 1915.

36. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., pp. 7-8.

37. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 14<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> January 1915, doc. 630, pp. 343-344.



prosperous”<sup>38</sup>. Good relations with Romania would have helped delay the Romanians and Italians’ entry into war, and would have favoured Bulgaria’s attainment of its goals, namely the maintenance of neutrality and Italy’s support for the Bulgarian cause<sup>39</sup>.

During his stay in Italy, Genadiev also went to Naples to meet other political personalities and important members of the Italian press, including Edoardo Scarfoglio, owner and director of the *Mattino* that the Bulgarian politician called “the newspaper with greater influence in southern Italy”. Scarfoglio had repeatedly written in the columns of his newspaper against the Italian participation in the war against Germany, as he was convinced that Rome could get much in return from Austria by renewing its alliance with the Central Powers. Scarfoglio believed that as soon as an agreement for territorial concessions by Austria had been reached, Bulgaria would be supported by Italy, whose vital interests would be safeguarded by a strong Bulgaria, a decisive player in the Balkans<sup>40</sup>.

From the many conversations and opinions gathered, Genadiev had become adamant that the Italians’ choice would depend on the willingness and speed with which Austria would agree to make concessions to them. Although he had no first-hand information, he could see that both the Austrian willingness to cede territories and the Italian claims depended very much on the circumstances of the moment, the situation on the battlefield, and the will of those who made decisions at the negotiating tables. If Austria had kept to its rigid position, Italy would enter the war, as Giovanni Giolitti had confirmed to Genadiev in a meeting, one that the Bulgarian had sought since his arrival, but had only managed to obtain towards the end of his stay<sup>41</sup>. Shortly before his departure on 20<sup>th</sup> February/5<sup>th</sup> March, he was granted another meeting with Sonnino, from which he concluded that the government in Rome had not yet made a decision. But the Italian Minister was more explicit than he had been in the first long meeting with him, and had firmly expressed the wish that an agreement between Bulgaria and Romania be reached. If this had happened, Sonnino had assured him

38. *Ibidem*.

39. *Ibidem*.

40. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 23<sup>rd</sup> January/4<sup>th</sup> February 1915, doc. 655, p. 364-365.

41. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 16<sup>th</sup> February /1<sup>st</sup> March 1915, doc. 707, p. 395.

that Italy would act in agreement with the two countries. He had also added that “in any case it was worth attempting such a policy”<sup>42</sup>.

In reporting on this meeting with Genadiev to the envoy Cucchi, Sonnino said that the Bulgarian had endeavoured to dispel any doubt as to the political implications of the loan taken out by Bulgaria with Germany before the conflict broke out, a loan that was obtained after a similar attempt in Paris had failed, as “it had not been possible to keep it separate from political constraints”<sup>43</sup>. Bulgaria was not therefore limited in its action, otherwise he would not have been able to carry out his mission in Rome. It was his country’s wish to proceed possibly in agreement with Rome, with which Bulgaria had many parallel interests or in common, but none against. Sonnino had reaffirmed that he was pleased the Bulgarian policy comply with the general lines of both Italy and Romania and concluded, “That if in 1912 it was a big mistake, in my view, not to have tried to get Bulgaria and Romania agree, even with some concessions, so *mutatis mutandis*, it would be of great help today if the two States could go along well with us, too, both by going the same way and on parallel lines”<sup>44</sup>.

The information gathered, allowed Genadiev to keep his government constantly informed not only of what was happening in Italy, but also on what was of concern to them. In his view, while the Central Powers were not hiding the intransigence of Vienna, not prepared to make any kind of concession in exchange for an agreement, the Italians were talking (not without emphasis) of mobilization in order to exert pressure on Austria. If the past Italian-Austrian alliance could be kept alive, it would be possible for the Central Powers to come to a successful conclusion of the war, otherwise “without this agreement [Germany and Austria] will be plunged into the unknown and the war could take a new unexpected route”<sup>45</sup>. A few days earlier, even the special envoy Rizov had expressed to the minister Radoslavov the opinion that the transfer of the Trentino to Italy was at the

42. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., p. 7.

43. DDI, the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, to the ministers in Bucharest, Fasciotti, and in Sofia, Cucchi, Rome 16<sup>th</sup> February 1915, Series V, vol. II, doc. 815.

44. *Ibidem*.

45. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 10<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> February, doc. 693, p. 386.

time the only way for the Central Powers to secure Italian neutrality on which, he reaffirmed, the Romanian one also depended<sup>46</sup>.

After leaving Rome, Genadiev went to Bern to continue on to Vienna and Budapest. But come to Bern, he decided to accept the French invitation – made to him when he was in Rome, which would cause him future adversity – and to travel to Paris where great was the interest in the opinions gathered by him in Italy. Only after that, passing through Vienna, he returned to Sofia to relate to the Cabinet on the outcome of his mission. He described it in a long and detailed report, expressing his impressions, and suggesting what would be the most appropriate measures to take in connection with the position of the different countries, without neglecting to make recommendations for a future Bulgarian policy. His starting point was the belief that the ultimate outcome of the war hinged on Italy's choice of camp.

With the information gathered, he managed to navigate quite well in the complicated international situation. The duty of every government was to direct their country's policy towards the alignment that would more likely yield greater benefits. Thus in his report he dwelled at length on the Italian position of the moment, discussing his forecast of possible scenarios. The first point concerned the Italo-French relations. Despite Germany's efforts to drag Italy into the war on their side, this was not to be, according Genadiev, as Italy could never declare war on France, even if it had wanted to, because the people would not have accepted it, or at least there would be serious disorders. If at the time of the signing of the Triple Alliance the Italian public opinion had been animated by anti-French feelings for what had happened in Tunis, to the point that the old hatred for Austria had not prevented a rapprochement between Vienna and Rome, the subsequent decades, Genadiev reminded his government, had been marked by a substantial friendship between Rome and Paris, and Bismarck's attempts to create tensions on the issue of Tunisia and Morocco had been vain<sup>47</sup>. Italy had also obtained that France "declare" their disinterestedness in the Tri-

46. DDB, Genadiev to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 16<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> January, doc. 636, p. 352. Even after Genadiev's departure, Rizov continued to inform Sofia on the progress of the Italian-Austrian negotiations, but as he himself pointed out, his sources were not the official ones.

47. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev cit.*, p. 11.

politania and Cyrenaica<sup>48</sup>, an agreement which was followed by a similar rapprochement with England. All this, together with the Italian-Austrian rivalry on Albania and the issues of the rights of the Italian people in the Habsburg lands, had gradually removed Italy from the Triple to which, in the words of the Bulgarian statesman, “it remained tied with strings of a soulless Treaty”<sup>49</sup>. What was jumping immediately to the eyes (a typical Bulgarian expression used by Genadiev) was that the French had withdrawn their forces from the Italian border and moved them to the Western front, thus succeeding in stopping the Germans. The Austrians, on the other hand, had retained their military contingents on the border with Italy. There could be no doubt as to which of the two contending parties were favoured by Italian neutrality; likewise, given the different positions that had emerged within the political parties and public opinion, there could be no doubt on Italy’s future choice, if Vienna had decided not to make any territorial concessions.

The second point took into consideration the different attitude of the Italian irredentists towards Austria and towards France. Everyone regarded as equally Italian lands both Trentino and Trieste, and Nice and Savoy, but while everybody in Italy, whether irredentist or Austria supporter, clamoured for Habsburgs lands inhabited by Italians, nobody asked France for the restitution of those provinces ceded with the Turin treaty of 1860. In France, too, there were those who claimed that if Austria had not taken a step in the direction of Rome’s requests, any government that had tried to prevent the entry into the conflict would be forced to resign. If Austria had agreed to make concessions, no one in Italy would have been able to declare war against Vienna.

The third point was that it was unthinkable that any Italian government would let the crisis be closed without taking any advantage from it or without making sure that Italy would gain enough from its neutrality, and that the war would not be a great risk. He also added that if Italy had been able to find a way not to fight against Germany and to receive some

48. Rome, Archivio Storico della Camera dei Deputati. Disegni e proposte di legge e incarti delle commissioni (1848-1943), Documenti diplomatici. Accordi italo-francesi (1900-1902), volume 1033, cc. 582-612 [Historical Archive of the Chamber of Deputies. Bills and Commissions Documents, 1848-1943, Diplomatic Documents. French-Italian Agreements, 1900-1902, vol. 1033, cc. 582-612].

49. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., p. 11.

benefits, it would do so<sup>50</sup>. Only Giolitti could persuade Italians to maintain neutrality with his slogan: “why go to war if you can earn enough even with neutrality”<sup>51</sup>. For the Italian politicians, however, the territorial concessions were not up for negotiation, they were not the price to pay for continued neutrality. An agreement would have sufficed, provided that it had been concluded in time not to force Rome “to go so far that going back would be difficult”<sup>52</sup>.

It had not escaped the Bulgarian politician’s attention that Rome looked upon the states at war in different ways: there were no hostile feelings towards Germany, France was looked on favourably, while Britain was greatly feared, since the coastlines were vulnerable<sup>53</sup>.

The contacts made during his time in Italy had enabled Genadiev to get a clear picture of the steps taken by the various powers’ diplomacy to convince Salandra’s government. In reporting on the Italian interests in Africa to the Council of Bulgarian Ministers, Genadiev stressed the ability of French diplomats in taking the opportunity offered by Austrian intransigence to flaunt the possibility of gaining some of the colonial territories in Africa, once taken from the enemy<sup>54</sup>.

Further points concerned the military aspects. In the uncertainty of the moment, Italy would not stop its rearmament, of which details were supplied. “Never the Italian army had been so well equipped and so numerous”<sup>55</sup>. However, Genadiev’s assessment of the kingdom’s military capabilities was negative: “Italy is not in a position to make a long continental war like France and Britain. For the spirit of its people and for the character of

50. *Ibidem*.

51. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., p. 12.

52. *Ibidem*.

53. *Ibidem*.

54. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., pp. 16-17. He is referring to the trip to Rome by the French Member of Parliament Charles Benoist, to meet the Prime Minister Salandra. On that occasion, according to the Italian ambassador in Paris, Tommaso Tittoni, Benoist had shared with the Premier an “indiscretion” by the Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé: the Triple Entente had no intention of inviting the neutral countries to the peace conference that was to decide the new arrangements for Europe. It would therefore be in Italy’s interests to join the war. DDI, The Italian ambassador in Paris, Tittoni, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Paris 10<sup>th</sup> March 1915, Series V, vol. III, doc. 72.

55. N. GENADIEV, *Doklad na dr N. Genadiev* cit., pp. 12-14.

its army the colonial expeditions are the most appropriate”<sup>56</sup>. Meanwhile Italy’s participation in the operations of the Dardanelles, also desired by the Entente, appeared likely, which, in his opinion, would be an opportunity for Rome to “gain on the cheap”. He also thought, mistakenly, that Italy would be more easily persuaded to join such operations, had there been indications that the Central Powers would not attack it, and if, at least in Asia, it could take whatever was on offer. The possibility that Italy decided to attack the Dardanelles was considered by Genadiev very important for Bulgaria, because the Italians would cut their “price” with the Entente if, at the time of the operations, they had not made any decisions. He reiterated that the Italian intervention would create an imbalance of forces and that it was his firm conviction that Italy would chose the Entente, which would have seen their ground forces increase up to half a million men, and strengthen their fleet in the Mediterranean, thus facilitating operations against Turkey. Were the border between Austria and Italy to be closed, a major artery would have been stopped, through which at the time the necessary food supplies and weaponry material was reaching Germany. To all this, it should be added the psychological impact that such a decision would have had on all the peoples at war, given that the already vast continental front from France to Russia, would be joined by another “great power”, which would have poured on the front a large number of men and five thousand guns. Even Greece and Romania would have followed Italy, “reassured that success would crown the Triple Entente”<sup>57</sup>.

At the time when Genadiev presented his report, in his country the debate on what Bulgaria’s choice should be was still open. The statesman who, as we have seen, had never hidden his partiality for the Central Powers, on his return to Sofia appeared inclined towards the Entente, whose final victory he was completely convinced of, because he considered the now certain Italian participation or the neutrality of Rome, equally favourable to it. He absolutely excluded Italy’s alignment with the Central Powers, whose final victory he now thought unlikely, a victory that would allow Vienna and Berlin to dictate peace terms. If the Bulgarians were to side

56. *Ivi*, p. 18.

57. *Ivi*, p. 20.

with Germany once again, “they would be crushed on the battlefield and at the peace process”<sup>58</sup>.

He reported his convictions on the pages of his newly-founded newspaper *Volya* (Will), repeatedly stating the need for Bulgaria to make an agreement with the Entente, thus causing the indignation of King Ferdinand, the Russophobes, and the very people in his party. A violent campaign within his party was mounted against him, during public events, in the press and in pamphlets, the best known of which belonged to one of his former colleagues in parliament<sup>59</sup>. The accusations, which took on strong words and sometimes degenerated into offensive language, blamed him of having abandoned the Russophobe policy, of having betrayed the principles of his party, and spread the idea that his country would join the Entente, that is, Russia. Genadiev responded through the pages of his newspaper, without ever losing control, insisting that he had not become Russophile, and that he was “only defending the national interests independently of any issue and feelings”<sup>60</sup>.

Despite the attacks and the split in his own party, caused by his new position, Genadiev continued to maintain a strong role in Bulgarian political life as a supporter of the Entente. In the summer of 1915 he was at the centre of a scandal linked to Ferdinand de Clossière, the representative of French banks in Sofia. De Clossière was handling huge sums, on behalf of the Entente, for the purchase of corn, mainly wheat, produced in Bulgaria, with the aim to prevent the export to Germany and to exert economic pressure on Sofia to join the Entente. Genadiev took care of the purchase plan, and he managed to create a wide network of brokers, drawing in, even using blackmail, many well-known politicians of the opposition parties. Very soon, however, the government discovered the deal and Genadiev and his most important accomplices were brought to justice and imprisoned<sup>61</sup>. Genadiev would be released from prison only in November 1918 when the war ended, and he immediately resumed his active political life. On 30<sup>th</sup>

58. *Ibidem*.

59. ASSEN KERMEKČIEV, *Dr Genadiev pred sąda na narodno-liberalite* (Genadiev before the tribunal of the national-liberals), Sofia, Iskra, 1915.

60. NIKOLA GENADIEV, *Memoari*, t.1., preface by Stojčo Grănčarov, Sofia, Izdatelstvo na Otečestvenija Front, 1985, pp. 9-10.

61. SIMEON DAMJANOV, *Declozierova afera* (L'affaire de Clossière), in *Vekove*, Sofia, VI, (1972), pp. 7-38.



October 1923, however, he was killed by one of the men of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO).

Even after his return from Rome, Genadiev had continued to take an interest in the Italian question, which Bulgaria was persuaded it had remained linked to the developments of the Italian-Austrian negotiations. The information of the Bulgarian diplomats confirmed the overall Italian attitude described by the former minister. Among the most active diplomats, there was the Bulgarian representative in Rome, Dimităr Rizov, and the one in Bucharest, Simeon Radev. Rizov, in particular, stressed the Austrian intransigence and the concerns that the Italian Government had about a possible entry of Romania and Greece into the war, as a result of Italy's<sup>62</sup>. Radev informed his government on the echoes of the Italian situation in the Roman political circles, and especially the pressure exerted on him by the Italian envoy in Bucharest Carlo Fasciotti, who wished Bulgaria would start negotiations with Romania as soon as possible. According to the Bulgarian diplomat, Fasciotti's action was not in compliance with specific instructions by Salandra's government, but actually dictated by his personal aversion of Austria<sup>63</sup>.

In the early days of May, when in diplomatic circles Italy's entry into the war was considered certain, an alarmed Prime Minister Radoslavov asked Radev to find out about the possibility that Romania, too, abandon its neutrality<sup>64</sup>. Italy's imminent entry into the war against Austria-Hungary was by now taken for granted in Bulgaria; but with the Bulgarian government's position still uncertain, the tone of the information was moderate, comments and forecasts carefully avoided. The *Pregled na čuždestrannija pečat* provided Bulgarian newspapers with information about Italy derived from the Italian press, but there were also reports from the Greek, Serbian and Turkish press attacking the Italian territorial claims in the Balkans and the Adriatic, which mirrored the growing fear of Bulgarian claims.

Italy's entry into the war generated even more pressures on Sofia by the two warring sides, but Bulgaria would no longer be able to settle for sim-

62. DDB, the special envoy in Rome, Rizov, to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 23<sup>rd</sup> April/6<sup>th</sup> May 1915, doc. 815, p. 470.

63. DDB, the special envoy in Bucharest, Radev, to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Bucharest 21<sup>st</sup> April/4<sup>th</sup> May 1915, doc. 809, p. 467.

64. DDB, the special envoy in Bucharest, Radev, to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Bucharest 4<sup>th</sup> May/17<sup>th</sup> May 1915, doc. 847, p. 468.

ple news and conversations, it required an official and concrete proposal. Everyone was interested in the country's strategic position in the Balkans: for the Entente it was a corridor towards Serbia, for the Central Powers a link with the Ottoman Empire and a source of supplies. On 30<sup>th</sup> May, the Triple Entente and then on 6<sup>th</sup> June Austria-Hungary presented their official proposals to the Bulgarian government. A few days later Sonnino, in the meeting with the new Bulgarian representative in Rome Dimitar Stančov, a man very close to King Ferdinand, had reiterated that "Italy [was] always [going to be] an advocate of Bulgarian interests, because between Bulgaria and Italy there [were] no issues that divide[d] them. On the contrary many of their interests [were] similar"<sup>65</sup>. These words confirmed the friendly feelings repeatedly expressed by the Italians to Bulgaria but, beyond this statement, Stančov had caught the minister's desire to understand how the Bulgarian government was actually going to act on the Entente's proposals, since the response given had been regarded in London, Paris, Rome and St. Petersburg as a way to postpone the decision. The Italian minister had admitted that if the offers made were somehow "incomplete" this was because of the inherent difficulties of making proposals while other negotiations were ongoing. These included those with Athens to cede Kavala to Bulgaria, which would have inevitably been affected by Greece's domestic situation, that is, if Eleftherios Venizelos, partial to the Entente, would return to power, or if Dimitrios Gunaris would remain at the helm of the country. Sonnino had concluded the meeting with a strictly personal opinion: it would be in Bulgaria's interest to act promptly, without waiting for clarification, especially at a time when the Entente would have greatly appreciated an immediate Bulgarian response, and would certainly be more generous at the end<sup>66</sup>.

The loan taken out with the Germans in the summer, as Genadiev had told Sonnino, did not oblige the country to take the side of the Central Powers, but the king and the government continued to consider carefully the proposals that came from both sides throughout the summer of 1915. Only on 21<sup>st</sup> September they decided to mobilize and to declare their "armed neutrality", which would be followed by the alignment with the

65. DDB, the Bulgarian minister in Rome, Stančov, to the Foreign Minister in Sofia, Radoslavov, Rome 18<sup>th</sup> June/1<sup>st</sup> July 1915, doc. 936, p. 545.

66. *Ivi*, p. 546.

Central Powers in the new offensive launched against Serbia in the month of October. Decisive factors had been not only the achievements on the field, that in those months had crowned the Austro-Germans with success, but also the compensation promised: Macedonia and most of Thrace and the control –granted, not without resistance from Constantinople – of the railroad through the valley of Marica which connected the plain of Plovdiv with the port of Dedeagač. These were far more attractive proposals than those of the Entente, that had only mentioned Thrace up to the Enos-Midia line, and the “Macédonie limitée: au Nord et à l’Ouest par la ligne Egri-Palanca-Sopet sur le Vardar et Ochrida - les villes de Egri-Palanca, Koprulu Ochrida Monastir y étant comprises - au Sud et à l’Est par les frontières actuel - les serbo-grecque et serbo-bulgare”<sup>67</sup>.

After the declaration of the “armed neutrality”, the relations between Italy and Bulgaria did not cease. The Prime Minister Salandra, in talks with Stančov between late September and early October, did not refrain from advising the Bulgarian government not to go ahead with the planned alignment with the Central Powers, adding very carefully that in any case, in future, Italy would have to agree on its attitude to Bulgaria with its allies<sup>68</sup>.

The former minister had stressed, beyond any doubt, how much those plans would have weighed on the Entente’s final victory – something that was undervalued at the peace conference in Paris from which Italy did not get what had been promised – and even today it is undervalued by some historiographers.

The information that Genadiev had sent from Rome, had allowed the Bulgarian government to obtain fundamental indications about Italy’s future intentions, but Italy’s advice to Bulgaria on what side to take was not followed, partly because of the country’s traditional partiality towards its sovereign’s central empires, partly because of the pro-Entente inclinations of its former opponents in the Balkan Wars (with the exception of Turkey). Not having listened to the suggestions put forward by the Bulgarian politician, based on the conclusions reached during his mission in Rome, about the important role that Italy would have played in bringing about the

67. DDI, the minister in Sofia, Cucchi Boasso, to the Foreign Minister, Sonnino, Series V, vol. IV, doc. 54.

68. DDB, the Bulgarian minister in Roma, Stančov, to the Foreign Minister, Radoslavov, Rome 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> September 1915, doc. 1117, p. 651 and Rome 19<sup>th</sup> September/2<sup>nd</sup> October 1915, doc. 1144, pp. 673-674.

victory of the block it would join, would be paid dearly by Bulgaria. The terrible conditions imposed by the peace Treaty of Neuilly would not only deny Bulgaria the desired territories, but it would also deprive it of others.

## Italy in the Great War as seen from Greece

To view the relations between Italy and Greece during the Great War and to understand the vision that the Greeks had of Italy at the time, we can resort to various sources, but it is right to highlight at the outset one particularly valid account, supplied by a not insignificant personage, the protagonist of the facts. I am speaking of the military attaché Mario Caracciolo di Feroletto (Naples 1880 – Rome 1954), later a teacher and a scholar, and the author of a book on the events of 1914-1918. Some brief indications on his career: he was in the Libyan War and then at the front in the Great War. He was seriously wounded, obtained two silver medals and promotion for special merit. He was then sent to Greece as a military attaché for a year and a half, later to the Dodecanese at that time under Italian control, and to Smyrna, a town that was an important objective of Italian policy in opposition to Greek policy, and to Thessaloniki. He finished his military career as an army corps general; he was a teacher of military history and art at the War School and was the author of several publications mainly on the First World War. The book concerning Greece had a preface by the nationalist Enrico Corradini who wrote: “And for us Mario Caracciolo’s historical work is of great importance. It is important because it furnishes new information throwing further light on the policy mistakes made by the allies. It is important since, ever more and ever better, it adds to our knowledge of the methods of our neighbours’ diplomacy, which may come in useful for us in future situations. And it is especially important because it is educational, because through the example of the Greece of Venizelos it teaches that men’s daring and spirit of adventure must never go beyond the real power of the nations.”<sup>1</sup>

1. MARIO CARACCILO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale e l'opera della diplomazia alleata*, Rome, Maglione-Strini, 1925, p. IV.

This source, therefore, tells us much of the Greeks' vision of Italy in the Great War. Clearly, diplomatic documents also tell us a great deal, from the Italian documents with the reports of the minister at Athens during the war, Alessandro De Bosdari, a man of a certain importance although at times his convictions led him to neglect certain aspects of reality. In 1912 he had been in Sofia representing the Reign of Italy and he had not understood that the small Balkan powers were about to launch an attack on the Ottoman Empire, in spite of the offer of an alliance presented personally to him by the Bulgarian Prime Minister of the time, Ivan E. Gešov<sup>2</sup>. I may say at once that his position was hostile towards the number one of Greek politics, Eleftherios Venizelos<sup>3</sup>.

Before going any further, I believe a few more words are needed on what the conflict represented for the Greeks. The issue is a real textbook case. If in other countries public opinion was divided between neutralists, Triple Alliance supporters and Triple Entente supporters, yet without such divisions boiling over into political or military acts of opposition (only the Polish situation presents certain similar aspects), in Greece something much more serious happened. The head of the government, Venizelos (for Caracciolo "certainly a great man" but also possessing "arts subtle and at times disloyal")<sup>4</sup> clashed strongly with the king; as a result, they set up separate opposing governments. This dramatic development in events featured the occupation of Greek territory by the Powers of the Entente and left behind it decades of repercussions within Greek society, lasting until after the Second World War and even, perhaps, until our own days. The national *Ethnikòs Dichasmòs* (split, schism) became an essential factor in the social and political life of the Greeks, producing excessive division and inspiring them with a sectarian spirit. In line with the logic of the *abyssus abyssum invocat* typical of a tragedy, after that violent clash among governing bodies,

2. Francesco GUIDA, *La Bulgaria dalla guerra di liberazione fino al Trattato di Neuilly (1877-1919). Testimonianze italiane*, Rome, Bulzoni, 1984, pp. 185-188. De Bosdari admitted, and justified, his short- or long-sightedness ("in politics long sight is undoubtedly better than short sight"), in his book *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande guerra e di alcuni fatti precedenti ad esse: appunti diplomatici*, Milan, A. Mondadori, 1927<sup>2</sup>, pp. 49-51.

3. On the figure of Venizelos see DOROS ALASTOS, *Venizelos, patriot, statesman, revolutionary*, Gulf Breeze, Academic international press, 1978<sup>2</sup>; *Eleftherios Venizelos, the trials of a statesmanship*, edited by. Paschalis M. Kitromilidis, Edinburgh, Edinburgh U.P., 2006.

4. M. CARACCIOLO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale e l'opera della diplomazia alleata* cit., p. 1.

the Court and political circles, further divisions followed in their wake and a series of errors made in the following years inspired a vicious circle that poisoned relations among citizens and social levels.

At the beginning of the world war in 1914, just a year after the end of the second Balkan war, Prime Minister Venizelos had explained why there was no obligation on Greece to intervene in aid of Serbia. Greece was linked to Serbia in an alliance (signed in 1913 at the time of the Balkan wars) which however was valid only in the Balkan context and not in the case of aggression on the part of a great power such as Austria-Hungary. It was the so-called “efficacy theory”: this expression meant that intervention in favour of the Serb ally would have posed a serious danger to Greece without the prospect of any concrete advantages to Serbia. In any case, shortly before in June 1914, the Belgrade government had decided on a prudent policy towards the requests for support coming from Athens when the Greek executive branch had thought of mobilising the fleet against Turkey because of the persecution of the Christians on Ottoman territory and had requested Serb backing. Advice arrived from Belgrade, however, to resolve the question through diplomacy and the mediation of the Powers<sup>5</sup>.

The prudence of the Greek government was also justifiable through the uncertainty perceived by the Greek prime minister in the Powers of the Entente, busy in winning over Bulgaria to their side. At last, in the early months of the war, until the Turkish government manifested the intention of siding with the central Empires and taking provocative military action against the Russian bases in the Black Sea, the head of the Greek government had continued to negotiate with his Turkish counterparts (first in Brussels, then in Bucharest) regarding the question of the Aegean islands contended between Istanbul and Athens<sup>6</sup>.

The convictions of the Hellenic political leader on the conflict under way soon underwent a decided evolution. In the Crown Council held on March 4 1915 Venizelos showed himself to be a firm interventionist, against Germany and in favour of England; he proposed that Greek armed forces should side with the Entente forces in the Gallipoli campaign, with the intention of influencing the future set-up of Constantinople, ever the

5. DOUGLAS DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece 1770-1923*, London, Benn, 1972, p. 203.

6. *Ivi*, pp. 203-204.



objective of the *Megali idea*<sup>7</sup>. He believed that German policy was incompatible with Greek interests; the British government on the other hand had been attentive to such interests in inducing the Italian government not to oppose the Greek occupation of northern Epirus. Widely different was the position of the elderly ex prime minister, Georgios Theotokis, an experienced leader in Hellenic politics: in his opinion it was Germany that was favourable to the non-Slav peoples of the Balkans, therefore to Greece as well, while England had been in favour of Italian objectives in the Dodecanese. These two opinions show how the Greek political class considered Italy basically relating two issues, that of the Epirus and that of the Dodecanese<sup>8</sup>. It was only after the war ended that it became clear that Italy and Greece were competitors in the Anatolian peninsula as well, particularly as regards the Smyrna district.

The Crown Council held two days later on March 6 proved decisive. King Constantine<sup>9</sup> (who had married Sofia, Kaiser Wilhelm's sister, and had been a student of the German military academy) sided with the ideas of the military commanders against any participation by Hellenic troops in the allied operation on the Dardanelles Straits: Colonel Ioannis Metaxas, acting Chief of Staff, went so far as to resign rather than support the option chosen by Venizelos. The latter's proposal was accepted by the other political leaders on condition that the main part of the available military forces was not to be involved, but Metaxas's gesture was approved by the Chief of Staff, General Victor Dusmanis, and the opinions of the military staff influenced the monarch, ever more convinced that it was useless to

7. FRANCESCO GUIDA, *Considerazioni sulla 'megali idea' ellenica*, in *Clio*, XXVI, 1990, 1, pp. 147-157.

8. On the management of the Dodecanese see LUCA PIGNATARO, *Il Dodecaneso italiano: 1912-1947*, Chieti, Solfanelli, 2011-2013. On one particular aspect, the deportation of the Dodecanese Jewish community, see the recent work by MARCO CLEMENTI, EIRINI TOLIOU, *Gli ultimi ebrei di Rodi: leggi razziali e deportazioni nel Dodecaneso italiano (1938-1948)*, Rome, DeriveApprodi, 2015.

9. With regard to the feelings of the Greek sovereign in 1913, while talks were going forward on the outcome of the first Balkan war, the Italian Foreign Minister Antonino Di San Giuliano had told the German ambassador Flotow: "King Constantine may be sincere, but he lacks sufficient authority to guide a policy contrasting with tradition and also with the interests of Greece"; see FRANCESCO CATALUCCIO, *Antonio di San Giuliano e la politica estera italiana dal 1900 al 1914*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1935, p. 118. On San Giuliano now see GIANPAOLO FERRAIOLI, *Politica e diplomazia in Italia tra XIX e XX secolo. Vita di Antonino di San Giuliano (1852-1914)*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2007.

take part, indeed of the danger of entering the war. He feared to subject the country to a Bulgarian and Austro-German invasion, being aware, like most of the military staff, that Constantinople was destined to become Russia's war loot, hence never assigned to Greece. It should be recalled that even after the Russian Revolution in February 1917, the Foreign Minister of the provisional Russian government Pavel Miljukov (head of the constitutional-democratic party) asked the Allies to respect the commitments undertaken, among which that the Ottoman capital was the main war objective of the Russians<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, as logistic support for the Gallipoli campaign, the Anglo-French occupied the islands of Lemnos, Imbros and Tenedos, at that time all under Greek control, even the last two just off the Anatolian coast<sup>11</sup>.

That same day, March 6, Venizelos resigned. This gesture brought to a close five years of collaboration with the Court: agreement, particularly with King George who died in 1913<sup>12</sup>, had been good in spite of the monarch's initial doubts about entrusting the leadership of the government to a politician coming from Crete and the bearer of innovative ideas. Five years of successes in terms of territorial expansion thanks to the Balkan wars<sup>13</sup> and domestic reforms of substantial scope, as well as being highly popular as was confirmed repeatedly in the outcome of elections. These reforms provided valid competition with respect to the Socialist and peasant movements which in Greece were less successful than in neighbouring countries<sup>14</sup>.

10. MARC FERRO, *La rivoluzione del 1917. La caduta dello zarismo e le origini della Rivoluzione d'ottobre*, Florence, Sansoni, 1974, pp. 203 ff. Miljukov's policy was actually soon contested and a totally different policy already prevailed before the Bolsheviks took power in October 1917.

11. Imbros (now Gökçeada) and Tenedos (Bozcaada) had been under Greek administration since 1912, and were officially annexed to Greece under the Sèvres Treaty of 1920; they returned to Turkish sovereignty under the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. The population was mainly Greek and the two small islands therefore enjoyed a certain degree of independence, which ended after the Second World War following the imposition of Turkish influence and the Greek exodus.

12. George I died in March 1913 at the hands of a psychopath in Thessaloniki, the important port that had become the second Greek city after Athens. Thessaloniki continues to be a significant centre, also economically; however its importance was much greater when it was the trade terminal for the vast imperial Ottoman territory: a destiny similar to that of Trieste after it became part of the Reign of Italy.

13. See EGIDIO IVETIC, *Le guerre balcaniche*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2006.

14. RICHARD CLOGG, *Storia della Grecia moderna dalla caduta dell'Impero bizantino a oggi*, Milan, Bompiani (or. ed.: *A short history of modern Greece*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1986), p. 101. Greece therefore had a moderate, reforming regime enjoying a good level of popular

After a few months of the government headed by Dimitrios Gounaris, in June 1915 there were new political elections in which once more the liberal party was successful, although to a lesser degree than in the previous ballot but still quite clearly: 184 seats against 133 for the other parties. With the support in any case of a majority of deputies, Venizelos installed the new government on August 24. He lasted only a few months, but he managed to proclaim military mobilisation<sup>15</sup> at the end of September. Bulgaria had mobilised on September 21 and this encouraged respect for the alliance with Serbia. Naturally the real reason was that Venizelos intended to side with the Entente, convinced that Greece would gain some advantage, particularly in the east. Nobody then would have believed that only a year and a half later (June 12 1916) demobilisation would be started in an utterly different political atmosphere, featuring enormous confusion and bitter dissent. In fact demobilisation came about at the desire of the English and French governments which considered it too dangerous to leave an army at war to the rear of the *Armée d'Orient* acting in the Aegean Macedonia.

Meanwhile the Gallipoli campaign had already failed<sup>16</sup>; it had been intended to force the Ottoman Empire into making a separate peace, reopening the trade routes between Russia and the western powers, and also to make possible the development of action in the Balkans in aid of Serbia. All these objectives had failed, and Serbia had now given in; yet Paris and London had decided to open a Balkan front in Aegean Macedonia: the first allied troops landed at Thessaloniki on October 21 1915. Having vainly hoped that the Gallipoli campaign would end in favour of the Entente, Venizelos was by no means unaware of such a detrimental new move for the sovereignty of Greece, still a neutral country. While being unable to declare his agreement in public, the head of the Hellenic government hoped that such a military operation would definitively involve his own

support, although the intellectuals were significantly progressive. ANDRÉ MIRAMBEL, *Aspects des lettres néo-grecques (XIXe – XXe siècles)*, in *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, VI, 1968, 4, pp. 564-565, 570-572.

15. Called to arms were those liable to call-up from 1892 (forty-plus) to 1914: on paper, this was a sizeable contingent, about 300,000 men, but in fact that figure was only theoretical.

16. The February-March 1915 operations were not successful and cost an enormous number of casualties, until the evacuation of the peninsula in January 1916. This failure also influenced the decisions taken in Sofia.

country in the conflict. For the time being, however, he had to protest formally. The cumbersome past legacy from the beginning of the nineteenth century made itself felt. The London and Paris governments took advantage of their status as powers protecting Greece in order to justify their pre-emptive initiative<sup>17</sup>.

In fact things had gone ahead; following the discussion on neighbouring Bulgaria officially entering the war, on October 4 Venizelos got a majority approval in the Chamber on the proposal to send troops in aid of Serbia. This caused the definitive break with King Constantine who was still determined to keep the country neutral, and who forced him to resign. The experienced Alexandros T. Zaimis replaced the liberal leader, but for a month only: yet he had the task of refusing the invitation of the Entente to enter the war in favour of Serbia, in spite of the fact that London in exchange had offered to cede Cyprus. The military commanders still believed it would pay to remain neutral. Zaimis lost a vote of confidence in the Chamber, still with a liberal majority, therefore on November 7 the elderly Stefanos Skouloudis was appointed head of the executive power. On December 19 the citizens were called to the polls for the second time in six months, and since the liberals did not present their lists and only one third of the electors went to vote, the candidates close to the king prevailed. Strong in this partial success, Skouloudis requested that the allied troops at Thessaloniki be disarmed, but predictably the request was not even taken into consideration. Indeed, further acts followed in no way respecting Hellenic sovereignty. In the Heptanese, Corfu and Argostoli (Cephalonia) were occupied, as well as further positions near Thessaloniki.

The situation shortly became confused and tense. A constitutional issue arose, regarding above all the limits to the sovereign's power. The two opposed personalities, Constantine and Venizelos, were each convinced of doing the right thing in the national interest. The former perhaps abused his power in asking for the prime minister's resignation, a prime minister who had twice received the electorate's consent; but the king was sure of

17. At the end of the world war, on the sidelines of the peace conference, London and Paris gave up their roles as protecting Powers, roles they had taken on back in 1832 together with Russia.

being better able to assess accurately the dangers run by Greece from the military viewpoint<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from the opinion of the contenders in this duel and what the Greek people thought about it, the story of Greece during the First World War was written above all by the western powers. That was the destiny of small countries, but in the case of Greece the violation of sovereignty was flagrant and can be explained in the light of the previous century's history. With somewhat limited territory and population, the reign of Greece came about thanks to the intervention of France, England and Russia<sup>19</sup>; those Powers chose the first king (Otto of Wittelsbach, Bavaria) and the second as well (Christian William of Glücksburg, Denmark, who took the name of George I). In both cases the wishes of the people, or at least those of the Greek ruling class, were not taken into account<sup>20</sup>. The Greek economy was kept under control by means of loans<sup>21</sup> from the western Powers, and, from the political point of view, Russia added her influence. The great shifts of Greek history were not immune to the action of the European capitals. There was the veto against joining the war in the first<sup>22</sup> and the second eastern crisis<sup>23</sup> and in this case even Italian diplomacy considered itself authorised to give Athens pressing advice<sup>24</sup>. After the 1893 bankruptcy declared by Trikoupis's government and the incautious decision to declare war on the Ottoman Empire in 1897, Greece was the object of the atten-

18. D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece 1770-1923* cit., pp. 209-210, where there is broad discussion in favour of one theory or the other.

19. R. CLOGG, *Storia della Grecia moderna* cit., pp. 67-70.

20. Once Otto had been driven out, the Greek people voted to have as their new king the son of the British Queen Victoria, Alfred, while Italian agents sought in vain to promote Victor Emmanuel II's plan to place his second son Victor Amadeus on the Greek throne. The balance of power however did not allow for such direct commitment with a Court such as the British one, and the candidacy of the Danish prince prevailed. See F. GUIDA, *L'Italia e il Risorgimento balcanico. Marco Antonio Canini*, Rome, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984, pp. 200-217.

21. ALESSANDRO ALBANESE GINAMMI - GIANPAOLO CONTE, *L'Odissea del debito: le crisi finanziarie in Grecia dal 1821 a oggi*, Vicenza, Edibus, 2015.

22. In May 1854 English and French forces occupied the Piraeus to force King Otto to stay out of the Russian-Turkish war, although irregular Greek groups were already in action on Turkish territory. D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece 1770-1923* cit., pp. 83-84.

23. DOMNA N. DONTAS, *Greece and the Great Powers 1863-1875*, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1966; EVANGELOS KOFOS, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis 1875-1878*, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1975.

