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SERBIAN-ITALIAN RELATIONS: History and Modern Times

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Saša MIŠIĆ

**NORMALISATION OF POLITICAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY AFTER
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OF 1954***

Abstract: The text analyzes the course of normalization of political relations between Yugoslavia and Italy in the second part of the 1950s. On the basis of the available archive sources and relevant literature, the author attempts to identify and describe the factors influencing this process. The author particularly points to numerous controversies and disputes in bilateral relations which hampered and slowed down the political rapprochement of Belgrade and Rome, while not neglecting the Cold War context in which the above process was unfolding.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Italy, Cold war, open issues, foreign relations, Alberto Folchi.

When Yugoslavia and Italy, together with the United States of America and the United Kingdom, signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the London Carlton House on 5 October 1954, this ended almost a decade-long and at moments very dramatic Trieste crisis. Although the achieved solution regarding the division of the Free Territory of Trieste to the Yugoslav zone B and Italian zone A seemed to a certain extent provisory, making the numerous unsolved “open” issues the stumbling block in their relations for the next twenty years, the MoU nevertheless *de facto* marked the end of the disputes between the two states and the start of a new period in the development of bilateral relations.

Already since October and particularly during November 1954 both parties attempted to normalise their relations and manifest it in public. The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia Aleš Bebler in his talks with the US chargé d'affaires

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in Belgrade Woodruff Wallner spoke about a new period resulting from the MoU,¹ while the Italian Prime Minister Mario Scelba in his speech on the occasion of the Remembrance Day on 4 November in Trieste spoke about a new direction of Italian politics towards Yugoslavia and its efforts to develop friendly relations with this state.² Attempting to normalise the relations Italians made practical steps as well, so that in early November they initiated the upgrading of diplomatic missions in Belgrade and Rome to the embassy level, which Yugoslavs accepted.³ They were lenient in all negotiations carried out after the MoU.⁴ They also attempted to show the new course towards Belgrade through the changed attitude of diplomatic officials in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – known as Palazzo Chigi – particularly after Gaetano Martino took over the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, i.e. after Vittorio Zoppi left the position of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵ All the above was clearly visible during the reception in the Yugoslav Embassy in Rome organised on 29 November 1954 on the occasion of celebration of the Republic Day. The state leadership, led by the Prime Minister Scelba, Vice President Giuseppe Saragat and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Gaetano Martino with almost complete army general staff stayed unusually long at this reception, obviously wishing to show in that manner the importance which Italy paid to the Yugoslav state in the changed circumstances after the MoU. All this made the Yugoslav Ambassador in Rome Pavle Gregorić say that “today’s Italian government, and particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs Martino, really carry out the politics of creation of the best possible relations with our country”, i.e. that Scelba’s government was the “most suitable” for Yugoslavia and that such situation should be used for resolving all the remaining issues of bilateral relations deriving from the treaties, both the MoU and the Treaty of Peace of 1947.⁶ Gregorić thought that Scelba’s government “really wanted” the normalisation of relations in such a manner as to resolve all open issues of bilateral relations during its first phase, in order to initiate – in the second phase – the political

¹ Gianpaolo Valdevit, *Trieste 1953–1954. L'ultima crisi*, OTE Spa-MGS PRESS Sas, Trieste 1994, 70.

² *L'Unita*, 5 November 1954; Diplomatic archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Political Archives (hereinafter AMIP, PA,) year 1955, box 26, doc. No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

³ Yugoslavia accepted the Italian initiative and on 10 November passed the decision to upgrade its mission to the rank of an embassy, AMIP, PA, 1954, f. 36, doc. No. 414871.

⁴ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

⁵ Poor relations of Yugoslavia with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the signing of the MoU were related to the work of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vittorio Zoppi and “the whole high bureaucracy which has gathered there (in the Ministry – note S.M.) since the times of the fascist regime”. Zoppi was replaced at the position of the Secretary General by Alberto Rossi-Longhi. AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 26, No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

⁶ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41480, Report on the social relations and connections and the official relations of the Embassy in the year 1954.

and military cooperation of the two states.⁷ The normalisation of relations would open “perspectives for political initiatives towards the Balkans” for Italy.⁸ All the above was crowned by the new Italian Ambassador in Belgrade Gastone Guidotti during a ceremonial meeting with the State Under Secretary Srđa Prica in the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late April 1955. On that occasion he said that signing of the MoU was “the third historic opportunity to set the relations between the two neighbouring nations onto the sound grounds”.⁹

When since mid-December 1954 Yugoslavia and Italy started to sign a whole set of economic and financial agreements, it seemed that this time the two states would not miss the historic opportunity which Guidotti spoke about.¹⁰ However, very soon it turned out that intensive cooperation in the economic sphere – above else in the field of trade relations – which was based on geographic connection, common border, close markets and traditionally complementary economic structures needed not to be accompanied with simultaneous normalisation in other fields of bilateral cooperation, particularly the political one.

