

ITALY'S BALKAN STRATEGIES

19th & 20th CENTURY

EDITED BY

VOJISLAV G. PAVLOVIĆ



BELGRADE
2014

ITALY'S BALKAN
STRATEGIES
(19th – 20th CENTURY)

Edited by

VOJISLAV G. PAVLOVIĆ



INSTITUT DES ETUDES BALKANIQUES
ACADEMIE SERBE DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS

EDITIONS SPECIALES 123

LES STRATEGIES BALKANIQUES D'ITALIE

(19^e – 20^e SIÈCLE)

Sous la direction de

VOJISLAV G. PAVLOVIĆ

Rédacteur en chef

DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ

Directeur de l'Institut des études balkaniques ASSA

BELGRADE
2015

INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES
OF THE SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

SPECIAL EDITIONS 123

ITALY'S BALKAN STRATEGIES

(19th - 20th CENTURY)

Edited by

VOJISLAV G. PAVLOVIĆ

Editor in chief

DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ

Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA

BELGRADE
2015

Publisher
Institute for Balkan Studies
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade, Knez Mihailova 35/IV
www.balkaninstitut.com
e-mail: balkinst@bi.sanu.ac.rs

Reviewed by

Dragoljub R. Živojinović, member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Dušan T. Bataković, Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Čedomir Antić, School of Philosophy, Belgrade

Second edition

ISBN 978-86-7179-082-6

The publication of this volume has been financially supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia (project № 177011: History of political ideas and institutions in the Balkans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries)

Table of Contents

<i>PREFACE</i>	7
Francesco Guida	
<i>THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE (1848-1870)</i>	11
Antonio D'Alessandri	
<i>THE MUSLIM QUESTION IN SERBIA: THE 1862 BOMBARDMENT OF BELGRADE AND THE NEWBORN KINGDOM OF ITALY</i>	29
Monica Priante	
<i>GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI: HERO IN THE PIEDMONT OF THE BALKANS. THE RECEPTION OF A NARRATIVE OF THE ITALIAN RISORGIMENTO IN THE SERBIAN PRESS</i>	45
Luciano Monzali	
<i>THE BALKANS AND THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE IN ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1882-1903</i>	61
Ljiljana Aleksić-Pejković	
<i>THE SERBIAN QUESTION IN ITALY'S BALKAN POLICY UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR</i>	81
Fabrice Jesné	
<i>L'ITALIE FACE A LA QUESTION ADRIATIQUE, 1861-1915: ASPECTS STRATEGIQUES ET IDEOLOGIQUES</i>	103
Catherine Horel	
<i>TRIESTE ET FIUME, DEUX ASPECTS DE L'IRRÉDENTISME ITALIEN 1867-1914</i>	121
Dragoljub R. Živojinović	
<i>THE WAR AIMS OF SERBIA AND ITALY (1917)</i>	137
Dušan T. Bataković	
<i>ESSAD PASHA TOPTANI, SERBIA AND THE ALBANIAN QUESTION (1915–1918)</i>	159

Stanislav Sretenović

- LA RELIGION ET LE CONFLIT FRANCO-ITALIEN MACÉDOINE, 1918-1940.*
LE CAS DU PÈRE BRUNETTI. 181

Alberto Basciani

- THE CIANO-STOJADINVIĆ AGREEMENT AND THE TURNING POINT IN*
THE ITALIAN CULTURAL POLICY IN YUGOSLAVIA (1937-1941) 199

Biser Petrov

- THE OCCUPATION OF ALBANIA OF 1939 IN*
THE LIGHT OF ANGLO-ITALIAN RELATIONS 213

Stelios-Pericles Karavis

- THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION OF GREECE:*
STRATEGY AND PRACTICE (1941-1943) 223

Svetlozar Eldarov

- MONSIEUR FRANCESCO GALLONI ET L'OPERA ITALIANA PRO*
ORIENTE EN BULGARIE (1944-1948) 241

Massimo Bucarelli

- A BELATED FRIENDSHIP: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS (1947-1990)* 255

Miljan Milkić

- YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY, 1945 – 1947:*
YUGOSLAV POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN THE TRIESTE CRISIS 267

Sasa Mišić

- YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS AND THE COMMUNIST*
PARTY OF ITALY, 1945-1956 281

Francesca Rolandi

- "TRIESTE IS OURS": WHEN THE YUGOSLAVS WERE*
GOING SHOPPING IN ITALY 293

Vojislav G. Pavlović

- THE FOREIGN POLICY OF YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1980*
DÉTENTE AS REGIONAL COOPERATION: ITALO-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS 309

- INDEX 351

Sasa Mišić

University of Belgrade

YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY, 1945-1956¹

Abstract: The paper briefly describes the relations between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia/League of Communists of Yugoslavia (KPJ/SKJ) and the Communist Party of Italy in the period from 1945 to 1956. On the basis of accessible sources and available literature, the author attempts to analyse all the phases that the relations of the two parties underwent in the first post-war decade.