24. FRANCESCO GUIDA, *I rapporti tra Italia e Grecia durante la crisi d'Oriente del 1875-78*, in *L'Europa d'oltremare* (special issue of *România Orientale*, XVII, 2004), pp. 75-87.

tion of the powers who mitigated the heavy defeat against the Ottoman troops then set the economy under strict control (not so very unlike what has happened in recent years) and decided the destiny of Crete, a large part of whose population wanted *enosis* (union) with the Greek reign. In fact the entrance of the Cretan Venizelos into the political sphere (by rights he was a subject of the Sultan) was an event not previously agreed with the protecting Powers; the latter, however, appreciated his skill in calming down a situation that had become very tense after 1909<sup>25</sup>. The Balkan wars also overall escaped from the control of the great capitals who simply tried to contain the worst effects<sup>26</sup>. Now in the Great War the iron fists of London and Paris were felt, firstly and mainly because of the geo-strategic position of the peninsula and archipelago. Russian and Italian diplomacy kept their gregarious positions that were more moderate. At first in order to get Bulgaria to side with them, the Powers of the Entente were willing to demand privations of Greece and Serbia; then, when the Bulgarian government chose to side with the central Empires, Paris and London decided not to allow Greece to escape as well, with recourse either to promises or through the use of force.

I mentioned above the Entente's occupation of Corfu where the Serb Court was to find haven together with the remnants of the army; after a year of fighting, the latter had been forced to give way to the overpowering forces of the adversary: the Bulgarians had joined the Austro-Germans. The Greek government made the best of a bad job and agreed to shelter the Serbs. It is somewhat ironical that the Greeks' most weighty complaint regarding the occupation of the main island of the Seven concerned the presence of just twenty Italian *Carabinieri*, a minimal presence compared to the French contingents<sup>27</sup>. It is easy to understand that this was due to the Greeks' fear that the Italian presence might become permanent and that above all it might reinforce Italian interest in the lower Adriatic, the Ionian

25. FRANCESCO GUIDA, *La crisi del 1909 in Grecia e la prima ascesa al potere di Venizelos vista dalle fonti diplomatiche italiane*, in *La Sicile, la Méditerranée, les Balkans: histoire, culture, langues, peuples*, edited by Matteo Mandalà, Palermo, Ac. Mirror, 2006, pp. 107-121.

26. This concerned other countries more than Greece. Austria-Hungary and Italy opposed Serbia's access to the Adriatic at the end of the first Balkan war, indirectly fuelling the Serb-Bulgarian dispute.

27. M. CARACCILO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale e l'opera della diplomazia alleata* cit., p. 49.



Sea and the Epirus region. Over this last, there had been disagreements between Rome and Athens shortly before, when in February 2014 irregular Greek forces had occupied those territories (Albania was effectively in the throes of anarchy<sup>28</sup>), but had been forced to withdraw through diplomatic pressure, and then it was the regular army that occupied them again on October 28 that same year. Athens went so far as to proclaim annexation and accept the Epirus deputies in the Greek parliament that opened in January 1916. Rome too, as we know, had been busy: Italian troops had occupied Vlorë on October 23 1914 when Italy was still neutral but intended to guarantee itself against any other foreign occupation of Albania which was occupied during the conflict by several armies: the Austro-Hungarian, the Italian and the French armies.

Given such precedents, not so far back, the Greeks felt the Italian presence in Corfu to be more dangerous, both because of what Rome had done in 1913 against Hellenic interests with regard to the Greek-Albanian frontier<sup>29</sup>, and for fear that Corfu itself was part of the Italian government's plans. Against such concerns, the fact counted little that it was not Italy who held the whip in trying to bring Greece over to the Entente and violate its sovereignty.

Accepting this as a *fait accompli*, hypocritically considered as free consent, made it possible to reawaken the myth of collaboration between the Greek and Italian nations to help another nation, the Serb one, seemingly

28. Prince Wilhelm of Wied, imposed by the Powers, abandoned the throne on September 3, boarding an Italian ship; for a certain period the strong man was the Internal and War Minister Essad pasha Toptani, equally unable to control the entire national territory. The Greek theories on the Epirus can be seen in VASILIOS PANAGIOTOU PAPADAKIS, *Histoire diplomatique de la question nord-épirote (1912-1957)*, Athens, Alevropoulos, 1958, and, less categorically, in BASIL KONDIS, *Greece and Albania, 1908-1914*, Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1976.

29. Italian diplomatic action had meant that certain towns remained with Albania and that Greece did not control both banks of the Corfu channel, considered of the greatest strategic importance by the Italian Navy. Cf. FABRICE JESNÉ, *L'Italia e la questione dell'Epiro durante le Guerre balcaniche*, in *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche*, edited by Antonio D'Alessandri and Rudolf Dinu, Rome, Dante Alighieri, 2014, pp. 99-101. The determined opposition to Greek plans by the Italians was connected to the figure of Di San Giuliano, while the President of the Council Giolitti was not of the same opinion ("neither Schkodër nor the Straits of Corfu were worth a European war") and even the minister at Athens De Bosdari did not consider the issue of the Corfu channel and the Greek-Albanian frontier in Epirus of great importance, yet he complied with the dispositions he received from the Consulta, the Foreign Ministry. See F. CATALUCCIO, *Antonio di San Giuliano* cit., pp. 124-126.



vexed by powerful, arrogant enemies<sup>30</sup>. Such imposition did not stop here. The allied commands decided that the Serb soldiers, in spite of the losses they had undergone and the terrible conditions in which they then were, should join the Thessaloniki front. Once they were again able to operate, the government in Athens was asked to allow them to transit across Greek territory (the territory of a state still neutral) to reach their assigned stations. The Greek govern stopped the march from crossing the northern regions since the king feared that the presence of a foreign army might cause disastrous consequences to the political framework to the advantage of Venizelos's followers, but he did allow the use for this purpose of the channel of Corinth.

The most important field of action was now in the east, in Aegean Macedonia. Hundreds of thousands of men were operating on that front. On one side, there was mainly the Bulgarian army, together with a limited number of German and Austro-Hungarian contingents; on the other there were in all 200,000 French, 180,000 English, 120,000 Serbs, 57,000 Italians and, later, a Greek corps which in the end totalled nine divisions. In this case too the presence of Italian troops<sup>31</sup> was not much appreciated by the Greeks, or at least by some of them. Actually Sidney Sonnino<sup>32</sup> and Luigi Cadorna<sup>33</sup> had with difficulty been convinced to concede on the condition that the Thessaloniki front should start to move, thus effectively lightening

30. "The Slav bards will rise again, these eternal Homerids, to sing of their blood-stained homeland, of the homeland that will never die, like the singers of Jonia, and in the funeral dirges of the refugees the touching memory will awaken of the ships of Italy and Corfu, always welcoming and always beautiful". These are the words used in this regard by an illustrious professor of the Oriental University of Naples; BRUNO GUYON, *Balkanica*, Milan, Hoepli, 1916, pp. X-XI.

31. They landed in the Aegean port on August 11 1916 under the command of General Petitti di Roreto. To the Irish Lord Bernard Granard, who had been at Thessaloniki in May-June 1917, the Italian troops appeared rather emphatically as "splendid". *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VIII, pp. 195-196, Imperiali a Sonnino, London, June 11 1917.

32. Volume V of the Fifth Series of *Documenti diplomatici italiani* is full of personal accounts referring to the period of October 1915-June 1916, on the resistance of the Italian government to allied proposals to send an expeditionary corps to Thessaloniki. At the time, even in London many were dubious at the idea of continuing that military initiative. The issue had been discussed at the Chantilly Conference in December 1915 where the allies' war plans for 1916 were laid down.

33. An example in the dispatch from the Army Chief of Staff to Sonnino on January 5 1917, in *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VII, p. 21. The Army Deputy Chief of Staff Carlo Porro was much more convinced of the wisdom and feasibility of the Italian mission to Thessaloniki.

the task of the Italians who were holding Vlorë and its surrounding area. It was Venizelos himself who raised his voice in the press in this sense, as reported by De Bosdari in the summer of 1916<sup>34</sup>. Greek alarm for any Italian initiative or participation continued. Yet both Caracciolo and the minister Alessandro De Bosdari, the Italian representative in Athens, insisted that the intention of the Rome government was widely different from that of the Anglo-French. In fact Rome did not consider essential the entry of Greece in the war, because Athens was unable to supply a decisive contribution from the military point of view and because a number of its war objectives were in competition with Italian interests. Furthermore, it seemed excessive to use a *diktat* as a response to Greek unwillingness to support the Allies. “Austrian” or “German” methods were spoken of (the reference was to Vienna’s ultimatum to Belgrade in 1914 and to the occupation of Belgium by the Germans). It is therefore comprehensible that the Italian representatives (De Bosdari at their head) were not aligned to all the moves of the allies, where such moves meant interference in domestic Greek policy in favour of one party rather than another. A number of Notes addressed to the Greek government were therefore signed only by the French and English representatives: among these the decisive Note of June 10 1917 sent to the Zaimis government that led to King Constantine standing down. Nevertheless the Italians could not avoid certain concrete actions such as the participation in the *Armée d’Orient* on the Macedonian front or those intended to guarantee its safeguard. Such was the most clearly aggressive gesture on the part of the Entente, the incursion on Athens on December 1 1916. Out of the 2,400 men deployed in that action, only 100 were Italians; Lieutenant Pittaluga was in command of 80 and Midshipman Santoro of a further 20 who took part in the occupation of the building known as Zappeion (after the *mecenate* Zappas) in which a number of Olympic competitions had already been held in 1896<sup>35</sup>. In order to understand the reason for such a violent act, we need to outline what happened after the opening of the Macedonian front.

It is by now clear that no immediate successes for Anglo-French army nor crises were registered in the delicate sector of the Alliance pivoting on

34. Reported by De Bosdari in his book *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande guerra e di alcuni fatti precedenti ad esse: appunti diplomatici* cit., pp. 131-132.

35. Cf. M. CARACCILO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale* cit., p. 163

Berlin and represented in the region by Bulgaria. Had that been so, perhaps the interventionist party would have prevailed in Athens. However, faced with an on-going unsettled situation, divisions in the Greek political world and public opinion reigned supreme. Further episodes materialised to add to the uncertainty, military and political. In May the French occupied the Dora Tépé fort, while Thessaloniki itself was occupied, as mentioned above. On May 22 1916 the Greek garrison of the Rupel fort in the Strimone/Struma valley, considered of enormous strategic importance<sup>36</sup>, surrendered to the Bulgarians-Germans without fighting. This gesture also violated Greek sovereignty but it did not make King Constantine decide to abandon neutrality since he continued to fear an invasion from the north and that Greece would go the way of Serbia. In fact the Bulgarians occupied several localities in Aegean Macedonia, but it was never a real invasion of Greece nor did they lead the conflict in terms of movement<sup>37</sup>. In June, due to Anglo-French pressure, Skouloudis gave way to Zaimis at the head of the executive: the new prime minister was considered more malleable. On June 19 the outgoing premier confided to minister De Bosdari "that to forestall the Entente's wish he has told the King that he was willing to resign with the whole Cabinet. The King did not seem against accepting this solution. Only he fears that, if he gives way to this requirement, the Powers will bring forward others such as the dissolution of the Chamber. The King declares he will not accede to such a request at any price."<sup>38</sup> Behind the action of the Powers there was also Venizelos who, according to De Bosdari, "having pushed my colleagues into action [a violent diplomatic Note], is now temporising and assuming an uncertain, devious attitude"<sup>39</sup>.

Since December 1915 an association had been set up in Thessaloniki that was pro-Entente and pro-Venizelos, National Defence (*Ethniki Amina*), with the intent of making an alternative political proposal to the Athens government, as well as getting together a fighting corps. On August 30 1916, a number of officers, Entente and Venizelos's supporters, declared

36. The fort had been built in 1914 after the Balkan wars. During the Second World War in April 1941, it resisted for three days against German and Bulgarian troops.

37. RICHARD J. CRAMPTON, *A concise history of Bulgaria*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 142

38. *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VI, p. 5, De Bosdari to Sonnino, Athens, June 19 1916.

39. *Ivi*, p. 18-19, De Bosdari to Sonnino, June 25 1916.

that they no longer recognised the legitimacy of the government in Athens. Only in the following October did the liberal leader, who had withdrawn to Crete, return to Thessaloniki and set up a real alternative government to that in office. With the *Ethnikì Amina* as a starting point, he intended to constitute a national army, but such a plan was difficult to carry out, as is shown by the fact that in November 1916 only three Greek battalions had been added to the British Expeditionary Corps<sup>40</sup>. However, the die was cast: the political turnabout had come about and it remained to understand whether the Athens government was in a position to oppose it. This turnabout was not borne out by the prudence shown by Venizelos's Anglo-French protectors: in fact they did not recognize his executive and continued dealing with Athens. In this they accepted the Italian viewpoint expressed at the Boulogne Conference<sup>41</sup>.

The new situation also explains a really significant episode in September 1916 in the Aegean town of Kavala. It involved Sofia in particular. At the Bucharest peace conference in 1913 at the end of the second Balkan war, there was a long discussion on whether the town was to be assigned to Greece or Bulgaria. Paris and Berlin favoured Greek interests with the necessary pressure on the Romanian government, initially willing to leave the Aegean port to Bulgaria. There was even a direct intervention of the Kaiser Wilhelm on King Carol I of Romania which determined the final decisions of the Conference<sup>42</sup>. In September 1916, therefore, the commander of the Kavala garrison surrendered to the Bulgarian and German forces, although an offer had been received with the support of the Entente

40. After the defeats undergone in spring 1917, the Entente commands seriously considered whether it would not be better to close the Macedonian frontier. It was Commander in Chief Maurice-Paul Sarrail (unpopular, as the Italian documentation shows: there were serious disagreements with the Italian General Giuseppe Pennella) who insisted on a choice that in the end proved decisive. On this figure see JAN KARL TANENBAUM, *General Maurice Sarrail 1856-1929. The French Army and Left-Wing Politics*, Chapel Hill (NC), University of North Carolina Press, 1974.

41. M. CARACCIOLLO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale* cit., p. 146. Sonnino had no desire to receive the representatives of the Thessaloniki government; A. DE BOSDARI, *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande guerra e di alcuni fatti precedenti ad esse: appunti diplomatici* cit., p. 174. See also the *instant book* UMBERTO FRACCHIA, *Venizelos contro lo Stato di Atene*, Rome, L'italiana, 1917.

42. Cf. CONSTANTIN IORDAN, *Venizelos și România*, București, Omonia, 2010<sup>2</sup>, pp. 111-115 (Problema Kavaliei); ID., *Le relazioni tra la Romania e la Grecia durante le Guerre balcaniche (1912-1913)*, in *Fra neutralità e conflitto. L'Italia, la Romania e le Guerre balcaniche* cit., pp. 121-124.

of evacuation towards Thessaloniki. Rather than sympathising with the central Empires, he feared that the garrison might be part of the Venizelos army that was being set up.

This new episode created alarm among the Entente commanders. As mentioned above, although demobilisation had been started in June 1916, London and Paris, as if to compensate for what had happened on the Macedonian front and to guarantee the rear-guard of the *Armée d'Orient*, asked Athens for the delivery of vital military equipment, the disarming of most of the fleet and the arrest or expulsion of the diplomatic representatives of the central Empires. This last request was to be connected to reasons of military security only if the diplomatic personnel were suspected of dangerous activity towards the allied forces. It is evident that both international law and respect of national sovereignty made such requests unacceptable for any government. After which, the only outcome was in fact the declaration of war. In fact, faced with the inevitable refusal, on December 1 1916 a number of Entente contingents landed in the port of Piraeus. In spite of the fact that King Constantine had ordered his officers not to give the order to fire, the attack was repulsed and the French vice-admiral Louis Charles Dartige de Fournet was blocked in the Zappeion, surrounded by Greek forces. The allied fleet, in order to obtain his release, among other factors, carried out a heavy bombardment: among its main targets was the Royal Palace which however was only slightly damaged. The Italian military attaché to Athens Caracciolo gives a vivid description of incident<sup>43</sup>. The victims, dead and wounded, amounted to a hundred.

All these acts were hardly justifiable<sup>44</sup> but they served the purpose. A large part of the Greek military contingents was transferred to the Peloponnese, farther therefore not only from the eastern front but also from the capital, thus leaving it more vulnerable to any reprisals<sup>45</sup>. The on-going

43. M. CARACCILO, *L'intervento della Grecia nella guerra mondiale* cit., pp. 163-165. Dartige published *Souvenirs de guerre d'un amiral (1914-1916)*, Paris, Plon, 1920.

44. Already on September 2 1916 Sonnino had written to De Bosdari to announce that the *Libia* had received orders to sail to the Piraeus "to take part 'in any demonstration in Greek waters, on condition that, while acting with them [the allied vessels] our ship shall not participate in hostile acts such as bombardments that they may start, as we do not intend to intervene in constitutional questions within Greece"; *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VI, p. 243.

45. Appearing in *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VII, De Bosdari to Sonnino, Athens, January 10 1917, a Greek Note in answer to allied injunctions concerning the military

pressure of the Entente did not however stop there. A rigid naval blockade followed causing serious problems for supplies, hence for everyday life for the Greeks, as well as for transportation. King Constantine's comment was bitter, and not unfounded: "And these are the Powers that were supposed to be fighting for Justice and the rights of small nations"<sup>46</sup>. There came a significant step by the Italian ambassador Imperiali to the English Foreign Secretary Grey to ask him to cease support to Venizelos detrimental to the king, support that might even prelude to the proclamation of the Republic in Greece. In the opinion of the Italian representative it was not allowable for any politician to use such language towards his own sovereign as that used by the liberal Hellenic leader to Constantine<sup>47</sup>.

Step by step, the Anglo-French interference at last overcame the resistance of the Monarchy party: on June 11 1917 the Frenchman Jonnart, speaking as High Commissioner of the protecting Powers, asked the Council President Zaimis<sup>48</sup> that King Constantine should leave the throne. The latter realised that he could no longer withstand the onslaught of the great Powers, once the so-called protecting Powers<sup>49</sup>; he left, followed by his eldest son George, *diadochos*, i.e. the heir to the throne and duke of Sparta, thought to be in favour of the Germans. His second son, Alexander, remained, and to him his father wrote: "It is necessary to obey, and I must depart. I carry out my duty towards my country. I am leaving you Alexander and I beg you to resign yourself and accept my decision; have faith in God, whose blessing I call down upon you."<sup>50</sup> Formally, there was no abdication<sup>51</sup>.

security measures regarding troop movement. De Bosdari noted in the margin: "Enough, it appears to me, for even the most ill-wishing critic".

46. D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece* cit. p. 215.

47. *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VI, p. 242, Imperiali to Sonnino, London, September 1916.

48. In the atmosphere of political unrest created after the resignation of Venizelos in October 1915, a number of Cabinets followed, almost all very short: Zaimis (October 1915), Skouloudis (November 1915 – June 1916), Zaimis again (June-September 1916), Kalogeropoulos (September-October 1916), Lambros (October 1916 - May 1917), Zaimis (May-June 1917).

49. It should be noted that six months earlier, Minister De Bosdari was sure that Constantine was in control of the situation and had popular support: "It is sufficient for me to realise that at the present moment the strength and influence of King Constantine are, shall we say, limitless in his country, and that it is on him that we should depend to obtain anything here"; *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VII, De Bosdari to Sonnino, Athens, January 17 1917.

50. D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece* cit. p. 215.

51. This later played out in favour of the return to the throne of Constantine, as we shall see.



What Paris and London had hoped for came about: on June 27 Venizelos returned to the government with the consent of the new king. Immediately after taking power, the government broke relations with the central Empires and decided to take to the field beside the Entente. The naval blockade was lifted and that allowed the return of Greek trading and, in order to allow the country to recuperate and sustain its military commitments, yet another Anglo-French loan was necessary. The contribution of the Greek armed forces obviously was not immediate but was sufficiently substantial in Aegean Macedonia itself, although it is not clear whether it was decisive for the surrender of Bulgaria, under pressure in turn from within its own borders (Bulgarian society suffered greatly in the war), and in terms of support of the army. In the meanwhile, it was important that the *Armée d'Orient* no longer had to fear an attack from the rear, as had been the case for some time. It could therefore operate in greater safety against the enemy armies.

Venizelos intended to carry forward a particularly ambitious national programme, inspired by the *Megali idea*: to constitute a State extending between Europe and Asia, like the Byzantine Empire, “the Greece of two continents and five seas”<sup>52</sup>. For this reason a new general mobilisation was carried out which enabled up to nine Greek divisions to be deployed on the north-eastern front. Hellenic contingents were in operation on the heights above Doiran and on Mount Dzena, together with English troops, and they took part in the breakthrough at Dobro Pole (today in the Macedonian Republic), on September 15 1918<sup>53</sup>. Fighting on the Macedonian front finished, but this was actually the beginning of the end of the general conflict: within very few days Austria-Hungary and Germany also capitulated on the Italian front and that of the Rhine, and the Ottoman Empire had no other choice. The Greek army entered Bulgarian territory and again occupied Aegean Macedonia, western Thrace and for the first time eastern Thrace, until then under Ottoman sovereignty. The most ambitious goal was Constantinople, but this proved impossible to achieve for political as well as military reasons, since the Powers were otherwise deciding the destiny of the Sultan’s capital, given that by then the Tsar’s Empire had dis-

52. F. GUIDA, *Considerazioni sulla ‘megali idea’ ellenica* cit.

53. RICHARD C. HALL, *Balkan Breakthrough: the Battle of Dobro Pole 1918*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010.



solved. Concerning the latter, we need to recall that later Venizelos wanted to use a Greek contingent in operations against the Bolsheviks in Russia. This was a further proof of alignment with France and Great Britain at a time when the hope still existed that the “Whites” would prevail over the “Reds” in Russia. However, that gesture, political rather than military, was designed to show Athens’s interest for the Black Sea with its substantial Greek settlements<sup>54</sup>.

In the meantime, however, the serious domestic split caused by an external event, the European conflict, was not without consequences. A change became apparent in the liberal nature of Venizelos’s power group. Opponents such as the ex-President of the Council Gounaris<sup>55</sup> and Ioannis Metaxas<sup>56</sup> were exiled to Corsica; a typically liberal norm such as the irremovable nature of judges was suspended; the armed forces and even the church authorities were purged with the removal of those not in sympathy with the Venizelos regime<sup>57</sup>. All of which had nothing to do with liberal principles, constituting a serious precedent that rendered the *Dichasmòs* profound and lasting. Indeed, during the twenty-year inter-war period such illiberal acts were widely used by the opposing Greek political parties. The experience of the so-called Lazzaro Parliament caused amusement<sup>58</sup>: the Chamber elected in December 1915 was declared illegal and replaced with

54. R. CLOGG, *Storia della Grecia moderna* cit., p. 110.

55. Towards the end of 1918 Gounaris managed to escape from Corsica in a fishing-boat, reaching Sardinia and then the Italian peninsula. The later amnesty allowed him to return to Greece in 1920 where he became head of the opposition to Venizelos and started the campaign for the return of King Constantine to Greece.

56. Many years later, in 1936, Metaxas set up his own dictatorial power, inspired by Fascism and Nazism. This is clear enough from the collection of his speeches, *La Grecia contro il comunismo*, published in Rome in 1938 by the CAUR (Action committees for the universality of Rome). Paradoxically he fell a prey to Mussolini (to whose ultimatum of October 28 1940 he opposed a decided No, today remembered in the Greek national holiday) and he died shortly before the end of the Italo-Greek war desired by the Duce.

57. The Italian minister Romano Avezana on July 13 1918 wrote: “Not a day passes without people of the opposition party being interned and imprisoned, officers suspected of sympathy for them expelled or demoted”. *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume XI, p. 194, Romano Avezana to Sonnino, Athens, July 13 1918.

58. De Bosdari wrote: “Were it worthwhile wondering at anything, it would perhaps seem strange that a Note [presented by Jonnart to the Greek Foreign Minister] that starts by recalling what the 1916 guaranteeing powers required regarding new elections finishes by asking for the re-convocation of the Chamber of May 31 1915”; *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume VIII, p. 290, De Bosdari to Sonnino, Athens, June 25 1917.

that elected in June 1915, controlled by the liberals. The new executive did not wish to risk receiving any refusal by an organ in which the liberal deputies were missing because their lists, as mentioned, had not been presented. Yet the country at the time needed to found its life on certain commonly-shared principles.

To further aggravate this very difficult internal situation, after the end of the world war came the unfortunate outcome of the Greek adventure in Asia Minor (1919-1922) which indelibly marked the territorial fate of the country, profoundly influencing Greek society following the exchange of populations agreed upon with Turkey. The division among opposing parties had an even longer influence, characterising the whole period between the two world wars and even many years following the end of the Second World War. It is hard to say whether any of this is to be seen in the convulsive political picture of Greece in our own time.

Apart from the political costs illustrated above, intervention alongside the Entente seemed to have been the right, advantageous thing to do. The frontiers of the Greek state were again extending after the great land acquisitions of 1913. Venizelos however declared in October: "It is impossible in spite of the joy of this victory not to think sadly of what the position of Greece would have been if it had intervened in February or at least in September 1915 [that is with the Gallipoli initiative or on the opening of the Thessaloniki front]. The curse of the nation be upon those who stopped us from following the road to national honour and made us lose one of those occasions that present themselves to peoples only every few centuries"<sup>59</sup>. The Paris Peace Conference granted Greece substantial spoils of war, as historical literature has many times illustrated<sup>60</sup>, in part satisfying the Memorandum sent by Venizelos on December 30 1918. The peace agreements of Neuilly (with Bulgaria, 1919) and Sèvres (with Turkey, 1920) confirm the fact, although the United States and Italy had expressed dissent regarding certain Greek aspirations. For the Italian and U.S. representatives, excluding Bulgaria from the Aegean coast was an excessively severe punish-

59. *Ivi*, pp. 468-469, Romano Avezzana to Sonnino, Athens, October 7 1918.

60. In the vast literature on the Peace Conference see FRANCESCO CACCAMO, *L'Italia e la "Nuova Europa": il confronto sull'Europa orientale alla Conferenza di pace di Parigi (1919-1920)*, Milan, Luni, 2000, which rightly devotes great attention to Greek aspirations and Italo-Greek relations, well represented by the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement.

ment<sup>61</sup>. The logic of diplomacy and balance among the diverse interests however annulled such dissent. With the Neuilly Treaty the port of Dede Ağa (today Alexandroupoli) was assigned not to Bulgaria but to Greece. The city and all western Thrace are still today part of the Greek state<sup>62</sup>, while eastern Thrace, assigned under the Sèvres Treaty (August 10 1920) was an acquisition that did not last: the unfortunate, dramatic campaign in Asia Minor ended with the peace of Lausanne, which restored the region to Turkey<sup>63</sup>.

Within such complex diplomatic dynamics, Rome and Athens in particular reached an agreement on several issues and in fact sacrificed the Bulgarian cause: this is the famous Tittoni-Venizelos agreement, signed in Paris on July 29 1919. For this agreement, at the negotiating table the Italian government was to support Greek claims<sup>64</sup> on western and eastern<sup>65</sup> Thrace and on southern Albania, furthermore ceding to Greece the sovereignty over the Aegean Islands occupied after the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-12<sup>66</sup>. For its part, the Greek government agreed to support the Italian requests relative to the Albanian state and the annexation of Vlorë and its hinterland, confirming the neutralisation of the Canal of Corfu, and to give up certain of its own aspirations in Asia Minor in favour of Italy. Since an article of the agreement stated that it would be totally invalid unless all the clauses laid down therein were implemented, in fact it had no

61. FRANCESCO GUIDA, *La Bulgaria dalla guerra di liberazione sino al trattato di Neuilly (1877-1919). Testimonianze italiane*, Rome, Bulzoni 1984, chapter V.

62. A few years ago the topic, already acknowledged in historiography, was dealt with once more by GIULIANO CAROLI, *L'Italia e la definizione del confine fra Grecia e Bulgaria (1919-1922)*, in *Tra speranze e delusioni. La Bulgaria a Versailles*, edited by R. Tolomeo, Rome, Lithos, 2002, pp. 99-120, in particular 102-103. See also F. CACCAMO, *L'Italia e la "Nuova Europa"* cit.

63. In spite of the military defeat, Greece saw its sovereignty recognised over most of the Aegean Islands (the Cyclades).

64. In the last days of the war, Venizelos had been much less optimistic on the Thrace issue with the Italian minister in Athens. He was in particular aware "of the obstacles to be met in obtaining admittance of Greece's right to that part of Thrace annexed to Bulgaria after the Balkan war." And he was "scandalised" by Bulgarian claims on eastern (Turkish) Thrace, a "region inhabited by flourishing populations of Greeks who, should Bulgarian aspirations be realised, would in brief be destroyed"; *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume XI, p. 472, Romano Avezzana to Sonnino, Athens, October 8 1918.

65. According to Dakin "Western Thrace was less Greek than eastern Thrace": in neither of the two regions was the Greek community, however numerous, the absolute majority; it was doubtful whether it was a relative majority; D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece* cit. p. 226.

66. The island of Rhodes was to remain under Italian sovereignty, except in the case of a referendum to be held within five years.

practical consequences and Italy and Greece found themselves competing on several fronts, above all in Asia Minor<sup>67</sup>. To be more exact, it was the Italian side (the new foreign minister Sforza) in June 1920 to denounce the fragility of the agreement while Venizelos replied in vain that such an act was not legitimate, being belated and unfounded. However on August 10 1920 together with the Sèvres Treaty, the Italo-Greek agreement was signed ceding certain islands in the Dodecanese to Greece<sup>68</sup>, and also a three-party agreement between France, England and Italy to share out the areas of influence that were once within the old Ottoman empire (an agreement which in fact never took effect).

We have already spoken of the competition between Italy and Greece on southern Albania and Rome's opinion on the territorial aggrandisement of Greece to the detriment of Bulgaria and European Turkey, but another issue must be recalled that did not assist good relations between Rome and Athens and that also came under the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement. The new Italian minister in the Hellenic capital, Romano Avezana (after Caporetto Italy's position with the allies was weakened in Greece as well)<sup>69</sup> in September 1918<sup>70</sup> reported that Greek opinion was focusing intently on the happenings in the Dodecanese. The aversion against Italy of the Venizelos party, now somewhat mitigated, had a new argument (rather, a returning issue) for exacerbation. When the war ended, in 1919 and 1920, Rome agreed to cede the Dodecanese to Greece, Rhodes excepted: successive events, however, induced the Italian government not to apply this agreement and those islands passed to Greece only after the Second World War<sup>71</sup>.

67. "Dans le cas où l'Italie n'obtiendrait pas satisfaction en ce qui concerne ses aspirations en Asie Mineure, elle reprend pleine liberté d'action par rapport à tous les points du présent accord. Dans le cas où la Grèce n'obtiendrait pas satisfaction en ce qui concerne ses revendications formulées dans l'article 4, elle reprend pleine liberté d'action par rapport à tous les points du présent accord" (GEORG FRIEDRICH VON MARTENS, *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités et autres actes relatifs aux rapports de droit international*, s. III, t. XII, Leipzig, p. 578).

68. The agreement never took effect. As we shall soon see, following the events in Asia Minor the Italian government decided to remain in possession of the whole of the Dodecanese which was ceded to Greece only after the Second World War.

69. This is De Bosdari's opinion, *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande guerra e di alcuni fatti precedenti ad esse: appunti diplomatici* cit., p. 208.

70. *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume XI, p. 408, Romano Avezana to Sonnino, Athens, September 19 1916.

71. M. CLEMENTI, E. TOLIOU, *Gli ultimi ebrei di Rodi* cit., pp. 207-222.

The main issues creating tension between Rome and Athens were those concerning Albania and the Dodecanese, but then competition arose for control over certain regions in Anatolia, including the Smyrna district. Already in October 1918 Sonnino let London, Paris and Athens know that the Italian government demanded respect of the agreements undertaken with the Allies and that “we are not willing to give up Smyrna and that it is necessary from every point of view that an intervention of Greek forces be avoided in Smyrna or in the Asia Minor territories attributed to us”<sup>72</sup>. In March 1919 Italian troops landed on the coast of the Antalya region reserved to the Italians under the agreements with the allies: the London Treaty of 1915 and the Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne Treaty of 1917. They moved towards Smyrna, one of the main cities of the Ottoman Empire, also assigned to Italy under this latter treaty: this led the Greeks to take the initiative with the consent of England (first of all), France and the USA, showing that the agreements mentioned could not be considered wholly valid. In effect Smyrna was occupied by Greek troops on May 15, not by the Italians. The occupation was not without bloodshed: although confined to barracks, the Turkish soldiers may have fired first, but the occupiers followed up by over-reacting in actions that involved the civilian population<sup>73</sup>. The Sèvres Treaty assigned the district of Smyrna to the Greeks; it was in the main populated by Greeks, although they were a minority with respect to the Turks. This diplomatic success was an incentive to operations that Athens decided to implement towards the heart of Anatolia where the new Turkish power had been constituted, well represented by the figure of Mustafa Kemal, the future Atatürk. It is a known fact that, in line with a dramatic law of retaliation, after the Hellenic catastrophe that began near the Sakharia River in 1922, it was the troops of Kemal who massacred the Greeks of Smyrna, considered “infidel” (*gâvur*)<sup>74</sup>. Par-

72. *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Fifth series, volume XI, p. 499, Sonnino to Borghese, Bonin Longare and Romano Avezzana, Turin, October 11 1918. A numerous community lived in Smyrna, holders of Italian passports but actually Levantine and Greek-speakers; see LIVIO MISSIR DI LUSIGNANO, *Due secoli di relazioni italo-turche attraverso le vicende di una famiglia di italiani di İzmir: i Missir di Lusignano*, in *Storia Contemporanea*, XXIII, n. 4, August 1992, pp. 613-623.

73. See a romanticised memory in a recent novel by THERESA RÉVAY, *L'altra riva del Bosforo*, Vicenza, Beat, 2015, pp. 127-128.

74. STEFANO PETRUNGARO, *Balceni. Una storia di violenza*, Rome, Carocci, 2012, p. 91. It should not be forgotten that during the World War the Greek population of Turkey was subjected to discrimination and at times violence.

adoxical as it may seem, there is an acute comment on those events, and on Hellenic Risorgimento struggles: “The little kingdom in the southern Balkans, which came into being by the forced agreement of the Porte, did all in its power to demolish the shaky empire, only to find it replaced by a more formidable adversary: a Turkish nation-state with a programme of homogenisation and a persistent imperial hangover. In more than one sense, Greece contributed generously to the creation of its eastern adversary”<sup>75</sup>.

Paradoxically at the end of the Greek army’s dramatic withdrawal, the survivors embarked at Smyrna itself, on Italian ships for the most part. Less paradoxically, the statistics show that the greatest Greek losses in war were greater in this local conflict with the Turks than during the military operations of the general overall conflict. Too well known to require further explanation is the exchange among populations that started between Turkey and Greece after these events, an exchange ratified under a specific Greek-Turk agreement in January 1923 and later in the Lausanne Treaty of July 24 1923<sup>76</sup>.

The Greek-Turkish war does not come within the scope of this paper, yet it is not possible to avoid supplying further indications regarding Greek politics in the first few years after the end of the European conflict. It continued to feature the *Dichasmòs*. According to historian Douglas Dakin, “the national disaster again split the country from top to bottom”<sup>77</sup>. In a still fluid international framework, indeed, as regards Greece, in full evolution from the occupation of Smyrna to the decision of the Sèvres Treaty, 1920 brought hugely dramatic novelties. In the month of October King Alexander died from an infection after being bitten by a monkey and that opened the way for the return to the throne of his father Constantine. A political event contributed to this, providing much food for thought on the uninominal electoral system. In the elections of December 1920, Venizelos’s liberal party was defeated in terms of seats (winning 110 out

75. JOHN S. KOLIOPOULOS – THANOS M. VERENIS, *Greece the modern sequel. From 1821 to the present*, London, C. Hurst & Co., 2002, p. 250.

76. 1.300.000 Greeks moved to Greece and 400.000 Turks or Muslims moved within the confines of the new Turkish state. Greek presence in Asia from then on was limited only to the city of Istanbul, while the immigrants became a serious problem, given that they were between one quarter and one fifth of the population of the Reign of Greece; DIMITRIOS MAMMIS, *La migrazione dall’Asia Minore verso la Grecia (1922-1924): conseguenze e risultati*, Venice, Cafoscarina, 2010; RENÉE HIRSCHON, *Espulsioni di massa in Grecia e Turchia: la convenzione di Losanna del 1923*, in *In fuga: guerre, carestie, migrazioni nel mondo contemporaneo*, ed. by MARCO BUTTINO, Naples, L’ancora del Mediterraneo, 2001, p.24.

77. D. DAKIN, *The Unification of Greece* cit., p. 237.



of 370), even though it had obtained the majority, however small, of the votes. The result was in any case surprising seeing that the government and the prime minister were able to claim important successes connected to war intervention. The opposition had shown itself able in compacting around the candidates presented to the electors, in spite of the composite nature of the electorate<sup>78</sup>.

Venizelos departed into exile with other party members, while a referendum called Constantine back into the country. These events meant it was the king with the cabinet he appointed under Gounaris who was responsible for the Anatolian campaign. After the failure of that military action and the dramatic consequences it entailed, in September 1922 Constantine was forced by the military to abdicate in favour of his son George II. Consistently with the partisan spirit and illiberal outcome of the *Dichasmòs*, those mainly responsible for the Anatolian catastrophe were executed after a political-slanted verdict from a military court<sup>79</sup>. The reign of George II lasted a very short time<sup>80</sup>: after the failed *coup* by the Monarchists, he was forced to go abroad. The next year, 1924, the Republic was proclaimed. The inter-war period of Greek history was extremely restless with great political instability, fed by the spirit that had arisen and become established during the Great War. The political picture polarised more or less around two sectors: the people's party and the monarchists on one side, and the liberals and republicans on the other. Apart from the continual swings between governments and even between the forms of the institutions (Monarchy, Republic) that serve to illustrate the negative legacy left by political experience during the First World War, it is above all the unorthodox methods used by both sides in their struggle for power that must be remembered.

78. For a particular view of the causes of the electoral "disaster" and its implications see C. IORDAN, *Venizelos și Români* cit., pp. 228-257, using the account of the unofficial Romanian correspondent in Greece, Nicolae Filodor, and of his wife.

79. The death sentence was inflicted on Gounaris (whom we have already encountered in this essay), and on four ministers of his 1921-1922 government (Baltatzis, Protopapadakis, Stratos, Nikolaos Theotokis) as well as on General Hadjianesti, while life sentences were given to General Stratigos and Admiral Goudas. Richard Clogg defines it a "political murder" (*Storia della Grecia moderna* cit., p. 116).

80. He returned to the throne in 1935 after a new authoritarian turnabout in Greek political history, and remained there until 1947, although during the years of the Second World War he had to move to Cairo.



## Italy in the Great War as seen from Turkey

When I was asked to think and write about “Italy in the Great War seen from Turkey”, my first reaction was to say that Italy was not among the major concerns of Turkey in that period. Indeed, at the beginning of the XXth. century, the Ottoman Empire was a declining great power trying to keep its integrity, and to preserve its influence in face of the western powers’ policy over the Eastern Mediterranean. It was “the Sick Man of Europe”, as called by Nicolas I of Russia, and the opportunities provided by its markets and raw materials were whetting western powers’ appetite, including that of Italy.