Judging by the initiatives whose main promoter was the United States of America, it seemed that the military relations would become the main field of cooperation besides the economy. Although by concluding the Balkan Pact Yugoslavia already became indirectly involved in the Western defence alliance, to the state leadership in Belgrade it very soon became clear that the main intention of the USA was to entirely “incorporate” Yugoslavia into its defence system after the achievement of the Trieste agreement, i.e. to connect it as strongly as possible to the NATO pact, for the defence of the strategically important Ljubljana direction.¹¹ One of the ways to indirectly bind Belgrade to the Western military alliance was to establish Yugoslav-

⁷ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Archive of Yugoslavia, Cabinet of the President of the Republic, fund No. 837 (hereinafter AJ, KPR), I-5-b/44-2, Note about the talks of comrade Srđa Prica, State Under Secretary, with the Italian Ambassador Gastone Guidotti on 29 April 1955. The previous two historic opportunities were the treaties between Yugoslavia and Italy signed in Rapallo in 1920 and Rome in 1924.

¹⁰ The signing of an Agreement on 18 December 1954 on the definite regulation of all mutual obligations of economic and financial character deriving from the Peace Treaty and the successive agreements – which solved the issues of war reparations, restitution, social insurance, civil and military pensions, property, outstanding private obligations and many others – was followed on 31 March 1955 in Rome by signing of an entire set of agreements pertaining to the regulation of trade exchange. The National Archives, London, Foreign Office (hereinafter TNA, F.O. 371), folder No. 118024, doc. No. RY 10322/8.

¹¹ Already in mid-September 1954, on the eve of signing of the MoU, the Deputy Under Secretary of the State Department and the person in charge for particularly sensitive operations Robert Murphy visited Belgrade. In several talks with the state leadership headed by Tito he attempted to convince Yugoslavs of benefits from signing the agreement with Italy for solving the Trieste issue. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-25, Reception of the Deputy Permanent Under Secretary of the State Department Robert Murphy, 17 September 1954.

Italian military cooperation which became possible after the signing of the MoU removed the largest obstacle on that road.¹² Yugoslavs did not reject the possibility for military cooperation with Italy, but kept emphasising that this was “the most delicate” issue which first requested the creation of an “atmosphere of mutual trust”, that this process had to be “incremental” and realised through “direct contact”.¹³

In October 1954 the US Ambassador James Riddleberger also spoke about this topic with Tito. Although, in his own words, he brought no precise instructions from the consultancies in the USA, he nevertheless presented an entire set of “possibilities” for connecting Yugoslavia with the NATO, i.e. Italy in the military sphere. The Ambassador started his presentation with a proposal for Yugoslavia to join the NATO, which both collocutors rejected as an impossible solution. Then he presented a set of other possibilities, such as the cooperation of the Balkan Pact and the NATO, i.e. the Italian membership in the Balkan Pact. Upon proposing that Yugoslavia and Italy should start direct bilateral talks, Tito agreed that it would be “the best solution”, with a note that this should be done gradually “with contacts, exchange of opinions, consultancies”.¹⁴ When Riddleberger finally proposed the preparations for subsequent serious talks about military issues between Yugoslavia and Italy to start by visits of low-ranked officials, Tito – with a smile – replied that the cooperation with Italians should nevertheless start with contacts in the field of culture.¹⁵

The Western effort after the resolution of the Trieste issue to “fill the gaps in the Western defence system and attempt to incorporate Yugoslavia therein”¹⁶, through encouraging and even rushing the military contacts between Yugoslavia and

¹² This initiative became even more obvious after the visit of Harold Stassen, Director of the US Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), another American envoy who came to Belgrade at the end of October. Stassen noted to the Assistant State Secretary Aleš Bebler that the solution to the Trieste issue “opens a perspective for the development of relations with Italy in the field of the economy and “security” while he offered Tito the mediation of the US Government in order to start the talks about military issues. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/107-28, Reception of Harold Stassen, the FOA Director, 26 October 1954.

¹³ Ibid. After the Belgrade talks, Harold Stassen submitted a memorandum to the US President Dwight Eisenhower advocating for the USA to encourage Yugoslav-Italian talks about common defence of the Ljubljana gate in the presence of the big powers – USA, Great Britain and France – but without the NATO auspices. (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Volume VIII, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean (hereinafter: FRUS, Vol. VIII), Document 711, Memorandum by the Director of the Foreign Operations Administration (Stassen) to the Secretary of State, 1 November 1954, available at: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v08/d711> (visited on 18 May 2014).