Keywords: *Yugoslavia, Palmiro Togliatti, Trieste, Tito, communism*

The relations between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (in 1952 the Party was renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia) and the Communist Party of Italy (PCI) in the period from 1945 to 1956 underwent several phases and changes. In the aftermath of World War Two the central issue was that of the city of Trieste, i.e. the delimitation of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy. Judging by the agreement made after the meeting of the Secretary General of the PCI, Palmiro Togliatti, and Edvard Kardelj in October 1944 in Bari, the leadership of Italian communists consented to the intention of the new Yugoslavia to occupy the city of Trieste and the Venezia Giulia during the final war operations and thus put it under control of Belgrade.²

¹ This article is a result of the work on the project No. 179076 of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia . A part of the research was carried out with the support of the Consorzio per lo Sviluppo Internazionale scholarship of the University of Trieste.

² E. Kardelj, *Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije 1944-1957, sećanja* (Belgrade-Ljubljana: Radnička štampa, Državna založba Slovenije, 1980), 47-49; On relations between the two parties regarding Trieste and the Venezia Giulia during World War Two and in the immedi-

When on 1 May 1945 Yugoslav communist forces entered Trieste, the PCI published a proclamation in the party journal *L'Unità* greeting this act.³ The proclamation signed by Togliatti was a lonely voice of support as all the other political parties, including socialists and liberals, supported the Italian government in its attempts to surrender the city to the administration of the Allies.⁴

To the Yugoslavs' surprise, the Italian communists soon substituted the insistence on the Italian character of Trieste for the welcome extended to the Yugoslav partisans. In fact, since February 1945, Togliatti started preparing the ground through the agency of Moscow for a solution of the Trieste issue which would be different from that agreed with the Yugoslavs in October 1944.⁵ The change of the PCI attitude towards the status of Trieste in terms of determined defence of Italian national interests was primarily brought about by reasons of internal policy. Since early May, the PCI – a part of the coalition Cabinet – underlined the Italian character of the city, but at the same time was trying to solve the problem of Trieste and Venezia Giulia in a manner which would satisfy the Yugoslav communists as well. It was hoped that a “full political and customs autonomy” for Trieste and Venezia Giulia would provide such a solution guaranteed and overseen by both the Yugoslav and Italian government. Togliatti forwarded the plan of a Yugo-Italian “condominium” to the Soviets through a trade union activist and member of the PCI Directorate, *Giuseppe Di Vittorio*, in early August 1945. The Soviets then presented the proposal to the Yugoslavs.⁶

The official Belgrade took a dim view of the Italian communists' change of attitude. As soon as the statements in favour of the Italian character of Trieste started to circulate, the Yugoslav Communist Party (hereinafter PCY) analysed them in detail, and particularly those of certain members of the Party Directorate like Mauro Scoccimarro and Eugenio Reale. It was observed that the majority of the leading cadre of the PCI presented the issue of Trieste as a

ate aftermath see P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa. Il PCI, il confine orientale e il contesto internazionale 1941-1955*, (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2010); L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste (1943-1948)” in F. Gori, S. Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L'Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)* (Roma: Carocci, 1998.); M. Galeazzi, “Togliatti fra Tito e Stalin”, in M. Galeazzi ed., *Roma-Belgrado: gli anni della guerra fredda* (Ravenna: Longo, 1995).

³ *L'Unità*, 1. maggio 1945. In the proclamation written in Rome on 30 April the party leader, Palmiro Togliatti, invited the Triestian workers to welcome Yugoslav partisans as liberators and closely cooperate with them in order to ‘crush’ the resistance of Germans and Italian fascists and liberate Trieste as soon as possible.

⁴ The Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia (hereafter AMIP), Political Archive (hereafter PA), Italy, 1945, box 12, folder 5, document No. 537, Smodlaka to Foreign Ministry, 2 May 1945.