When it comes to Italy, it was considered to be “the least of the Great Powers”, though it was trying to expand its borders in search of realizing the opportunities offered to it by other Powers. In the eyes of the Ottoman statesmen, the Italian intervention in Libya rendered Italy an important actor in the international arena, a potential great force to take into consideration. Furthermore, the Ottoman defeat in Libya made Italy undeniably the trigger of partition of the Ottoman Empire.

The Libyan War had several important outcomes for the Ottomans. First of all, the loss of territories were strategically important. The last Ottoman strip on North Africa was gone. Italy annexed also Rhodes and Dodecanese Islands. But, there was something more important than territorial losses: from the Libyan War on, the internal political stability of the Ottoman Empire was damaged, its isolation in the diplomatic field was aggravated, its illusion of greatness came under scrutiny. As Bülent Durgun argues, “another important outcome of the Ottoman-Italian War was the establishment of the Balkan League, which had not been formed for many years. Main purpose of the alliance was to take the advantage of the situation which the Ottoman Empire was in”<sup>1</sup>.

1. B. DURGUN, *Balkanları Tutuşturan İtalyan Ateşi: Türk-İtalyan Harbi (1911-1912)*, in «Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi», XIV, 2014, 28, p. 138.

It can be said that the Libyan War was the first earthquake, or it caused a snowball effect; the Balkan Wars were the aftershocks and the Great War functioned as a deadly blow for the Ottoman Empire. If we take the Turkish side into consideration, first of all, it is a story of a diminishing power, a transformation of a multi-national, multi-religious empire to a middle-size national republic. Ottoman reformers tried to struggle for its survival until the very end, but successive wars rendered the collapse inevitable.

Ottoman Empire's territorial losses were almost limitless, and decisively important. Austria's annexation of Bosnia, Bulgaria's annexation of East Rumelia, and Greece's annexation of Crete, unrest in Macedonia and in other provinces resumed with compounding violence in the Balkans. Ottoman territorial losses continued with the victory of the newly independent states of Southeastern Europe during the Balkan Wars, which pushed the Ottomans out of all their remaining European provinces except a small part of the Thracian peninsula.

Almost all prominent historians underline the specific role of Italy in Ottoman destabilization process. Among others, R. J. B Bosworth states: "...with the perseverance of the least of the Great Powers, Italian leaders strove to attend every international conference on Balkan or Levantine affairs, to belong to every international commission and, most of all, to be a part of any deal which might bring real or apparent advantage."<sup>2</sup> Italy engaged itself in discovering zones of interest in Asia Minor in order to be granted a place in a foreseeable division of the Empire. In search of political and commercial interests, Italy invested in agricultural settlements and government-financed shipping lines. Italian diplomats, bankers and industrialists took action in different domains especially in Southwestern Turkey such as forests, coal and lignite mines<sup>3</sup>. As a part of this policy, an Italian company was involved in the construction of the İzmir-Aydın railway. Bosworth questions the basic motivation behind Italian policies and comments that "even within Italy, whatever evidence there is for pressure by industrialists or bankers in favour of a more forward policy in the East is far outweighed by evidence of the government trying to encourage business

2. R.J.B. BOSWORTH, *Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, a cura di M. Kent, Frank Cass, London 1984, p. 53.

3. M. ÇELEBI, *Turco-Italian Relations between 1919-1922*, in *Italia e Turchia tra passato e futuro. Un impegno comune, un sfida culturale*, a cura di E.D. Tamur-F.L. Grassi, Nuova Cultura, Roma 2009, p. 133.

to involve itself in Turkey in ways which would be useful to the political ambitions of Italian foreign policy”<sup>4</sup>.

When the Great War broke out, there was not a direct military confrontation between Italian and the Ottoman troops in any battlefield. Italy, belatedly joined the *Entente* Powers by secret agreements (the first one is the London Agreement of 26 April 1915) and tried to secure its rights over Southwestern Anatolia and Smyrna region. The official Italian declaration of war to Ottomans was dated 21 August 1915. Following their traditional policies, Italian diplomats pressured the British and French authorities to recognize their right to create settlements in Ottoman territories. This was a time of diplomatic war of influence depending on manipulations. But, it is generally accepted that Italy could be involved only to the extent permitted by France and Britain. As actual military conflict was always avoided between Turks and Italians, Fabio L. Grassi defines this situation as “war without war”<sup>5</sup>.

St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement (26 April 1917) was another attempt for Italy to secure its claims over Southern and Western Anatolia. Supposedly, Italy should receive a “just share” in that region. Later on, the Agreement failed since the treaty was not ratified by Russians. Nonetheless, the basic premises of the Agreement remained as sources of inspiration of Italian diplomacy following the end of the Great War.

The Paris Peace Conference was inaugurated on 18 January 1919 in Versailles and continued for one full year. Italy, as its demands were not met, started to behave separately by occupying Antalya in March, Konya in April, Fethiye, Bodrum, Marmaris, Kuşadası and Muğla till the end of July 1919. In May 1919 Greece, backed by Britain and France, managed to occupy Izmir and its environs. Finally, the Sèvres Treaty, signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1920, acknowledged Italian zone of influence, except for the region occupied by Greece.

Mevlüt Çelebi, based on eye-witness accounts, claims that the Italian invasion, contrary to that of the Greeks, was well accepted by the Turkish population<sup>6</sup>. Italians contributed to social and cultural life of the local

4. R.J.B. BOSWORTH, *Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, cit., p. 67.

5. F.L. GRASSI, *Türk İtalyan İlişkilerinde Az Bilinenler*, trans. S. Güneş, Tarihçi, İstanbul 2014, p. 95.

6. M. ÇELEBİ, *Turco-Italian relations*, cit., p. 134.

community by founding hospitals, clinics, dispensaries, and schools. This positive approach in occupied regions shows that, on the part of Italians, it was not an unfriendly invasion.

There is also a need to mention the name of Carlo Sforza, the high-profile High Commissioner of Italy to Istanbul, from November 1918 on, who founded and maintained good relations with Turkish resistance movement leaders. As the new nationalist mobilisation was spreading out through Anatolia, Italy, who did not get the support it had expected from its allies, had to re-evaluate its policies. This reappraisal included a rational analysis of Turkish reaction against the Greek occupation of Izmir and the recognition of Turkish national movement<sup>7</sup>. This pro-Turkish, anti-Greek and also anti-British shift in Italian diplomacy was largely signed by C. Sforza, the commissioner, secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then Minister of Foreign Affairs until mid-1921. In this period, Italian occupation forces seemed to ignore the Kemalist militia's activities in their influence zones, and did not restrain them from using harbors of Kuşadası and Antalya. Ankara government was also allowed to open an agency in Rome to promote and advocate its positions in international arena.

Forming such an alliance with Italy, the Kemalist National Assembly in Ankara provided the military supplies of the armed struggle from Italy, and from other countries via Italy. Benefiting on Italy's expectations for economic concessions, Ankara has managed to put a distance between Italy and the allies. Throughout this period, Italy has tried to secure the concessions in its zones of influence in the long run –namely, the concessions regarding the mines in Bodrum, Fethiye and the Salt Lake in Central Anatolia, and agricultural production in Konya and Menderes plains. As such, Italy has supported Ankara government's representation in the London Conference which has convened to revisit the conditions of the Sèvres Treaty. Although inconclusive, London Conference contributed to the international recognition of the Ankara government. Italian and Turkish sides also signed a bilateral agreement, but this agreement was not approved by the National Assembly<sup>8</sup>. The ongoing victories of the Turkish

7. *Ivi*, p. 138.

8. This agreement had six articles where the Italian zones of influence in Anatolia were secured by the Turkish side, a Turco-Italian economic cooperation was foreseen in these zones, and Italy accepted to support Turkish sovereignty in İzmir and Thrace. For the articles of this agreement,

forces against the Greek invasion fueled the already existing interest in the Kemalist cause in the Italian public opinion. As a result, beginning with Antalya, Italy has started to withdraw its forces from Anatolia. This can be taken as the point where Sforza period in Italy's policy of Turkey has ended. Indeed, on its aftermath, the government where Sforza was the Minister of Foreign Affairs fell, and the newly formed government would act in accordance with British diplomacy. As Grassi posits, after the failure of Sforza's policies, Italy ceased to have a real Turkish policy, but acted as a fair mediator of diplomatic disputes, in search of benefits from the sides it has supported<sup>9</sup>. Indeed, under the ministry of the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Pietro Tomasi della Torretta, who was known to be a British ally, Italy would follow policies for different ends, which included supporting the allies against Ankara government.

When the Great Offensive of the Turkish armed forces started on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1922, Italian press was following the process closely. The Kemalist victory against the Greek army was also taken as the approval of the unjust policies of Italy and the allies<sup>10</sup>. Hence, Italy had given up expecting economic concessions in Anatolia, and found itself in search of a new discourse which was in line with this new situation. Furthermore, as Bosworth puts it, "By then Italy, somewhat gleefully, could watch the collapse of the Greek Empire in Asia Minor, and the accompanying humiliation of Greece's Franco-British sponsors"<sup>11</sup>.

Fabio L. Grassi evaluates Italy's Turkish policy on the aftermath of the Great War, as a "history of frustration"<sup>12</sup>. It indeed is so. The Great War was the beginning of a process which proved to be the deadly coup on the Ottoman State. Italy was one of the great powers who was involved in this process with great expectations. Yet, the inclusion of Greece to the process, and the Kemalist resistance, has killed off Italy's hopes. Grassi posits that "the aims of Italy, and ways in which it was involved in the Turkish problem, were sites of target practice for the incoherent imperialistic desires

see: F.L. GRASSI, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu 1919-1923 Kamuoyu ve Dış Politika*, transl. N. Özkan-D. Kundakçı, Ed. Yapı Kredi, İstanbul 2003, p. 142.

9. F.L. GRASSI, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu*, cit., p. 225.

10. P. DI ROCCALTA, *Angora e Kemal Pascià*, Anonima Romana, Roma 1932, p. 67, cited in: M. ÇELEBİ, *Turco-Italian Relations*, cit., p. 143.

11. R.J.B. BOSWORTH, *Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, cit., p. 72.

12. F.L. GRASSI, *İtalya ve Türk Sorunu*, cit., p. 217.

of Italian capitalism” and relates the rise of fascism in Italy, in part, to the frustration created by Italy’s Eastern policy<sup>13</sup>.

Mussolini rose to power in Italy, about the time when preparations for a new peace conference where the new situation resulting from the Kemalist victory in the Turco-Greek War would be negotiated. At the Lausanne Conference Mussolini’s Italy tried to play one of the major roles, but essentially a double one. In substantive matters, Italy seemed to preserve the united Allied front, but between United Kingdom and Turkey, it aspired to play a mediatory role.

In conclusion, interestingly enough, Italy is one of the countries who has made a direct and indirect contribution, both to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the rise of new Turkey. New Turkey, within its own limits, tried to go beyond the constraints set by the “Great Powers”. Italy, or so-called “the least of Great Powers”, was among the parties negatively affected by the failures of its natural allies, the Great Powers, in their Eastern Mediterranean policies.

13. *Ivi*, p. 225.

## The Enigma of the Presence of Italian Soldiers in Belgium during the First World War: the Places and the History

### Introduction

“Italy during the First World War as seen from Belgium” is not a new theme in historiography. During the winter of 1978-1979, Michel Dumoulin had organized a study day on the relations between Belgium, Italy and the Holy See in the years 1914-1918<sup>1</sup>.

In her contribution on that day, entitled “Les Italiens en Belgique pendant la Guerre de 1914-1918”<sup>2</sup>, Anne Morelli studied three different themes that coincided with three types of Italian presence in Belgium during the First World War, as to know: the colonies of the Italians settled in Belgium on the eve of the declaration of war; the Italian prisoners that were deported by the occupation power to the prisons and concentration camps on Belgium territory; the Italian soldiers of the “secondo corpo d’armata”, whose head-quarter was situated at Gedine at the end of 1918.

In her article, Morelli touched some fundamental questions on the enigma of the fallen Italian soldiers on Belgium soil during the Great War; nevertheless not all of these questions could be answered. The historian although, states correctly that the major part of the Italians that were buried in the cemetery of Robermont were soldiers of the auxiliary troops sent in January 1918 by Italy, in sight of the defence operations in France and were part of the mentioned “secondo corpo d’armata”, that joined the

1. *La Belgique, l’Italie et le Saint-Siège (1914-1919). Actes du séminaire interuniversitaire de III<sup>e</sup> cycle du Comité belge de l’ISRI*, in *Risorgimento. Bulletin semestriel publié par le Comité belge de l’Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento italiano. Numéro spécial*, a. XXI (1979), pp. 1-171.

2. ANNE MORELLI, *Les Italiens en Belgique pendant la Guerre de 1914-1918*, in *Risorgimento. Bulletin semestriel publié par le Comité belge de l’Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento italiano. Numéro spécial*, a. XXI (1979), pp. 1-21.



battle on 11 June 1918 for the conquest of the *Chemin des Dames* and of the river Meuse in Belgian Luxembourg<sup>3</sup>.

But how to explain the presence of dead Italian soldiers on the battlefield in Flanders? Had they “really participated in the battles within the trenches”, as the fascist Italian associations in Belgium confirmed immediately after the War, to instrumentalize the history? Or were they Italian prisoners that were deported to Belgium<sup>4</sup>? Morelli, again correctly, opts for the second hypothesis, thanks to the data of Italian prisoners in the Citadelle of Liège; the historian, although, was not able to explain the presence of Italian graves on other military or civil cemeteries, as those of Houthulst, Ixelles and Aubange<sup>5</sup>. After almost forty years, one can hope on a better synthetic overview of the question. Within the context of the centennial of the Great War, indeed, we can find fragmental evidence on the presence of Italians on Belgian soil. Nevertheless, we have to conclude that the present literature at our disposal concerning Italian soldiers within Belgium during the First World War contains a lot of inexactitudes and even urban legends. For example, based on some not very scientific testimonies, one states that the cemetery of Houthulst contains the bodies of some thirty Italian soldiers that had to labour for the Germans in maintaining the defence infrastructure within the woods of Houthulst, and that the same later on would have been used as human shield during the final offensive of 28 September 1918. This urban legend was later on confirmed *in loco*, by which it gained some official status<sup>6</sup>.

Similar is the myth of “a fraternization in arms” between the Belgian and Italian combatants, that would have been “born within the trenches”, that was sustained by a captain of the Belgian army, A. Jacoby in an article of 1937, who remembers in particular an Italian cemetery near the Yser (IJzer): his thoughts are with the cemeteries in West-Flanders, “where, during the days of battle, we had the best relations with the Italian comrades”<sup>7</sup>. The fundamental problem with this ‘invented historiography’ is the fact that most of the existing research never has been based on archives. The

3. *Ivi*, pp. 15-17.

4. *Ivi*, p. 17.

5. *Ivi*, pp. 14-15.

6. <http://www.grafzerkje.be/nieuwsbrief/90/artikel/1090>; <http://tenmandere.be/nieuws-brieven/2013/08/italianenlaan.html>.

7. A. JACOBY in *Courrier de l'Armée*, 1 novembre 1937.

only “serious” results, for instance, concerning the cemetery of Houthulst, can be found in studies that not concentrate as such on this topic, but only mention a few things concerning it<sup>8</sup>. Besides, one has to conclude that even not the whole historical context of the Italian presence in Belgium during the First World War ever has been taken into account. Some authors believe that the Italians indeed have participated at the combat at the Yser (IJzer); others, contrary, state that the Italians never have participated as active soldiers at combats on Belgian territory. Happily, there are some rare exceptions within the historical research<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, contrary to what happened concerning the presence of Italians in France, we have to observe that even in Italy there does not have been any historical research on the Italian presence in Belgium during the First World War; even not by Giovanni Procacci, an authority in this field<sup>10</sup>.

Passioned by the fact that I have lived for more than twenty years on some hundred meters from the military cemetery of Houthulst, I decided to do some research on Italians soldiers that were buried in Belgium. My research is based, among others sources, on personal visites of the Belgian cemeteries that at present still contain the tombs of the Italian soldiers and on of their archives<sup>11</sup>, on the archives preserved in the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History – Documentation Centre in Brussels (hence AMRA)<sup>12</sup> and on documents of the Documentation

8. PIETER DECLERCQ, *Het militair kerkhof*, in *Ten Mandere-periodiek*, a. 4 (1964), pp. 6-10; JAN VANCOILLIE, *De Duitse militaire begraafplaats Menen Wald. Geschiedenis van de Duitse militaire graven van de Eerste Wereldoorlog in Zuid-West-Vlaanderen*, Wevelgem, Wibilinga, 2013, pp. 84, 123, 191, 193, 210, 270, 289 et 294; JEAN-MARIE LERMYTE, *Leven in het operatiegebied Izege 14-18*, Kortrijk, 2010, pp. 348-356

9. LUC COREMANS and ANNEMIE REYNTJENS, *Verrassende sporen van de Grote Oorlog. 33 minder bekende WOI-hotspots in West-Vlaanderen*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2014, pp. 110-113 and ROBERT BACCARNE and JAN STEEN, *Van het Vrijbos tot Roeselare*, s.l., s.e., pp. 200-201.

10. GIOVANNA PROCACCI, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra. Con una raccolta di lettere inedite*, Torino, Bollati Boringheri, 2000.

11. Especially the archives of the cemeteries of Liège-Robermont (special thanks to the director Charles Doppée) and those of Antwerp-Schoonselhof, preserved in FelixArchief, Oude Leeuwenrui 29, 2000 Antwerp.

12. I want to express my gratitude toward Rob Troubleyn for his precious help and especially for facilitating the consultation of dossiers not yet inventarised.

Centre of the 'In Flanders Fields Museum' of Ypres<sup>13</sup>. We can already anticipate four important results:

1. There are more Belgian cemeteries in which we find the graves of Italian soldiers than thought before. In total, I found data in 10 cemeteries that preserve 549 bodies, of whom 15 unknown.
2. The actual state of the cemeteries does not reflect the facts that happened on the battle field: a soldier can be killed on place A, and buried eventually at place B. In historical research this fact often is denied or overlooked, what leads to wrong conclusions. In fact, already during the First World War, and afterwards from 1924 onwards, diverse bodies of killed Italian soldiers were transferred, up to 1978. This was no exception, since it happened for all the other nationalities involved.
3. One can confirm the theses of Morelli that the major part of the Italian soldiers (circa 70%) died as prisoners in Belgium, and this between the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1919. Another part of them, although, was killed on the battle field; in concreto, we talk about the soldiers of the "secondo corpo d'armata", that reached the combat on 11 June 1918 to conquer the *Chemin des Dames* and the river Maas in Belgian Luxemburg. The 'mythe' that Italians would have participated at the battles of the trenches of the Yser (IJzer) near Diksmuide, is only an invention by fascist militants of the afterwar period.
4. The material and social living conditions of the circa three thousand Italian prisoners in the Austrian-German concentration camps in Belgium, were disastrous. Besides, one has to question their status: were they officially prisoners or not? It seems that the majority of them were constraint to forced labour and that the agreements stipulated during the Convention of The Hague (1907) were not respected towards them. After the defeat at Caporetto, moreover, the Italian state considered a huge part of its imprisoned compatriots as deserters since they did not do anything to defend themselves. This could explain why there was no national organisation at all to help them

13. With Marc Glorieux, Ludwig Devlieghere and Gilbert Ossieur of the "Documentatiecentrum In Flanders Fields", we prepare the publication of the prosopographical data of the Italian soldiers in Belgium during the First World War.

materially during their imprisonment. The soldiers only could rely on their families far away in Italy.

### The actual state of the cemeteries

We have the following data concerning the actual cemeteries in Belgium that conserve the bodies of Italian soldiers who died during the First World War:

1. Flanders: 148 bodies.
  - Houthulst (military cemetery): 81 graves, 7 unknown.
  - Langemark (Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof): 1 grave in a mass grave of German soldiers.
  - Ghent (Westerbegraafplaats): 24 graves.
  - Antwerp (Schoonselhof): 42 tombs.
2. Brussels: 12 bodies.
  - Ixelles (municipal cemetery): 8 graves.
  - Anderlecht (Vogelenzang): 3 graves.
  - Molenbeek-Saint-Jean (municipal cemetery): 1 grave.
3. Wallonia: 389 bodies.
  - Liegi (Robermont): 346 graves, of which 8 unknown.
  - Namur (Belgrade): 15 graves.
  - Virton (Bellevue): 28 graves.

Based on the data at our disposal we can state that on 21 December 1917 the first Italian soldier died on Belgian soil, while the last one died on 1 March 1919.

### The history of the Italian soldiers in Belgium based on the actual cemeteries

During the First World War, there arrived a lot of war prisoners, captured in German-Austrian territory, in Belgium. These prisoners of war, as the civilians, were constrained to labor at or behind the front. In the case of the Italians, between 1915 and 1918, there were around 600.000 soldiers in prison and half of them were captured during the days of the

“Dodicesima Battaglia dell’Isonzo”, from 24 October until 12 November 1917. It is known that the majority of them were deported to Mauthausen (Austria), Theresín (Czech Republic), Rastatt and Celle (Germany)<sup>14</sup>, but as we mentioned, one forgets that many of them were transferred to the territory of occupied Belgium.

## Flanders

In Flanders, the actual cemeteries of Houthulst (Province of West Flanders), of Ghent (Province of East Flanders) and of Antwerp (Province of Antwerp) testify of this sad period. Houthulst is one of the new cemeteries of the Westhoek that were constructed after the First World War. Similar to what happened in France the Belgian government authorized after the conflict that the bodies of the killed soldiers returned home to the cities and villages of origin. Houthulst (that was part of the municipality of Klerken until 1928) constructed a military cemetery in 1923, to group the bodies that were conserved in graves coming from minor cemeteries<sup>15</sup>. In total, today, the cemetery counts 1804 graves, of which 1723 Belgian (among them 493 unknown) – a good part of them were killed during the final offensive of end September 1918 – and 81 Italian (7 unknown).

All the Italian bodies were grouped between 1924 and 1929 and exceptionally still in 1975. This grouping was done during the Interwar period by the “Service des Sépultures Militaires”, a special section of the Belgian Ministry of War. In 1975, the transport was organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Direction for the National Affairs and the Section of the military graves.

The Italians were thus war prisoners who were used as forced labourers by the Germans: but where did these Italians have to work? First of all, there was a group settled in the neighbourhood of the castle of Wallemote owned by Gaspar Van de Boogaerde near Izegem of about 800 Italians.

14. G. PROCACCI, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra* cit., and MASSIMILIANO VALENTE, *La nunziatura di Eugenio Pacelli a Monaco di Baviera e la “diplomazia dell’assistenza” nella Grande Guerra*, in *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, a. 83 (2003), pp. 264-287.

15. AMRA, Box “Correspondance internationale BMB Houthulst”, which contains the dossiers on the construction of the cemetery (1923-1925).

They had to labor in the region of Izegem, Moorslede, Staden and the canal Roeselare-Leie. They had to construct new streets to transport the building materials coming from Boom in view of the construction of the fortifications. This region was indeed a junction of the transport from and to the front. The trains and trams were of major importance and due to their strategic function, the stations, the points and the railroads were often the specific goal of bombing. Also the canals and ports, as in Roeselare, were very important<sup>16</sup>.

In the summer of 1918 a group of 400 Italians were settled in a camp near to the municipality of Rollegem. Other circa 300 of them were lodged, together with Russian prisoners, in the monastery of the French Sisters Passionists at Tielt. They had to work for the construction and the maintenance of the railroad Ghent-Tielt-Diksmuide. The prisoners had to exhume, transport and bury again the bodies of killed German soldiers, due to the fact that the frontline regularly shifted and thus put the cemetery too close to the territorial borders of the combat in the neighbourhood of Ingelmunster, Rumbeke, Ardoorie, Lendelede and Izegem<sup>17</sup>. In Ardoorie, the Italians were lodged with the Russians in an old textile workshop of the family De Bal. In Ichtegem, and more particularly in the wood of Bekegem, there was a hut camp (barack) for Italian prisoners, as of the other side of Aartrijke. The Italian group arrived on 2 December 1917 and was composed of hundred persons<sup>18</sup>. Further on, we will see that there also were Italian prisoners in Harelbeke, Bruges, Ruddervoorde, Oostrozebeke, Wielsbeke, Ploegsteert and Warneton. According to some sources, there would have been a barack with Italians in Vijfwegen, near to Houthulst.

Witnesses describe the miserable conditions of living of the Italians and Russians not only with relation to the food, but also in relation to the treatment they received, going from exhaustion to poisoning. The Italians were badly dressed and starved. Some families that lived in the neighbourhood of the camps regularly give them to eat. They often saw that Italians had to transport the dead bodies of compatriots to the German

16. <http://veertienachtien.be/fr/themes/travail-obligatoire-et-prisonniers-de-guerre>

17. R. BACCARNE and J. STEEN, *Van het Vrijbos* cit., pp. 200-201.

18. ETIENNE SIERENS, ANTOON NAERT and WILLY HOSTEN, *Drie erfgoedwandelingen in drie dorpskernen. IchtegemsErfgoed-3*, Ichtegem, Gemeentebestuur, 2015, pp. 6-7; <http://bekegem.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/LG-Def.pdf>.

cemetery at Izegem, where they were buried without coffin, but directly in the ground in a bag.

Other sources provide us with indirect indications on the past of the Italians, whose traces at present have disappeared on the battle field. The city of Izegem, for instance, has dedicated to the Italians a street (“Italianenlaan”) and a commemorative stone<sup>19</sup>.

The reorganization of around one hundred cemeteries after the Great War

After the war, during the twenties, the cemeteries were reorganized throughout Europe, Belgium and Italy included<sup>20</sup>. In Italy, during the first months after the armistice of Villa Giusti, the military units scattered on the territory of the ex-zone of war foresaw a first recuperation of the many dead bodies on the battle fields. Only with the decrees of 13 April and 19 May 1919 a national commission for the honouring of the fallen soldiers was installed and connected to the Italian Ministry of Interior Affairs. With the successive royal decree-law of 29 January 1920 the administration of this special service was attributed to the Ministry of War, “Direzione centrale di sanità militare”, and to the corps of mortuary police. While Italy started a widespread and big project to have a definitive sistematization of the scattered war cemeteries on its own territory, it wanted to develop a similar organization of the graves of the fallen compatriots in the whole of Europe<sup>21</sup>. Here we have to mention the correspondence and the reports the Belgian Ministry of Defense and the Italian government exchanged concerning the eventual activities that had to be done regarding the Italian graves on Belgian soil<sup>22</sup>.

On 8 June 1920, Rome received from Belgium a list with 532 names. From 1921 onwards, colonel Maltese, military attaché at the Italian am-

19. <http://tenmandere.be/nieuwsbrieven/2013/08/italianenlaan.html>.

20. MARCEL M. CELIS, *Oorlogsbegraafplaatsen*, in *Tafel* a. 27 (2015), pp. 19-60 (especially pp. 28-31).

21. MICHELE LA TORRE, *Cimitero*, in *Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, Roma, Treccani, 1938, vol. I Appendice, pp. 251-252.

22. Letter of the general director Carbonnelle of the Ministry of the National Defence – Technical Office of Military Engineering dated 21 June 1926, in which one confirms that on 8 June 1920 this list had been sent to the Italian government (AMRA, Dossier “Italiens”).



bassy in Brussels, captain Piccotti of the Italian military mission for the tracking of the dispersed prisoners in Berlin and the direction of the “Office des sépultures militaires” in Bruges had a regular correspondence to identify the deads, or to receive the acts and death certificates of certain soldiers<sup>23</sup>.

It is obvious that nor the Belgian military administration nor the Italian government, wanted the Italian soldiers still to be buried together with the German soldiers. Thus the Direction of the “Office des Sépultures militaires” in Bruges decided to transport the bodies of all the Italians of the region of West Flanders to the new military cemetery of Klerken-Houthulst. Until present we did not find a direct motivation in the archival sources for this particular cemetery as the destination of grouping the Italians. One can, although, imagine that the military space at disposal in Klerken-Houthulst and the limited distances of the numerous war cemeteries in the area to it, will have conditioned this decision<sup>24</sup>.

On 20 March 1924 a unknown Italian (fractured skull, black hair, a good set of teeth, boots 30 ½, height 1,66 circa) was exhumated in Oostrozebeke: the body was put in a gunny bag and transported to Klerken-Houthulst<sup>25</sup>. Six days later, the same happened with the body of Fortunato Cheli: exhumated in Oostrozebeke, he was transported to Klerken-Houthulst<sup>26</sup>. Between 26 October and 20 November 1925 there were transferred another 67 Italian bodies from the region of West Flanders to the new cemetery of Klerken-Houthulst<sup>27</sup>. The “Office des Sépultures militaires”, under the

23. Letter from Maltese to the director of the “Office des Sépultures militaires” in Bruges, dated 27 June 1921; letter from Piccotti to the director of the “Office des Sépultures militaires” in Bruges, dated 14 March 1923 and response by Bruges, dated 23 March 1923 concerning the death-certificate of soldier Giovanni Giampapa, born in Lentini in 1881, captured in Germany and deceased in Wingene (Belgium) on 10 January 1918 in the military hospital n. 104 (AMRA, Dossier “Italiens”).

24. AMRA, Box “Correspondance internationale BMB Houthulst” with some dossiers concerning the construction of the cemetery (1923-1925).

25. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation of an unknown Italian soldier, 23 March 1924 (AMRA).

26. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation of Fortunato Cheli, 26 March 1924 (AMRA).

27. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation of Salvatore Jacone, Riccardo Marcusso, Giuseppe Bocchino, Adamo Gaudenzi, Bernardino Parronchi, Carlo Danto, Vivarello Cardelli, Angelo Berate, Pietro Bussoni, Angelo Delmiglio, Pietro Pettinari, Francesco Stocco (all on 26 October 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Ardoie); Giulio Sadini, Eligio Corti and Pasquale Bulitta (all on 4 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Rumbekke); Pasquale Larotondo (on 5 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Gistel), Nicola Rocchio and Guerino De-

watchful eye of lieutenant Remy Oswald, transported the coffins and the bodies to Klerken-Houthulst, where a certain Hippolyte Vanbecelaere buried them again. Every exhumation and inhumation was documented by an official report (“procès-verbal d’exhumation et d’inhumation”) containing the name of the Italian soldier, his civil status, place of inhumation, number of grave where he was buried before and number of his new grave in Klerken-Houthulst<sup>28</sup>.

Thus, via the “Service des Sépultures Militaires”, the Belgian Ministry of War had transferred the bodies of the Italian soldiers who were dispersed over diverse war cemeteries, above all German ones, as to know: Ardooie Ehrenfriedhof (13 bodies, transferred on 26 October 1925)<sup>29</sup>, Rumbeke Ehrenfriedhof (3 bodies, transferred on 4 November 1925)<sup>30</sup>, Gistel Ehrenfriedhof (1 body transferred on 5 November 1925)<sup>31</sup>, Aartrijke-Wijnendaele Ehrenfriedhof (2 bodies transferred on 5 November 1925)<sup>32</sup>, Aatri-

santi (on 5 Novembre 1925, transferred from the cemetery from Aartrijke-Wijnendaele); Francesco Mondelli, Vittorio Giusti and Raimondo Mossani (5 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Aartrijke); Carlo Coruino, Antonio Orlandi, Vincenzo Certorame, Antonio Callipari, Stefano Persico, Antonio De Rosa, Gino Mattioli and Gargano Donato (on 6 November 1925, all transferred from the cemetery of Izegem II); Guido Rosetti, Raffaele Sofiolo, Giuseppe Guion, Enodio Verdecchia, Basilio Pivetta, an unknown, Mario Fosolini and Giuseppe Brundu (on 10 November 1925, all transferred from the cemetery Izegem I); Battista Succi, Egidio Grasso, Giuseppe Gargiani, Lauretto Orazio, Emidio Esposito, Filippo La Salle, Giuseppe Micheletti and Ernesto Gatti (on 12 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery Izegem I); Eugenio Passeli, Allesandro Ferrari and Luigi Gligli (on 13 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Wervicq Nord); an unknown on 13 novembre 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Dadizele; Angelo Locatelli, Mario Merlini, Giovanni De Gemini, Antonio Pischedda, Luigi SanPietro, Giovanni Dadi and Giacomo Cantamessa (on 16 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Kortrijk); Carlo Boschet, Alfredo Ottadi, Martelli, Bagio Odiardo, Giovanni Parisotto, Antonio Porticoni and Alberto Crosta (on 17 November 1925, all transferred from the cemetery of Kortrijk); Giuseppe Colombara (on 20 November 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Marke); Antonio Terniola (on 20 novembre 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Lauwe); and Battista Zilio (on 21 novembre 1925, transferred from the cemetery of Aartrijke) (AMRA; dossier “Italiens”).

28. See the “procès-verbal d’exhumation et d’inhumation” of the unknown soldier from Oostrozbeke of 20 March 1924 in annex 1.

29. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation of Salvatore Jacone, Riccardo Marcusso, Giuseppe Bocchino, Adamo Gaudenzi, Bernardino Parronchi, Carlo Danto, Vivarello Cardelli, Angelo Berate, Pietro Bussoni, Angelo Delmiglio, Pietro Pettinari, Francesco Stocco.

30. Giulio Sadini, Eligio Corti and Pasquale Bulitta.

31. Pasquale Larotondo.

32. Nicola Rocchio and Guerino Desanti.

jke Ehrenfriedhof (3 bodies transfered on 5 November 1925)<sup>33</sup>, Izegem Ehrenfriedhof II (8 bodies transfered on 6 November 1925)<sup>34</sup>, Izegem Ehrenfriedhof I (16 bodies transfered on 10 and 12 November 1925)<sup>35</sup>, Dadizele Klephoek Ehrenfriedhof (1 body transfered on 13 November 1925)<sup>36</sup>, Wervik-Noord Ehrenfriedhof nr.65 (3 bodies transfered on 13 November 1925)<sup>37</sup>, Kortrijk Ehrenfriedhof nr.175 (14 bodies transfered on 16 and 17 November 1925)<sup>38</sup>, Marke Ehrenfriedhof nr.179 (1 body transfered on 20 November 1925)<sup>39</sup>, Lauwe Ehrenfriedhof nr.180 (1 body transfered on 20 November 1925)<sup>40</sup>, and Aartrijke (1 body transfered on 21 November 1925)<sup>41</sup>.

Three years later, on 24 November 1928, the body of Pietro Wizo, prisoner of war of the sixth company at the German camp of Wittenberg and until then buried in Lazarethfriedhof “Le Bizet” near Ploegsteert in Belgium, was translated to Houthulst. According to the official report of the exhumation, his body was completely decomposed, with “traces of attire of a different tissue than the Germans, with a well preserved ribbon with white, green and a third undefinable color”. The body was placed in a sealed coffin<sup>42</sup>. On 4 April 1929 the mortal remains of Antonio Possamai were exhumated in Bas-Warneton Ehrenfriedhof and transported to Houthulst to be reunited with those of his compatriots<sup>43</sup>. Still in the Interwar period,

33. Francesco Mondelli, Vittorio Giusti and Raimondo Mossani.

34. Carlo Coruino, Antonio Orlandi, Vincenzo Certorame, Antonio Callipari, Stefano Persico, Antonio De Rosa, Gino Mattioli and Gargano Donato.

35. Guido Rosetti, Raffaele Sofiolo, Giuseppe Guion, Enodio Verdecchia, Basilio Pivetta, un ignoto, Mario Fosolini, Giuseppe Brundu, Battista Succi, Egidio Grasso, Giuseppe Gargiani, Lauretto Orazio, Emidio Esposito, Filippo La Salle, Giuseppe Micheletti and Ernesto Gatti.

36. Unknown.

37. Eugenio Passeli, Alessandro Ferrari and Luigi Gigli.

38. Angelo Locatelli, Mario Merlini, Giovanni De Gemini, Antonio Pischedda, Luigi San Pietro, Giovanni Dadi, Giacomo Cantamessa, Carlo Boschet, Alfredo Ottadi, Martelli, Bagio Odiardo, Giovanni Parisotto, Antonio Porticoni and Alberto Crosta.

39. Giuseppe Colombara.

40. Antonio Terniola.

41. Battista Zilio.

42. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation. Service des Sépultures militaires belge, Secteur d’Ypres, n. 3777 (AMRA).

43. Official report of the exhumation and inhumation, Service des Sépultures militaires belge, Secteur des Flandres, n. 3830 (AMRA). For more information on the grouping of the grave of Possamai, see the correspondence between colonel Carbone, general director of the Technical

the body of an unknown Italian soldier was transferred from Beveren (near Roeselare) Ehrenfriedhof nr.27 to Houthulst<sup>44</sup>.

As mentioned, on 18 November 1975 the mortal remains of six Italian soldiers were transported from the municipal cemetery of Deinze (Peter Benoitlaan) to the military cemetery of Houthulst. The soldiers were Gaetano Lumini (°1885), Giovanni Croco (°1898), Salvatore Salvarelli (°1897), Domenico Locati (°1893), Ginitini Tranquillo (°1895) and Mario Natale (°1893). All of them had to do forced labour for the Germans at the textile atelier of Liebaert. According to the documentation at our disposal, they all died at the 'Kriegslazaret' in Petegem, between 5 and 9 February 1918 and on 5 October 1918<sup>45</sup>. Of other three unknown soldiers, who eventually were inhumated in Houthulst, we did not find any trace within the archives to determine the date of their transfer<sup>46</sup>.

The only exception to the whole grouping operation was the soldier Giuseppe Scala (1884-1918), who died on 15 November 1918, and was buried in a mass grave with Germans in Langemark<sup>47</sup>.

Thanks to the research by Marc Glorieux and Ludwich De Vliegere, volunteers at the "Documentatiecentrum In Flanders Fields" of Ypres – and thanks to their contacts with Italy – it is possible to reconstruct the fate of some of the Italians who were eventually buried in Houthulst. The ongoing research is based on data conserved in the "Albo d'Oro dei Caduti della Grande Guerra"<sup>48</sup> and on the study of the "ruoli matricolari", preserved in the military archives of the Italian province of origin of the soldiers, where the latter lived before their first call up to military service. The registers contain the military career of each soldier; although one has to accept the fact that from the deportation onwards, the data are very unsure and mostly incorrect. We give some examples: Riccardo Marcuzzo (1898-

Office of the military Engineering in Brussels and the vice Minsart in Ypres between 22 and 29 October 1930 (AMRA).

44. JAN VANCOILLIE, *De Duitse militaire begraafplaats Menen Wald* cit., p.123 (AMRA, fonds 58, box 2).

45. I am very grateful to Romain De Bouver of Deinze to have communicated the documents regarding the exhumation and inhumation of the six soldiers at Deinze.

46. It is possible that they were transferred from the war graves situated in Oostrozebeke, Bruges, Harelbeke, Tielt and Wielsbeke, as we will see further on.

47. LUDWICH DEVLIEGHERE, *Italiaanse krijgsgevangenen op Belgische begraafplaatsen* cit., in *VIFF flash*, a. 12 (2014), n. 50, p. 54.