¹⁴ AJ, KPR, I-3-a,/107-29, Reception of the Ambassador Riddleberger, 16 October 1954. The same idea was presented by Edvard Kardelj in the talks with the British Ambassador Frank Roberts. TNA, F.O 371, 118024, RY10322/1.

¹⁵ AJ, KPR, I-3-a,/107-29, Reception of the Ambassador Riddleberger, 16 October 1954; FRUS, Vol. VIII, Document 714, the Ambassador in Yugoslavia (Riddleberger) to the Department of State.

¹⁶ AMIP, PA, 1955, b.26, doc. No. 41405, Annual report of the diplomatic mission in Rome for the year 1954.

Italy, clashed with the final phase of the process of normalisation of relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Thus, in fact, the normalisation of relations with Italy went in parallel with the normalisation of relations with the East, and in case of the Yugoslav-Italian talks about military cooperation the improvement of relations with Soviets made Belgrade to lose interest in military cooperation with its Western neighbour. Although the Italians through Guidotti as well as through the British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery – who visited Belgrade on several occasions – attempted during 1955 and 1956 to pose the question of bilateral military talks to the Yugoslavs, this was not met with understanding.¹⁷ Moreover, with increasingly better relations with Soviets and the socialist camp, Yugoslavs started to perceive these endeavours of the West and Italians with increasing suspicion that their background was hiding the old aspirations of Rome for the establishment of domination over the Balkans and Yugoslavia, all under the auspices and on the account of the West.¹⁸ Thus the requests for military cooperation started to be ignored.¹⁹

The failure to start bilateral talks on security issues negatively influenced the normalisation of political relations, which were also relieved with difficulty from the burden of the “unpleasant residuals of the past”.²⁰ As the British diplomacy correctly observed, the Yugoslav-Italian relations were a “sensitive plant” which required a permanent care.²¹

The major obstacle on the road towards a faster normalisation of political relations – besides the general Cold-War climate – was the entire set of unsolved bilateral issues related to the fulfilment of all provisions of the treaty which the two states concluded after World War II. The Peace Treaty and the MoU did not solve all the disputable issues between Yugoslavia and Italy. On the contrary, many issues were left pending and waited to be resolved in the coming period. The largest portion of them pertained to the territories which were annexed to Yugoslavia after World War II or to the borderland between the two states. They were divided into two groups. The first one consisted of the issues deriving from the contractual obligations: final definition and demarcation of the border; the problem of ethnic minorities visible through an unregulated minority status at both sides of the border; restitution

¹⁷ On his meeting with Montgomery in January 1956, Tito definitely emphasised that that kind of talks with the Italians was not possible. TNA, F.O, 371, 1956, 124 286, RY 10322/25G, Secret.

¹⁸ AMIP, PA, 1957, f. 40, No. 44347, Relations Yugoslavia-Italy, 27 February 1957. Italy's intention to establish military cooperation with Yugoslavia directly or through joining the Balkan Pact was observed through the prism of attempts of this state to take over the control over the Pact in cooperation with Turkey. (AMIP, PA, 1957, b. 40, doc. No. 413789, Italian foreign policy in Martino's time.)

¹⁹ Increasingly obvious suspicions of Yugoslavia warned the British who in the beginning were also the advocates of the idea about the Yugoslav-Italian military talks, to discourage in a certain manner the intention of the Italian state leadership headed by the Prime Minister Antonio Segni and the Minister of Defense Paolo Emilio Taviani in mid-1956 to send the Italian Chief of Staff to Yugoslavia. TNA, F.O, 371, 1956, 124 286, RY 10322/25G, Secret.

²⁰ AMIP, PA, 1968, b. 67, doc. No. 441592, Yugoslav-Italian relations, 29 December 1967.

²¹ TNA, F. O. 371, 1955, 118024, RY10322/1.

of cultural-historical and artistic heritage; some unresolved issues of the optants. Another group consisted of non-contractual obligations: property-financial issues from the annexed territory and the former B zone; conclusion of a consular convention and legal aid conventions; conclusion of a cultural convention and many others.²²

The most disputable issue of the bilateral relations was the demarcation. The border line which went from the tripoint of Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria to the Trieste Gulf, about 216 km long, was by its legal character and the diversity of international instruments it was based upon, divided into several sectors: the north sector, from the tripoint of Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia to the tripoint of Yugoslavia, Italy and the former FTT; the part of the border between the former A zone and Yugoslavia; the border between the former A and B zones and the border in the territorial waters and in the Trieste Gulf. The first two sectors were regulated by the Peace Treaty. In these sectors several disputable points remained non-demarcated: Colovrat, Monte Sabotino, Collio and Gorizia. On the other side, the border between the former A and B zones was regulated by the MoU, whereas the demarcation of the territorial waters and the Trieste Gulf had not been resolved by any treaty whatsoever.²³