⁵ L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste”, 99-100; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 82.

⁶ The plan envisaged that a definite solution for the Trieste issue be made after 2-3 years by a plebiscite. Di Vittorio a Stalin e Molotov, 5 agosto 1945, in F. Gori, Silvio Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L'Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)*, 242-244. For more details on the plan see L. Gibjanskij, “Mosca, il PCI e la questione di Trieste”, 109-110; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 98-99.

“sentimental issue” for Italian people while the Yugoslav attitude was dubbed “chauvinist”.⁷ The Secretary-General of the Party, Togliatti, belonged to this majority of officials.⁸ As opposed to them, two members of the Directorate - the Under-Secretary, Luigi Longo, and Pietro Secchia - were considered to be taking a pro-Yugoslav stand.⁹ The Slovenian communists were particularly harsh in their assessment of the PCI attitude. Thus the Prime Minister of the Slovenian Government, Boris Kidrič, thought that the attitude of the PCI representatives in the Venezia Giulia, as well as that of the entire Party, was bound to break the unity of Italian and Slovenian communists in the area.¹⁰

At first Yugoslavia refused the proposal for putting Trieste under the joint Italo-Yugoslav governance, and particularly the idea of internationalisation of the city administration with the implied interference of third parties in the final solution of the problem. However, Yugoslavia changed her attitude in the course of time. She gave up the original plan to annex Trieste and then intended to proclaim the city the seventh Yugoslav federal unit. Finally, in late 1945, it was proposed that Trieste be transformed into a free city, along with its port. However, the “supremacy” of Yugoslavia over Trieste would be preserved, most notably by establishing a customs union. The idea originated with Josip Smodlaka, an old diplomat, who was sent by Tito to Italy in order to discuss it with Togliatti. He met the PCI Secretary-General on 9 November in Rome.¹¹ Conveying his impressions from the discussion, Smodlaka informed Tito that the leader of Italian communists had listened to the Yugoslav proposal “with an evident satisfaction”, and said that all other matters would be easier to solve after the agreement on Trieste. Togliatti, however, pointed out that the successful outcome required a favourable atmosphere. Unfortunately, no step was made in that direction and, in that context, Togliatti underlined the “ad hoc raised issue of the sovereignty i.e. annexation of Trieste”. This matter provoked a nationalist reaction in Italy while the “chauvinist journalistic campaign” created a general feeling of resentment against Yugoslavia. That feeling was further exacerbated due to the persecution of Italians and their displacement from Venezia Giulia. Togliatti therefore proposed some steps to be taken towards creating a better atmosphere underlining that something could be done for the exiled and displaced Italians.¹²

⁷ The Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter AJ), collection 507/IX – The Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (hereafter: 507/IX – KMO CKSKJ), No 48-Italy, group I, document 16, Report on the PCI attitude on the Venezia Giulia.

⁸ Ibid. The PCI Directorate headed by Togliatti took such stance because of the “anxiety” that the Party would lose ground to other parties before the elections due to its pro-Yugoslav position.

⁹ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-39, a paper on the PCI political line and leaders.

¹⁰ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-10, Kidrič to Kardelj, 14 September 1945.

¹¹ AJ, 507/IX–KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-13, Smodlaka to Tito, 12 November 1945.

¹² Ibid.

As it became more obvious that the borderline problem would not be resolved easily, the Italian communists attempted a different approach. In April 1946, Longo suggested that Yugoslavia should establish "any kind" of relations with Italy as that would help the PCI at the impending elections in June that year.¹³ At the same time, the issue of the release of Italian prisoners of war in Yugoslavia was raised again with a view to facilitating a better atmosphere in mutual relations and contributing to the increase of Communists' prestige in the Italian general public.¹⁴

The meeting between Tito and Togliatti in November 1946 in Belgrade introduced a new phase in the relations between the two parties. During the meeting a new proposal was mooted: the Italian cities of Gorizia and Monfalcone should pass to Yugoslavia which, in return, would concede the return of Trieste to Italy. Although the meeting did not bring about the solution of the disputable border issue, it nevertheless yielded certain results. The Italian prisoners of war were finally released from Yugoslavia, and Togliatti strongly advocated the commencement of direct negotiations between Yugoslavia and Italy for solution of the Trieste issue. The Yugoslav Communists believed that the meeting between Tito and Togliatti, as well as the statements given by the latter on his return from Belgrade, had a "strong echo" in the Italian public, and that the PCI now wielded "a powerful weapon in the fight against the Italian reaction". This was a contribution to the prospect of direct negotiations between the two states. According to the Yugoslav Minister in Rome, Mladen Iveković, the Tito-Togliatti meeting boosted the reputation of PCI among the Italians, and Italian communists changed "overnight" to a large extent their "negative and harmful attitude" regarding the Yugoslav territorial requirements.¹⁵ Finally, it brought about a rapprochement between the two parties.