48. <http://www.cadutigrandeguerra.it/>

1918), originating from Oderzo, did not die in Houthulst, as declared in the death certificate of his municipality, nor in Minden, as stated in the “ruolo matricolare”, but in Ardooie. We know that directly after his death on 7 March 1918 in the infirmary of the castle De Jonge d’Ardoie, the soldier was buried in the Ehrenfriedhof n°168 of Ardooie. Fortunato Cheli (1884-1918) officially died in Minden, Germany, but was inhumated in Houthulst. Alfredo Ottati (1890-1918) officially died of pneumonia at Altengrabow, Germany, but his body at present is buried in Houthulst. Francesco Stocco (1882-1918), died of tuberculosis in Ardooie, but was eventually transported to Houthulst. Giuseppe Colombara (1897-1918) was killed in Marke during an attempted escape, and was eventually buried in Houthulst under the wrong name of Giuseppe Colombaro<sup>49</sup>. The reserach team of Ypres is at present doing research to clarify all analogue prosopographical questions and problems.

The 24 Italian soldiers who are buried individually in the cemetery Westerbegraafplaats in Ghent, and are remembered in group on a bronze tablet enumerating their names besides an image of a bersagliere sculpt by Ippolito Le Roy in 1922, had been also prisoners who were constraint to work for the occupying forces of the Germans in the region of and in the port of Ghent, but also in Aalst<sup>50</sup> and even in Hoogdele in the province of West Flanders<sup>51</sup>. On 26 October 1924 there was the official inauguration in the already existing cemetery of a monument in stone of Euville honouring the Allies of the First World War. It is a very symmetrical architectural composition, formed by four allegorical feminine figures: the two of the façade representing Belgium and France, the other two of the rear elevation, Italy and Great-Britain. The allegorical figure of Italy has a huge feather on the helmet, likewise the bersaglieri, and holds in the hands a flaming torch, symbol of hope<sup>52</sup>. One of the soldiers, Giovanni Alessandri, born on

49. L. DEVLIEGHERE, *Italiaanse krijgsgevangenen op Belgische begraafplaatsen*, cit., pp. 54-56.

50. JOHAN DE VOS, *Alpejagerslied* (Paul van Ostaijen, 1928), in *Interbellum*, a. 35 (2015), pp. 18-19; <http://www.madeinaalst.be/permalink/4da4558d-b4e2-5407-486a-fcfc1e2f0dbe> (photo of Umberto Pesarin, Italian prisoner of war in Aalst); <http://www.madeinaalst.be/permalink/58e7d-c0d-3cdb-6e87-f59f-165ea3727790> (photo of 7 Italian prisoners of war in Aalst).

51. Soldier Antonio Diodati died in Hoogdele.

52. Map of the cemetery of Ghent-Westerbegraafplaats (AMRA, Box “Correspondance internationale BMB Houthulst”); [http://www.bel-memorial.org/cities/oost-vlaanderen/gent/gent\\_gedenkteken\\_verbonden\\_landen.htm](http://www.bel-memorial.org/cities/oost-vlaanderen/gent/gent_gedenkteken_verbonden_landen.htm)

27 December 1880 in Cervaca near to Rome, died on 10 February 1918 of pneumonia<sup>53</sup>.

In general the 42 Italians buried in the cemetery Schoonselhof in Antwerp, underwent the same fate. They all died between February and December 1918, the youngest at the age of 19, the oldest at the age of 37. Thanks to the archives preserved in the FelixArchief of the city of Antwerp (hence AFA), we know that 32 of them died in the barrack of Saint George in Antwerp<sup>54</sup>. In this barrack, during the First World War the future head Rabi of Belgium, Joseph Wiener, organized the Committee for the relief of the allied war prisoners, sick and hospitalized soldiers<sup>55</sup>. Other eight Italians died in the military hospital of Antwerp, located at the Maria Lei<sup>56</sup>, one Italian died in Hoboken<sup>57</sup>, and another Italian soldier in Lier<sup>58</sup>.

The noble estate of Schoonselhof was bought just before the First World War by the city of Antwerp in view of the construction of a new cemetery. On 8 August 1914, the architect Alexis Van Mechelen and his team were asked by the city administration to construct a military cemetery “to honour the killed soldiers who had defended the Belgian territory”. From 1921 onward, Schoonselhof would only serve as an urban cemetery. In 1925 the crosses in wood above the military graves were replaced by crosses in

53. L. DEVLIEGHERE, *Italiaanse krijgsgevangenen* cit., p. 56.

54. We are talking of Valenti Spadoni, Domenico Carboni, Santo Oliva, Pietro Amatrini, Humberto Pascal, Stefano Spazziani, Baptista Borelli, Rodolfo Nobili, Luciano Spirito, Paolo Perguidi, Davide Suidero, Luigi Menegaldo, Cristophoro Vassali, Silvio Brocardo, Ernesto Gessi, Michele Setolo, Marino Bernardinello, Domenico Giavaniello, Giuseppe Mazzini, Pietro Giachiero, Francesco Mariano, Enrico Bignardi, Federico Broglia, Giorgio Sai, Francesco Nardi, Giuseppe Tommasinelli, Antonio Bonifacio, Enrico Borghi, Massimo Demurtas, Pasquale Miele, Olivo Migliari and Giacomo Paradi. See the letter of the director of the Office of the cemetery to the bench of mayor and eldersmen of Antwerp, dated 18 July 1921, with a list of the Italians buried at Schoonselhof in annex (AFA, Dossier 638#1091).

55. JEAN-PHILIPPE SCHREIBER, *Dictionnaire biographique des Juifs de Belgique. Figures du judaïsme belge XIXe-XXe siècles*, Louvain-la-Neuve, De Boeck & Larcier, 2002, pp. 362-363.

56. We are talking of Fermo Granziera, Biagio Dimartino, Enrico Burri, Pasquale Gerardano, Enrico Colombo, Mario Angermo, Giuseppe Montero and Angelo Camarotto. See the letter of the director of the Office of the cemetery to the bench of mayor and eldersmen of Antwerp, dated 18 July 1921, with a list of the Italians buried at Schoonselhof in annex (AFA, Dossier 638#1091).

57. The name is Arrigo Parri. See the letter of the director of the Office of the cemetery to the bench of mayor and eldersmen of Antwerp, dated 18 July 1921, with a list of the Italians buried at Schoonselhof in annex (AFA, Dossier 638#1091).

58. The name is Scaramuzza, who was buried by the Germans without any official document delivered by the civil registration (AFA, Dossier 638#1091).

stone, thanks to the architect Van Mechelen and his successor Emiel Van Averbeke: in this way the graves and the crosses of the died soldiers had a unified and harmonious totality<sup>59</sup>. From the year 1922 onward, the Italian consul in Antwerp, Gallo Galli (1870-1928), asked the permission for a project by the Italian colony of the city: they wanted to have erected a commemorative monument at Schoonselhof for the fallen Italian soldiers of the First World War. The city administration referred to the decrees of the governor of the province of Antwerp of 17 December 1919, of 7 June 1920, of 30 June 1920 and of 17 February 1921, stipulating that all requests should be sent to the Ministry of Defence and to the “Office des Sépultures militaires”<sup>60</sup>.

## Brussels

In the region of Brussels there are at present three cemeteries that conserve some graves of Italian soldiers fallen during the First World War. In the municipal cemetery of Ixelles there are eight graves, in the cemetery Vogelenzang d’Anderlecht three<sup>61</sup>, and soldier Natan Roberi is buried in the municipal cemetery of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean.

## Wallonia

In the Frenchspeaking part of Belgium, the situation was far more complicated. First of all, there were as in Flanders, a lot of Italian prisoners. At present we find in three cemeteries (Liège Robermont, Namur Belgrade and Virton Bellevue) the graves of 389 Italian soldiers. The major part of

59. *Schoonselhof 14-18, opening tentoonstelling Oorlogsgeheugen van Antwerpen. Groot ereperk op de stedelijke Antwerpse begraafplaats*, in *Tafel a.22* (2014), pp. 6-9.

60. AFA, Dossier 638#1091.

61. Thanks to documents conserved in the AMRA, and more in particular to a letter of the “Office des Sépultures militaires belge” of Bruges to colonel Maltese, dated 7 May 1921, we know we have to do with the bodies of the soldiers Giovanni Colontone (+23/11/1918), Ildegardo Lunardi (+02/12/1918) and Primo Priccianti (+05/12/1918) (AMRA, dossier “Italiens en Belgique”). At present, they occupy area 17, range 3, grave 36; area 17, row 3, grave 38 and area 15, row 4, grave 3 (I am grateful to Mr. Johnny Januarius of the cemetery Vogelzang).



them were war prisoners who had to labour between 1917 and 1918 in the camps of Quenast, Andenne, Ath, Mons, Charleroi, Libramont, Halanzy, Musson and in the citadelle of Liège. According to Morelli, 170 Italian prisoners died during the last months of 1918 due to the imposed treatment<sup>62</sup>. During the occupation, the mines and the factories of Musson, Halanzy and Athus were closed. The Italians were forced to dismantle the buildings and to convert them into storage spaces for the German army<sup>63</sup>.

The cemetery of Namur-Belgrade conserves the graves of 15 war prisoners, 14 soldiers and one corporal. They all died in the hospital of the city. Still we have to mention that during Spring 1924, together with the bodies of 348 Italian soldiers who died in France, sixteen bodies of Italians buried in Belgian territory, were grouped in the “Sud du Royaume” (Mons?), not far from the French border, to regain their homeland<sup>64</sup>.

In 1928, the Italian government selected the cemetery of Liège-Robermont as the centre for the general grouping of the Italian graves scattered in diverse secondary cemeteries. Captain Cenci took the lead of this operation in name of the Italian state<sup>65</sup>. The only exceptions to the rule were the cemeteries of Ghent-Westerbegraafplaats, Antwerp-Schoonselhof, Deinze, Ixelles, Brussels (Evere), Anderlecht, Namur-Belgrade and Houthulst, where the maintenance of the graves was considered by the Italians as sufficient. Meanwhile, in June 1928, in Deinze, the six Italian soldiers buried in the German cemetery were transferred to the municipal cemetery. This event was organized by the “Souvenir Italien” of Ghent, presided by the notary Paul Van Zantvoorde, who was married to an Italian lady<sup>66</sup>. On 6 June 1928, captain Cenci dressed a list of all the remaining cemeteries in Belgium with Italian graves, as far as he knew of. He counted around 200 soldiers.

62. A. MORELLI, *Les Italiens en Belgique* cit., p. 15.

63. *Traces et mémoire. Guide illustré 1914-18. La Grande Guerre. 100 ans d'histoire* (Le Luxembourg belge). edited by Pascale Ghislain, La Roche-en-Ardenne, 2014, pp. 70-71, 100.

64. BÉATRIX PAU, *Le transfert des corps des militaires italiens tombés en terre de France*, in *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, a. 81 (2010), pp. 221-237; *Programme général des commémorations Mons 14-18*, Mons, Ville de Mons, 2014, p. 13 (see <http://www.mons.be/decouvrir/histoire/1914-1918/livret-fr-web.pdf>).

65. Letter from the general director Carbonele of the Technical Office of the military Engineering / Ministry of the National Defence in Brussels to the offices of Ghent and Namur, dated 6 June 1928 (AMRA, dossier “3B: Regroupement tombes Italiennes”).

66. The correspondence concerning this transfer was exchanged between 27 March and 12 June 1928. (AMRA, dossier “3B: Regroupement tombes Italiennes”).

Studying this list, it is amazing to see that at that time still that many Italian graves were scattered all over the Belgian territory. In West Flanders, besides the cemetery of Houthulst, there were those of Oostrozebeke (3 graves), Bruges (4 graves), Harelbeke (1 grave), Ploegsteert (1 grave, to know that of Pietro Wizo), Ruddervoorde (1 grave), Tielt (1 grave) and Wielsbeke (1 grave). In East Flanders, besides the cemeteries of Ghent-Westerbegraafplaats and Deinze, there were those of Aalst (1 grave), Geraardsbergen (2 graves), and Dendermonde (1 grave). In Brabant, there were, besides those of Brussels (Evere), Anderlecht, Ixelles and Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, those of Halle (5 graves), Nijvel / Nivelles (2 graves), Vilvoorde (1 grave) and Wavre (1 grave). For the Wallon provinces, there were besides the cemeteries of Namur and Liège, those of Acoz (6 graves), Beaumont (1 grave), Braine le Comte (1 grave), Charleroi (3 graves), Chimay (1 grave), Jumet (1 grave), Leuze (2 graves), Mons (12 graves), Montigny sur Sambre (1 grave), Tournai (45 graves), Verviers (4 graves), Beauraing (1 grave), Bièvre (14 graves), Couvin (1 grave), Focant (1 grave), Saint-Gérard (1 grave), Gedinne (1 grave), Honnay (1 grave), Olloy (1 grave), Rienne (1 grave), Vonêche (8 graves), Wisenne (1 grave), Recht (1 grave), Eupen (1 grave), Aubange (12 graves), Bertrix (1 grave), Freux (2 graves), Halanzy (5 graves), Libramont (1 grave), Gouvy (3 graves), Paliseul (7 graves), Tenneville (1 grave), Tiliet (1 grave), Saint-Hubert (2 graves) e Virton (30 graves)<sup>67</sup>. By comparing this list of 1928 with the present situation of cemeteries with graves of Italian soldiers fallen during the First World War, we have to conclude that the request by the Italians in 1928 to transfer the remaining graves to Liège-Robermont has been realized almost completely. Based on notes made in pencil on the list of 1928 of the graves mentioned by the Italian embassy and conserved in AMRA<sup>68</sup>, based on the archival sources of the cemeteries involved<sup>69</sup> and based on the contemporary journals<sup>70</sup>, we know that an Italian official (Captain Cenci?) led the exhumations, the transports and the inhumations and was assisted by the association “Nos Tombes”, for the grouping of the mortal remains of the Italians at the cem-

67. Ambasciata d'Italia. Ufficio dell'addetto militare, Liste dei corpi dei militari italiani raggruppati nel cimitero da Robermont a Liegi (annex to the letter of Carbonnelle in date of 6 June 1928, see note 65).

68. See note 65.

69. Especially those from Liège-Robermont.

70. *Journal de Liegi*, 22 June 1928.

etery of Liège-Robermont. Although much more research still has to be done, we can already confirm that on 19 July 1928 several bodies of Italian soldiers were transferred to Liège: to know four from Verviers<sup>71</sup>, six from Acoz<sup>72</sup>, thirteen from Bièvre<sup>73</sup>, three from Gouvy<sup>74</sup>, two from Nivelles<sup>75</sup>, two from Charleroi<sup>76</sup>, two from Geraardsbergen (Grammont)<sup>77</sup> and one from Ruddervoorde<sup>78</sup>.

Exceptions to the rule were the cemeteries of Aubange and Virton-Bellevue. Concerning Aubange in particular, one had to wait until 15 November 1978, when finally 12 Italian soldiers were transferred to Liège-Robermont<sup>79</sup>. In Virton Bellevue, at the contrary, at present we still find the graves

71. We are talking of Luigi Brunetti, Constantino Capozzi, Augustino Carminati and Vincenzo Meretti, all dead in Béthune and afterwards buried at the cemetery of Verviers (<http://www.verviers.be/administration-communale/services-communaux/pop-ec-etr/etat-civil/combattants-14-18.pdf>). The bodies at present are buried in the area 163-12 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

72. In the old municipal cemetery (area A03T117) of Acoz, there is at present still a grave, but empty, where the six Italian soldiers were buried before their transfer to Liège-Robermont. The bodies were from a corporal and five soldiers, to know: Giuseppe Bombagi (°1885), Pietro Carmine (°1892), Giovanni Massino, Ernesto Daggetti (°1889), Lorenzo Franceschini (°1898) and the mentioned corporal Luigi Reggia (°1894). They had to do forced labour together with 40 other Italian prisoners within the factory of the Société anonyme de Moncheret and they died between 22 February and 29 April 1918 (See the official death certificates preserved in the municipal archives of Gerpinnes). At present they all are buried in the area 163-11 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont. I am very grateful to Mr. STÉPHANE DENIS.

73. Francesco Bordonaro, Cataldo Joviero, Salvatore Canni, Romano Piazza, Vittorio Vezzano, Carlo Pierini, Laurenzio Pepe, Pasquale Pavan, Giuseppe Portiglia, Antonio Lodolo, Attilio Pagani, Tommasini Dalia and Pasquale Proviatti. At present they are buried in the area 159 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

74. Dante Zuga (Ziga), Arigo Mazzoni and Luigi Osiera, who died between 26 April and 23 May 1918, were afterwards buried near the monument of the allies that was inaugurated on 3 July 1921 ([http://www.bel-memorial.org/names\\_on\\_memorials/display\\_names\\_on\\_mon.php?MON\\_ID=259](http://www.bel-memorial.org/names_on_memorials/display_names_on_mon.php?MON_ID=259)).

75. We are talking of Di Predo and Luigi Giardini, who at present are buried in the area 159 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

76. Carmelo Busaoca and Farnia (Farnier), who are at present buried in the area 163-11 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

77. Carlo Angillotti and Giuseppe Imperiali, who at present are buried in the area 163-11 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

78. Giovanni Giampapa, who at present is buried at the area 163-11 of the cemetery of Liège-Robermont.

79. Terzilio Gori and Annibale Petinari (at present in area 163-6); Giuseppe Silvano, Dario Socci and Dante Storchi (at present in area 163-7); Antonio Bertalia, Augusto Boldrini, Natale Brigo, Natale Carmenuzzi, Pasquale Dalcanto, Felice Garetta and Giuseppe Gresti (at present in area 163-11).

of 28 Italian prisoners. They had been captured by Austrian soldiers of the Kuk KgfArbKp 1391 – Kriegsgefangenen-Arbeits-Kompanie 1391<sup>80</sup>. The cemetery, situated on the hill of Bellevue, conserves the victims of the battle of Virton and the bodies of the eventually died wounded soldiers in the urban hospital.

## Italian Liberators

As mentioned at the beginning of this contribution, according to Morrelli, the majority of the Italians buried in the cemetery of Liège-Robermont were soldiers of the auxiliary troupes sent from Italy to France in 1918 for the defence operation. It were these Italians of the “secondo corpo d’armata” who attended the front on 11 June 1918 for the conquest of the *Chemin des Dames* and the river Meuse (Maas) in Belgian Luxembourg.

Traces of this Italian presence can be found, among others, in Saint-Hubert, where the population, after a four year long German occupation, was eager to see arrive the liberators. They expected to welcome Belgian troops or French, English or even American soldiers. To their great surprise they saw a marche-past of Italian soldiers in the streets of their city and surrounding villages<sup>81</sup>! On 26 November 1918, the Italian liberators led by General Pitta Suega and coming from Givet, reached Beauraing.

Witnesses describe that the civilians welcomed the soldiers with flags, music and discourses. The soldiers often fell in love with the local girls and they organized balls, feasts, concerts and cinema. Although the soldiers illuminated with their headlights the midnight mass on Christmas 1918, the parish priest was not amused with their degenerating way of life and the status of their religious piety. The Italians left the region on 26 February 1919. After Gedinne, they went to Bièvre. It seems that a lot of the Italian soldiers died due to an epidemic of Spanish flu during their stay in the region<sup>82</sup>. In the Historical Documentation Centre of Bièvre we found traces of 14 victims of bronchial pneumonia followed by a cardiac arrest

80. [https://www.verdun14-18.de/?page\\_id=3396](https://www.verdun14-18.de/?page_id=3396).

81. EMILE CATINUS, *Des soldats italiens à Saint-Hubert en 1918*, in *Saint-Hubert d’Ardenne asbl Société d’histoire et d’archéologie*, a. 3 (2014), pp. 53-64.

82. <http://www.matelecommeen14.be/spip.php?article23>; YVON BARBAZON, *Les soldats italiens dans la région de Gedinne*, in *Cercle d’Études historiques de Gedinne*, a. 59 (2013), pp. 24-29 (avec

who died in a field hospital in the neighbourhood of Bièvre. Before their death, they all were taken confession, they received the Eucharist and the extreme unction by their military chaplain Don Geremio Bortolotti<sup>83</sup>.

At the time of the armistice, the “secondo corpo d’armata italiano” was settled in Belgian Luxemburg and had its head quarters in Gedinne. During this stay in the south of Belgium at least 197 injured soldiers died, while at least 134 died due to the consequences of the gassing attacks by the Germans<sup>84</sup>. As we could see on the list of 1928, there were indeed a lot of Italian graves in that area situated. In January 1919, the general staff of the Italians was transferred to Saint-Hubert, from where the progressive repatriation of the injured soldiers and also of the mortal remains of part of the victims was started. In February 1919, general Alberico Giuseppe Albricci (1864-1936)<sup>85</sup>, future minister of War of the Kingdom of Italy during the government Nitti, officially announced the withdrawal of the Italian troops to King Albert in Brussels<sup>86</sup>. Among the Italian soldiers who liberated that part of Belgium, was Kurt-Erich Suckert, alias Curzio Malaparte (1898-1957), the author of *Viva Caporetto*<sup>87</sup>!

des photos); Y. BARBAZON, *1914-1918. Tout a commencé par un beau dimanche du mois d’août*, Bièvre, Administration de Bièvre, 2014, pp. 153-154.

83. “Elenco nominativo delle morti avvenute a Bièvre (Belgio) nei mesi di dicembre, Gennaio e Febbraio 1918 e 1919” (Centre de documentation historique de Bièvre). I am grateful to the librarian, Emilie Brasseur. Concerning the names, see note 73, to which we have to add the one of Amedeo Tavelli, who died on 29 December 1918.

84. A. MORELLI, *Les Italiens en Belgique* cit., p.16.

85. GIAMPIERO CAROCCI, *Albricci, Alberico Giuseppe*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960, vol. II, col. 54-55.

86. *Courrier de l’Armée*, dated 16 February 1919 (A. MORELLI, *Les Italiens en Belgique*, cit., p. 17).

87. In this work the author describes the absurd sacrifice of brave young men, the stupid obstination of an incompetent head quarters, and, above all, the gap between the horror of the killing war and the lies of a disgusting patriotic rhetoric. The young Malaparte was the voice of the illiterate soldiers who accepted in silence an useless death. Against the official propaganda, he considered the defeat of Caporetto - the massive withdrawal of the Italian troops under the advance of the Austrian soldiers in October 1917 was the most disastrous military crisis Italy ever knew -, as the emblem of the heroism of the soldiers of the trench and the hope on revenge of a despised people. Malaparte’s work was three times sequestered and censored between 1921 and 1923, since *Viva Caporetto!* was an explosive charge against the young fascist Italy that was constructing itself on the memory of a victorious Great War (ANDREA POZZETTA, “*Ci son overamente delle canaglie fra i soldati*”. *Curzio Malaparte da Viva Caporetto a la Rivolta dei santi maledetti*, in *Inchiostro proibito. Libri censurati nell’Italia contemporanea*, edited by Roberto Cicata, Pavia, Collegio Universiatrio S. Caterina da Siena, 2012, pp. 45-61). On Malaparte, see FRANCO VEGLIANI, *Malaparte*, Milano-Venezia,

## The reality of the war camps

Thanks to various ecclesiastical archives, we have information on the situation of the Italian prisoners at the war camps in Belgium and their living conditions. In the war reports we can find besides a general overview of the situation of the Church in Belgium in the years 1914-1918, some usefull particularities. For instance, the sources conserved in the monastery of the minor capuchins in Izegem dating from 13 April 1919, contain precious information on the Italians who were interned within that city.

The 1200 Italians of the camps in Izegem and Rollegem were regularly assisted by chaplains belonging to the monastery of the minor capuchins of Izegem. Father Hildebrand van Hooglede (Jules Raes, 1884-1961), who had done studies in Rome and knew some Italian, was sent to Rollegem, while father Oscar van Pamel (Gustaaf Hertveldt, 1887-1948) to Izegem. The German chaplain of the camp gave at the latter the permission to say mass to the Italians. According to the war report of the capuchins, the Italians who had been interned in December 1917, did not have the opportunity to confess, nor to receive the Eucharist, nor to celebrate Eastern:

“Ce n'est que le 14 avril 1918 que le père Oscar a célébré pour eux pour la première fois la Sainte Messe. Du 20 au 25 avril 1918 il les a confessés et pendant ces cinq jours il a célébré chaque matin la Sainte Messe et distribué la sainte communion. Depuis lors il a célébré pour les Italiens chaque dimanche la messe avec allucation, jusqu'au 29 septembre 1918, jour du départ des prisonniers.”<sup>88</sup>

Guarnati, 1957; A.J. DE GRAND, *Curzio Malaparte: The Illusion of the Fascist Revolution*, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, a. 7 (1972), pp. 73–89; LUIGI MARTINELLI, *Invito alla lettura di Malaparte*, Milano, Mursia, 1977; GIORDANO BRUNO GUERRI, *L'Arcitaliano. Vita di Curzio Malaparte*, Milano, Bompiani, 1980; *Malaparte scrittore d'Europa. Atti del convegno (Prato 1987) e altri contributi*, edited by GIANNI GRANA, editing and bibliographic care by Vittoria Baroncelli, Milano-Prato, Marzorati-Comune di Prato, 1991; GIUSEPPE PARDINI, *Curzio Malaparte. Biografia politica*, Milano, Luni Editrice, 1998; G. B. GUERRI, *Il Malaparte illustrato*, Milano, Mondadori, 1998; LUCREZIA ERCOLI, *Philosophe malgré soi. Curzio Malaparte e il suo doppio*, Roma, Edilet, 2011; MAURIZIO SERRA, *Malaparte. Vite e leggende*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2012.

88. “Réponse au questionnaire devant servir à une enquête d'ensemble sur la situation de l'Église en Belgique pendant la guerre 1914-1918. Couvent des Frères Mineurs Capucins, à Iseghem (13 avril 1919)”, pp. 31-34 (archive number D 1004 in the State Archives of Belgium in Brussels; [http://search.arch.be/nl/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/inventaris/index/eadid/BE-A0550\\_006912\\_006778\\_DUT/inventarisnr/I0069120067781050/level/file](http://search.arch.be/nl/zoeken-naar-archieven/zoekresultaat/inventaris/index/eadid/BE-A0550_006912_006778_DUT/inventarisnr/I0069120067781050/level/file)).

Also within the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hence ASV) and within the Archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State, we find precise indications on the living conditions of the Italian prisoners in occupied Belgium. For instance, on 25 May 1918, monsignor Achille Locatelli (1856-1935), apostolic nuncio in Belgium and internuncio in Luxemburg, sent to the Secretary of State, monsignor Pietro Gasparri, a report on the situation of the interned Italian prisoners in the Cittadel of Liège<sup>89</sup>:

“Ils étaient environ 700, et de l’avis même des soldats allemands, les prisonniers italiens meurent de faim. Les colis d’Italie ne leur parviennent pas par représailles et si par hasard quelques paquets s’égarent chez eux, ils sont avariés et sont en route depuis des mois. La raison était claire: Ces prisonniers dépendent du camp de Münster. Ils ont été envoyés au front Ouest pour travailler puis, malades ou débilités sont expédiés aux lazarets de Liège. Les colis doivent donc faire le même trajet: Münster, Front Ouest, Liège. La nourriture que les prisonniers reçoivent du camp est insuffisante. Le nonce avait vu le souper: un petit bol de soupe, de l’eau brunâtre sans féculent ni légume, un morceau de pain et 7 à 8 centimètres de ce que l’on appelle chez lui du boudin noir. Les vêtements, ceux qui existent encore sont sales & déchirés. Ce sont des haillons. La plupart des prisonniers n’ont plus chemise. Les chaussettes & les chaussures sont presque inexistantes. Des chiffons noués de ficelle en tiennent lieu. Quand pour l’une ou l’autre raison les vêtements passent à l’étuve, les prisonniers doivent se draper dans leur couverture jusqu’à ce que l’opération soit terminée. La situation hygiénique est très mauvaise: les italiens sont malpropres un peu par leur faute mais surtout par manque de linge de rechange & manque de savon. Il est revenu au nonce que les prisonniers italiens n’ont pas de lit et dorment sur le sol; ceci, il lui a été impossible de vérifier, ne pouvant pas pénétrer dans les chambrées. Il y a énormément de tuberculeux et, en cas d’épidémie c’est parmi les italiens qu’il y a le plus de victimes. Plusieurs décès chaque jour, sans compter les malheureux qui, par exemple, se jettent par la fenêtre du troisième étage.”

The nuncio insists on the methods to use to help the Italian prisoners in Belgium:

“Il faudrait d’énormes sommes d’argent pour ne pouvoir presque rien distribuer aux malheureux. La solution qui, à première vue, paraît résoudre le problème et qui

89. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Guerra (1914-1918), pos. 244, fasc. 141, fol. 284r-285r.



en théorie serait exacte, ne l'est plus en pratique c. à. d. l'envoi de colis venant de la Mère Patrie à ses Enfants & distribué par un organisme officiel sous le contrôle et les auspices de la Légation Royale d'Espagne celle-ci protégeant les intérêts Italiens en Belgique. En effet, les colis arrivant d'Italie en Allemagne ou en Autriche aux camps où se trouvaient les prisonniers avant leur envoi en Belgique dans un "Commando" situé derrière le front Ouest; de là, renvoi du camp allemand ou autrichien à ce dit "Commando". – Comme les plus malheureux de ces soldats n'ont pu résister aux fatigues ou privations, ils sont expédiés dans un lazaret à l'intérieur de la Belgique, soit disant, pour les soigner, encore une réexpédition du "Commando" Ouest au Lazaret! Avec la rapidité des transports actuels il faudra 4 à 5 mois si tout marche bien pour que les intéressés reçoivent leur colis. Les vivres y contenues dans quel état seront-ils? En cours de route, le nonce estime qu'il y aura des vols commis pour plus de 25% des envois. Une solution très simple en théorie, difficile à mettre en pratique vu les difficultés inhérentes à toute initiative pendant ces temps troubles serait: Une entente entre le Gouvernement Italien et le Gouvernement Belge représenté en pays occupé par la Comité National de Secours & d'Alimentation pour que cet organisme délivré sous le contrôle de la Légation Royale d'Espagne en Belgique, les produits nécessaires tant pour le ravitaillement des soldats italiens actuellement dans les lazarets ou hôpitaux que pour les vêtements, linges ou chaussures dont ils ont besoin. Il serait tenu compte par le Comité National Belge des produits livrés aux Soldats Italiens, ceux-ci seraient débités au Gouvernement Italien ou un prix de revient en Belgique et la facture serait payable après la guerre au Comité National Belge. Une ou deux personnes dont l'honorabilité serait reconnue, serait chargées de distribuer par lazaret ou camp (ceci est à régler avec les Autorités Allemandes), les vivres et vêtements en mains propres des chefs d'escouades commandant les soldats Italiens prisonniers. C'est le seul moyen pratique pour venir en aide efficacement et rapidement aux malheureux soldats italiens dont la situation est lamentable et exige de suite une amélioration sous peine de voir mourir à bref délai ces malheureux qui ont commis le crime d'avoir fait leur devoir en servant leur Patrie."

In August 1918, the norbertrine monsignor Thomas Louis Heylen (1856-1941), bishop of Namur, sent to the secretary of State, monsignor Gasparri a report on the situation of the Italian prisoners interned in the war camps of Libramont, Halanzy and Musson<sup>90</sup>:

90. Segreteria di Stato, Sezione per i Rapporti con gli Stati, Archivio Storico (S.RR.SS.), Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari (AA.EE.SS.), Italia, 1918, pos. 936, fasc. 340, fol.

*“I. Colonie Italienne de Libramont.*

Les prisonniers Italiens renfermés dans le camp de Libramont sont actuellement au nombre de quatre cents.

*Situation matérielle.*

Au début, ils ont été fort maltraités; mais, depuis quelque temps, leur malheureux sort semble s'être amélioré. Leurs gardiens ne les rudoient et ne les frappent que rarement. Tous sont employés pendant sept heures par jour aux travaux de la gare. Un seul, plus riche que les autres, est exempt de toute corvée en dehors du camp. Ils reçoivent parfois la visite du médecin allemand. La plupart reçoivent régulièrement d'Italie des paquets contenant du riz, des pois, des haricots, du macaroni; ce qui, avec les 600 grammes de pain et le litre de soupe qu'ils reçoivent chaque jour, leur rend l'existence, au point de vue matériel, assez supportable.

Les prisonniers correspondent assez fréquemment avec leurs familles et en reçoivent assez souvent des nouvelles. Une vingtaine d'entre eux cependant ne reçoivent jamais rien de la Patrie, ni paquets de vivres, ni lettres, ni nouvelles de leurs familles, parce que celles-ci sont comprises dans la zone de feu: ceux-là sont vraiment malheureux et dignes de pitié.

L'habillement laisse beaucoup à désirer: une seule chemise, une veste, un pantalon, le tout en lambeaux, voilà tout leur trousseau.

*Situation religieuse.*

Au point de vue religieux, leur situation est plus lamentable encore. Une seule fois depuis quatre mois, ils ont reçu la visite d'un prêtre autrichien parlant l'italien, et ils ont pu se confesser. Tous sont catholiques et seraient désireux d'assister aux offices de l'Eglise, mais jamais on ne leur permet de sortir du camp et on les force à travailler, tous les dimanches, jusque vers 2 ou 3 heures. Comme le camp est suffisamment vaste, il serait à souhaiter qu'on pût y dresser un autel et qu'un prêtre, connaissant l'italien, pût y venir, de temps en temps, célébrer la S. Messe, prêcher, confesser, communier. Plusieurs parlent français, suffisamment du moins pour se faire comprendre; et, si la consigne n'était pas si sévère, il serait facile au prêtre, en les visitant de temps en temps, d'exercer auprès d'eux un ministère aussi fructueux que consolant.

Les malades, m'a-t-on dit, ne sont pas soignés au camp, mais dirigés de suite sur Namur, où plusieurs sont déjà morts à l'hôpital. Bien que leurs gardiens du mo-

ment, soldats autrichiens, soient catholiques pour la plupart, ils ne semblent guère se soucier de procurer à ces pauvres prisonniers, même sur le point de mourir, les suprêmes consolations de la Religion.

Bref, chez ces pauvres exilés, le côté spirituel laisse encore plus à désirer que le côté matériel, et certes ils voueraient une reconnaissance éternelle à celui qui aurait assez d'influence pour obtenir des autorités supérieures un petit adoucissement à leur malheureux sort.

## *II. Colonie Italienne de Halanzy e de Musson*

### *Situation religieuse.*

La camp de Halanzy contient cent onze prisonniers, celui de Musson soixante. Le camp de Halanzy dépend hiérarchiquement de celui de Musson.

Au point de vue spirituel, ces prisonniers sont, dans toute force du terme, des âmes abandonnées. Au temps de Pâques seulement, ils ont reçu la visite d'un aumônier militaire s'exprimant en leur langue; en dehors de cette circonstance, jamais ils n'ont pu assister à la S. Messe ni recevoir les Sacrements. Les meilleurs d'entre eux sont navrés de cette situation. Plusieurs prêtres, entre autre un religieux italien, ont fait démarches sur démarches en vue d'obtenir l'autorisation d'exercer auprès d'eux leur saint Ministère: les chefs allemands la leur ont toujours refusée.

### *Situation matérielle.*

Le dénuement de ces prisonniers est en rapport avec leur détresse morale. Les témoins les plus dignes de foi sont unanimes à dire que, lors de leur arrivée, ils se traînaient à peine; ils n'étaient presque plus des hommes, exténués, pâles, affreusement maigres. L'état de la plupart ne s'est guère amélioré. Jouissent d'une santé un peu plus satisfaisantes ceux-là seulement qui ont pu profiter plus souvent de secours clandestins. Durant l'hiver, beaucoup ont dû être portés à l'hôpital de Virton.

Leur régime alimentaire est insuffisant. Aux repas, on leur sert une écuelle de brouet noir et répugnant où flottent quelques morceaux de pain et débris de légumes. Les paquets, envoyés d'Italie à leur destination, ne leur parviennent pas. Au commencement de juin dernier, est arrivé à leur adresse un wagon de paquets: à peu près tout le contenu en a été retenu par les autorités militaires de Musson. Pour sauver le principe, on a remis du pain à un certain nombre de prisonniers et à d'autres, ... le papier d'emballage! Les conserves, les fruits ont été servis sur la table des chefs et des soldats allemands ou envoyés en Allemagne aux familles de ces derniers. Bon nombre d'infortunés prisonniers n'ont donc jamais rien reçus

d'Italie. D'autres ont eu une fois un paquet de pain. L'un ou l'autre seulement a reçu plusieurs paquets.

Quelques âmes charitables ont voulu faire des vivres aux prisonniers, par l'intermédiaire d'officiers ou de soldats allemands. Ces vivres ont passé, en grande partie, au mess de ceux-ci ou à leur cantine, puisque rien n'est arrivé au réfectoire des prisonniers. Aussi, ces derniers ont exprimé leur vif désir de ne plus voir se renouveler pareilles charités. Seuls ont réussi les donateurs clandestins. C'est peut-être grâce aux ruses de la charité que les prisonniers n'ont pas vu des leurs mourir de faim. Parfois même ils ont dû recourir à la violence pour s'emparer de ce qui leur était destiné: un jour, pour amener dans le camp deux voitures de rutabagas, ils saisirent la sentinelle à la gorge; ce qui leur valut à tous cinq jours de punition.

Les prisonniers occupent, à Halanzy, des baraquements en planches, à Musson, la maison d'école. Ils sont couchés sur de la paille, sans paillasse, en des lits superposés. Les locaux sont trop exigus, ils sont loin d'offrir deux m. c. par occupant.

Plusieurs manquent de souliers et n'ont, en fait de bas, que des chiffons en lambeaux, dont ils s'entourent les pieds. Plusieurs aussi sont habillés de loques.

Leur travail principal consiste à démonter les usines de Halanzy et de Musson. On les emploie à ces gros travaux malgré leurs forces défaillantes, aussi les accidents ne sont pas rares. Assez souvent, ils sont battus par leurs gardes.

Détail navrant: parmi ces ouvriers loqueteux et misérables, se trouvent des hommes appartenant aux classes aisées. Ainsi, par ex., il y a parmi eux un des plus grands hôteliers de Rome, connu de S. E. le Cardinal Merry del Val et de plusieurs hauts personnages du Vatican; parmi eux encore un avocat de Rome, dont S. E. le Cardinal Secrétaire d'Etat a demandé des nouvelles, par l'entremise du Nonce de Munche.

La solde de ces ouvriers est de trente centimes par jours.

Quant à la correspondance des prisonniers, il est à regretter que les réponses de leurs familles leur parviennent rarement. Plusieurs même restent longtemps sans nouvelles.

Si au moins, ils pouvaient se plaindre de leur sort à qui de droit ou à qui serait en mesure de les aider; mais, ils sont dans la crainte ou de voir leurs lettres de réclamation arrêtés ou de s'attirer des punitions et des représailles."