A month later another important meeting at the party level occurred. Longo met with the Slovenian Communists' leaders Miha Marinko and Sergej Krajger in Ljubljana on 10 December.¹⁶ Branko Babič, the head of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia,¹⁷ and Giordano Pratolongo, the manager the

¹³ AMIP, PA, 1946, b. 33, f. 6, No. 3939, telegram of Slaven Smodlaka sent from Rome on 4 April 1946, confidential no. 17 (Str. pov. br. 17 – treba resiti dilemu oko dva broja dokumenta. Mislim da bi bilo dobro da ovakve reference imaju uvek isti format ako je moguće: Smodlaka to Foreign Ministry (ako je njima slao). Ja sam do sada tako ispravljao, ali ovde ne pise kome je slao, a mozda se i vi ne slazete sa mojim formatom.).

¹⁴ Ibid, No. 4021, telegram of Slaven Smodlaka sent from Rome on March 30, 1946, (Str. pov. br. 187).

¹⁵ AMIP, PA, 1947, b. 48, f. 10, No. 418030, Report of the envoy Iveković from Rome str. pov. br. 5/47 of 11 September 1947.

¹⁶ AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report of Miha Marinko on the discussion with Luigi Longo of 10 December 1946.

¹⁷ The Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia was founded on 13 August 1945 in Trieste. Since its foundation it was under the control of Slovenian communists. It was headed by Boris Krajger until he was succeeded at the position of the Secretary-General in 1946 by Branko Babič.

Information Office of the PCI in Trieste, were also present.¹⁸ In the first part of the discussion, Longo tried to resolve some organisational issues such as the formation of a „parity coordination body“ between the two parties with a task to harmonise the work of Italian and Yugoslav communists ‘in the matters of common interest’¹⁹. Although he did not explicitly define what ‘common interest’ he had in mind, the Slovenian communists were of opinion that Longo hinted at Trieste. If that was the case, the said body would be “providing guidance“ to the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia. For that reason Longo’s idea met with resistance on the part of Marinko and Krajger who countered it by the fact that two parallel communist organisation could not exist in the territory of the zone A and Trieste itself, under Allied rule, and that the local communist party should preserve its autonomy in region. They feared that such a body would “necessarily degenerate” into a separate leadership independent of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia.²⁰ Longo’s suggestion that the Venezia Giulia’s organisation should include all those who were excluded from it and have adhered to the Pratolongo’s Information Office was also met with resistance.²¹

he party organization in the Trieste area was not the only topic of discussion. Longo raised another issue, which Marinko and Krajger considered to be the main reason for his arrival in Ljubljana, namely the granting of financial assistance to the Italian Communist Party. The problem of the PCI’s financing had already been known.²² The party funds were depleted in the aftermath of the war, and the financial situation was further aggravated due to the costs of the election campaign in 1946. The Yugoslav contribution to the financing of the Italian communists had already been the topic of discussion between the two parties. France Bevc, a member of the Yugoslav mission at the Paris conference, seems to have studied this matter with certain members of the PCI and promised the assistance amounting to 100 million liras. In his conversations with Longo, Marinko confirmed Yugoslav willingness to fulfil that promise and the intention to provide the third of the required amount within a month through Branko Babič. In a letter sent to Belgrade he requested a prompt action and required the first instalment to be transferred as soon as

¹⁸ The Information Centre was formed in April 1946 for the purpose of representing the PCI’s interests in Trieste. P.Karlsen, *Frontirera rossa*, 133; Jože Pirjevec, “*Trst je naš!*” *Boj Slovencev za morje (1848-1954)* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2008) 385.

¹⁹ During August 1946, Togliatti had several discussions with the Yugoslav representatives in Paris. As a result an agreement was reached to form a four-member committee composed of two members from Yugoslav and Italian party. The envisaged ‘committee of four’ would be charged with the regulation of relations between the two parties. P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 167.