The author of this investigation noted from the testimonies by the Italians these words:

“Nous sommes au milieu d’une population qui nous témoigne une grande sympathie, nous en sommes vivement touchés. En notre qualité de catholiques italiens, nous voudrions leur donner l’exemple, en assistant aux offices, mai, hélas! nous n’avons pas de prêtre qui vienne à nous.” Et encore: “Si Dieu nous donne de rentrer dans notre Patrie, nous ne cesserons de répéter à quel point la population belge a été bonne pour nous!”

The daily life of the Italian prisoners in Belgium was not at all easy and the consequences of their psycho-physical status was sometimes disastrous, as was reported in the diary of the soldier and ‘giant’ Mario Bosisio of the 428th “batteria d’assedio”, preserved in the Archivio diaristico nazionale di Pieve Santo Stefano. Bosisio was deported after the Drama of Caporetto, passing by Udine and Lubiana, to Lager Lechfeld, west from München, from where, finally, he was transferred in 1918 to Olloy-sur-Viroin in the province of Namur in Belgium, together with other Italian war prisoners. In a regime of forced labour the soldiers had to work or in a stone quarry or at the maintenance of the roads.

Some citations of the mentioned diary are published in “La Grande Guerra, i diari raccontano”, a website born out from a collaboration between the editing group “l’Espresso” and “l’Archivio diaristico nazionale di Pieve Santo Stefano”: they describe first of all the misery of the prisoners and of Bosisio in particular, who failed in his attempted suicide. Nevertheless, we get also an image of the strength of the human being in such terrible situations, where humour and solidarity are mixed with fear<sup>91</sup>:

“Una mattina fredda e nebbiosa mentre lavoravo sulla strada ferrata trasportando travi, stanchissimo di tutto e di tutti, non esclusi i miei compagni di sventura che si guardavano sempre in cagnesco, in un momento esaltato di eccitazione e di scoraggiamento, all’approssimarsi del treno, con una mossa repentina mi slanciai nel vuoto verso i binari per finirla una buona volta. La vista annebbiata mi salvò. Essa m’impedì di notare, la presenza del filo di ferro che costeggia la linea; per dare i segnali da un casello all’altro.

Inciampando in questo ero andato a finire ruzzoloni, sul principio della ghiaia dov’erano posti i binari. Il pesante convoglio mi passò rasente sfiorandomi. Mi portarono in stazione svenuto. Ripresi i sensi, mi accorsi che avevo la testa fasciata

91. See <http://espresso.repubblica.it/grandeguerra/index.php?page=estratto2>.

per una ferita. Interrogato dall'interprete, presi la scusa di un caso accidentale. Non so se la mia dichiarazione fosse stata creduta o meno, epperò dopo quell'incidente fui guardato a vista più degli altri e dovevo stare sempre vicino alle sentinelle. Ri-entrato al concentramento mi misi a letto. Un forte choc nervoso mi fece passare tormentosa tutta la notte."

Further:

"Mattina splendida di primavera col sole sfolgorante i ramoscelli delle piante vicine erano tutti in fiore, e gli uccelletti saltellavano di ramo in ramo cantando. Trasportato da questi dolci richiami della natura, forse rimembrando gli allegri momenti trascorsi nel suo incantevole e festoso paese, un napoletano che stava spaccando sassi vicino a me, si mise improvvisamente a cantare a pieno petto una canzone nostalgica della bella Napoli. Le sentinelle ne rimasero entusiaste e ci incoraggiarono perché cantassimo tutti. Io ne approfittai per intonare l'inno di Mameli che tutti in coro cantarono a squarciagola. Poi si passò con maggior calore all'inno di Garibaldi. E loro avevano riso entusiasti!

Contenti, giulivi e soddisfatti di aver cantato le canzoni della patria contro il tedesco, ritornammo al concentramento. Prima dell'imbrunire senza alcun preavviso vennero ad agguantarmi in camerata e mi misero in prigione, dove mi lasciarono tre giorni senza toccare cibo. Dato che quel giorno l'interprete non era alla cava, doveva essere stato qualche rinnegato ed infame italiano a riferire. Al quarto giorno di buon mattino vennero a togliermi e mi portarono in cucina.

Volevano che mangiassi fin quando accomodasse loro, certo intenzionati di farmi scoppiare. Ne feci infatti una buona scorpacciata, ma quando mi sentii satollo smisi. Mentre mangiavo s'erano divertiti a passarmi una palla a spintoni ed a pugni. Rientrai in camerata nel tempo giusto che stavano passando in rivista tutti i nostri oggetti personali. S'erano allarmati seriamente. Sembrava avessero paura che noi tenessimo nascosto qualche ordigno pericoloso, perché frugarono persino dentro ai pagliericci.

A sera mi colse una tremenda diarea e per tutta la notte non feci altro che correre. Al mattino seguente marcai nuovamente visita. Ce ne volle della pazienza prima che varcassi la soglia dell'infermeria. Il sergente di sanità era deciso di mettermi alla prova. Voleva verificare se realmente avevo il suaccennato disturbo. E qui è giocoforza ch'io dica almeno succintamente il fatto che si svolse. Son certo che il lettore perdonerà la mia licenza, poiché avrà già compreso da precedenti ch'io lo faccio solo per documentare ciò ch'era capace di fare quella gentaglia vigliacca e

schifosa. Non appena se ne furono andati tutti, il caro sotto ufficiale mi chiamò fuori nel cortile. Gargarizzò qualche cosa nella sua lingua ch'io peraltro non ero tenuto a capire. Poi mi fece montare su un pancone più alto di un metro e mi obbligò a sbottonarmi i pantaloni. Voleva ad ogni costo constatare la verità. Siccome dovette godersi l'effettivo ed abbondante spettacolo, non sapendo più come sfogarsi, diede un tremendo colpo al pancone mandando tutto a capitombolo. Dopo la caduta ebbi la sensazione di aver qualche cosa di spaccato. Ottenni tre giorni di riposo, solo perché mi aveva un po' rovinato. Dovetti ancora ringraziarlo."

### Commemorating events after the War

After the War, the Italian authorities organized various commemorating activities to honour their heroes. On 3 November 1921, on the third anniversary of the armistice of Villa Giusti, the Italians residing in the city of Liège went to the cemetery of Robermont, to celebrate the memory of their compatriots who fell for "right and justice". This ceremony was similar to the Belgian feast of 11 November as there was a procession starting from within the city to the cemetery, followed by a floral tribute, a minute silence and a parade in front of the graves. The only difference was the organization of a religious celebration at the cathedral prior to the cortege. It was no coincidence that this first commemoration in Liège happened simultaneously with the Italian commemoration in honour of the battle of Vittorio Veneto and with the inhumation of the unknown soldier in Rome<sup>92</sup>.

In 1923, King Alberto I of Belgium and the Duke of Aosta visited the fort of Lonçin in Liège and the military cemetery of Robermont<sup>93</sup>. On 9 November 1924, *La Domenica del Corriere* put on its front page a coloured photo-drawing of a public commemoration that was organized at Ghent-Westerbegraafplaats in honour of the Italian heroes<sup>94</sup>.

In November 1928 the Italians of Liège started their annual procession. After the religious celebration at Saint-Remacle, the cortege with the mem-

92. *La Meuse*, 5 November 1921; EMELINE WYNANTS, *Les commémorations du 11 novembre en Belgique francophone pendant l'entre-deux-guerres. Les cas de Bruxelles, Liège et Mons*, Liège, Université de Liège, 2012, p. 154.

93. <http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/fr/europeana/record/08623/12467>

94. *La Domenica del Corriere*, 9 November 1924.



bers of the Italian Consulate, left the church building. They were attended on the square by a huge group of communist and anti-fascists who wanted to organize a countermanifestation. The police had to intervene twice to prevent a clash. At an analogue situation at the cemetery of Robermont, the clash could not be avoided<sup>95</sup>.

During the interwar period, the cemetery of Antwerp-Schoonselhof would receive on various occasions official visits from Italian representatives. On 13 October 1922 they even had the honour to welcome King Vittorio Emanuele III. The day before, the new mayor of Antwerp, Frans van Cauwelaert (1880-1961), had prepared the event by laying flowers on each grave of the Italian soldiers<sup>96</sup>. On 25 May 1929 an Italian delegation made a floral tribute at Schoonselhof near the temporary monument the city had erected for all Allies. Their floral wreath was composed of the Italian flag and with the inscription "L'ambasciata d'Italia"<sup>97</sup>. On 3 November and 11 December 1929, the consul general of Italy in Antwerp, Michelangelo Zimolo, presided an Italian delegation that commemorated its fallen compatriots in a similar way<sup>98</sup>.

On 20 August 1930, the mayor of Antwerp, Van Cauwelaert, informed the consul general of Italy that the bench of mayor and aldermen had authorized the firm Édouard Rombaux-Roland of Ecoussinnes-Carières to put funeral monuments on the 42 graves of the Italian soldiers. The height, length and depth of the stones were precisely indicated and the monuments had to be put perpendicularly, with solid fundaments and sufficient draught to resist to the winds<sup>99</sup>. On 29 May 1933, the "la Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri" put flowers on the graves of the Italian soldiers at Schoonselhof<sup>100</sup>. Three years later, in 4 November 1936, the Antwerp section of the Italian veterans ("Anciens Combattants Italiens"), with official see at Quai Ortelius 2, inaugurated a marble monument

95. *Le Journal de Liège*, 5 November 1928; *L'Express*, 4-5 November 1928; *Le Soir*, 6 November 1928; *La Dernière Heure*, 5 November 1928 and *Le Drapeau Rouge*, 6 November 1928; EMELINE WYNANTS, *Les commémorations du 11 novembre en Belgique francophone pendant l'entre-deux-guerres* cit., p. 154.

96. Letter from the Secretary of the City of Antwerp, dated 7 October 1922 (AFA, Dossier 638#1091).

97. Letter from the director of the Office of the cemeteries of Antwerp to the bench of mayor and aldermen, dated 26 May 1928. (*ibidem*).

98. Letters from the Director of the Office of the cemeteries of Antwerp to the bench of mayor and aldermen, dated 4 November and 11 December 1929 (*ibidem*).

99. See the correspondence and the plans between 1 July and 20 August 1930 (*ibidem*).

100. Letter from the Secretary of the City of Antwerp, dated 26 May 1933 (*ibidem*).

at Schoonselhof in honour of the fallen Italian soldiers<sup>101</sup>. The consul general of Italy in Antwerp, Emilio Manfredi, had obtained the permission on 16 October 1936<sup>102</sup>. The monument was a commemorative stele in marble sculpt by Amedeo Piaggio. According to sources consulted at the FelixArchief, the fascist signs on that stele were added afterwards, to be successively removed again after the Second World war, on the demand of the “Associazione Nazionale Combattenti” of 27 novembre 1944<sup>103</sup>. In contrast, an analogue monument that was inaugurated at Liège-Robermont after 11 November 1928, and realized in a much more fascist style, at present still dominates the Italian graves. Its presence, nevertheless, caused already during the interwar period numerous incidents between the antifascist community of Liège and the Italian authorities during patriotic ceremonies<sup>104</sup>.

## Conclusion

After this overview it is clear that the last word on the Italian soldiers buried on / in Belgian territory during and after the First World War is not written. During our research we realized that it is an almost unknown and forgotten history, in Belgium, as in Italy as well. This contribution has no other goal than wishing that one day, after a real cooperation between Belgian and Italian historians, the enigma will be resolved.

Annex 1: Official report of the exhumation (Oostrozebeke) and inhumation (Klerken-Houthulst) of an unknown Italian soldier on 20 March 1924

“ Service des Sépultures Militaires Belges  
Secteur II n. 4  
Procès-verbal d’Exhumation

101. Letter from the Secretary of the city of Antwerp dated 31 October 1936 with plan (*ivi*).

102. See correspondence between 1 and 16 October 1936 (*ivi*).

103. Letter from the Director of the Office of the cemeteries of Antwerp to the bench of mayor and aldermen 12 dicembre 1944 (*ivi*).

104. Lettera from the Consul in date of 1 October 1930; Letter of the Head of the Office of cemeteries to the mayor, dated 24 October 1933 (Liège, Archives du Service inhumations de la ville, dossier C 49 1) (see also A. MORELLI, *Les Italiens en Belgique* cit., p.15).

Conformément aux prescriptions du Ministre de la Défense Nationale  
et en exécution des ordres du Major Directeur du Service des Sépultures  
Militaires

L'an mil neuf cent vingt quatre, le vingt mars

en présence de Cyr. Engels

et du Lieut[enan]t Lefèvre

du Service des Sépultures Militaires Secteur IV Iseghem

Il a été procédé, dans les conditions d'hygiène prévues, à l'exhumation du  
corps du militaire Italien, mort au Champ d'Honneur, qui était proviso-  
irement sepolto sur le territoire de la commune de Oost-Roosebeke, sous  
le nom de *Inconnu*

(prénoms, grade, position) Soldato italien

à l'endroit indiqué par la fiche de repérage n. 3342

Le corps a été soigneusement examiné et cet examen a donné lieu aux  
remarques suivantes:

Cheveux et moustache noirs, front droit étroit, tête 50, taille 1.60 m en-  
viron

Le corps a été placé dans une toile de jute sur laquelle a été fixée une lapi-  
de en métal portant le n. 2033/4 et a été ensuite transporté au cimetière  
m(ilitai)re d'Houthulst.

En foi de quoi, le présent procès-verbal a été dressé par nous, soussignés,

Fait en double à Iseghem, le 20 mars 1924

Les témoins

Procès-verbal d'Inhumation

La toile, contenant le corps ci-dessus, a été sepolto dans une tombe isolée  
au cimetière m(ilitai)re d'Houthulst. La lapide du cercueil porte les indi-  
cations ci-dessous:

S IV

2033/4

Le n. de la tombe est 4

Nouveau n° de tombe 2008 Fait à Iseghem, le 20 mars 1924

Le Lieutenant d'administration Lefèvre

Commandant le secteur IV

Vu:

Le Major Directeur du Service des Sépultures Militaires

Pour le Major Directeur

Le Capitaine Comm[andan]t Cambrelin, adjoint

## Italy during the First World War as seen from Poland

When setting out to present the Polish perception of Italy during the World War I, account has to be taken of several factors related to the specific situation of the country on the Vistula River just before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo. It is important to mention first that the territory of Poland after its Third Partition in 1795 was divided between three powers: Austria, Prussia and Hungary, and when the Great War broke out the Polish State was not included in the map of Europe. Moreover, we must also take into account the internal disintegration of the Polish society resulting from two different ways of perceiving possible solutions to the Polish issue. These differences led to the emergence of two distinct ideological streams over the period of 1914-1918 (*activists* and *passivists*) and, as a consequence, for one part of the society to take the side of Austria-Hungary and for the other to stand on the side of the Triple Entente. The division was reflected in Polish press and had a bearing on the presentation of the Italian politics and events from the Austro-Hungarian front in Polish newspapers and magazines. The purpose of this article is to compare publications that occurred between 1915 and 1918 in two most important Polish newspapers of that epoch representing the two mentioned ideological streams, namely: 1) in Kraków *Czas* - an organ of Galician conservatives, traditionally pro-Austrian, supporting Austria-Hungary<sup>1</sup> and in 2) Lviv *Słowo Polskie* - a newspaper linked to *Narodowa Demokracja*

1. Established in 1848 in Krakow, *Czas* was one of the leading conservative newspapers. With an editor-in-chief having been Antoni Kłobuchowski, and later, in the 90's, Michał Chyliński and Antoni Beaupré, the newspaper passed into the hands of the so-called "neoconservative" group, established between 1888 and 1899. *Prasa polska 1864-1918*, edited by Jerzy Lojek, Warszawa, PWN, 1976, p. 140.

(National Democracy), pro-Russian and supporting the Triple Entente<sup>2</sup>. The third newspaper to be taken into account is *Godzina Polski*, which has a special character as having been one of a few pro-German newspapers published on the territory of Poland during the World War I, that enacted propaganda of such intensity against all states of the Triple Entente, including Italy<sup>3</sup>.

1. The concepts of the restoration of the independent Polish state in the eve of war.

After the Third Partition of Poland the Polish territory was divided between three partitioners: Prussia, Russia and Austria. There was no Polish state as such, however the national spirit of Poles did not cease to exist and resulted in a few military attempts in the 19th century (in 1830-1831, 1846, 1848, and 1863-1864) aimed at regaining independence. Despite the fall of national uprisings the Poles did not abandon the hope for rebirth of the free and independent state. Around 1908 the Polish society developed a conviction of the inevitability of armed conflict between the partitioners plunged into contradictory alliances, which could provide an opportunity for regaining independence for Poland<sup>4</sup>. This brought the emergence of two different political orientations that importantly influenced further development of the concept of reestablishing the Polish state.

2. *Słowo Polskie*, created in Lviv in 1896 was issued until 1915. It was revived in 1918. In 1902 it passed into the hands of the Ligue of Nations. During the World War I it was one of a few Galician newspapers (next to *Ilustrowana Gazeta Polska* issued in Kraków), which took the side of the coalition. *Ibidem*.

3. *Godzina Polski*, the magazine formally belonged to Cezary Zawilowski and Adam Napieralski. Although we lack definite evidence, during the war years the newspaper was believed to serve as an organ of a chief of a German propaganda division, Georg von Cleinow, who financed it. The paper promoted programme of restoration of the Polish state in strict cooperation with Central Powers. It was founded in Łódź in January of 1915 and in August its afternoon issue was launched in Warsaw. In July of 1917 the main office moved to Warsaw, where the title was issued twice a day in a circulation of 20,000 copies until the end of the war. *Ivi*, p. 1283.

4. In 1908, as a result of the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Europe got to the edge of war, which was to afflict the political set-up prevailing in Central and Eastern Europe since the Congress of Vienna. ROMAN WAPIŃSKI, *Historia polskiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX wieku*, Gdańsk, Arche, 1997, p. 129.

The first of the aforementioned political stances, linked to Józef Piłsudski<sup>5</sup>, aimed at cooperation with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose support could create an opportunity to create the Polish state in the lands of the Russian partition. It should be noted that Piłsudski, then, a member of *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (*The Polish Socialist Party*), strongly opposed any form of cooperation with Russia, identifying the Romanov empire as the most serious opponent of the Polish independence and a partitioner taking the lion's share of the Polish territory. According to then future National Commander, Russia was also the most *barbaric* of all three partitioning powers<sup>6</sup>. Thus, he considered the fight against the Romanov empire reasonable from both moral and political points of view. Piłsudski assumed that in case of an outbreak of pan-European war, the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey) would defeat Russia and later would be defeated themselves by Western states, which were more economically advanced (England and France). As a consequence, he thought that the Poles could play a role in that conflict providing they would be able to form independent armed forces. To this end, Piłsudski contacted military clubs and associations in Austria and with their agreement and cooperation he entered in the proceedings to set up Polish paramilitary organisations in Galicia between 1908 and 1914. Military irredentism had more supporters: underground *Związek Walki Czynnej* (the *Union of Active Struggle*), founded in 1908 by Kazimierz Sosnkowski and inspired by Piłsudski, who became its Chief Commandant in 1912, and two patriotic Polish organizations, created in 1910 in Kraków and Lviv and extremely popular with Polish youth: *Strzelec* and *Związek Strzelecki*. The architects of the organizations intended them to train staff of future Polish Army in

5. Józef Piłsudski, after five years of exile in Siberia for anti-Russian activities, came back to Vilnius in 1882 and joined PPS (*The Polish Socialist Party*). Between 1894 and 1900 he secretly edited *Robotnik*. Arrested in February 1900 in Łódź, he remained in custody in a citadel in Warsaw and later in a prison hospital in St. Petersburg. In the following years Piłsudski was gradually departing from participatory activity in PPS and founded just before the outbreak of World War I his own political camp, moving towards preparation of Polish military staff. ANTONI CZUBIŃSKI, *Historia Polski XX w.*, edition II, Poznań, Wyd. Poznańskie, 2003, pp. 47-48.

6. In his article from 1903 entitled: *Jak stałem się socjalistą* (*How I Became a Socialist*) Piłsudski was explaining that from his early youth he had been convinced of the necessity to take up armed struggle against Russia - "this Asian monster, covered with a thin layer of Europeanism that oppressed Poland". JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI, *Jak stałem się socjalistą*, in: *Pisma-mowy-rozkazy*, vol. II, Warszawa 1930, p. 5 and R.Wapiński, *Historia* cit., p. 131.

case of fight against Russia in a future armed conflict<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, it should be noted that Galicia was the part of Poland that enjoyed a measure of autonomy granted by the Emperor in 1867 and had its influences in the Vienna Parliament (*Polen Klub*), which entailed much more freedom for its citizens in comparison to territories occupied by Russia and Germany<sup>8</sup>. Galicia was the region, where in 1912 *Polski Skarb Wojskowy* (*Polish Military Treasury*) was established and *Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodległościowych* (*Temporary Coordinating Commission of Confederated Independence Parties*), a form of political leadership steering preparations for a future military action, created on 10th November, 1912.

A different concept of regaining independence was put forward by a political movement linked to Roman Dmowski, a leader and one of founders of a Polish nationalist party *Demokracja Narodowa* (*National Democracy*)<sup>9</sup>, which identified Germany, not Russia, as a main enemy of Polish issues. The party was oriented towards Russia and counted on gaining far-reach-

7. MARTA WOJTYŚ-KIPIEL, KATARZYNA MRUGAŁA, *Wstęp* in: *Legiony polskie 1914-1918. Wystawa w stulecie wybuchu Wielkiej Wojny i czynu legionowego*, Kraków, Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2014, p. 52.

8. Between 1867 and 1914 Galicia (*The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria with the Grand Duchy of Cracow and Oświęcim*) enjoyed autonomy and broad discretion of development. Granting autonomy to Galicia in the 1860s meant transferring from Vienna to Lviv many political, administrative, economic, and culture-formative functions, necessary to manage such a vast province. The Emperor's Governor resided in Lviv, which was also the site of gatherings of *Sejm Krajowy* (*The Diet of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria, and of the Grand Duchy of Cracow*) and of *Wydział Krajowy* (*The Home Division*) appointed by Sejm Krajowy. In 1871 Ministerstwo do spraw Galicji (*Ministry of Galician Affairs*) was established and until the very last days of monarchy it was chaired by officials of Polish origin. Polish became an official language in Galicia. Poland had its representatives in the Austrian parliament, and science, arts and culture proliferated in Galicia. Different types of schooling were developed, The University of Jan Kazimierz in Lviv was polonised and The Jagiellonian University revived. Akademia Umiejętności was founded in 1872, and 1873 saw the birth of Akademia Sztuk Pięknych (Kraków Academy of Fine Arts). The first National Museum in Poland was founded in 1879 in Kraków, and in 1894 in Lviv an exhibition of Polish art was opened. An official celebration of 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald in July of 1910 became one of the most zealous manifestos of Polish spirit. A. CZUBIŃSKI, *Historia Polski* cit., pp. 12-13 More on the subject: JACEK PURCHLA, *Wiedeń, Kraków i Lwów na drodze do nowoczesności*, in: JACEK PURCHLA, WOLFGANG KOS, ŻANNA KOMAR, MONIKA RYDIGER AND WERNER MICHAEL SCHWARZ, *Mit Galicji*, Kraków, Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2014, p. 159.

9. *Liga Narodowa* (*National Ligue*) formed in 1893 was a nascent form of a Polish nationalist party. In 1897 leaders of *Liga Narodowa* founded *Stronnictwo Demokratyczno-Narodowe*, later slightly changing its name to *Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne* (*The National Democratic Party*)



ing autonomy of Polish lands within constraints of the Romanov Empire. Dmowski found Russia the weakest of the partitioners not only because its misguided foreign policy in the East (of which the best evidence was a lost war with Japan in 1905), but also because of a deep internal crisis affecting the country after the 1905-1907 revolution. According to Dmowski, Russia was at a lower level in terms of civilization and not able to successfully impede independence projects in Poland, being, as he noted, an enemy “*more barbaric, yet less dangerous than Germans*”<sup>10</sup>. Based on the assumption that the Poles were capable of fighting independently against Germany, the leader of the *National Democracy* thought that they had to rely upon Russia, out of necessity. Consequently, Dmowski became an adherent of the pro-Russian stance, convinced that the question of Poland could be solved only within the state of Tsars<sup>11</sup>.

When the international turmoil after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo led the partitioning powers to the opposite sides of the conflict, the two mentioned orientations gave rise to two ideological currents<sup>12</sup>:

- a. The so-called *activists* were linked to Józef Piłsudski, who was carrying out a function of a commander of *Związek Walki Czynnej* (the *Union of Active Struggle*) since 1912. Piłsudski just after the events

10. Dmowski's position on the subject of Polish-Russian relations underwent evolution in the following years. Initially, he saw the biggest threat in Russia and found tsardom the main enemy of the Polish nation. In 1903, however, he made an attempt to look for support against the Germans in Russia, along with other leaders of “*endecja*” - Leon Popławski and Zygmunt Balicki. This concept had been already outlined in “*Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*” (*Thoughts of a modern Pole*), published in 1903 and considered a profession of faith for a Polish nationalist, and later presented in full in a 1908 book entitled *Niemcy, Rosja i kwestia polska* (*Germany, Russia and the Polish Cause*). After the revolution of 1905-1907 Russia seemed to Dmowski as weak and less threatening than Germany, whose power “*was growing, toppling the old order in Europe and in the whole world*”. JANUSZ PAJEWSKI, *Odbudowa Państwa Polskiego 1914-1918*, Poznań, Wyd. Poznańskie, 2005, pp. 35-38 and A. CZUBIŃSKI, *Historia Polski* cit., pp. 45-46.

11. Dmowski called for seeking a compromise with Russia at the cost of the so-called partitioned lands and also for defending Polish positions in terms of politics and economy in ethnically Polish territories. This end was to be achieved by emphasizing tradition of the so-called *Piast Poland* as contradictory to the *Jagiellonian concept* advocated by Piłsudski's adherents. Read more on the subject in: A. CZUBIŃSKI, *Historia Polski* cit., p. 45-46.

12. It should be also noted that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the partitioning powers became parts of alliances competing for political and economic influences in Europe: in 1907 Russia, after signing a pact with United Kingdom, became a part of the Triple Entente, whereas Germany and Austro-Hungary, together with the Kingdom of Italy, formed the Triple Alliance in 1883.

in Sarajevo initiated a process of reorganization of Polish patriotic forces by establishing The First Cadre Company, which was included in December of 1914 into The First Brigade as a part of The Polish Legions, under Austrian command<sup>13</sup>. The core of the movement was constituted by legionists of the First Brigade and the youth involved in sport and military associations from Galicia. The so-called *Piłsudscy* (*Piłsudskites*) strived to create an independent Polish state, relying on Austria-Hungary, from the territories occupied by Russia - they wanted to achieve this end through their military commitment on the side of the Central Powers.

- b. A diametrically opposed position was taken by the *passivists*, who found Germany the worst enemy and looked for support in Russia. The group, under Dmowski's leadership, relied on the alliance with the Triple Entente and on the relentless struggle with German Reich, taking the view that the success of the central states would be equal with a disaster for Poland. Facing the absence of any concessions for the Polish cause on the part of Russia, regardless *the Manifesto of Grand Duke Nicholas* (also called *the Manifesto to the Polish Nation*) on 14 August 1914, the passivists decided to concentrate their activity within the Polish society. They abstained from military cooperation with Russia, claiming that "a country under occupation is able only to adopt the policy of waiting for the German defeat". In accordance with this programme, on 15 November 1915, Roman Dmowski initiated the foundation of *Komitet Narodowy Polski* (*Polish National Committee*), which grouped pro-Russian political circles. Its main purpose was to spread ideas of hostility towards cooperation with the Central Powers, yet the Committee was not determined to take any actual military measures<sup>14</sup>.

13. However, as Janusz Pajewski emphasised, the activists were not at all monolithic. Alongside Piłsudski, other *activists* should be mentioned: the right wing of PPS, the Galician *Supreme National Committee* (*Naczelny Komitet Narodowy; NKN*), *Liga Państwowości Polskiej* (*Polish Statehood Ligue*), *Klub Państwowców Polskich* (*Polish Statesmen Club*) founded by Władysław Studnicki, Zygmunt Makowiecki and Wincenty Rzymowski, and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL Wyzwolenie* (*Polish Agrarian Party - PSL Liberation*) J. PAJEWSKI, *Odbudowa* cit., p. 98.

14. In October 1915 the passivists founded *Międzypartyjne Koło Polityczne* (*Cross-party Political Circle*) made up of *National Democracy* and the so-called *realists*, as well as some smaller organizations. *Ivi*, p. 99.

## 2. Italy in Polish press during the World War I

The two mentioned ideological programmes resulting from distinct visions of regaining independence of Poland and remote ideas of building different alliances on the international arena had an impact on the perception of the Kingdom of Italy during the Great War, which was reflected in the Polish press. After analyzing articles published by Polish newspapers between 1914 and 1918, we may conclude that the Polish interest in Italy was born at the beginning of May 1915, just before their entry into the war. One of the most important Lviv newspapers *Słowo Polskie*, ideologically linked with *National Democracy*, on the 2nd of May 1915, wrote with a great deal of liking about Italian approachment with the Triple Entente. An anonymous journalist in a series of articles entitled *Kryzys włoski* [An Italian Crisis], looking into the possibility of Italy entering the war against the Central Powers, informed about significant political events, and particularly about stepping down of Antonio Salandra's government due to, as he claimed, "Giolitti's intrigues and a group of neutralists in the Italian Parliament". He also reported on interventionist manifestations in all big cities of Italy and on an audience given by a King Victor Emmanuel III to a German ambassador in Rome, Bernhard von Bülow, and to a Franz Joseph's representative<sup>15</sup>.

Wondering whether the aforementioned events were pointing to war preparations or to continuation of the neutralistic policy, the newspaper drew attention to the facts, which they found announcing of Italy entering the war, as, for example, the closure of Italian shops, clubs and workshops in Germany. To conclude his thoughts, the anonymous journalist referred to an article published in *Corriere della Sera*, and stated that Italy: "cannot fail to enter the conflict, which will decide both the fate of the world and the prevalence in Europe of either the German or the Anglo-Slavonic-Romance spirit." With reference to theses of Italian nationalists - understandably, given the close contacts of Enrico Corradini's nationalists with *Polish National Democrats* - the paper indicated that the current armed conflict should be a victory for the Romance race over Germanism<sup>16</sup>. As we can

15. Kryzys włoski, in *Słowo Polskie*, 2 May 1915, (issue: 224), p. 1.

16. More on the subject: J.SONDEL-CEDARMAS, *Nacjonalizm włoski-geneza i ewolucja doktryny politycznej (1896-1923)*, Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka, 2013, pp. 363-383.

read in the article, in case of the Triple Entente's defeat, Italy either taking stand in favor of the Triple Alliance or remaining neutral, would have to become a German colony over time. In the opinion of the newspaper, in case of victory for the central states, Germany and Austria-Hungary would gain control of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and Italy would be tolerated only as a "vassal state". As the journalists highlighted, not only did Austro-Hungary not intend to give the earlier promised lands of Trento and Trieste to Italy, but they also could even claim back Lombardia and Veneto. According to *Słowo Polskie*, Italy entering the war on the side of the Triple Entente would be even more reasoned, since it could guarantee them immediate financial support from England and France.

On the 18th of May 1915 *Słowo Polskie* reporting contentedly on the reconstruction of Salandra's government, which was to be "a great victory for the anti-neutralistic camp and for the King Victor Emanuel", devoted a longer piece of text to the profile of the Italian monarch. Victor Emanuel III being, as he himself emphasized, "a grandson of the great king who united Italy", solved a difficult political situation in the country for the benefit of interventionist orientation<sup>17</sup>. On the 25 May 1915, in an article entitled triumphantly *Italy declares war*, an anonymous correspondent reported that at Pentecost (23 May 1915) an Italian ambassador in Vienna, duca Giuseppe d'Avarna, submitted a war-declaring notification to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Stephan Burianow. An extensive military mobilization began in Italy. With undisguised satisfaction, the newspaper wrote: "Less than forty years of ingenerate statehood of united Italy has given the Italian nation capacity to organize internally and transform itself into a real power. Italy after the victorious war against Turkey and annexation of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica began to claim a major role on the Mediterranean and in the Balkans"<sup>18</sup>. According to *Słowo Polskie*, it was that hegemonic Italian policy that had caused over previous 40 years a conflict with Austria, the issue of the Adriatic and Albania becoming an apple of discord. In the Polish journalist's view, Italy understood that they could complete the work of Italian unification started by Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi, only by waging the war against Austro-Hungary. Wondering, on the other hand, what possible conse-

17. *Gabinet Salandry zostaje*, in *Słowo Polskie*, 18 May 1915, (issue: 228), p. 1.

18. Włochy wypowiedziały wojnę, *Słowo Polskie*, 25 May 1915 r., (issue: 240), p. 1.

quences for the military actions could result from Italy entering the war, he underlined that Italian army could count on one million soldiers, not easily fatigued in the battle, and on the navy exceeding the potential of Austrian fleet. He added also that Italians had reached an advanced level in terms of military technology. When concluding, the newspaper noted that the Polish nation looked upon Italy with great affection, seeing in Italian unification an analogy to Polish political situation and hoping that Poland could gain its own independence as a result of dismantlement of multinational states in Central Europe<sup>19</sup>.

Similarly, in an article entitled *Włochy i Austria* [Italy and Austria], the paper emphasized that Austria had always been the greatest enemy of Italian independence and unification, since the Habsburg state, after gaining control over the Adriatic, was planning to ensure hegemony in the Mediterranean, thus eyeing unfavorably the increase of Italian power and their expansionist policy. The Habsburg Empire was concerned to preserve Austro-Hungarian traditions in Trieste and Trento, because the Empire “did not forget Lombardia”. In effect, as the journalist noted, “The Italians know that they will be forced to fight for their own right to development, i.e. for their right to existence”. On the 28th of May 1915 *Ślowo Polskie*, in turn, devoted much attention to a profile of general Luigi Cadorna, the chief of the general staff of army. An anonymous journalist underlined that Cadorna was a son of another general, Raffaele Cadorna, who had fought in the second and third war for independence against Austria, although he did not managed to return Trieste to the Italians. He stated, however, that: “when Italy has suffered a serious blow, the leadership of army is taken by a second Cadorna, who must have been brought up in the spirit of revenge.”<sup>20</sup> As a result of war events taking place in Galician territories at the turn of 1914 and 1915 and after the Austrian seizure of Lviv on 22 June 1915, *Ślowo Polskie* was closed<sup>21</sup>. The newspaper came

19. It should be noted that *Ślowo Polskie* dedicated much attention to propaganda for reconstruction of the Polish state in Italian society, which corresponded with Dmowski's policy of raising public awareness of the Polish cause in Western Europe. In accordance with this policy, the newspaper commented broadly on news about establishing 'Pro Polonia' committees in Italian cities and lectures and public readings organised between 1914 and 1918 and devoted to the Polish cause.

20. *Wojna włosko-austriacka*, in *Ślowo Polskie*, 28 May 1915(issue: 247), p.2.

21. In the second half of 1914 and in the first half of 1915 the Eastern part of Galicia was taken by Russian troops. On the 3rd of September 1914 Lviv was captured, and it remained under oc-

back in print as late as in June 1918. Its last reports on the events on the Italian-Austrian front referred to the Austrian offensive in Italy. Starting from 19 June 1918, the newspaper reported on Italian victories over the Piave river, numerous Austrians killed and taken into captivity, and on a recall of general Conrad von Hoetzendorff, who “did not stop the Italian offensive”. The paper mentioned also the ideological crisis of socialism in Italy in the circumstances of war, when “the idea of internationalism had to subordinate to the national idea.”

A fundamentally different view of the entry of Italy into the war was presented by the most significant conservative newspaper in Krakow, *Czas*. The paper, taking the Austro-Hungarian side, since the beginning of May 1915 emphasized the great disappointment of the Emperor Franz Joseph and the imperial-royal government with Italian abandonment of the Triple Alliance and Salandra's government rejection of Austrian territorial offers. The major importance should be given to the commentary on the subject of *Austro-Hungarian Note* handed to the Italian ambassador, Duca d'Averna di Gualteri by the Austrian Foreign Minister, Stephan Burianow, and addressed to the Italian government after it had declared their plan to leave the Triple Alliance. In the article from 22 May 1915 entitled *Nota Austro-Węgier dla Włoch* [The Note of Austria-Hungary to Italy] an anonymous journalist described sadness of the old Emperor and the dual monarchy's government at the termination of the treaty, that had ensured safety and peace for more than 30 years in that part of Europe. He emphasized an absolute readiness of Austria-Hungary to recognize Italian neutrality and possibly consider territorial concessions in accordance with article 7. of the treaty, although, as he noted, “the above mentioned article should pertain mainly to the Balkan Peninsula”. He accentuated an honest will to reach an agreement with Italy, for, as he wrote, “Austria-Hungary and Germany, attacked by the powers of the Triple Entente, had to defend their territories, although this defensive war was not aimed at ‘implementation of the programme that would be contrary to the vital interests of Italy.’”<sup>22</sup>

cupation until 22 June 1915. On the 22nd of March 1915 Russians took a fortress in Przemyśl. The withdrawal of Russian troops from Galicia began on the 2nd of May 1915, when the front in Gorlice was broken. *Słowo Polskie* was closed by Austrians for its pro-Russian stance, and its main editors left for Russia together with the withdrawing tsarist army. The paper was resumed only after 1918. *Prasa polska 1864-1918* cit., p. 167.

22. *Nota Austro-Węgier do Włoch*, in *Czas*, 22 May 1915, (issue: 271), p. 1.



The newspaper, although concerned for the Italian entry into the war on the side of the Triple Entente, pinned hopes on the future prime minister, Giovanni Giolitti, and on diplomatic activities of the German ambassador in Italy, Bernhard von Bülow. The paper counted also on a peaceful stance of the major part of the Italian Parliament, particularly of the Senate, considered the most conservative and inclined to maintain the *status quo*, as well as the majority of the Italian society, regardless the radical shift in the attitude of some newspapers, as, for example, the main paper of Italian nationalists *Idea Nazionale*. Krakow *Czas* stated that a month ago the Italian publication alerted the public opinion to “the war turmoil”, yet currently it had become one of the vital organs of interventionists.

After Italy had declared war on 23 May 1915, a day later the Krakow newspaper published *Emperor's Manifesto* addressed to all nations of the Empire, in which he emphasized once more the great pain of the monarch, “Not having been treated kindly by Fate, but nevertheless showing far reaching understanding and loyalty to his ally, who had despite it turned against him.”<sup>23</sup> The Emperor Franz Joseph expressed his sorrow for the armed conflict and for the fact that Italy after 30 years of cooperation, during which it achieved great benefits and was given a chance to extend its territory, abandoned a former ally when the former was in greatest need.