²⁰ AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report on discussions with Luigi Longo on 10 December 1946.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² For a detailed account of the PCI’s financing by the Soviet Union see V. Riva, *Oro da Mosca. I finanziamenti sovietici al PCI dalla Rivoluzione d’ottobre al crollo dell’Urss* (Milano: Mondadori, 1999).

possible.²³ The reply from Belgrade was positive so it was decided to supply the PCI with 50 million liras at the earliest opportunity.²⁴ Apart from providing her own funds, Yugoslavia soon became the intermediary through which the Soviet Union sent financial assistance to Italian communists.

The signing of the Peace Treaty in Paris in February 1947 also affected the bilateral party relations and facilitated the formation of the Free Territory of Trieste. In order to harmonise their work in the new circumstances, the PCI and PCY concluded an agreement in Belgrade signed by Milovan Djilas and Luigi Longo.²⁵ It called for the formation of a communist party in the Free Territory of Trieste. By the terms of the agreement, the PCI was obligated to dismiss all its groups there which should then join the new party. Such an arrangement implied that the Pratolongo's Information Office would be no more. The PCI consented to giving certain autonomy to the party organisations operating in the part of the Venezia Giulia which belonged to Italy. On the other hand, the PCY was allowed to take care of the Slovenian minority in that area.²⁶ The end of August saw the formation of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste. The last Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Venezia Giulia, Branko Babič, became a head of the new party whereas Vittorio Vidali sent by the PCI cut another influential figure.

The expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948 proved to be a milestone in relations between the two parties. Like other communist parties, the PCI took part in the attacks against the PCY but without the sharpness and the relentless systematic campaign typical of other Cominform members. On the contrary, during a few weeks after the passing of the anti-Yugoslav Resolution on 28 June 1948, it seemed that there was a divided opinion among the ranks of Italian communists regarding the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Yugoslav diplomats in Italy carefully monitored the developments within the PCI and reported on the attitude taken both by the party members who were "friendly" towards Yugoslavia and those considered as the "old

²³ Because of the lack of liras to be given to the Italians Marinko proposed in a letter sent to the Central Committee of the PCY to obtain the money by dispatching to Trieste "an appropriate volume of merchandise" via the UIVOD trade cooperative (the Import-Export Institute) which did business with the zone A and Trieste. Marinko proposed the trade to be carried out by the Commander of the Military Administration in Opatija, General Vječeslav Holjevac. The latter would then personally hand in the obtained money to Babič who, in turn, would forward it to Pratolongo. AJ, 507/IX-KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-33, Report on the discussions held with Luigi Longo on 10 December 1946.

²⁴ Ibid. Note to the document was written by Aleksandar Ranković (comrade Marko).

²⁵ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CKSKJ, 48/I-56, The agreement between Milovan Djilas and Luigi Longo signed on 7 April 1947; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 189.

²⁶ Ibid. The Agreement envisaged the preservation of the UAIS – Unione antifascista italo-slava. Moreover, this mass organization created in May 1945, which gathered the Slovenians and Italians from the Trieste area, was supposed to expand the forms of its work and cooperate with other political groups in order to defeat the „reactionary groups and agencies of the American and English imperialists“.

enemies” of the KPJ.²⁷ Although all of them condemned certain Yugoslav actions such as the absence from the Cominform meeting in Bucharest there were some who sought for a way to resolve the dispute. A member of the PCI Politburo, Edoardo D’Onofrio, suggested to the Yugoslavs in early July to request an extraordinary session of the Cominform in order to smooth over the difficulties. In Iveković’s opinion, he made the suggestion with the approval of the Secretary-General Togliatti.²⁸ Soon, however, the PCI leadership completely accepted the stance of Cominform. Nevertheless, contacts between the two parties did not entirely cease after 1948. They took place occasionally, and even the likes of the Central Committee member, Eugenio Reale, were engaged in conversations.²⁹ These contacts notwithstanding, the relations between PCI and Yugoslavia conformed to the stand taken by Cominform. It remained so until the rapprochement in the mid-1950s.

Yugoslavia countered by disseminating printed propaganda among the members of the Italian communist party.³⁰ At the same time, the PCY was looking for an ally among the PCI’s dissidents with a view to creating an organisation supportive of Tito. Some individuals and groups of Italian communists, opponents to the official policy or ostracised from the Party, were sounded thanks to the help of certain pro-Yugoslav communists from Trieste, most notably Branko Babič and Eugenio Laurenti. Some former partisans who fought in Yugoslavia during the war and members of socialist parties and groups who disagreed with the Cominform policy towards Yugoslavia were also contacted.