Since the entry of Italy into the war until the end of the conflict, *Czas* devoted much attention to the Vatican question and the policy of the Pope Benedict XV. By no means was it coincidental, taking into account the pro-Austrian policy of Vatican during the war, and the close links between the newspaper office and the hierarchy of the Church in Galicia. In particular, in the issue from the 25th of May 1915. *Czas*, when touching upon the subject of the Holy See's sovereignty and its independence from internal and external policy of Italy, noted that the 1871 *Legge delle Garantigie* [Law of Guarantees] so far had pertained to the purely Catholic matter, but in the light of the current conflict between Italy and the central states, it became a global question. The conservative paper, when referring to the article published in Vienna *Reichpost*, underlined that regardless prerogatives of Pope's sovereignty and independence, the Law of Guarantees

23. *Po manifestacie*, in *Czas*, 24 May 1915, (issue: 274), p. 1.



lacked in corresponding guarantees of inviolability for “prelates, officials, and dignitaries of Curia” of various nationalities<sup>24</sup>.

The publication wondered whether the officials of Curia, being citizens of countries against which Italy was waging war, would be forced to leave the Italian capital. According to the journalist, the problem pertained also to intangible properties belonging to foreign churches located within Italy, which were not given any guarantees by the above mentioned law. He gave an example of Austrian Church Santa Maria dell' Anima, German Church Campo Santo, Austro-Hungarian Collegium Germanicum, not to mention the Polish, Czech, and Ukrainian colleges formally belonging to Austria. As *Czas* noted with a dose of venom, referring to the text published in *Leipziger Nachrichten*, “Everything can be expected from the government, who did not hesitate to tear up a 30 year old alliance, and now could possibly be able to violate the Law of Guarantees and Vatican’s independence”. The journalist claimed that the Pope should consider leaving Vatican during the armed conflict and move to Einsieden, for only in a neutral country would he be able to freely conduct his policy. Correspondingly, on June 1915 the newspaper related on the circumstances of evacuating accredited ambassadors of Austria-Hungary, Prussia and, Bavaria due to, as he stated, “their presence having become impossible from the moral point of view of waging war”<sup>25</sup>. As a result, as the newspaper noted, the Pope would not be able to communicate with all governments, thus being hindered from monitoring the general situation in Europe. Not surprisingly, *Czas* devoted much attention to the *Papal Note of Benedict XV* from 1 August 1917. The Krakow newspaper dedicates as many as three articles to that matter, all entitled *Peaceful Message of Holy Father*, published from 17 to 21 August 1917. The paper reminded that it was not the first peaceful offer of the Pope, who, after issuing the encyclic *Ad bestissimi Apostolorum*, did not cease his activities of “calling for stable peace based on justice”. The journalist noted that the Note was well received in Austria-Hungary and in Germany, but with certain hesitation in the Triple Entente countries, including Italy. Yet he reminded that according to Pope, the most difficult

24. *Kwestya watykańska*, in *Czas*, 24 May 1915 (issue: 274), p. 1

25. *Watykań a wojna*, *ivi*, 1 June 1915 (issue: 289), p.1.

problems to solve were issues of Alsace-Lorraine, Trento-Trieste, and the Polish matter<sup>26</sup>.

An overly negative picture of Italy during the First World War was drawn by *Godzina Polski*, a newspaper issued in the lands of the General Government of Warsaw, in Łódź, and later in Warsaw since December 1915 until 12 November 1918. As I have already mentioned, the “political, social, and literary” paper printed in Polish, was one a few activist newspaper supporting the Central Powers. The publication had a specific character, considering that not many Polish newspapers and magazines were standing on the side of Germany<sup>27</sup>. However, it should be kept in mind that on the territories of the General Government of Warsaw, since the beginning of the conflict the press was extensively censored by specifically appointed for this purpose German Press Office (*Die Presseverwaltung*), headed by a general of the Prussian army, Georg von Cleinow. *Godzina Polski* proclaimed the programme of the restoration of Poland in close cooperation with Central Powers, seeing the future Poland as a country subordinated to Germany<sup>28</sup>.

In contrast to the earlier mentioned newspapers, *Godzina Polski* devoted much attention to military events and published daily a bulletin from the front, signed by a Deputy Head of the General Staff, Field Marshal Franz Ritter von Höfer, and later by general Erich Ludendorff, relating on the most significant events from all fronts, including the Italian-Austrian front. In the article from 16 January 1916, the newspaper commented on the course of war on the south-western front, reporting particularly on the course of the offensive at Isonzo from October and November 1915. *Godzina Polski* draw attention to Italian attacks fought off by Austro-Hungarian soldiers, a big number of killed and captured Italians, and on the low morale of the Italian soldiers. Based on the reports from *Kölnische*

26. *Orędzie pokojowe Ojca Świętego*, *ivi*, 19 August 1917 (issue: 381), p.1.

27. Between August 1914 and October 1915 the territories occupied by Russia were taken by German and Austro-Hungarian troops and divided into 4 administrative districts. The territories around Warsaw found themselves under German occupation. On 24 August 1915 these lands became *Generalgouvernement Warschau* (*The General Government of Warsaw*), presided over by general Hans von Beseler. Georg von Cleinow was appointed a chief of the press department in January 1915, and later, in 1916 his place was taken by dr Martin Mohr.

28. Because of its pro-German character, the paper was found to be an organ financed by the Germans and did not earn much popularity among the Polish society, especially when it attacked Józef Piłsudski's First Brigade after *the oath crisis* in July 1917.

*Volkszeitung*, an anonymous journalist stated that both the military and the society felt dejection resulting from the protracting war and the costs it entailed, as well as the lack of coal and increase of prices they had to pay for most basic products. The newspaper many times reminded of Italian betrayal of their former allies, i.e. their entry into the war in May 1915, at the moment of particular difficulty on the eastern front. An anonymous journalist explained that Italian choice to support the Triple Entente had been motivated by their colonial interests, stating that: "Italy necessitated by colonial interests did not want to afoul of England and took their side, thus terminating a 30-year long alliance and taking up the sword against the ally in the darkest hour"<sup>29</sup>.

The newspaper reminded that the general objective of Italy was to gain control over the Mediterranean, which in a long run could lead to a conflict with France and England and forming an alliance with Germany. According to the paper, the fact that Italy did not declare war against Germany pointed clearly that the Italians were considering looking for German support for their Mediterranean policy after the war. At that moment, Italy entered the war against Austria, giving priority to their interests in the Adriatic. The journalist also stressed that the friendship between Italy and Russia was not based on solid fundamentals. As he noted, it was all about "*a fleeting political and diplomatic romance*" resulting from having a common enemy, i.e. Austria. In another article the paper stated that Italy entered the war not for imperialistic reasons, but out of fear that it could be isolated by great powers after the end of the war. It was emphasized that the Triple Entente did not have full confidence in Italy, since it had declared the war against Austria-Hungary without doing the same against Germany. The newspaper reminded that the coalition seemed to have remembered that it had been saved twice by Italy: 1) in 1914, when, owing to Italian declaration of neutrality, the Triple Entente could easily run a battle at Marna and 2) in the summer of 1915, when Italian entry into the war had saved Russia from certain defeat.

On the 20th of May 1916. *Godzina Polski* paid much attention to the defeat of Montenegro and the great victory of Austria-Hungary. An anonymous journalist, with reference to *Tägliche Rundschau* and *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, described the impression made in Italy by seizure of Mon-

29. *Albania*, in *Godzina Polski*, 30 January 1916 (issue: 31), p. 1.

tenegro, which was a serious blow to political spheres, fearing to lose Albania and, consequently, the control over the Adriatic, which in turn could provoke a new conflict between the government and the royal court. The paper stressed that queen Helena supported her father, King Nicolaus I, whereas King Victor Emanuel advocated the policy of Prime Minister Salandra and Foreign Minister Sonino<sup>30</sup>. The defeat of Montenegro evoked resentment among the Italian society, which was materialized in anti-war demonstrations organized in the biggest cities, and motivated the government to strengthen security forces. The publication saw the danger of the outbreak of revolution in Italy and claimed that the best strategy would be to withdraw from war, especially given that the idea of peace was winning more and more supporters among Italian intellectuals<sup>31</sup>. Summarizing 9 months of activities on the Italian-Austrian front, the paper stated that so far there had been no greater Italian victories. Quite contrarily, Italy had suffered a number of severe defeats and were forced “*to do what England and France wanted*”. “*Italia fights, because England tells them to*” - the paper emphasized on 1 February 1916<sup>32</sup>.

Not surprisingly, *Godzina Polski* paid much attention to the battle at Caporetto. The paper devoted it the front pages of all issues from 24 October until 15 November 1917. On 24 October the newspaper dedicated a longer article to the motion of no confidence on the government put forward by socialists, which was, however, rejected. Starting from 25 October, a bulletin from the Italian front was published. Signed by general Erich von Ludendorff, it pertained to the movement of Austro-Hungarian and German troops in northern Italy up to the Tagliamento River<sup>33</sup>. The bulletin reported also on numerous fallen soldiers and those who had been taken into captivity (e.g. on 27 October the bulletin mentioned of 30, 000 Italian prisoners of war, including 700 officers and 800 cannons), described a breakdown in Italian army, particularly numerous episodes of disobedience and desertion, and of Cadorna's pro tempore order to execute deserters by shooting. On 30 October, referring to the news published by *Berliner Tageblatt*, the newspaper printed an article under the telling

30. *Znaczenie kapitulacji Czarnogóry*, in *Godzina Polski*, 20 January 1916, (issue: 21), p. 1.

31. *Nastroj we Włoszech*, in *Godzina Polski*, 21 January 1916, (issue: 22), p. 1.

32. *Półtora roku wojny*, in *Godzina Polski*, 1 February 1916, (issue: 33), p. 1.

33. The issue from 28 October mentions taking of Cividale, whereas the title from 31 October refers to capturing of Udine, the Italian staff headquarters.

title: *Włochy przed rewolucją* [Italy before revolution], which confirmed earlier information about unrest and anti-war protests in all big cities of Italy, especially in Milan, pertaining not only to the workers, but also to the soldiers. Consequently, an anonymous writer stated that Italy found itself in a situation similar to that of Russia in February 1917. An issue from 1 November 1917 included an information about an alleged suicide of general Cadorna after Austro-Hungarian seizure of Gorizia. Furthermore, on 2 November the paper published a German communicate announcing a defeat of Italy at Tagliamento, stating that “German and Austrian corps achieved victories of such magnitude that it was a rarity even in such a wide-ranging war”<sup>34</sup> and expressing conviction that only help from new allies could save Italy. In an issue from 15 November, *Godzina Polski* presented a profile of general Luigi Cadorna, who was replaced at the function of the Commander-in-Chief by general Armando Diaz after the defeat at Caporetto. The description of Cadorna published by *Godzina Polski* was very different to the one in *Słowo Polskie* from May 1915. According to *Godzina Polski*, general Cadorna was dismissed from his function 2,5 years too late, since he had no leadership qualities, as demonstrated by the fact that he lost more than a year for war preparations, without taking advantage of the arrangements with the Triple Entente concerning the time of Italian entry into the war. In that way, as the paper emphasized, general Cadorna had lost the surprise effect and had not used the fact that south-western borders of the dual monarchy had been virtually unarmed. Moreover, he decided to attack Trieste and Trentino at the same time, when he should rather concentrate all forces on the Giulia front. Cadorna appeared also to be ineffectual during the great German-Austrian offensive, surmounted by the battle at Caporetto.

The newspaper again related thoroughly on the defeat of Austro-Hungarian troops in the second battle at Piave (la battaglia di Solistizio), fought from 15 until 22 June 1918. On 14 June *Godzina Polski* mentioned in general terms that “important measures will be taken on a south-western front, as the Austrians are preparing a great offensive”, and on 21 June the paper admitted that “The Italians are fighting now much better than previous autumn”, and that the Austrian front lines were under constant bombardment

34. *Kłęska włoska nad Tagliamento*, in *Godzina Polski*, 2 November 1917, (issue: 301) p. 2.

from the Italians, English, and French<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand, an Austrian communicate from 23 June announced that the fights at Piave weakened, and that the Italian attack at Montello and San Dona di Piave was fought off, causing great losses - 40, 000 were taken into captivity, among them Czecho-Slovak legionists, who “were executed by shooting in accordance with martial law.” On 10 August 1918, the newspaper wrote about a poet Gabriele D’Annunzio’s famed flight over Vienna. It is worth noting that the famous flight of the Italian poet over the capital of Austria raised the interest of all Polish newspapers. Thus, *Godzina Polski* in an article entitled *Włoscy lotnicy nad Wiedniem* [Italian pilots over Vienna], reported that at 9.30 Italian airplanes flew over the Austrian capital, throwing around leaflets with an Italian flag. As the paper emphasized, the planes had not been caught earlier by an anti-aircraft defense, because “the Italian aircrafts were flying without projectiles, thus being able to fly higher; the defense was impeded also by a morning fog covering the horizon”. The Italian venture, as the publication noted, was interpreted as a sport experiment and did not cause concern among the inhabitants of the capital<sup>36</sup>.

The newspaper related on the last battle of Austria-Hungary at Vittorio Veneto, fought between 24 October and 4 November 1918 in very general terms. On 31 October 1918 it published a communicate announcing Austria’s readiness for peace negotiations and proposal of ceasing military actions on the Italian front to avoid “unnecessary bloodshed”. The paper wrote: “Pursuant to an already repeated decision to immediately establish peace negotiations, our troops fighting on the Italian front will abandon their lines of defense.”<sup>37</sup> In just less than two weeks later, on 12 November 1918, *Godzina Polski* suspended its publishing activities.

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To resume these considerations, it should be stated that the Italian policy during the First World War was looked upon in Poland through the prism of solving the Polish cause. The picture of Italy shaped by articles in the most important newspapers was dependent upon belonging of journalists and publishers to either the camp of Józef Piłsudski’s *activists* or Roman

35. *W czarną godzinę Włoch*, in *Godzina Polski*, 21 June 1918, (issue: 167), p. 2.

36. *Włoscy lotnicy nad Wiedniem*, in *Godzina Polski*, 10 August 1918, (issue: 217), p. 1.

37. *Włoski teren walk*, in *Godzina Polski*, 31 October 1918, (issue: 298), p. 3.

Dmowski's *passivists*. Italy and war events on the Italian-Austrian front were presented with a great affection by press linked to Dmowski's *Narodowa Demokracja* (*National Democracy*), which was reflected in the newspaper *Słowo Polskie* from Lviv. However, a dramatically different picture of Italian policy was shown by newspapers and magazines related to the neoconservative party from Galicia, traditionally loyal to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and to the Emperor. Consequently, the publications supported the Central Empire, as exemplified by *Czas* from Kraków. Nevertheless, a sad conclusion can be drawn from the publications of *Czas*, and it results from the fact that in that armed conflict Poles and Italians were situated on the opposite sides of the barricades, even though the two nations had maintained good relations throughout centuries and though, above all, they were linked with the tradition of their brotherhood of arms in the 19th century fights "for our freedom and yours". A special place among the analyzed publications is occupied by *Godzina Polski*, which was one of a few newspapers published on the Polish territory, which sympathized with Germans during the World War I and conducted propaganda openly hostile towards the Triple Entente and, as a result, also towards the Italians. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that it was a newspaper financed by German Propaganda Office, which in a similarly ruthless manner criticized Legionists of the I and III Brigade after they had refused to pledge an oath of allegiance to the German Emperor in July 1917. Notwithstanding that fact, the publications of *Godzina Polski* should be considered significant to an understanding of the character of German propaganda conducted on the Polish territories during the First World War.



## Spanish-Italian Relations and the Great War Outbreak

During the summer of 1914, before the outbreak of war, Spain and Italy reached their maximum level of approximation since the so-called “Secret Pact”, signed between the two countries in 1887 and expired in 1895. From 1912 a change had begun to take place in Spanish-Italian relations, related to the changes that took place in the Mediterranean scenario following the Italian-Turkish war and, on the other hand, with the will of the great European Powers to ensure, as far as possible, a new balance which ranged from the problematic and always unstable situation in the Balkan region to the coasts of North Africa. Without losing the reference to this general context, Spain, for its part, knew during the same period an approximation to France that many saw as final, when the confrontation with Morocco led to a bilateral agreement (November of 1912) that, while solving the greater problem of bilateral relations, opened up the possibility of new objectives in international politics. The idea was simple: once eliminated on paper the long confrontation about the possession of Morocco would Spain and France subscribe an alliance of greater scope referring to the so-called Cartagena Agreement of 1907? Would Spain be willing to enter into the orbit of the *Entente* with a greater degree of commitment?

### A Spanish-Italian political agreement?

On May 4, 1913, Spain and Italy signed in Rome the *Italian-Spanish Declaration on Libya and Morocco* which led to the mutual recognition of the respective possessions, the Italian ones in Libya and the Spanish ones in its area of influence, assigned by the Spanish-French Convention of November 27, 1912. Since the end of the Italian-Turkish War, after the Treaty of Lausanne on October 18, 1912, all the European Powers rushed to the

recognition of new Italian possessions: Spain was the last to do it because France and Italy were reaching an agreement on Libya and Morocco that finally took place on October 28.

Similar to the one that was subscribed with Spain a few months later, it led to a condition that Italy found difficult to recognize in front of Spain: the mutual concession of the most favored nation clause in commercial relations with both African territories. This explains, among other things of minor importance, why the negotiation between Italy and Spain lasted so much. However, the interesting aspect of this unusually long period, in a matter so apparently unplanned, is that for the first time in a long period it was intended to give a meaning of political reach, of commitment, to the relations between the two countries. During all those months, the mood of Spanish-Italian relations changed substantially. The trade negotiations between the two countries, started at the informal level in the first months of 1912, became official from February 1913. A new environment had been created, and it was also accompanied by a series of press articles (promoted from political institutions) that were favorable to the rapprochement between the two Mediterranean peninsulas. It seemed that from 1912 to 1913 Italy “discovered” the role that Spain could play in the Mediterranean and how its new position from the annexation of Libya could be influenced by the attitude that Spain took in certain international events such as an armed clash between Alliances. Italy saw in a positive way both the need for a closer *rapprochement* with Spain and the development of a series of political, economic and cultural ties, which until that moment had been totally neglected or, to be fair, seen with indifference.

From September 1912 the Italian ambassador to Madrid, Lelio Bonin Longare, began to warn Rome that if Spain and France reached an agreement on Morocco, both states would enter into a new phase of their relations leading, at last, to a more active participation of Spain within the *Entente*. According to Bonin, this was a real possibility, because if Spain decided to participate in some international alliance, “it should” only do it by the leadership of France and Great Britain, “le due sole potenze che possono efficacemente attaccare o difendere il suo territorio”<sup>1</sup>. Bonin based

1. Archivio storico diplomatico ministero Affari esteri (ASDMAE), Archivio riservato di gabinetto (ARDG), busta (b.) 13, fascicolo (fasc.) 81, rapporto (r.) riservato n. 745/296. Ambasciatore d'Italia a Madrid a ministro Affari esteri. San Sebastián, 12 settembre 1912.

his point of view on the change he detected in Spanish politics, and how, after the Spanish-French agreement, many people talked about the “new era” in which Spanish foreign policy entered, about the need to become more involved in international issues and, ultimately, the need to lean towards one of the alliances. This new trend in Spain’s foreign policy was supported, according to Bonin, by three reasons that justified this change of mind: the relative calm of the Country, the evident improvement of the economic situation and the influence of Alfonso XIII, always wishful of a greater international activity of Spain<sup>2</sup>.

The considerations of the Italian ambassador were a wake-up call to the Government of Rome because, if this new environment created in Madrid was confirmed in practical terms, Italy, the most Mediterranean of the Powers of the Triple Alliance, would be the first to suffer: “La questione presenta infatti molta importanza perché (...) la situazione della triplice intesa nel Mediterraneo si avvantaggerebbe grandemente quando potesse disporre delle numerose basi navali di tutto l’immenso arco di cerchio che si estende da Tolone a Biserta”<sup>3</sup>. On February 22, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio di San Giuliano made a statement at the Chamber of Deputies speaking about the agreements with France and Great Britain to guarantee their interests in the Mediterranean and about similar agreements with Spain in the future, “poiché le due nazioni desiderano di rafforzare sempre più i loro cordiali ed amichevoli rapporti”<sup>4</sup>.

French sources wanted to give these words a scope that they did not have at first and, a few days later, the Spanish ambassador to Italy, Ramón Piña y Millet, told San Giuliano in an “unofficial” way that Spain could be favorable to give the Libyan-Moroccan agreement a greater, “more political” scope. The minister took it seriously and discussed the matter with the ambassadors of Italy in the main European capitals, ordering them to discuss it with the respective governments. From his point of view, the interest was not so much into “lengthen” the agreement on Libya and Morocco to give it a greater political reach but, instead, in making it a first step, a kind of symbol, to think more closely about a foreign and independent commitment

2. ASDMAE, Serie Politica (SP), SPAGNA, b. 79, r. 12/5 Ambasciatore d’Italia a Madrid a ministro Affari esteri. Madrid, 6 gennaio 1913.

3. *Ibidem*.

4. G. ANDRÉ, *L’Italia e il Mediterraneo alla vigilia della Prima Guerra Mondiale. I tentativi di intesa mediterranea (1911-1914)*, Giuffrè, Milano 1967, pp. 155-156.

which was, however, compatible with the Treaty of the Triple Alliance<sup>5</sup>. For the Germans, in the words of Foreign Minister Gottlieb von Jagow, the matter was delicate and dangerous, not to be taken with great enthusiasm, but should not discourage initiatives from Spain to know the real scope of their proposals<sup>6</sup>. Bonin, after speaking with the Spanish Minister of State, Juan Navarro Reverter, informed San Giuliano that Spanish People were “very willing” to sign an agreement for the Mediterranean equilibrium, but they indicated immediately their limit: France had to become a part of the agreement because in any case Spain would be part of any international combination that was directed against that Power<sup>7</sup>.

Rumors about the ongoing international projects with Spain and Italy playing the main role, grew to a large extent and spread to public opinion. An article published in *La Stampa*, by Benedetto Cirmeni, member of the Parliament, journalist and Giovanni Giolitti’s unofficial spokesman, presented the Spanish-Italian rapprochement as a mean to stop French ambitions in the Mediterranean, as matter of fact the only reason for an agreement between the two countries. The Spanish liberal newspaper *El Imparcial* published also this article and, immediately, the President of the Council of Ministers, Count de Romanones, hastily denied this information by explaining that the ongoing talks between Spain and Italy referred only to the Libya-Morocco agreement<sup>8</sup>.

Those early months of 1913 were actually confusing. Rumors about the scope of the Spanish-Italian rapprochement mixed with the opposite; that is Spain’s admission to the *Entente* through agreements of greater commitment with the balance in the Mediterranean. Even in Germany, someone began to pay more attention to this subject. At the beginning of March, Jagow encouraged the Italians to do something to prevent Spain from joining the *Entente* policy more directly, but the model of agreement

5. ASDMAE, ARDG, b. 27, fasc. 315, Telegramma partenza (T.p.) n. 102. Ministro Affari esteri Italia agli ambasciatori a Vienna, Berlino, Parigi e Madrid, Roma, 26 febbraio, 1913.

6. *Ivi*, Telegramma arrivo (T.a.) n. 113. Ambasciatore d’Italia a Berlino a ministro Affari esteri, Berlino, 28 febbraio, 1913.

7. *Ivi*, T.a. n. 113. Ambasciatore d’Italia a Madrid a ministro Affari esteri, Madrid, 28 febbraio, 1913.

8. *Ivi*, T.a., n. 1593 and 1621. Ambasciatore d’Italia a Madrid a ministro Affari esteri, Madrid, 26 e 27 febbraio, 1913. Cfr. “El Imparcial”, 27 febbraio 1913. Also in “La Tribuna” of Rome appeared a denial by the Italian Government that insisted on the restricted scope of the words of San Giuliano in the Chamber of Deputies.

he proposed showed the Italian government how, in Berlin, they were far from the real possibilities of movement of the Spanish international policy. *Ergo*, a return to the formula of the Spanish-Italian agreement stipulated in 1887<sup>9</sup>.

Consequently, months before May 3, 1913, when Italy and Spain signed the famous and “controversial” agreement on Libya and Morocco, there was already an ongoing discussion on a greater Spanish-Italian rapprochement and it didn’t stop until the outbreak of the war. Its parameters were also clear: the talks between Spain and Italy should have been developed in an international environment characterized by an exchange of proposals about a new Mediterranean balance<sup>10</sup>. The fact that the Spanish press repeatedly welcomed a debate on a more active Spanish foreign policy, also becoming part of an international alliance, and, in addition, that the Government made ambiguous declarations about this, increased Italian interest for an hypothetical new international role of Spain.

But the fact that Spain had accepted being closer to Italy and, at the same time, had enforced its links to the *Entente* (in other words, France) were complementary not contradictory actions. There were also talks on this matter between Italy and France. Was Spain working for itself, defending its exclusive interests, or for the benefit of the *Entente*, until the Hispano-Italian rapprochement could lead to a further weakening of the Triple Alliance? It could be possible. Certainly, if we pay attention to the comments that Alfonso XIII (always so loquacious) addressed to the Ambassador of Italy in his private talks, we should conclude that this was the true reality<sup>11</sup>.

In other words, the same role that Germany assigned to Italy (against Spain), was carried out by France with Spain against Italy. In this sense,

9. *Ivi*, ARDG, b. 27, fasc. 351, T.a. n.115. Ambasciatore d'Italia a Berlino a ministro Affari esteri, Berlino, 3 marzo 1913.

10. On this argument, G. ANDRÉ, *L'Italia e il Mediterraneo*, cit.

11. Bonin had to listen several times from Alfonso XIII that the Italian policy of alliances was wrong because in Italy the popular feeling was with France and hated the Austrians and that, sooner or later, Italy should be inclined towards an agreement with France, “tale politica sarebbe secondo S.M. più conforme al sentimento popolare e anche meno pericolosa in quanto che, rimanendo noi nella triplice, saremmo esposti in caso di conflagrazione europea a vedere il nostro commercio paralizzato e le nostre città marittime minacciate dalle forze navali prevalenti della Francia e dell’Inghilterra.” ASDMAE. SP, b. 79 (1912-16), n. 337/119, riservato, *Spagna-Francia*. Ambasciatore d'Italia a Madrid a ministro Affari esteri, Madrid, 7 maggio 1914.

contacts between Spain and Italy became the symbol of the division of Europe into blocks: Spain, in combination with Italy, could be placed, as Germany wished, against France; Italy, in a combination with Spain, could “hook on” the Mediterranean policy of the *Entente* and weaken, or give the final blow, to the Triple Alliance<sup>12</sup>. But the difficulties that this perspective posed did not weaken Italy’s interest in Spain because, with or without an agreement, it was necessary to get closer to Spain, to create links that could prevent Spain from abandoning its traditional neutrality, damaging Italian interests. The goal pursued by Italy was, therefore, independent from the greater or lesser interest of the allies of the Triple Alliance, and also from a political commitment with Spain, because it was a matter of Italian security policy. This was explained by Antonio di San Giuliano to President Giolitti in a personal letter sent him in July 1913. As for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it was necessary to cultivate good relations with Spain and avoid any inconvenience that might arise in the negotiations leading to a trade treaty:

“È mia opinione personale che converrebbe fare ogni possibile sforzo per coltivare i nostri buoni rapporti con la Spagna e legarla a noi dal lato economico per modo di preparare il terreno ad ulteriori intese di carattere politico e per rendere meno probabili tali sue intese coi nostri possibili avversari. Il trattato di commercio che è ora in corso di negoziati può rappresentare ad esempio l’inizio di questo programma, e quindi io credo che sarebbe per noi vantaggioso far tutto il possibile per giungere ad un accordo in tal senso (...).”<sup>13</sup>

The trade arrangement was seen as a milestone of a two-country approach program that included the creation of bilateral committees on culture, science, etc., and press campaigns that maintained a positive atmosphere between the two countries. On March 30, 1914, the *ad hoc* commissions signed the Treaty of Commerce. In April a large group of Italian visitors toured the main Spanish cities exchanging expressions of friendship as a mean to demonstrate the common historical, latin llink

12. Cfr. F. GARCÍA SANZ, *Historia de las relaciones entre España e Italia. Imágenes, comercio y política exterior (1890-1914)*, CSIC, Madrid 1994, pp. 449 ss.

13. ASDMAE, ARDG, b. 13, fasc. 81. Lettera “riservata alla persona”, *San Giuliano a Giovanni Giolitti*, Roma, 18 luglio 1913. Cit. in F. GARCÍA SANZ, *Historia de las relaciones entre España e Italia*, cit., pp. 473-474.

between Spain and Italy. At the end of the month, the news that Presidente Giolitti was about to make a trip to Spain on May 1<sup>st</sup>. spread all over. The press talked about this trip and also about the fact that the illustrious visitor did not show up the day announced... nor the following days. On answering the press, the President of the Spanish Government, the conservative Eduardo Dato, stated that he had no news about Giolitti's arrival and took the opportunity to make an enthusiastic eulogy "de las altas cualidades de Giolitti y de su relive singular en la politica de Italia y de Europa"<sup>14</sup>. A few days later, the Spanish press echoed an interview with the Spanish President just published on the Roman newspaper *La Tribuna*. After declaring his attention and sympathy for Italian affairs, Dato expressed his admiration for the conquest of Libya and finally admitted that he was an admirer of the political activity of the former President of the Council, "Conoce (Dato) todos los discursos políticos del presidente del Consejo, Sr. Giolitti, los cuales ha leído con gran atención"<sup>15</sup>.

Giolitti gave his permission for the Trade Agreement with Spain, that was signed on March 30, a week after his resignation as President of the Council of Ministers. During palarmetary talks in Madrid and Rome in June and July 1914, the Spanish-Italian Trade Agreement was viewed as mean to develop a commercial and economic relation with a deep politican meaning. Some deputies even argued that it was a Treaty of Friendship better than an agreement on trade relations. Count de Romanones, leader of the liberal opposition, during a meeting with the *senadores* of his party, instead of explaining the economic reasons behind the Treaty with Italy, encouraged them to sign it explaining what it meant for the international role of Spain:

"Este convenio con Italia, que ha de contribuir a estrechar nuestras relaciones con aquella nación, a la que nos hallamos ligados por tantos vínculos de afecto y simpatía, nos aproxima más a la Triple Alianza y coloca a España en excelente situación en el Mediterráneo, pues unida ya a Francia e Inglaterra con los lazos de la más sincera amistad, aunque sin pacto o compromiso, podría en cualquier

14. "ABC", May 2d 1914, p. 6.

15. "ABC", May 20, 1914, p. 8.



momento ser una valiosa mediadora, por la misma neutralidad en la que se halla colocada”<sup>16</sup>.

History gave the Count the opportunity to make his wishes come true. The ratifications of the Treaty were exchanged in Madrid on July 13, with the mutual feeling that a new era in the historical relations between the two countries started and the crisis between Austria and Serbia at its peak. Two weeks after, the Great War begun and none of the estimations made in Europe were met and not only for Spain and Italy but for everyone. Something became clear in Italy: Spain, for very important reasons, was linked closely to France, although without a formal agreement, and it was impossible to think that Spain would change this position to get closer to the Powers and politics of Triple Alliance. This is the reason they all have been so worried.

### Neutrality and “latin peace”

A strange unanimity was reached in the Spanish press when the Italian government declared its neutrality, on August 2. This decision was viewed positively. In the main newsrooms there was speculation about it even before it was known. On the same day, August 2, Spanish press talked about a possible Italian neutrality “porque sus compromisos con la Triple Alianza la obligan a la acción defensiva, no a la ofensiva”<sup>17</sup>. In Spain, this was considered a fully valid argument. Italy’s wisdom and prudence were praised, it was viewed as act of dignity, and Austria accused of having followed a disloyal policy with Italy for a long time: “La actitud de Austria con Italia ha sido incalificable desde la anexión de la Bosnia Herzegovina, sin la más leve y previa explicación a su aliada”<sup>18</sup>. The decision to resist in front of the Berlin and Vienna pressures was admired, but soon a question was raised: whether such neutrality could be maintained after the entry of France and England into the war, “Italia con su neutralidad es la nación que más cariño y admiración nos inspira. Un recelo nos inquieta ¿conservará

16. Cfr. F. SOLDEVILLA, *El año político. 1914*, Imp. de Ricardo F. De Rojas, Madrid 1915, p. 337.

17. “Heraldo de Madrid”, August 2, 1914. Information on the first page.

18. “El País”, August 3, 1914.

Italia su neutralidad después de rotas las hostilidades entre Inglaterra y Alemania? Cavour no pasó por Italia sin dejar rastro. Dignos sucesores del gran político son los ministros italianos que declaran la neutralidad de su nación”<sup>19</sup>. The press started to ask itself very soon the same questions as the Government: could Italy defend its neutrality? How long? On which side would line up during the War? These questions arose during the first days of August, when there were a lot of uncertainties and -we can’t forget it- all expectations were that the war will be short, no more than three months long, a year at the most in the case of a pessimistic scenario.

In this context, Spain was worried because the Government made no public or official declaration about the Spanish position. The press was very nervous about this. There was speculation on the possibility that Spain had previously signed a compromise (France was openly mentioned) that could drag the country into the race that had just started. Political leaders, Conservatives as well as Liberals, were forced to use the press to banish the fear that Spain would be involved in the conflict under hypothetical commitments: they did not exist, they asserted, and Spain could thus remain neutral, as finally published in the *Official Gazette* on August 7. On the other hand, they mentioned the example of Italy that remained outside the conflict despite its strong international commitments; how could Spain do not do it? Moreover, as it was analyzed in the newspaper considered the voice of the Prime Minister Eduardo Dato, it was precisely the position adopted by Italy that allowed the war to move away from Spain: “Si Italia persevera en la actitud en que se ha colocado, mientras Inglaterra mantenga cerrado el paso del Canal de la Mancha a las escuadras alemanas del Norte, la guerra no llegará a nuestras costas, ni se planteará en el Mediterráneo en condiciones que pueda afectarnos, y la defensa de nuestra neutralidad será al presente fácil y sencilla (...).”<sup>20</sup> Consequently, for the Spanish Government and the opposition, Italian neutrality also served the interests of Spain, because it removed the pressure it might suffer otherwise.

But if we look at the Spanish press with regard to Spain’s own neutrality, we conclude that even after August 7 there was no tranquility in the public mood or in what we can call public opinion with all the necessary precautions. Should Spain be strictly neutral? Previous years had cast doubt on

19. “El País”, August 6, 1914.

20. “La Época”, August 5, 1914.

Spain's international position, and its links to French and English politics were more than evident. From the first days of the war Spain was already put at the disposal of France to help it in what it might need, but this "benevolent neutrality" was not considered to be incompatible with the image that Spain intended to maintain in the world. Moreover, in August 1914, it was already born the "motto" that Spain was trying to maintain against all circumstances and even against reality until 1918: to have the leading role as mediator in peace negotiations<sup>21</sup>. Spanish foreign policy during World War I was much more complex than historians have said over the last Century. In August 1914, from an objective point of view, Spain was not in a position to be a belligerent country, nor to be a strictly neutral one. The neutrality of Spain would be highly debatable, partly because it was impossible to accomplish it, partly because of its own choosing..

The cooperation with Italy begun in August 1914, in order to achieve that leading role for Spain that in any case could not be reached with weapons. A neutral Italy could be an useful ally for Spain during the mediation to obtain a peace with historical resonances, a "Latin peace", as it was magniloquently called. Those were the words from a type of speech very dear to Alfonso XIII, saying that only Spain could take the initiative. The King received Lelio Bonin in audience on August 15 and greeted the Ambassador saying that "trovava ottimo il tiro da noi giocato ai nostri alleati" because, he added, the decision adopted by Italy was "la sola conforme ai nostri interessi e rispondeva interamente alle previsioni che egli aveva sempre fatto a tale proposito". Then Alfonso XIII went on talking about the benefits of a closer Spanish-Italian collaboration in those circumstances,

"Egli (Alfonso XIII) aggiunse che la nostra industria dovrebbe approfittare di questa guerra che paralizza interamente la germanica per sostituirla sul mercato spagnolo, così a suo giudizio la bandiera italiana e spagnola, rimaste neutrali, dovrebbero fare ogni sforzo per sostituire quelle delle forze belligeranti nel com-

21. On the direction of the foreign policy of Spain during the decades before the Great War, cfr. F. GARCÍA SANZ, *España y la Primera Guerra Mundial: síntesis de la política exterior durante la Restauración*, in *España entre Repúblicas 1868/1939*, ANABAD Castilla-La Mancha y Asociación de Amigos del Archivo Histórico Provincial de Guadalajara, Guadalajara 2007, pp. 703-724. For a closer look at the real role played by Spain during the war in relation to the belligerent countries, F. GARCÍA SANZ, *España en la Gran Guerra. Espías, diplomáticos y traficantes*, Galaxia Gutenberg, Barcelona 2014.

mercio del Mediterraneo e con l'America del Sud. Infine, egli mi disse, noi abbiamo ora molto da fare insieme, potendo al momento opportuno tentare una azione comune per il ristabilimento della pace"<sup>22</sup>.

Minister San Giuliano, after sending the formal proposal to Rome, responded positively to the initiative on August 19. He ordered the acceptance of the proposals of the Government of Spain on the exercise of joint mediation "y que queda entendido que nos tendremos recíprocamente al corriente de la acción y de los propósitos de los dos gobiernos para acelerar la paz"<sup>23</sup>. On the Spanish side it was a bit risky to think that Italy could be accepted as an international mediator. Of course, San Giuliano accepted because he could receive useful information without jeopardizing anything. But his mind was far away from the interest that Spain could represent or a joint action in the international sphere. The best proof of this is that, on the same day he received and answered the Spanish telegram dated in San Sebastián (summer holidays residence of the Court), he received the offer by the Ambassador of France in Rome, Camille Barrère, to enter into talks on the participation of Italy in the war. The Minister of Foreign Affairs accepted the proposal giving an answer that is an example of the moment that Italy was facing:

"He dicho hoy a Barrère que Italia no ha cambiado su decisión de mantenerse neutral y que en el caso de que deba cambiarla, cualquier negociación al respecto debe ser secretísima y ser centralizada en Londres. Le he dicho también que cualquier indiscreción nos obligaría a desmentir e interrumpir las negociaciones"<sup>24</sup>.

Spain and Italy were in very different planets regarding their national interest and the option that could be more worrisome for Rome; that is, Spain turning against the *Entente*, had been discarded. The "Latin peace" was only a lure that did not attract Italy and as matter of fact, no one in

22. Archivio centrale dello Stato, Roma (ACS), Archivio Salandra (AS), 5 (1915), fasc. 34, *Corrispondenza diplomatica*, Madrid, agosto 1914-giugno 1916. Comunicación del 16 agosto de 1914 (no evidence, but certainly a telegram). Lelio Bonin met Alfonso XIII on August 15.

23. ASDMAE, Archivio politico ordinario e di gabinetto (APOG), conflitto europeo (c.e), b. 229, T.p. n. 4753, ministro Affari esteri ad ambasciatore Italia a Madrid.

24. ASDMAE, APOG, c.e., b.119, T.p. Gabinetto segreto n. 943, ministro Affari esteri ad ambasciatori a Parigi, Londra e San Pietroburgo, Roma, 19 agosto 1914.