Publishing of journals and magazines which propagated the PCY’s ideas was another attempt at creating a pro-Yugoslav base among the communists

²⁷ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CKSKJ, 48/I-72, Report of Rudi Janhuba from Rome “Reakcija i komentari iz redova KPI u vezi sa rezolucijom Informbiroja” 9 July 1948. Pietro Secchia was the most important person among the “friends” with whom Janhuba had a top secret discussion.

²⁸ AJ, 507/ IX, KOM CK KJ, 48/I-70, Rome Embassy to Belgrade, 5 July 1948, no. 497; Ibid, I-79, Iveković to Tito and Kardelj, 25 March 1949, strictly confidential no. 28/49; M. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito. Tra identità nazionale e internazionalismo* (Roma: Carocci, 2005), 107. The PCI’s intention to play the role of a mediator in the dispute between Yugoslavia and Cominform has been the subject of disagreement among Italian researchers. For more details see M. Galeazzi, *Togliatti e Tito*, 101-113; M. Zuccari, “Il PCI e la ‘scomunica’ del ’48. Una questione di principio”, in F. Gori, Silvio Pons eds., *Dagli Archivi di Mosca, L’Urss, il Cominform e il PCI (1943-1951)*, 175-210; P. Karlsen, *Frontiera rossa*, 197-220.

²⁹ The most important person to maintain contact with the CPI members was Anton Vratuša. He had been in touch with Italian communists ever since the war when he had been in Milan as an envoy of the Osvobodilna fronta under the alias „Professor Urban“. During his stay in Italy at the end of May 1949 he had long discussions with Eugenio Reale on two occasions (AJ, 507/ IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-82, letter on the discussion of Antona Vratuša with Leali (Reale) of June 1, 1949). On one of those occasions, he talked to certain Rokgo, a member of the CPI Central Committee. This person may have been Longo whose name was added in handwriting next to the name Rokgo. (Ibid, III-1, telegram No. 227 of 31 May 1949).

³⁰ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-79, Iveković to Tito and Kardelj, 25 March 1949, strictly conf. no. 28/49.

in Italy. To that end, the Yugoslavs purchased the weekly magazine *Omnibus* published in Milan and started the journal *Politica Nuova* which gathered the pro-Yugoslav communists and socialists from all over Italy.³¹

When the prominent members of the PCI and MPs Valdo Magnani and Aldo Cucchi were excluded from the Party's ranks in early 1951, it acted as an impetus for the fight against Cominform in Italy. The leadership of Italian communists viewed the two men, pejoratively named "Magnacucchi", as "Titoists", the traitors and foreign agents who were in the service of the enemies of Italian working class.³² Yugoslavia, on the other hand, welcomed them warmly. Valdo Magnani had been known to the Yugoslav side since the war when he had been the commissar of a battalion within the Garibaldi brigade and a PCY member.³³ This facilitated the renewal of contact with him in 1950. In mid-1951, Magnani and Cucchi formed the *Movimento dei lavoratori Italiani* which was transformed into the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* (USI) two years later. This movement was under the influence of Yugoslavia and received a constant financial aid from her as long as it existed.³⁴

In Trieste, the 1948 Cominform Resolution caused stir among the communists. It broke a fragile unity of Slovenian and Italian communists within the framework of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste. Italian followers of the Resolution gathered around Vittorio Vidali were the majority and supported by PCI whereas the pro-Yugoslav fraction headed by Branko Babič remained a minority. At the party congress held in 1948 the majority favourable to the Cominform line prevailed. Since then, the party led by Vidali became the striking fist of the Cominform among Italian communists. On the other hand, the "Babič's party" was still active and relied on Yugoslavia. However, in spite of the considerable funds at its disposal, it was not active and often left the initiative to Vidali. For that reason it was criticised in Yugoslavia.³⁵

³¹ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-109, Iveković to Foreign Political Committee of the KPJ, 30 October 1950, no. 566; Iveković to Foreign Political Committee, 13 December 1950, no. 642. The members of the editorial board of the *Politica Nuova* were the former members of the PCI Domenico Davide, Comunardo Morelli and Pierleoni Mazzini.

³² M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga. Togliati e il PCI nella rottura fra Stalin e Tito 1944-1957* (Milano: Mursia, 2009), 237- 260.

³³ AJ, 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, 48/XIII-55, The situation within the progressive movement of/in? Italy, April 1951; Ibid 48/I-104, Note on the discussion with the members of the Central Committee of the PCI; M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 247.