Spain had false expectations. Despite the stabilization of the Western Front in September, the idea of a short war still remained and the assumption that Italy would sooner or later enter the war spread quickly. This possibility had been already mentioned on Spanish press since Italy declared its neutrality. At the same time, unfortunately, Spain (the Government and Alfonso XIII) had very few informations about Italian intentions. They didn't know anything more than what the Italian and Spanish press could reveal. But, as was the case with Alfonso XIII, different possibilities were handled. At the end of September, the King received in audience the military attaché of the Italian Embassy in Madrid, Captain Maurizio Marsengo, who said that he praised the cautious policy that Italy was following in those difficult moments, and then asked the military about Italian neutrality, adding that “si Italia se decide a salir de su neutralidad para unirse a los aliados contra Alemania y Austria, es necesario que lo haga cuanto antes para llegar a tiempo de poder dar el golpe decisivo a las dos potencias”<sup>25</sup>. Few days later, in another meeting with the same actors, Alfonso XIII was still posing questions about the end of Italian neutrality, adding that Spain was in a better position to keep that neutral stance than Italy. The King told Marsengo that he was aware of the territorial compensations that the belligerent powers would be willing to offer to Italy to have it on the same side of the war and pointing that, on the other hand, there was no possible compensation that would change Spain's position<sup>26</sup>.

As mentioned above, the interest in the attitude that Italy could take was based on the importance it had for Spain's own neutrality and therefore the daily monitoring in the press on this matter. Depending on the decision adopted by Italy, pressures on Spain could change considerably. At the time of Alfonso's XIII conversations with Marsengo, Spain was being courted by Germany and with specific territorial proposals: the annexation of Portugal, Gibraltar, Tangier... That is the reason why the King talked

25. Archivio ufficio storico stato maggiore esercito, Roma (AUSSME), Repertorio G-29, Raccoltore (R) 2, Cartella (C) 6, *Udienza Reale*, addetto militare ambasciata Italia a Madrid a stato maggiore esercito, Madrid, 28 settembre 1914. The audience was motivated by the delivery of a portrait of Vittorio Emanuele III destined to the Regiment of Infantry Saboya, of which he was honorary colonel.

26. *Ivi*, Madrid, October 2, 1914. The aim of the hearing was the delivery to Marsengo of the Cross of Military Merit for publishing an article on the sites of Gerona during the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in the “*Rivista di Cavalleria Italiana*”.

about compensations that could be offered to Spain but avoiding to give the Italian military attaché, obviously, any clues on the mood around those proposals<sup>27</sup>.

### The “Machiavellian Italy” and the concern of Catholics

Alfonso XIII posed Marsengo the same question every time they met but the press also used the possibility of Italy's entry into the war as a recurrent argument, nearly on a daily basis, in the same way that the image of Italy spending much of its neutrality period “bargaining” with its participation in the conflict has gone down in History.

Gradually, the Spanish press was being taken over by the belligerent countries that were exerting their influencing on it while Spain was becoming divided between pro-Germany and pro-Allies camps. The time when that same press, almost unanimously, praised the position of neutrality adopted by Italy in August 1914, seemed so far away. Lelio Bonin was surprised by the opinions expressed by some Spanish newspapers about his country and the circumstances it was facing.

Always insisting on the innate “Machiavellianism” in Italian politics, he wondered “perché in un paese come questo in cui vi è in realtà molta simpatia per gli italiani, che non ha nessun interesse in conflitto con i nostri, che trae anzi vantaggio dalla nostra neutralità prolungata, le manifestazioni della stampa non siano piú benevole a nostro riguardo”<sup>28</sup>.

When Bonin wrote these sentences, many months of constant speculation had already passed for the Spanish press, with two well-defined fields between pro-Allied and pro-Germany that, in the Italian case, lost sometimes their contours. As he wrote elsewhere,

27. On this theme, F. GARCÍA SANZ, *España en la Gran Guerra*, cit., pp. 37-38. The death of Minister San Giuliano and the replacement by the conservative leader Sidney Sonnino also meant a radical change of position in front of the war. Salandra and Sonnino claimed the entrance of Italy in war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire “as soon as possible”. In a secret meeting in Rome, in which the two leaders participated together with the chiefs of the General Staff of the Navy and the Army, this option was stopped by the military and in particular by General Luigi Cadorna. On this theme, *ivi*, pp. 51-53.

28. ASDMAE, SP, b. 226 (1915-1916). Marocco, r. n. 263/80, Madrid, 18 aprile 1915, *Neutralità italiana e spagnuola*.

“gli organi francofilo annunziano quasi ogni giorno la nostra imminente entrata in campagna, i germanofili danno per sicura l’intesa diretta con l’Austria-Ungheria per una nuova delimitazione di territori in cambio della nostra neutralità, e anzi il noto “ABC” considera ancora stamani l’ipotesi che l’Italia possa schierarsi in campo a fianco degli Imperi centrali. In generale quei commenti senza essere ostili insistono spesso sul tradizionale machiavellismo della politica italiana. Anche le caricature circa l’atteggiamento ancora riservato dell’Italia si vanno facendo più frequenti, e secondo l’abitudine della stampa spagnuola che, suscettibilissima ad ogni minima ferita portata all’amor proprio spagnuolo, non è altrettanto riguardosa delle suscettibilità altrui, quelle caricature non sono sempre lusinghiere”<sup>29</sup>.

If the Spanish press was redundant on the same subject, ambassador Bonin was also required to inform on the matter in each of his regular meetings with the Minister of State or with Alfonso XIII. With his proverbial loquacity, the King of Spain made predictions and proposals, many times very far from reality because, it is also true, the Spanish diplomats accredited in Rome offered very little or no information. In those conversations Alfonso XIII advised Italy to remain neutral, sometimes urged it to decide as soon as possible to enter the war if it wanted to achieve certain objectives; in another occasions issuing a veiled threat with a “guerra a coltello” with Germany if Italy choose the side of the *Entente*. When Italy decided, just over a week before entering the war and a month after the London Pact, Alfonso XIII said the following words to the ambassador of Italy:

“S.M (...) Mi chiese subito con molta premura notizie circa l’atteggiamento che sarà per prendere l’Italia (...) Io non ignoravo -egli mi disse- da qual lato inchinassero le sue simpatie; egli fa tuttora voti per il trionfo finale degli alleati (...) Egli si augurava che noi potessimo restar neutri fino alla fine. Tutto quello che noi potremmo ottenere da una guerra anche vittoriosa non compenserebbe secondo lui i danni incalcolabili che infallibilmente ci porterebbe la nostra entrata in campagna”<sup>30</sup>.

Alfonso XIII assured Bonin that Italy should expect a ruthless war with Germany “se ora facessimo causa comune con i loro nemici, essi concen-

29. *Ibidem*.

30. ASDMAE, SP, b. 79 (1912-16), r. s/n., Riservato, *conversazione con Re Alfonso*, ambasciatore Italia Madrid a ministro Affari esteri, Madrid, 14 maggio 1915.



trerebbero contro di noi ogni odio ed ogni sforzo”. Alfonso XIII -ignoring reality- believed that behind the pressures on the Italian government there was “l’opera dei partiti rivoluzionari desiderosi di vedere il governo e l’esercito impegnati in una guerra all’estero per tentare qualche sconvolgimento all’interno”. Under that assumption, the Holy See, and the Pope in particular, were in great danger.

In certain circles of government and particularly in the Royal Court, there was a deep concern about the delicate position of the Holy See after Italy’s decision to enter the war. Months before, the Ambassadors of Spain, who had no information at all about the government of Antonio Salandra and, were sometimes, very confused, were carried away by the rumors that circulated about a hypothetical “revolutionary” action to bring Italy into the war and, thereby, misinformed Madrid, as we have seen. At the end of February 1915, Marquis de Lema asked the ambassador in Italy, Ramón Piña y Millet, to intervene in this matter: “(los católicos españoles) han llegado a preocuparse ante la eventual situación en que quedaría colocada la Santa Sede si los agitadores italianos socialistas y francmasones perturbaran el orden público para obligar al Gobierno a ponerse al lado de Francia e Inglaterra”<sup>31</sup>. Piña received the order to obtain from Minister Sonnino the assurance that “las autoridades italianas dispondrían de los elementos necesarios para impedir toda ofensa material contra la Santa Sede”. At the beginning of May, the Minister of State met with Francesco Ragonesi, to convey the Spanish government’s deepest concern and its support in the event that circumstances forced the Pope to “become absent” from Rome. At the same time, after the request by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri, the Spanish Ambassador Ramon Piña asked the government of Rome to guarantee the permanence in the Capital of the representatives of the belligerent nations at the Holy See, although they were from enemy countries and also to make sure that some Vatican servants were exempted from military service<sup>32</sup>.

Just a few hours before the Italian government announced its declaration of war with to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Spanish govern-

31. Archivo ministerio Asuntos exteriores (AMAE), Serie guerra europea (SGE), legajo (I). 3055, s/n., marqués de Lema a Ramón Piña y Millet, Madrid 22 febrero 1915.

32. AMAE, serie politica (SP), I. 2534 (1912-1915) T. s/n. Embajador de España en Italia a ministro de Estado, Roma, 19 mayo, 1915.

ment took one more step forward<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, on May 20 Alfonso XIII met Ragonesi so that, in turn, he would send Benedict XV the King's invitation to consider Spain as a place of refuge for his security in case of danger in Rome<sup>34</sup>. On May 25, while Italy was already at war, the Minister of State ordered the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, Cipriano Muñoz y Manzano, Count de la Viñaza, to request an audience with the Pope to transmit the note elaborated during the interview with the King; but, because of bad radiotelegraph communication, he didn't receive this note from the Cardinal Secretary of State that, in turn, didn't receive it from his attaché in Madrid. This was the text that the Pope listened:

“Como Rey Católico de España, hijo sumiso de la Iglesia y deseoso de cuanto redunde en honra del Vicario de Cristo en la Tierra y bien de su sagrada misión, llegadas estas tristes circunstancias que acongojan el paternal corazón de Su Santidad, creo de mi deber reiterarle mi filial ofrecimiento de El Escorial como su residencia mientras dure esta terrible conflagración europea. Allí podrá Su Santidad mantenerse en perfecta relación con todas las naciones del mundo y ser escuchada su voz sin prevención de ningún género cuando juzgue llegado el momento de elevarla en favor de la paz que Su Santidad tan ardientemente anhela. El temor de que acontecimientos que no cabe prever, no obstante todas las preocupaciones y los esfuerzos mejor intencionados, pudiesen colocar a Su Santidad en situación que dificultase el ejercicio de su sagrado ministerio me impulsan a dirigirme directamente a Él como monarca del país Católico por excelencia, esperando no vea en mi moción sino la expresión del amor que profeso a la Iglesia y mi ferviente deseo por la libertad y prestigio del Pontificado.”<sup>35</sup>

Benedict XV knew Spain and spoke Spanish perfectly well because (when he was still Giacomo Paolo Battista della Chiesa) he had lived in Madrid sent by the Holy See as secretary to the attaché Mariano Rampolla

33. The following are the considerations I made in *España en la Gran Guerra*, cit., pp. 53 ss.

34. AMAE, SGE, l. 3055, Embajador de España en Roma (Santa Sede) a ministro de Estado, Roma, 14 mayo 1915.

35. AMAE, SGE, l. 3055, T. s/n., ministro de Estado a embajador de España en Roma (Santa Sede), Madrid, 25 de mayo de 1915. *Descifre V.E. por sí mismo*.

The minister concluded by ordering that no copy of the text should be released unless expressly requested and only on a confidential basis “pero no deseo que aparezca como telegrama expresa y directamente enviado a Su Santidad por el Rey”.

del Tindaro (1883-1887), who later on, when he was named Secretary of State, wanted Giacomo to stay as one of his main collaborators. Due to his Spanish and diplomatic-international experience (he participated actively in the negotiations for the resolution of the Spanish-German conflict for the possession of the Caroline Islands in 1885) and his knowledge of the Italian situation and the ongoing Church-State rapprochement, the Pope begged Viñaza to convey to the King his deepest gratitude “con palabras de íntimo reconocimiento y de paternal afecto”, but “con sencillez y franqueza” told the ambassador that “solo en un caso extremo podrían obligarle a marchar al Escorial, en donde el año 1885 viví dos meses. Se sabe cuando se sale mas no cuando se vuelve”. These significant words of the Pope were based, in conclusion, on the promises made by President Antonio Salandra about the guarantee of his personal and Vatican security<sup>36</sup>.

In that moment, at the end of May 1915, while the press was paying attention to the alarming rumors about a possible Spanish declaration of war following the step taken by Italy, the truth is that Spain's international stand was being clarified by its policy towards the Holy See. It seemed uncoherent to offer refuge to Benedict XV and, at the same time, prepare to enter the war. Possibly, if the Spanish proposal had been made public, certain public had nor been alarmed. It was a “brindis al sol”, *Diario Universal* (owned by the Count of Romanones) said on June 2, because the Constitution did not allow the King or the government to make that offer to the Pope, since, he explained, any portion of territory, even provisionally, required a special law, in other words, the intervention of the Cortes. The will of the King was not enough, according to the article that referred to one of the principles of the Constitution of Cadiz, “la nación española es libre e independiente, y no es ni puede ser patrimonio de ninguna familia ni persona”. It is true that Italy was not happy with the that Spain doubted about its sincerity did not play out well in It

aly

What is certain was that Italy did not like that Spain could doubt about its sincerity and, Salandra's capacity to shield the Pope from trouble. Bonin received from Rome the order to ask for an explanation. The ambassador confirmed that the initiative did not come from the Holy See, but from

36. AMAE, SGE, 3055, T. s/n., embajador de España en Roma (Santa Sede) a ministro de Estado, Roma, 27 de mayo de 1915, *Muy reservado-descifre V.E. personalmente*.

Alfonso XIII himself, as the attaché assured him confidentially. On the other hand, Bonin “friendly” regretted before Minister Lema that the press echoed the offer to the Pope because this could lead to “misinterpretations”. The Minister of State, of course, downplayed the importance of the matter. In those days, Italy was not in the position to deal with this issue<sup>37</sup>.

From the day Italy came into the war and for several weeks, the Spanish press had been discussing the possibility that the decision taken by Italy could also lead to the intervention of Spain. “El problema de la intervención de España - escribía Luis Araquistáin - ha adquirido desde hace unos días una realidad atmosférica”<sup>38</sup>. As it could not be otherwise, there were many people in Spain who did salute Italy’s entrance into the war. At least, not all those in the pro Germany camp -including most of the members of the church hierarchy who still were declared enemies of the “usurping king” - echoed the reactions from the German press for which the fact that Italy had declared war only to the Austro-Hungarian Empire had no other links. According to Bonin, Italian declaration of war surprised relatively Spain because the Government received informations from its embassies in Rome telling just the opposite, that Italy was not entering the war:

“La nostra entrata nella lizza produsse quindi da principio un senso di sorpresa; quando si venne a formulare giudizi, questi furono benevoli e lusinghieri in quasi tutto il partito liberale amico alla Francia, riservati e non senza un qualche accenno di disapprovazione nella stampa conservatrice dinastica, mentre nella stampa e in tutti i circoli clerico-carlisti fervorosamente germanofili si scatenò contro di noi una vera tempesta che si manifestò con una serie d’articoli ingiuriosi sui quali ho dovuto richiamare a più riprese l’attenzione del Governo, e con non poche lettere anonime all’indirizzo della Regia Ambasciata. I partiti di estrema destra non si sono mai riconciliati con la nuova Italia; assai più papisti del papa sognano sempre come nei primi tempi la ricostituzione del potere temporale; ora sono tutti mobilitati in favore della Germania mentre corrono fra le loro file le voci più strane che accendono sempre più il loro zelo; il Kaiser restituirà Roma al Sommo Pontifice, si è fatto cattolico, ha offerto un dono di cento milioni alla chiesa del Pilar ecc... quante di simili favole che trovano assai più fede di quanto si dovrebbe supporre nella parte meno colta della popolazione. Le classi meno

37. ASDMAE, APOG, ITALIA, b.120, T.a. n. 712, Madrid, 2 giugno 1915.

38. L. ARAQUISTÁIN, *El fantasma de la intervención*, in “España”, n. 19, 4 June 1915.

colte sono poi dominate da noti ordini religiosi qui potentissimi e interamente ligi al Governo di Berlino”<sup>39</sup>.

For its part, pro-Allied press justified itself talking about the logic of the Italian reaction as it had been writting in its pages since 1914. The magazine *España*, close to the most famous intellectuals at that time, had already praised the new and strong Italy in the first issue of the publication with an article by its director, Jose Ortega y Gasset, who stated:

“Italia puede mirar con serena arrogancia lo que ha vivido durante un siglo. Era la nación más desdichada: era una larga ruina, un montón de escombros refulgentes, gloriosos. Hoy es un pueblo fuerte y edificado que interviene en el gobierno del mundo (...) Nosotros no podemos mirar a los últimos sesenta años de nuestra vida sin sonrojo y sin ira. Los directores de nuestra patria han hecho de ella lo contrario de lo que hicieron con la suya los directores de la raza latina: éstos han hecho a Italia, aquellos han deshecho a España.”<sup>40</sup>

In a war context, Italy did not give much importance to the role that a neutral Spain could play. They were not in a position to consider any relevant role for it in a war that was going to be waged in the Eastern Alps. They were so sure that, between February and June 1915, General Cadorna tried to leave vacant the role of military attaché at the Italian embassy in Madrid, and even make it disappear, because, he claimed, it was irrelevant from a military point of view. The General wanted to seize the opportunity that Captain Maurizio Marsengo, who held the position at the time, was being promoted to Major in the army to ask him to come back to Italy and leave the post vacant. Cadorna had to back down in the face of the warnings and complaints of Ambassador Bonin who stated the impact that this measure would have in Spain, when not even the belligerent countries had withdrawn their military representation in Madrid and, above all, the impact that was going to cause in Alfonso XIII who gave great importance to the presence of the military attachés. The General accepted to maintain Marsengo on a provisional basis even after his

39. ASDMAE, SP, b. 79 (1912-16), n. 397/114, Madrid, 30 maggio 1915, *Giudizi spagnoli sulla politica italiana*.

40. J. ORTEGA Y GASSET, *Política de neutralidad. La camisa roja*, in “Epaña”, n. 1, 29 January 1915.

promotion, not forgetting to underline that he did so for purely diplomatic, non-military reasons, in order to carry out his project<sup>41</sup>. This is the reason why Marsengo, at its own request, left Madrid in June for a combat post, and it is also the reason why nobody was in a hurry to name a substitute<sup>42</sup>. It was not until September that Count Giuseppe Sannazzaro Natta, Captain of complement into to the Cavalry<sup>43</sup>, arrived in Madrid as military attaché. Six months after Italy's entry into the war, the Government in Rome had not only withdrawn his military attaché in Madrid, but also found necessary to name a naval attaché, - a role that had not previously existed, choosing the Captain of Corvette Filippo Camperio<sup>44</sup>.

\* \* \*

Before the end of 1915, the circumstances of the war changed substantially. As a result of this change, Spain's role was radically altered to gradually become an important strategic objective for all belligerent Powers. The loss of perspective about the end of the war, the change of mind that led to a war with a non foreseeable end with the anguished need to guarantee the supply of the raw materials that Spain had in huge quantities, and the new German naval strategy in the Mediterranean, led to this situation: Spain did not go to war, but the war arrived to Spain with an unusual force. The two Italian military attachés previously mentioned were intended to become the heads of two information structures which will grow with time, experience, and by the growing need of Spain to be able to maintain the<sup>45</sup> war effort of all the allied countries. Thus, when the belligerent powers

41. Cfr. AUSSME, F-1 fondo *Comando Supremo-vari uffici*, b. 249, fasc. 4.

42. Marsengo was sent on a mission to Russia where he remained until September 1917. The result of this experience was the book published by UTET in 1935 titled *Eroi senza luce. Una missione militare in Russia durante la guerra mondiale*. In November 1917, with the military role of Colonel, he was sent to the front in the Regiment Lancieri di Novara (5 °). He became General, role that he kept until the end of war. Then, he came back to Spain again as a military attaché in 1922.

43. Giuseppe Sannazzaro served as military attaché in Madrid from September 1915 to July 1918. He became Major for special merits in 1917, in May 1918 he obtained the incorporation into a combat unit in the war. On the conditions that had to gather a military attaché in Madrid and the reasons for sending Sannazzaro, cfr. AUSSME, G-29 *Addetti Militari*, b. 11, r. n. 1091, Comando del corpo di stato maggiore, riparto operazioni, al comando supremo, Roma, 5 giugno 1915, *Addetto Militare alla Regia Ambasciata di Madrid*.

44. Cfr. F. GARCÍA SANZ, *España en la Gran Guerra*, cit., pp. 84-89.

45.

lost all hope to even glimpse the end of the war, the Spanish territory, its coasts and its islands, became a battle front with very specific characteristics. Espionage and counter-espionage, supply, propaganda, anti-submarine struggle, political and diplomatic relations, combat for the supremacy, inter-allied relationships.... new battles that all the belligerent Powers had to learn to fight, including Italy.





## Index of Names

- Abba Giuseppe Cesare,  
Abdülhamid II, Sultan of Ottoman Empire,  
Abrudan Mircea-Gheorghe,  
Adami Maria Vittoria,  
Adanır Fikret,  
Achrenthal Lexa von,  
Afflerbach Holger,  
Agnelli Giovanni,  
Agnelli Giuseppe,  
Agostini Piero,  
Agrigoroaiei Ion,  
Ahlund Claes,  
Ajrapetov Oleg,  
Akçam Taner,  
Aksenov Vladislav,  
Albani Tiron,  
Albergoni Napo,  
Albert Carmen,  
Albertini Luigi,  
Albert I, King of Belgium,  
Albes Jens,  
Albini Decio,  
Albricci Alberico Giuseppe,  
Albu Petru,  
Alcock Antony Evelyn,  
Aleksandrov Ivan,  
Aleksandrov Valentin,  
Alessandri Giovanni,  
Alexander I, King of Greece,  
Alexander I, Tsar of Russia,  
Alonge Giaime,  
Alpeev Oleg,  
Alphonse XIII, King of Spain,  
Altarozzi Giordano,  
Altın Şükrü,  
Amara Michaël,  
Anderson Elizabeth,  
Andics Helmut,  
Andreis Flavio,  
Andreoli Annamaria,  
Andruş Rodica,  
Ansaloni Giancarlo,  
Antolini Patrizio,  
Antonelli Quinto,  
Apollinaire Guillaume,  
Ara Angelo,  
Arbonie Emil,  
Arcari Paolo,  
Arendt Hannah,  
Arhire Sorin,  
Aroldi Tommaso,  
Asquith Herbert,  
Astašov Aleksandr,  
Atatürk Kemal (Mustafa Kemal),  
Atnur İbrahim Ethem,  
Aubert Paul,  
Aubert Roger,  
Audouin-Rouzeau Stéphane,  
Aurel Jean,  
Avarna di Gualtieri Giuseppe,  
Avcıoğlu Doğan,  
Avino Luigi,  
Aydemir Şevket Süreyya,  
  
Babeu I.,  
Babits Mihály,  
Baccaredda Ottone,  
Baccarne Robert,  
Baccelli Alfredo,  
Bachinger Bernhard,  
Bachturina Aleksandra,  
Bachurin Juri,

Badii Gaetano,  
 Badiu Nicolae,  
 Baharas Dimitris,  
 Bailo Luigi,  
 Baioni Massimo,  
 Balàka Bettina,  
 Baldini Alberto,  
 Balfour Arthur James of,  
 Balicki Zygmunt,  
 Balla Tibor,  
 Ballini Pier Luigi,  
 Balog Marin,  
 Balogh Botond,  
 Baluev Petr,  
 Bánkiné Molnár Erzsébet,  
 Banti Alberto Mario,  
 Băran Coriolan,  
 Baravelli Andrea,  
 Barbazon Yvon,  
 Barbiera Raffaello,  
 Barbu Filaret,  
 Barbu Vasile,  
 Barbusse Henri,  
 Barincou Edmond,  
 Bârlea Eugenia,  
 Baroncelli Vittoria,  
 Barrère Camille,  
 Barrès Maurice,  
 Barthou Louis,  
 Bartók Béla,  
 Bartolini Simonetta,  
 Bartoloni Stefania,  
 Bartorelli Luigi,  
 Barzilai Salvatore,  
 Basciani Alberto,  
 Batjušin Nikolaj,  
 Bator Juliusz,  
 Batowski Henryk,  
 Battistella Antonio,  
 Battisti Cesare,  
 Bauerkämper Arnd,  
 Baženova Kristina,  
 Bazyłow Ludwik,  
 Beaupré Antoni,  
 Bechet Christophe,  
 Becker Annette,  
 Becker Jean-Jacques,

Bédarida Henri,  
 Bedeccean Mihaela,  
 Belge Murat,  
 Belousov Lev,  
 Belova Irina,  
 Below-Saleske Claus von,  
 Benedetto XV,  
 Benelli Sem,  
 Benoist Charles,  
 Benoist-Méchin Jacques,  
 Benvindo Bruno,  
 Berchtold von und zu Ungarschitz Frättling und  
     Püllütz Leopold,  
 Bereczky Carol,  
 Berenini Agostino,  
 Berger Ernst Eduard,  
 Berindei Dan,  
 Berktaş Halil,  
 Bermúdez de Castro O'Lawlor Salvador,  
     Marquis of de Lema,  
 Bernardy Amy A.,  
 Bernini Rita,  
 Bersani Serena,  
 Berselli Aldo,  
 Bertényi Iván jr.,  
 Berthelot Philippe,  
 Bertrand Gilles,  
 Berzevichy Albert,  
 Beseler Hans von,  
 Beşikçi Mehmet,  
 Bethmann-Hollweg Theobald von,  
 Bettini Luciano,  
 Bettoni Pio,  
 Biadego Giuseppe,  
 Biagi Guido,  
 Biancheri Giuseppe,  
 Bianchi Bruna,  
 Bianchi Nerino,  
 Bianco Giuseppe,  
 Bianconcini Cavazza Lina,  
 Bibó István,  
 Bidnei Nicolae,  
 Bidnei Ștefan,  
 Bidou Henry,  
 Biliński Leon,  
 Birnbaum Jean,  
 Bischof Günter,

Bismarck Schönhausen Otto Eduard Leopold von,	Brânzeu Nicolae,
Bissolati Leonida,	Brătianu Ion I.C.,
Bistarelli Agostino,	Bratu Gheorghe,
Bizerea P.,	Braun Ernesto,
Bizzocchi Marco,	Bravo Anna,
Blaga Lucian,	Brediceanu Caius,
Blatnik Ana,	Bregantin Lisa,
Bloch Camille,	Bresciani Giuseppe,
Bloch Jean-Richard,	Briand Aristide,
Blome Gustav von,	Brocchi Angelo,
Blomfield Reginald,	Brown Horatio F.,
Boaglio Gualtiero,	Bruni Domenico M.,
Bobroff Ronald,	Brusilov Aleksej,
Bocşan Nicolae,	Brussi Giuseppe,
Bocu Sever,	Budnickij Oleg,
Bodale Horaţiu,	Buelens Geert,
Bodart Gaston,	Bufnea Elie,
Boff Jonathan,	Bulei Ion,
Boia Stelean Ioan,	Bullo Carlo,
Bolovan Ioan,	Bülow Bernhard Heinrich Karl von,
Bonazzi Giuliano,	Bülow Maria Anna, wife of the former,
Bondarenko Vjačeslav,	Buomberger Thomas,
Bongiovanni Luigi,	Buracu Coriolan,
Bonhardt Attila,	Burato Alberto,
Bonin Longare Lelio,	Burianow Stephan,
Borelli Giovanni,	Buşe Dorel,
Borghese Livio,	Buszko Józef,
Bortolan Domenico,	Buzzi Pierre-Louis,
Bortolotti Geremio,	
Boselli Paolo,	Cabannes Bruno,
Bosisio Mario,	Cadeddu Lorenzo,
Bossi Maurizio,	Cadorna Luigi,
Bost Mélanie,	Cadorna Raffaele,
Bosworth Richard J.B.,	Caetani Leone,
Botău Dimitrie,	Caffarena Fabio,
Botezan Ioana,	Caillaux Henriette,
Botiş Emil,	Calasso Roberto,
Boţoghină Cristina,	Calì Vincenzo,
Botoş Ioan M.,	Cameron David,
Botta Salvatore,	Cammarano Fulvio,
Bottoni Stefano,	Campanini Naborre,
Bourchier James David,	Câmpeanu Gavril,
Boyce Robert,	Camperio Filippo,
Bozarslan Hamit,	Campori Matteo,
Bracco Barbara,	Campus Eliza,
Branişte Valeriu,	Canevaro Felice Napoleone,
	Canevazzi Giovanni,

Canfora Luciano,	Charles I, King of Romania
Cantoni Fulvio,	Charriaut Henri,
Canudo Ricciotto,	Chatziiossif Christos,
Capialbi Ettore,	Cheli Fortunato,
Cappellano Filippo,	Chiappelli Luigi,
Capra Arnaldo,	Chickering Roger,
Caprotti Giuseppe,	Chiesa Eugenio,
Capuzzo Ester,	Childs Timothy,
Caracciolo di Feroletto Mario,	Chotek Sofia,
Carcano Paolo,	Churchill Spencer Winston Leonard,
Carcopino Jérôme,	Chwalba Andrzej,
Carden Ron M.,	Chyliński Michał,
Cârja Ion,	Ciachir Nicolae,
Carocci Giampiero,	Ciampani Andrea,
Carp P. Petre,	Cicata Roberto,
Cârpinișan Romulus,	Çiçek Cemil,
Carpitella Mario,	Çiçek Kemal,
Casini Luigi,	Cicenia Dario,
Casini Tommaso,	Cigliano Giovanna,
Castelli Mario,	Cimati Camillo,
Castronovo Valerio,	Cinghișă P.,
Catargi Alexis,	Ciobanu Pompiliu,
Cațavei Victor,	Ciobanu Vasile,
Catinus Emile,	Cipăianu George,
Catullo Gaio Valerio,	Cirmeni Benedetto,
Cavalli Luigi,	Ciubotă Viorel,
Cavazza Countess, see Bianconcini,	Ciugudeanu Marius Z.,
Cavell Edith,	Ciumbrudean Dumitru,
Cavour Camillo Benso di,	Ciunčuk Rustem,
Cazacu Ioana,	Clark Alan,
Cazals Rémy,	Clark Bruce,
Ceaușescu Nicolae,	Clark Christopher,
Cecotti Franco,	Claudé Paul,
Çelebi Mevlüt,	Cleinow Georg,
Céline Louis-Ferdinand (Destouches Louis Ferdinand Auguste),	Clémenceau Georges,
Celis Marcel M.,	Clémentel Étienne,
Cemil Ârif,	Cliveti Gheorghe,
Centek Jarosław,	Clopoșel Ion,
Ceobanu Adrian-Bogdan,	Closière Ferdinand de,
Cernea Gheorghe,	Codarcea Corneliu I.,
Červenkov Váiko,	Cœuré Sophie,
Cesari Cesare,	Cogo Gaetano,
Ceschin Daniele,	Cojocaru Gheorghe,
Chabod Federico,	Colombara Giuseppe,
Charles I, Emperor of Austria and as IV King of Hungary	Colombo Adolfo,
	Comandini Ubaldò,
	Compagnon Antoine,

Conchon Georges,	Damjanov Simeon,
Conrad von Hötzenndorf Franz,	D'Ancona Alessandro,
Constant Marie,	D'Angelo Lucio,
Constantin I, King of Greece	Daniel Ute,
Constantiniu Laurențiu,	D'Annunzio Gabriele,
Contamine Philippe,	Dartige de Fournet Louis Charles,
Cordero Olivero Inmaculada,	Darwin Charles,
Coremans Luc,	Daszyński Ignacy,
Corneanu Nicolae,	Dato Eduardo,
Corneanu Traian,	David Ioan,
Cornelissen Christoph,	Davies Maurice,
Cornforth Maurice,	Davies Norman,
Corvinus Matthias, see Matthias I Corvinus,	Davignon Julien,
King of Hungary	Deacu Horațiu C.,
Corni Gustavo,	De Angelis Daniela,
Cornwall Mark,	De Bosdari Alessandro,
Corradini Enrico,	De Bouver Romain,
Corsini Umberto,	De Bruyne Emmanuel,
Cortellessa Andrea,	Declercq Pieter,
Cosma jr. Aurel,	Decleva Enrico,
Costantini Emanuela,	De Filippo Eduardo,
Crampton Richard J.,	De Fort Ester,
Crișan A.,	De Francesco Giuseppe,
Crispi Francesco,	De Gasperi Alcide,
Cristea Marius,	Degli Azzi Vitelleschi Giustiniano,
Cristescu Sorin,	Degli Esposti Fabio,
Croce Benedetto,	De Grand Alexander J.,
Croco Giovanni,	Dehio Ludwig,
Cucchi di Boasso Fausto,	Deist Wilhelm,
Cucchiari Giovanni,	Dejob Charles,
Curli Barbara,	De La Torre Hipólito,
Curta Florin,	Delaunay Jean-Marc,
Curzio Malaparte (pseudonym of Suckert Karl- Erich),	del Carretto Ferdinando,
Cutean Smaranda,	Delcassé Théophile,
Czernin Ottokar von,	Deleu Victor,
Czubiński Antoni,	Delforge Paul,
	Della Torre Ruggero,
Dąbrowski Jan Konstanty,	Delle Fusine Giovanni,
Dacrema Nicoletta,	Del Negro Pietro,
Dakin Douglas,	Del Pero Mario,
D'Alessandri Antonio,	Delureanu Ștefan,
Dalisson Rémi,	Del Vecchio Giorgio,
Dallolio Alberto,	De Meyer Marc,
Dallolio Alfredo,	De Nobili Filippo,
D'Amelia Marina,	Dentoni Maria Concetta,
Damian Ștefan,	De Petra Giulio,
	Deringil Selim,

De Schaepdrijver Sophie,  
 De Smet Joseph,  
 Devlieghere Ludwig,  
 Devois Jean-Michel,  
 De Vos Johan,  
 De Vos Luc,  
 Devroey Jean-Pierre,  
 Diaz Armando,  
 di Carpegna Falconieri see Falconieri,  
 Di Gioia Dario,  
 Di Giovanni Gaetano,  
 Di Giovanni Marco,  
 Di Girolamo Pietro,  
 Di Iorio Anthony,  
 Dillon Emil J.,  
 Di Michele Andrea,  
 Dimitriev Alexander,  
 Dimitrov Georgi,  
 Dina Achille,  
 Dink Hrant,  
 Dinu Rudolf,  
 Di Roccalta see Roccalta,  
 di San Giuliano Antonino Paternò Castello,  
 Dito Oreste,  
 Dmowski Roman,  
 Dobrinescu Valeriu Florin,  
 Dogliani Patrizia,  
 Dolci Fabrizio,  
 Dominiczak Peter,  
 Dorgolès Roland,  
 Dornel Laurent,  
 Dornik Wolfram,  
 Douki Caroline,  
 D'Ovidio Francesco,  
 Dragomir Silviu,  
 Dreyfus Louis,  
 Drieu La Rochelle Pierre,  
 Droz Jacques,  
 Drugărin Petricoane Mihai,  
 Dubois Jérémie,  
 Duca Ion Gheorghe,  
 Ducasse André,  
 Duchenne Geneviève,  
 Duclert Vincent,  
 Duda Oktawian,  
 Dudaş Vasile,  
 Duhamel Georges,

Dumont Paul,  
 Dumoulin Michel,  
 Dundar Fuat,  
 Durgun Bülent,  
 Duroselle Jean-Baptiste,  
 Duschesne Louis,  
 Dusmanis Victor,  
 Düzel Neşe,  
 Dziurok Adam,  
  
 Edroiu Nicolae,  
 Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom of  
     Great Britain and Ireland,  
 Eldem Edhem,  
 Elena, Queen of Italy,  
 Elizalde Maria-Dolores,  
 Emmanoulides Emmanouil,  
 Enea Constantin,  
 Enver Ismail,  
 Enver Pasha see Enver Ismail,  
 Ercoli Lucrezia,  
 Erdoğan Recep Tayyip,  
 Erickson Edward J.,  
 Erioli Elisa,  
 Ermacora Matteo,  
 Erol Merve,  
 Essad Pasha Toptani,  
 Exertzoglou Haris,  
  
 Fabi Lucio,  
 Fait Gianluigi,  
 Faitrop-Porta Anne-Christine,  
 Falconieri di Carpegna Guido Orazio,  
 Falconieri di Carpegna Tommaso,  
 Faldella Giovanni,  
 Falkenhayn Erich,  
 Fanfani Amintore,  
 Fani Angelo,  
 Fasciotti Carlo,  
 Faur Antonio,  
 Faur Dumitru,  
 Faur Viorel,  
 Faure Maurice,  
 Fava Andrea,  
 Febvre Lucien,  
 Féja Géza,  
 Fejtő François,



Feldman Gerald D.,  
 Fellner Fritz,  
 Fenelli G.,  
 Fenyő Miksa,  
 Ferdinand I, King of Romania,  
 Ferdinand I, Tsar of Bulgaria,  
 Ferguson Niall,  
 Ferigo Luciano,  
 Ferrandi Giuseppe,  
 Ferrandi Maurizio,  
 Ferrante Carla,  
 Ferrari Ettore,  
 Ferrari Giuseppe,  
 Ferrero Guglielmo,  
 Ferrero di Cambiano Cesare,  
 Ferro Marc,  
 Fičev Ivan,  
 Figes Orlando,  
 Figueroa y Torres Álvaro de Romanones,  
 Filippova Tatjana,  
 Finali Gaspare,  
 Finocchiario-Speciale Vincenzo,  
 Fiorini Vittorio,  
 Fischer Fritz,  
 Floașiu Ionel,  
 Flotow Hans von,  
 Fluga Vasilij,  
 Fogarini Dante,  
 Fogu Claudio,  
 Fomičev Igor,  
 Fonzi Fausto,  
 Forcadell Carlos,  
 Formigini Santamaria Emilia,  
 Formigoni Guido,  
 Fortna Benjamin C.,  
 Fortunato Giustino,  
 Fournol Étienne,  
 Fracassetti Libero,  
 Franceschetti Francesco,  
 Francesco Ferdinando see Habsburg-Este Franz  
     Ferdinand,  
 Franchini Vittorio,  
 Franciosi Pietro,  
 Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and King  
     of Hungary,  
 Franzina Emilio,  
 Franzolini Sabino,

Fratellini Salvatore,  
 Frențiu Vasile,  
 Fresu Rita,  
 Frétigné Jean-Yves,  
 Frodyma Roman,  
 Fromkin David,  
 Fuentes Codera Maximiliano,  
 Furet François,  
 Furlani Silvio,  
 Furlungeanu Octavian,  
 Fussel Paul,  
  