³⁴ The USI received from Yugoslavia a monthly aid of several million liras in the name of "socialist solidarity". An attempt was later made to additionally finance the USI by establishing the OPIMES firm which should do business with Yugoslav enterprises; however, the firm was not profitable. Yugoslavia lost her interest in the movement after the reconciliation with the Soviet Union and Italian communists in 1956, and pleaded for the maintenance of the USI organization in Trieste alone. For more details on relations between Yugoslavia and the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* see AJ, fund 507/IX – KMO CKSKJ, 48/III, documents 1-41.

³⁵ At the end of 1950, an investigation was carried out about the funding of the 'Babič's party' and other political organisations in Trieste which were under the Yugoslav control. The investigation revealed that more than 2 billion liras were spent from late 1946 to the end of 1950. A

The re-establishing of relations between the two parties took place in the mid-1950s following the visit of Nikita *Khrushchev* to Belgrade in 1955. The new policy of the Soviet Union towards Belgrade was accepted by the PCI leadership headed by Togliatti. The Secretary-General of the Party had most probably been familiar with the Soviet decision to improve relations with Belgrade before the arrival of the Soviet delegation in Yugoslavia.

In early 1955 in Trieste contact was made between the representatives of the pro-Yugoslav *Osvobodilna fronta* and some of the Triestian communists.³⁶ Another important step towards the renewal of relations was contact made between Anton Vratuša and Eugenio Reale in mid-1955 as well as the unofficial meetings between a group of the leading people of the PCI headed by Longo and a prominent Yugoslav journalist, Frane Barbijeri.³⁷ It was agreed during these informal talks that the PCI should send a high-level party official to Yugoslavia for an exchange of views with Yugoslav officials. This idea was realised in December the same year. The PCI Directorate member, Giancarlo Pajetta, met the President of the Committee of International Relations of the Socialist Alliance, Veljko Vlahović, on his return from Albania via Belgrade. This discussion, however, did not yield the desired results as, unexpectedly for the Yugoslav side, Pajetta did not show much understanding for the Yugoslav communists' policy; consequently, he was labelled as a "corrupt ward-heeler and Stalinist".³⁸ Nevertheless, the relations continued to improve which became apparent to the general public after the *L'Unità* had published a series of favourable articles on Yugoslavia in early 1956.³⁹

The Yugoslav diplomatic envoys in Italy, however, assessed that the policy of PCI leadership towards Yugoslavia during 1955 was marked by cautious statements. Two groups of leading members of the Central Committee differed in their outlook. The first one, gathered around Togliatti, Longo and Pajetta, took a "more realistic position" and attempted to establish, though "with marked reluctance", some sort of relations with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (hereinafter LCY). This group was opposed by the "orthodox group" of leaders headed by Velio Spano, Edoardo D'Onofrio and Girolamo Li Causi, which maintained that "Khrushchev's statement stemmed exclusively from opportunist reasons of the Soviet foreign policy in the present moment".

large portion of that money was embazzled. AJ, 507/IX, KOM CKSKJ IX, 48/II-9, Report of the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Slovenia sent to Aleksandar Ranković on 23 November 1950.

³⁶ M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 293.

³⁷ AJ, 507/IX –KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-128, Note on the discussions between Eugenio Reale and Anton Vratuša led on 30 July and 3 August 1955. Ibid, 48/I-129, Note on the discussion between Frane Barbijeri and Longo, Pajetta and the comrades, led on 19 October 1955. Barbijeri remained a permanent link between the PCI and Yugoslavia until his departure from Rome in mid-1957.

³⁸ AJ, 507/IX –KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-130, Note on the discussion with Giancarlo Pajetta led in Belgrade on 3 December 1955.

³⁹ The first text published on 15 January was entitled „Il volto di Belgrado è l'immagine della Jugoslavia“; the last one published on 1 February was entitled “Dal sud a nord della Jugoslavia“.

Togliatti was reluctant due to his not being sure about the actual meaning of Khrushchev's statement and thus did not want to take a too definite attitude towards Yugoslavia.⁴⁰

Contrary to its headquarters in Rome, the pro-Cominform Communist Party in Trieste headed by Vidali was losing its ground. Due to the normalisation of Yugo-Soviet relations, the "pressure" exerted by Slovenian membership of the Communist Party which increasingly required the normalisation of relations with Yugoslavia, as well as the formation of the pro-Yugoslav federation of the *Unione dei socialisti italiani* in Trieste shook the "monopoly" of the Communist Party of the Free Territory of Trieste over the Trieste communists.⁴¹

The rapprochement between the two parties and the renewal of official relations followed the visit which Palmiro Togliatti had paid to Belgrade in the last days of May 1956. This visit was deemed to be brought about by the "mutual incentive" on the part of the two parties.⁴² The goal of Togliatti's visit was, according to the party headquarters' analysis and that published in *L'Unità* on the front page on 29 May, to make the first contact and mark the beginning of the "regular relations" with Yugoslav communists. The blame for the rupture in relations was attributed to the "wrong decisions" of the Cominform during the years 1948 and 1949.⁴³

During the meeting in Belgrade attended by the highest officials, including Tito, several important topics were discussed: relations between the PCI and SKJ, the history of these relations and further joint actions. There was also some talk about the problems related to the dissolution of the Cominform, the possibilities for the cooperation between communist parties as well as the intention of the Soviet Union to recreate an organisation similar to Cominform. The Yugoslav party saw the visit as "very beneficial" and Togliatti was said to have been "positive" towards Yugoslavia and "open-minded".⁴⁴

The rapprochement between the two parties continued during the autumn of the same year. It was agreed at the Togliatti-Tito meeting that a party delegation of Italian communists should come to Yugoslavia to have further discussions. On that occasion, a new form of cooperation was envisaged: a group of the PCI "cadres" was to come for vacation to Yugoslavia.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 36, f. 2, No. 4608, Political report for 1955 forwarded to Belgrade by the Rome Embassy on 12 January 1956.

⁴¹ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 36, f. 2, No. 41092, Report of the Consulate General in Trieste about the situation in Trieste in 1955.

⁴² AJ, 507/IX - KMO CKSKJ, 48/I-139, Prica to the heads of diplomatic offices abroad, 6 June 1956. However, the report which Togliatti submitted to the PCI Directorate stated that the invitation for meeting came from the SKJ; M. Zuccari, *Il dito sulla piaga*, 339.

⁴³ *L'Unità*, 29 May 1956.

⁴⁴ 507/IX -KMOV CKSKJ, 48/I-139, Prica to the heads of diplomatic offices abroad, 6 June 1956.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Vratuša to Rome Embassy, private 30 May 1956. The arrival of the first group of leading Italian communists in Yugoslavia for vacation took place in the summer of 1956. This practice

The PCI delegation comprised of nine members and headed by the Deputy Secretary General, Luigi Longo, arrived in Belgrade on 5 October 1956. Since this was the first visit of an official delegation of a Western European communist party to Yugoslavia, much was made of it in Belgrade. The Italian communists were required to influence their government in order to have some bilateral problems solved to Yugoslavia's satisfaction. The guests were also asked to influence the official Rome to recognise the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the issues of Trieste, signed two years before, as definite and not tentative as the Italian government interpreted it. Furthermore, they were supposed to plead for the suspension of the trial of Yugoslav antifascists and their further prosecution and show interest in the situation of the Yugoslav national minority in Italy.

The PCI delegation put forward their own requirements. They asked for the Italian supporters of the Cominform to be released from prison in Yugoslavia, and some other communists to be allowed to return from Italy to the B zone. As for the former issue, Yugoslavia was willing to release the Cominform supporters. It was, however, to be done gradually rather than at once. The request for the return of certain individuals to the B zone was refused on account of the danger that such precedent might be abused later by the Italian government.⁴⁶ The visit proved to be a success, and some seven Italian supporters of the Cominform were indeed released from prison. Interestingly, some Italian officials protested against such proceeding. They argued that it was "inexplicable" that the Italian government through its diplomatic representation in Belgrade could not have managed to arrange the release of a single Italian prisoner while the request of the PCI leaders Togliatti and Longo had been met.⁴⁷ The visit of the PCI's delegation in October 1956 also marked the renewal of the official relations between the two parties.

would be continued in the years to come. It was actually a sort of economic assistance to the Communist Party of Italy and it was indulged in by all the countries/or parties? of the so-called 'people's democracy'.

⁴⁶ 507/IX –KMO CKSKJ, IX 48/I-142, Some questions for the discussion with the PCI delegation.

⁴⁷ AMIP, PA, 1956, f. 37, No. 420009, Note on the discussion between I. Topolski and the Italian Ambassador Guidotti in Belgrade on 22 November 1956.