 Gabba Bassano,  
 Gabriele Mariano,  
 Gabrielle Marianne,  
 Gaiu Corneliu,  
 Gajda Fedor,  
 Galateri Annibale,  
 Gałęziowski Marek,  
 Gallavresi Giuseppe,  
 Gallenga Stuart Romeo,  
 Galli Gallo,  
 Galloni Pietro,  
 Garavani Giulio,  
 García Sanz Carolina,  
 García Sanz Fernando,  
 Garibaldi Bruno,  
 Garibaldi Costante,  
 Garibaldi Giuseppe,  
 Garibaldi Ricciotti,  
 Gärtner Reinhold,  
 Gasparri Pietro,  
 Gasperoni Gaetano,  
 Gatrell Peter,  
 Gatterer Claus,  
 Gauck Johannes,  
 Gauvain Auguste,  
 Gay Harry Nelson,  
 Genadiev Genadij,  
 Genadiev Nikola,  
 Genevoix Maurice,  
 Gentile Emilio,  
 Gentile Giovanni,  
 Genzardi Bernardo,  
 George I, King of Greece,  
 George II, King of Greece,  
 Georgescu Vlad,

Gerő András,  
 Gerwarth Robert,  
 Gešov Ivan E.,  
 Geția Ioan,  
 Gherman Eftimie,  
 Ghetti Domenico,  
 Ghica (Ghika) Dimitrie I. Gr.,  
 Ghinghinița A.,  
 Ghiocel Petru,  
 Ghisalberti Alberto Maria,  
 Ghislain Pascale,  
 Giacone Alessandro,  
 Giani Gustavo,  
 Gianola Alberto,  
 Giarrettino Alessandro,  
 Gibelli Antonio,  
 Gigli Marchetti Ada,  
 Giladi Amotz,  
 Gilbert Martin,  
 Giller Joachim,  
 Ginitini Tranquillo see Giuntini Tranquillo,  
 Ginsborg Paul,  
 Giolitti Giovanni,  
 Giono Jean,  
 Giordan Henri,  
 Giorgi Paolo,  
 Giovagnoli Raffaello,  
 Giovannini Paolo,  
 Girginov Aleksandar,  
 Giuntini Tranquillo,  
 Giurescu Dinu C.,  
 Giurgiu Dorin,  
 Glaise-Horstenau Edmund,  
 Glorieux Marc,  
 Gnoli Domenico,  
 Gökay Bülent,  
 Gol'cov Viktor,  
 Goldinger Walter,  
 Goldiș Vasile,  
 Göle Nilüfer,  
 Gollerbach Evgenij,  
 Gomboș Constantin C.,  
 Gömbös Gyula,  
 Gondos Erno,  
 Gonse Henri,  
 González Calleja Eduardo,  
 Gori Agostino,

Goron Doru E.,  
 Gorun Hadrian,  
 Gottardi Giuseppe M.,  
 Gounaris Dimitrios,  
 Gräf Rudolf,  
 Grana Gianni,  
 Granard Bernard Forbes of,  
 Grančarov Stojčo,  
 Grandi Dino,  
 Granikov Aleksandr,  
 Gras Michel,  
 Grassi Fabio L.,  
 Graziuso Luciano,  
 Grec Marius,  
 Grecu Adrian,  
 Greenhalgh Elisabeth,  
 Gregory Adrian,  
 Grey Edward,  
 Grippo Pasquale,  
 Grodziski Stanisław,  
 Grofșorean Cornel,  
 Groșșianu Ilie,  
 Groșșianu Mihail,  
 Grosson Baronchelli Paola,  
 Groza Mihai-Octavian,  
 Gruber Karl,  
 Gualtieri Alessandro,  
 Gučkov Aleksandr,  
 Güclü Yücel,  
 Guéhenno Jean,  
 Guerri Giordano Bruno,  
 Guerrini Irene,  
 Guida Francesco,  
 Guillaud Jean-Louis,  
 Guillen Pierre,  
 Guiot Gaston,  
 Guiotto Maddalena,  
 Gül Abdullah,  
 Gulin Aleksandr,  
 Gunaris Dimitrios see Gounaris Dimitrios,  
 Gur'janova Svetlana,  
 Gürün Kâmuran,  
 Gyáni Gábor,

Habsburg-Este Franz Ferdinand,  
 Habsburg Teschen Albrecht von,  
 Haig Douglas,

Hajdú Tibor,  
 Hall Richard C.,  
 Hamilton Keith,  
 Hämmerle Christa,  
 Hanioglu Şükrü,  
 Hanisch Ernst,  
 Hanotaux Gabriel,  
 Haring Sabine A.,  
 Hartmann Ludo Moritz,  
 Haselsteiner Horst,  
 Hauch Gabriella,  
 Hauvette Henri,  
 Hazai Samu,  
 Henley John,  
 Herriot Édouard,  
 Hertog Johan Den,  
 Herwig Holger H.,  
 Heylen Thomas Louis,  
 Heyriès Hubert,  
 Hirschfeld Gerhard,  
 Hitchins Keith,  
 Hitler Adolf,  
 Höbelt Lothar,  
 Hobsbawm Eric J.,  
 Hochedlinger Michael,  
 Hoefer Franz von Feldsturm,  
 Hoffmann Max,  
 Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen Karl Anton von,  
 Holden Anne Christine,  
 Hollande François,  
 Holquist Peter,  
 Holzer Anton,  
 Holzer Jerzy,  
 Horne John,  
 Horthy Miklós,  
 Hortis Attilio,  
 Hossu Valer,  
 Hosten Willy,  
 Hötzendorf Franz Conrad von see Conrad von  
     Hötzendorf,  
 Houlihan Patrick,  
 Hranilović Oskar,  
 Hristov Atanas,  
 Hristov Dimităr,  
 Hristov Hristo,  
 Hubatsch Walter,  
 Hulea Eugen,

Hürter Johannes,  
 Hynes Samuel,  
  
 Iancu Gheorghe,  
 Ilčev Ivan,  
 Ilie Ioan,  
 Illies Florian,  
 Imbroane Sofia,  
 Imperiali di Francavilla Guglielmo,  
 Ingegnatti Edoardo,  
 İnönü Erdal,  
 İnönü İsmet,  
 Ionescu Ion,  
 Ionescu Mihail E.,  
 Ionescu Take,  
 Isaac Jules,  
 Ischakov Salavat Midchatovič,  
 Islamov Tofik,  
 Isnenghi Mario,  
 Isopescu Claudiu,  
 Isserson Georgij,  
 Istasse Cédric,  
 Iurli Ivano,  
 Ivan Sabin,  
 Ivănescu Dumitru,  
 Ivănescu Sorin D.,  
 Ivanov Andrej,  
 Ivanova Julija,  
 Izverniceanu Damian,  
  
 Jachimovič Z.,  
 Jacoby A.,  
 Jäger Wolfgang,  
 Jagow Gottlieb von,  
 Jákó János,  
 Jansen Sabine,  
 Janusz Bohdan,  
 Janz Oliver,  
 Jászi Oscar,  
 Jauffret Jean-Charles,  
 Jaumain Serge,  
 Jedlicka Ludwig,  
 Jianu Ştefan,  
 Johnson R. W.,  
 Joll James,  
 Jones Heather,  
 Jonnart Charles,

Josipovic Ivo,  
Jover Zamora José María,  
Juhász Gyula,  
Julien Elise,  
Jumanca Pavel,  
Jurjac Ion,

Kahler Thomas,  
Kalogeropoulos Nikolaos,  
Kamiński Łukasz,  
Kaposi József,  
Karaivanov Asen,  
Karlhofer Ferdinand,  
Karner Stefan,  
Károlyi Mihály,  
Kasaba Reşat,  
Kaspi André,  
Kavtaradze A.,  
Kayalı Hasan,  
Keegan John,  
Keene Jennifer D.,  
Kemény Gyula,  
Kennedy Paul,  
Kent Marian,  
Kenwood Albert George,  
Kermekčiev Assen,  
Kesteloot Chantal,  
Kévorkyan Raymond H.,  
Keyder Çağlar,  
Keymeulen Sarah,  
Keymolen Hans,  
Kharatyan-Araqelyan Hranush,  
Kiderlen-Wächter Alfred von,  
Kieniewicz Stefan,  
Kienzler Iwona,  
Kinross Patrick,  
Kir'janov Jurij,  
Király György,  
Kirkup James,  
Kisielewski Tadeusz,  
Kitromilides Pascal M.,  
Kiwior-Filo Małgorzata,  
Klein Fritz,  
Kleist Paul Ludwig Ewald von,  
Kłobuchowski Antoni,  
Knaepen Arnaud,  
Knoch Peter,

Koçak Cemil,  
Koch H.W.,  
Kocka Jürgen,  
Kolerov Modest,  
Koliopoulos Ioannis,  
Kolonickij Boris,  
Komar Žanna,  
Koneva Romyana,  
Konrad Helmut,  
Kopylov Nikolaj,  
Kos Wolfgang,  
Kostis Kostas,  
Koval'čuk Andrej,  
Kozenko Boris,  
Kramer Alan,  
Krasicki August,  
Kraus Karl,  
Kreisky Bruno,  
Kriegel Annie,  
Kruizinga Samuel,  
Krumeich Gerd,  
Kücüker Yüksel,  
Kudrin Jurij,  
Külloõs Imola,  
Kupčinova Tatjana,  
Kuprian Hermann J.W.,  
Kurcev Aleksandr,  
Kury Patrick,  
Kutay Cemal,  
Kuzmics Helmut,

Labanca Nicola,  
Labate Giuseppe,  
Lacava Pietro,  
Lahdelma Tuomo,  
Lahovari Alexandru Emanuel,  
Lahovari Ion,  
Lalkov Milčo,  
Lamberts Emiel,  
Lambros Spyridon,  
Lamprecht Karl,  
Landes David Saul,  
Langewiesche Dieter,  
Langlais Jacques,  
Lapedatu Alexandru,  
La Porte Pablo,  
Largajoli Dionisio,

Lascale Giuseppe,  
 Lascu Nicolae,  
 Lascu Viorica,  
 Lasorella Giuseppe,  
 Latini Carlotta,  
 La Torre Michele,  
 Lattanzi Marco,  
 Lavisser Ernest,  
 Lazăr Ștefan,  
 Lăzărescu Marinela,  
 Lazzari Giulio,  
 Leblanc Henri,  
 Lecci Amerigo,  
 Leed Eric J.,  
 Lefevre Jean,  
 Lefevre Patrick,  
 Le Moal Frédéric,  
 Lemonidou Elli,  
 Leon George B.,  
 Leoni Diego,  
 Leontaritis Georgios,  
 Lermyte Jean-Marie,  
 Le Roy Ippolito,  
 Lesen Vito,  
 Leti Giuseppe,  
 Leu Valeriu,  
 Lewy Guenther,  
 Liddell Hart Basil,  
 Lieven Dominic,  
 Lill Rudolf,  
 Linția N.,  
 Lipkes Jeff,  
 Listikov Sergej,  
 Llewellyn-Smith Michael,  
 Lloyd-George David,  
 Locatelli Achille,  
 Locatelli Milesi Giuseppe,  
 Locati Domenico,  
 Loch Eugenia,  
 Loero Attilio,  
 Loewy Hanno,  
 Loez André,  
 Lohr Eric,  
 Łojek Jerzy,  
 Lombardi Marco,  
 Lombardo Radice Giuseppe,  
 Longo Francesca,

Lorette Jean,  
 Loumiotis Vassileios,  
 Lovin Minerva,  
 Luchaire Julien,  
 Ludendorff Erich von,  
 Ludu V.,  
 Lukan Walter,  
 Lumini Gaetano,  
 Lumperdean Ioan,  
 Lunzer Renate,  
 Lupaș Ioan,  
 Lupeanu Melin Alexandru,  
 Luzio Alessandro,  
 Luzzatti Luigi,  
 Luzzatto Sergio,  
 Lyon Bryce,  
 Lyon Mary,

Macarie I.,  
 Macovei A.,  
 Maddrell Avril,  
 Mader Hubert,  
 Maderthaler Wolfgang,  
 Madigan Edward,  
 Mádl Loránd L.,  
 Madžarov Mihail,  
 Magni Antonio,  
 Magni Francesca,  
 Maier Charles S.,  
 Maior Liviu,  
 Maiorescu Titu,  
 Majerus Benoît,  
 Makowiecki Zygmunt,  
 Mal'kov Viktor,  
 Maleev Luka,  
 Malfer Stefan,  
 Malni Paolo,  
 Mamina Ion,  
 Mancini Augusto,  
 Mancini Luigi,  
 Mandel Roberto,  
 Mândrescu Gheorghe,  
 Mândrescu Simion C.,  
 Manela Erez,  
 Manfredi Emilio,  
 Manga Janos,  
 Mangiavacca Maria,

Manno Antonio,  
 Mannucci Francesco,  
 Manykin Aleksandr,  
 Manzoni Ansdei Giuseppe,  
 Marchetti Livio,  
 Marconi Guglielmo,  
 Mardin Şerif,  
 Marès Antoine,  
 Marghiloman Alexander,  
 Margittai Gábor,  
 Maria, Queen of Romania,  
 Marinetti Filippo Tommaso,  
 Marini Franco,  
 Mariotti Francesco,  
 Mariotti Giovanni,  
 Mariotti Ruggero,  
 Markov Georgi,  
 Markovits Rodion,  
 Marsengo Maurizio,  
 Martens Georg Friedrich von,  
 Martinelli Luigi,  
 Martinelli Ulrico,  
 Martinengo Cesaresco Evelina,  
 Martini Diego,  
 Martini Ferdinando,  
 Mârza Iacob,  
 Massaroli Ignazio,  
 Massey William Thomas,  
 Massignani Alessandro,  
 Mastellone Salvo,  
 Matri Paolo,  
 Matei Alexandru,  
 Matthias I Corvinus, King of Hungary,  
 Mauriac François,  
 Maurin Jules,  
 Mavrogordatos Georgios,  
 Maxa Maria,  
 May Ernest R.,  
 Mayer Arno,  
 Mazohl Brigitte,  
 Mazzini Federico,  
 Mazzini Giuseppe,  
 Mazzini Ubaldo,  
 Mazziotti Matteo,  
 McCarthy Justin,  
 McClellan George Brinton,  
 McLoughlin Kate,

McMeekin Sean,  
 Meaker Gerald H.,  
 Medinskij Vladimir,  
 Meinecke Friedrich,  
 Melloni Alberto,  
 Mellusi Antonio,  
 Memmoli Gubello (pseudonym of Capasso  
 Torre di Caprara Giovanni),  
 Menghini Mario,  
 Menozzi Daniele,  
 Mercier Désiré,  
 Meriggi Marco,  
 Merkel Angela,  
 Merlaş Ştefan,  
 Messeri Antonio,  
 Metaxas Ioannis,  
 Metea Octavian,  
 Metzeltin Michael,  
 Meyer Jacques,  
 Michalopoulos Dimitris,  
 Michel Ersilio,  
 Michel Johann,  
 Mihai Alexandru,  
 Mihai Dan,  
 Mihăiţiu Grigore,  
 Mihalache Andi,  
 Milanov Jordan,  
 Miljukov Pavel,  
 Miller Aleksej,  
 Miller Maria,  
 Milocco Giorgio,  
 Milocco Sara,  
 Milza Pierre,  
 Minghetti Marco,  
 Miniero Alessandro,  
 Minniti Fortunato,  
 Minuţ Adolf,  
 Minuţ Ioana,  
 Mironescu George G.,  
 Mironov Volodimir,  
 Mişcuţia Ilie,  
 Misericchi Lorenzo,  
 Mitu Sorin,  
 Moacă Aurel,  
 Moga Valer,  
 Mohr Martin,  
 Moisa Gabriel,

Mola Aldo Alessandro,  
 Molenda Jan,  
 Molinari Augusta,  
 Molodjakov Vasilij,  
 Moltmann Bernhard,  
 Mommsen Wolfgang J.,  
 Mondini Marco,  
 Monier Frédéric,  
 Montalcini Camillo,  
 Monteleone Renato,  
 Montero Francesco,  
 Montero Jiménez José Antonio,  
 Monti Santo,  
 Monticone Alberto,  
 Monts de Mazin Anton von,  
 Moraru Teofil,  
 Mordawski Hubert,  
 Morelli Anne,  
 Morghentau Henry,  
 Moritz Verena,  
 Morley-Headlam James Wycliff,  
 Moro Renato,  
 Morpurgo Salomone,  
 Moscovici Ionela,  
 Mosse George L.,  
 Motta Giuseppe,  
 Mourellos Ioannis,  
 Moyd Michelle,  
 Mrugała Katarzyna,  
 Mulé-Bertolo Giovanni,  
 Müller Florin,  
 Müller Koloman,  
 Muller Raphaël,  
 Mulligan William,  
 Muñoz y Manzano Cipriano,  
 Munteanu Cassian R.,  
 Munthiu Nicolae,  
 Mureșan Augustin,  
 Murri Romolo,  
 Musiał Filip,  
 Mussolini Benito,  
 Muti Riccardo,  
  
 Nádasdy Ádám,  
 Nadsadnyj Dmitrij,  
 Naert Antoon,  
 Nagornaja Oksana,

Nani Mocenigo Filippo,  
 Napieralski Adam,  
 Napoleon III, Emperor of the French,  
 Napolitano Giorgio,  
 Nappi Maria Rosaria,  
 Nardini Luigi,  
 Narskij Igor,  
 Nasson Bill,  
 Nastovici Ema,  
 Natale Mario,  
 Natali Giulio,  
 Nathan Ernesto,  
 Nava Cesare,  
 Navarro Reverter Juan,  
 Nazemceva Elena,  
 Neagu Miron,  
 Neamțu Gheorghe,  
 Nedev Nedjo,  
 Neiva Saulo,  
 Nelipović Sergej,  
 Nemoianu Petru,  
 Neri Achille,  
 Neugebauer Wolfgang,  
 Neyzi Leyla,  
 Nicholas I, Mirkov Petrović-Njegoš, King of  
     Montenegro,  
 Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia,  
 Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia,  
 Nicolescu Gheorghe,  
 Nicoletti Luigi,  
 Nicolson Arthur,  
 Niederkorn Jan,  
 Niño Antonio,  
 Nisini Giorgio,  
 Nistor Dumitru,  
 Nistor Ioan,  
 Nistor Ionuț,  
 Nistor Pompiliu,  
 Nițescu V.,  
 Nitti Francesco Saverio,  
 Nižnik Nadežda,  
 Noiriel Gérard,  
 Nojkov Stilijan,  
 Nolte Ernst,  
 Norris Stephen M.,  
 Norton-Cru Jean,  
 Nouzille Jean,



Novati Francesco,  
Nuțu Constantin,

Oancea Gheorghe I.,  
O'Brian Jennifer,  
Offenstadt Nicolas,  
Ojetti Ugo,  
Olejnikov Aleksej,  
Olszański Andrzej,  
Omodeo Adolfo,  
Ongaro Luigi,  
Oram Gerard,  
Oran Baskın,  
Orechovskij Vadim,  
Orga Valentin,  
Orlando Vittorio Emanuele,  
Oroian Teofil,  
Ortega y Gasset José,  
Os'kin Maksim,  
Ossieur Gilbert,  
Ostenc Michel,  
Oswald Remy,  
Oțel Ioan,  
Otte Thomas G.,  
Otto, King of Greece,  
Ottolenghi Emilio,  
Ottolenghi Giuseppe,  
Overmans Rüdiger,  
Özakman Turgut,  
Özdemir Cem,  
Özdemir Hikmet,  
Özel Oktay,

Pachaljuk Konstantin,  
Păclișanu Zenobie,  
Pahor Borut,  
Painlevé Paul,  
Pais-Serra Francesco,  
Păiuș Liviu,  
Păiușan Radu,  
Pajewski Janusz,  
Palazzeschi Aldo (pseudonym of Giurlani Aldo  
Pietro Vincenzo),  
Paléologue Maurice,  
Palmer William,  
Panajotov Ljubomir,  
Pando Juan,

Panousakis Stamatis,  
Pantev Andrej,  
Paolantonacci Jean-Thomas,  
Papini Giovanni,  
Papp István,  
Paradisi Buonaguidi Maria Lida,  
Parchomenko Tatjana,  
Pardini Giuseppe,  
Parente Pasquale,  
Pascu Ștefan,  
Pasolini Pier Desiderio,  
Passarin Mauro,  
Pau Béatrice,  
Pavesi Angelo,  
Paxton Robert O.,  
Payne Stanley G.,  
Pécout Gilles,  
Pedotti Ettore,  
Pedroncini Guy,  
Pedullà Gabriele,  
Péguy Charles,  
Pelinka Anton,  
Peneș St.,  
Pennell Catriona,  
Pennella Giuseppe,  
Perea Ruiz Jesús,  
Pérez Caballero Juan,  
Perfetti Francesco,  
Péricard Jacques,  
Perreux Gabriel,  
Péterfi Gábor,  
Petit Gabrielle,  
Petitti di Roreto Carlo,  
Petkov Petko,  
Petricoane-Drugărin Mihai,  
Petrignani Rinaldo,  
Petrone Karen,  
Petrov Jurij,  
Petrov Todor,  
Petrovskaja Oksana,  
Petsalis Diomidis,  
Petschar Hans,  
Petzold Joachim,  
Peyfuss Max Demeter,  
Philippe, King of Belges,  
Philpott William,  
Piaggio Amedeo,

Pichon Stephen,  
 Pignataro Roberto,  
 Pignoloni Vittorio,  
 Pignot Marion,  
 Piłsudski Józef,  
 Piña y Millet Ramon,  
 Pinchia Emilio,  
 Pintér Tamás,  
 Pintor Fortunato,  
 Pinzi Cesare,  
 Pirenne Henri,  
 Pirenne Jacques-Henri,  
 Pisa Beatrice,  
 Pisarev Jurij,  
 Pitre Giuseppe,  
 Pittaluga, lieutenant,  
 Pitta Suega, general,  
 Pizzo Marco,  
 Pla Xavier,  
 Plaschka Richard Georg,  
 Pleve Pavel,  
 Plutino Fabrizio,  
 Pluviano Marco,  
 Poganu Constantin,  
 Poggi Vittorio,  
 Pöhlmann Markus,  
 Poincaré Raymond,  
 Poklewskii Koziel,  
 Pokrovskij Michail,  
 Poletika Nikolaj,  
 Polivanov Aleksej,  
 Pollio Alberto,  
 Pollman Ferenc,  
 Polonskij Vadim,  
 Pombeni Paolo,  
 Ponce Marrero Javier,  
 Poncet Olivier,  
 Ponticelli Lazare,  
 Pop E.V.,  
 Pop Petre,  
 Pop Valeriu,  
 Pop Vasile Marian,  
 Popa Iacob,  
 Popa Vasile,  
 Popa-Andrei Mirela,  
 Popeangă Vasile,  
 Popescu Eleodor,

Popescu-Puțuri Ion,  
 Poplawski Leon,  
 Porro Carlo,  
 Poršneva Olga,  
 Porțeanu Alexandru,  
 Poruțiu V.,  
 Possamai Antonio,  
 Postnikov Nikolaj,  
 Pozzato Paolo,  
 Pozzetta Andrea,  
 Preda Dumitru,  
 Prezioso Stéfanie,  
 Prezzolini Giuseppe,  
 Price Julius M.,  
 Procacci Giovanna,  
 Prochasson Christophe,  
 Prodanov Nikolaj,  
 Prost Antoine,  
 Provoost Guido,  
 Psiroukis Nikos,  
 Pučenkov Aleksandr,  
 Pullè Leopoldo,  
 Pupo Raoul,  
 Purchla Jacek,  
 Pușcariu Sextil,  
 Putin Vladimir,

Quaranta Clinio,  
 Quattrocchi Luca,  
 Quercioli Alessio,

Radetzky von Radetz Johann Joseph Wenzel,  
 Radev Simeon,  
 Radosav Doru,  
 Radoslavov Vasil,  
 Radu Sorin,  
 Radu Vasile,  
 Rădulescu-Zoner Ștefan,  
 Răduțiu Aurel,  
 Ragonesi Francesco,  
 Raito Leonardo,  
 Rampoldi Roberto,  
 Rampolla del Tindaro Mariano,  
 Ranzato Gabriele,  
 Rasera Fabrizio,  
 Rasmussen Anne,  
 Rathkolb Olivier,

Ratti Federico,  
 Rauchensteiner Manfred,  
 Raulich Italo,  
 Rava Luigi,  
 Ravà Vittore,  
 Reinach Joseph,  
 Renard Isabelle,  
 Renner Karl,  
 Renouvin Pierre,  
 Renz Irina,  
 Renzi Renzo,  
 Repnikov Aleksandr,  
 Rešetnikov Leonid,  
 Reyntjens Annemie,  
 Ribarov Nikola,  
 Ribot Alexander,  
 Riccardi Luca,  
 Ricci Aldo G.,  
 Ricci Raffaello,  
 Richard Gaston,  
 Ridolfi Maurizio,  
 Rieber Alfred J.,  
 Rinaudo Costanzo,  
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 Risé Claudio,  
 Riste Olav,  
 Ritter Gerhard,  
 Riva Luigi,  
 Rivet Gustave,  
 Rizov Dimităr,  
 Robbins Keith,  
 Roberi Natan,  
 Robert Jean-Louis,  
 Roccalta Pasquale di,  
 RoCHAT Giorgio,  
 Rochet Béatrice,  
 Rodd Rennell,  
 Rodrigo Javier,  
 Rolland Romain,  
 Românașu Radu,  
 Romano Avezzana Camillo,  
 Romanones Earl see Figueroa y Torres,  
 Romanov Nikolaj Nikolaevič,  
 Romsics Gergely,  
 Romsics Ignác,  
 Roncagli Giovanni,  
 Roper Michael,

Rose John Holland,  
 Rosemberg Sieglinde,  
 Roshwald Aviel,  
 Rossfeld Roman,  
 Rossi Domenico,  
 Rossi Marina,  
 Rossini Daniela,  
 Rosso Giovanni,  
 Rousseau Frédéric,  
 Rudinì Antonio Starrabba di,  
 Ruiz Sánchez José-Leonardo,  
 Rumiz Paolo,  
 Rumppler Helmut,  
 Runov Valentin,  
 Rus Angela,  
 Rus Dorin-Ioan,  
 Rusconi Gian Enrico,  
 Russu Alexandru,  
 Rustoiu Gabriel,  
 Rustoiu Ioana,  
 Rydiger Monika,  
 Rzymowski Wincenty,  
  
 Sabbatucci Giovanni,  
 Sacchetti Sassetti Angelo,  
 Sacchi Simonetta Ada,  
 Šacillo Kornelij,  
 Šacillo Vjačeslav,  
 Şafak Elif,  
 Saffi Aurelio,  
 Ságvári György,  
 Saint-Aulaire Auguste-Félix-Charles de  
     Beupoil de,  
 Saint-Laurent Cécil,  
 Şaiu I.,  
 Salandra Antonio,  
 Salata Francesco,  
 Salomone Oreste,  
 Salvanou Emilia,  
 Salvarelli Salvatore,  
 Salvatici Silvia,  
 Salvatorelli Luigi,  
 Salvemini Gaetano,  
 Salvetti Patrizia,  
 Salwa Piotr,  
 San Giuliano Antonino Paternò Castello di,  
 Sanborn Joshua,

Sanesi Giuseppe,	Schwarz Werner Michael,
Sankova Svetlana,	Scolé Pierluigi,
Sannazzaro Natta Giuseppe,	Scotoni Giovanni,
Sansone Alfonso,	Scotti Cristoforo,
Santangelo Giuseppe,	Scurtu Ioan,
Santoro, midshipman,	Secretan Gilberto,
Santoro Stefano,	Segata Donata,
Sapori Julien,	Seidl Christina,
Saragat Giuseppe,	Seignobos Charles,
Sarasini Paolo,	Sella Corradino,
Sârbu Marian,	Senjavskaja Elena,
Sardi Cesare,	Şerban Ioan I.,
Sarısaman Sadık,	Şerban Virgil,
Sárközy Péter,	Şeredan Valeriu,
Sárközy-Gergely B.,	Sergeev Evgenij,
Šarova Krumka,	Sergeev Sergej,
Sarrail Maurice-Paul,	Serra Enrico,
Sartori Davide,	Serra Maurizio,
Satta-Branca Pietro,	Seton-Watson Christopher,
Savelli Agostino,	Seton-Watson Robert W.,
Savoia Carignano Amedeo, King of Spain to-be,	Sevimay Devrim,
Savorini Luigi,	Sfetea Constantin,
Saxo-Coburg-Gotha Alfred, son of Queen	Sforza Carlo,
Victoria,	Sforza Giovanni,
Sazonov Sergej,	Shanafelt Gary W.,
Sbârnă Gheorghe,	Sheffield Gary,
Sbrilios Konstantinos,	Showalter Dennis,
Scala Giuseppe,	Şiclován D.,
Scaramella Gino,	Sidorenko Nadežda,
Scardaccione Francesca,	Sieder Reinhard,
Scarfoglio Edoardo,	Sierens Etienne,
Scarpa Domenico,	Signori Ettore,
Scartabellati Andrea,	Silberstein Gerard E.,
Schatz Elena Maria,	Silvestri Mario,
Schaumann Walther,	Sima Ana Victoria,
Schiavon Emma,	Simioni Attilio,
Schild Georg,	Simó Gyula,
Schindling Anton,	Simon Aloïs,
Schininà Giovanni,	Simoncelli Vincenzo,
Schmidt Rainer Friedrich,	Širokorad Aleksandr,
Schmidt-Suppran Christoph,	Skouloudis Stefanos,
Schöningh Ferdinand,	Smirnov Andrej,
Schöttler Peter,	Smirnov Nikolaj,
Schreiber Jean-Philippe,	Soffici Ardengo,
Schroeder Paul W.,	Solaini Ezio,
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Schwarz Guri,	Solmi Arrigo,

Solov'ev Vladimir,  
 Somlai Katalin,  
 Sondel-Cedarmas Joanna,  
 Sondhaus Lawrence,  
 Sonnino Sidney,  
 Sophia, Queen of Greece,  
 Sorbelli Albano,  
 Sorrentino Andrea,  
 Sosnkowski Kazimierz,  
 Soupart Sven,  
 Soutou Georges-Henri,  
 Spadolini Ernesto,  
 Spadoni Domenico,  
 Spadoni Giovanni,  
 Spector Sherman David,  
 Speranza Alceo,  
 Sperti Angelo,  
 Staderini Alessandra,  
 Stambolov Stefan,  
 Stanca Sebastian,  
 Stančev Stančo,  
 Stančov Dimităr,  
 Stansky Peter,  
 Statelova Elena,  
 Steed Henry Wickham,  
 Steen Jan,  
 Stefanidis Ioannis,  
 Șteiu Nicolae,  
 Stepanov Konstantin,  
 StępniaK Krzysztof,  
 Stevenson David,  
 Știrban Marcel,  
 Stites Richard,  
 Stocco Francesco,  
 Stockdale Melissa K.,  
 Stoddard Philip H.,  
 Stogov Dmitrij,  
 Stoiolov Petăr,  
 Stojanov Zahari,  
 Stone Norman,  
 Strachan Edward Morgan,  
 Studnicki Władysław,  
 Suchova Olga,  
 Suciu Onoriu,  
 Suckert Karl-Erich (Curzio Malaparte),  
 Suppan Arnold,  
 Suppanz Werner,

Suru Pavel,  
 Suttina Luigi,  
 Svilas Svetlana,  
 Svolopoulos Konstantinos,  
 Szabo Arthur,  
 Szabó Dániel,  
 Szabó Dezső,  
 Szabo Etelka,  
 Szanta Piotr,  
 Szenti Tibor,  
 Szöllősi Zsigmond,  
  
 Talât Mehmed,  
 Tallier Pierre-Alain,  
 Talos Emmerich,  
 Tamás M. Tarján,  
 Tămaș Oana Mihaela,  
 Tamur Danacioglu Esra,  
 Țărău Liviu,  
 Țărău Virgiliu,  
 Tăslăuanu Octavian Codru,  
 Tato María Inés,  
 Taylor Alan John Percival,  
 Tegetthoff Wilhelm von,  
 Țeicu Dumitru,  
 Teleagă P.,  
 Temperley Harold William Vazeille,  
 Teodor Avram P.,  
 Teodor Pompiliu,  
 Thaon di Revel Paolo,  
 Theotokis Georgios,  
 Tilly Pierre,  
 Tisza István,  
 Tittoni Tommaso,  
 Tikhon Axel,  
 Tjutjukin Stanislav,  
 Toderașcu C.,  
 Todero Fabio,  
 Todero Roberto,  
 Todoran Isidor,  
 Tolomei Ettore,  
 Tolomeo Rita,  
 Tolstoguzov Sergej,  
 Toma Georgeta,  
 Tomasi della Torretta Pietro,  
 Tomassini Luigi,  
 Tommasini Oreste,

Tomescu Mircea,  
 Tončev Dimităr,  
 Torcellon Nicoletta,  
 Tormay Cécile,  
 Torrey Glenn E.,  
 Tortato Alessandro,  
 Toscano Mario,  
 Tošev Stefan,  
 Tosi Guy,  
 Trașcă Ottmar,  
 Traverso Enzo,  
 Trenker Luis,  
 Trevelyan George Macaulay,  
 Treves Claudio,  
 Trohani George,  
 Troubleyn Rob,  
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 Tua Paolo M.,  
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 Turbucz Dávid,  
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 Turri Francesco,  
 Tușu Dumitru,

Überegger Oswald,  
 Ugliş Petre,  
 Ugolini Romano,  
 Uhl Heidemarie,  
 Ullmann Jay Peter,  
 Ungaretti Giuseppe,  
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Văcaru Silviu,  
 Valea Virgil,  
 Valente Massimiliano,  
 Valiani Leo,  
 Valzania Sergio,  
 Van Averbeke Emiel,  
 Van Cauwelaert Frans,  
 Van den Bogaerde Gaspar,

Van Hooglede Hildebrand,  
 Van Mechelen Alexis,  
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 Vanbecelaere Hippolyte,  
 Vancoillie Jan,  
 Vanysacker Dries,  
 Varsori Antonio,  
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 Venizelos Elefterios,  
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 Venturi Franco,  
 Vercesi Ernesto,  
 Verdi Giuseppe,  
 Veremis Thanos,  
 Verleyen Misjoe,  
 Verney Jean-Pierre,  
 Vesentini Angelo,  
 Viaene Vincent,  
 Viallet Jean-Pierre,  
 Vicentini Giulio,  
 Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of  
     Great Britain and Ireland,  
 Vidotto Vittorio,  
 Vigezzi Brunello,  
 Vigni Laura,  
 Vincent Alana,  
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 Violle Nicolas,  
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 Vițălaru Adrian,  
 Viterbo Ettore,  
 Vittorio Emanuele II, King of Italy,  
 Vittorio Emanuele III, King of Italy,  
 Vlad Matei,  
 Vlahov Tuše,  
 Vlasidis Vlasis,  
 Volobuev Pavel,  
 Volpato Paolo,  
 Volpe Gioacchino,  
 Von Hagen Mark,  
 Vrints Antoon,

Vuia Traian,  
Vulpe Magdalena,

Walleczek-Fritz Julia,  
Wandruszka Adam,  
Wapiński Roman,  
Ward M.A.,  
Watson Alexander,  
Wawer Zbigniew,  
Waxweiler Emile,  
Weber Fritz,  
Wedrac Stefan,  
Wehler Hans-Ulrich,  
Weigel Hans,  
Weniger Christian,  
Wereszycki Henryk,  
Werth Léon,  
Wette Wolfram,  
Wiener Joseph,  
Wierzyński Kazimierz,  
Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany,  
Wilhelm of Wied, Prince of Albania,  
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Windsor William, Prince, Duke of Cambridge,  
Winkler Heinrich-August,  
Winkler Jay M.,  
Wisthaler Sigrid,  
Witte Els,  
Wittelsbach von Bayern Rupprecht,  
Wizo Pietro,  
Wojtyś-Kipiel Marta,  
Woods Henri Charles,

Wrigley Chris,  
Wynants Emeline,

Yerasimos Stefanos,  
Yiannouloupoulos Yiannis,  
Yildirim Onur,

Zach Krista,  
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Zadravec István,  
Zaharia Dumitru,  
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Zalesskij Konstantin,  
Zani Luciano,  
Zarcone Antonino,  
Zawilowski Cezary,  
Zechlin Egmont,  
Zeidler Miklós,  
Žekov Nikola,  
Žerdeva Julija,  
Zgórníak Marian,  
Zieliński Henryk,  
Ziemann Benjamin,  
Žigalov Boris,  
Zimolo Michelangelo,  
Živkov Todor,  
Živojinović Dragoljub R.,  
Zlatina Marija,  
Zoccoli Ettore,  
Zrínyi Miklós,  
Zuckerman Larry,  
Zumbini Bonaventura,  
Zürcher Eric J.,  
Zweig Stefan.



## Contents

<i>Romano Ugolini</i> Foreword	5
<i>Franco Marini</i> Opening Address	13
<i>Andrea Ciampani</i> A European Perspective in the Historiography of the Great War	17
<i>Romano Ugolini</i> The <i>Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano</i> and the Great War	39
 Part I The European Historiography of the Great War: a First Overview	
<i>Rémi Dalisson</i> French Historiography of the Great War: from the “ <i>Battle-History</i> ” to the Total, Social History of a Specific War (1918-2015)	79
<i>Gerhard Hirschfeld</i> The New German Historiography of the First World War	89

<i>Stefan Wedrac</i> Austria and the Memory of the First World War	99
<i>László Csorba</i> Issues and Historiography of the Great War	109
<i>Giovanna Cigliano</i> The First World War in Recent Russian Historiography	117
<i>Fabio L. Grassi</i> On Turkish Historiography	151
<i>Domenico Maria Bruni</i> British Historiography	169
<i>Ion Cârja</i> Between History and Historiography: Romanians from the Austro-Hungarian Army serving on the Fronts during the Great War	181
<i>Svetlozar Eldárov</i> Bulgarian Historiography on the First World War	219
<i>Aimilia Themopoulou</i> Perceptions of the Great War in Greece	239
<i>Małgorzata Kiwior-Filo</i> Polish Historiography	255
<i>Michel Dumoulin</i> The Belgian Historiography on the Great War. Between Regional and European Perspective	269
<i>Carolina García Sanz</i> Neutrality throughout the Great War. An Insight from Spanish International History	289

<i>Ester Capuzzo</i>	
Italian Historiography	305

## Part II

### A European Perspective on Italy during the Great War

<i>Holger Afflerbach</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Germany	329
<i>Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro, Jean-Yves Frétigné</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from France	341
<i>Fulvio Cammarano</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Great Britain	363
<i>Stefan Malfer</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Austria	381
<i>Gábor Andreides</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Hungary	391
<i>Rudolf Dinu</i>	
Romania, the Issue of the War against the Central Empires and the Relationships with Italy (1914-1916)	401
<i>Rita Tolomeo</i>	
Italy in the Great War: a Perspective from Bulgaria. Nikola Genadiev's Visit to Rome	431
<i>Francesco Guida</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Greece	457
<i>Cengiz Çağla</i>	
Italy in the Great War as seen from Turkey	481

<i>Dries Vanysacker</i> The Enigma of the Presence of Italian Soldiers in Belgium during the First World War: the Places and the History	487
<i>Joanna Sondel-Cedarmas</i> Italy during the First World War as seen from Poland	519
<i>Fernando García Sanz</i> Spanish-Italian Relations and the Great War Outbreak	537
Index of Names	559



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