Apart from the demarcation, a key issue of bilateral relations that had to be solved pertained to the regulation of the status of the national minorities. This particularly pertained to Slovenes in Italy. The specificity of this minority community was that it lived in the territories of three Italian provinces (Trieste, Gorizia and Udine) and their status was regulated in different manners depending on their place of residence. Trieste Slovenes enjoyed the most of rights, since they were under protection of the Special Statute of 1954 which was annexed to the MoU, those living in the territory of Gorizia enjoyed certain rights envisaged by the Italian legislation, while the minority members who lived in the Udine province were in the worst position as the Italian state had not recognised the minority status at all. Yugoslavia attempted to resolve an entire set of issues related to the status of its minority members and deriving from the provisions of the MoU and the Special Statute. This covered numerous issues in the field of education, introduction of bilingualism and bilingual sign-boards, giving Slovenes a possibility for obtaining public functions, return of Slovene cultural centres, opening of the Slovene credit bank in Trieste, granting assistance to Slovene cultural institutions and many others.²⁴

Entirely different was the situation with the Italian minority in Yugoslavia. Since the end of World War II there was an ongoing process of its depopulation, with permanent emigration from the territories which under the Peace Agreement and the Memorandum were annexed to Yugoslavia. The largest number of people

²² AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-15, Reception of the Ambassador Alberto Berio, 5 March 1960.

²³ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-46, Discussion material for the visit of the President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat to the SFRY in October 1969.

²⁴ More on this: Nevenka Troha, *Položaj slovenske narodne skupnosti v Italiji in italijanske v Sloveniji med letoma 1954 in 1990*, Na oni strani meje. Slovenska manjšina v Italiji in njen pravni položaj: zgodovinski in pravni pregled 1866–2004, Zbornik radova, Knjižnica Annales Majora, Koper 2004, 141–166.

emigrated during the so-called “Big Exodus”, but this process continued after the signing of the MoU as well. Thus out of several hundred thousand people in the mid-1950s, their number was reduced to only around 30 thousand, with the tendency of a further decrease.²⁵

Italians also had their requests in relation to their minority in Yugoslavia; among the most complicated ones was the resolution of the property issue. As mentioned before, the Agreement of 18 December 1954 solved the largest part of mutual obligations of economic and financial character deriving from the Peace Treaty and the successive agreements. The December agreement also resolved the issue of restitution of the immovable property of the Italians who opted for Italy and offered their property for sale. Pursuant to the decision of the Yugoslav state authorities of January 1955, this property became the ownership of Yugoslavia.²⁶ There remained, however, an important issue of the so-called Italian free assets, i.e. the property which was not offered to Yugoslavia for purchase by its owners.²⁷ The same problem appeared with the property of Italians who emigrated from the former B zone. The MoU stipulated that the Italians who wanted to move to Italy and take Italian citizenship could sell their property in the territory of the former B zone within a two-year deadline. However, many of them did not manage to sell their property within the prescribed deadline due to a huge offer and low demand. Besides the above mentioned property, another problem pertained to the property which had not been encompassed by various restrictive measures (nationalisation, confiscation, agrarian reform).²⁸

The task of dealing with the national minority problems was assigned to the mixed Yugoslav-Italian committee for the ethnic groups’ issues, stipulated by the Special Statute of 1954. The Rule of Procedures of this committee was drafted already in February 1955, and the government in Belgrade ratified it on 28 June of the same

²⁵ About the exodus of the Italians from Yugoslavia: *Darko Dukovski, Dva egzodusa: hrvatski (1919–1941) i talijanski (1943–1955)*, *Adrias*, no.15 (December 2008) 145–165; Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l’esilio*, BUR, Milano 2006.

²⁶ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-2, The issue of execution of the agreement with Italy of 18 December 1954.

²⁷ On the basis of the agreement between the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) and the Italian Republic about the regulation of certain issues pertaining to the options, as well as the Agreement on the transfer of optants’ funds between the FPRY and the government of the Republic of Italy of 23 December 1950, it was regulated that Yugoslavia should purchase all free immovables i.e. the assets not under the regime of confiscation or nationalisation by the Yugoslav state (which its owners-optants for Italy offered for purchase through the Italian government). The number of such assets exceeded 5,000. However, there were Italians from the territories annexed to Yugoslavia who did not want to sell their property. Their number amounted to more than 3,000. AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-2, Letter to the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of 26 April 1955.

²⁸ The value of this property in the former B zone according to the assessment of the Yugoslav side amounted to five million dollars. These were large objects such as farms, industrial plants and hotels. AJ, KPR, I-5-b I-5-b/44-6. The unresolved issues between Yugoslavia and Italy which might be the subject of future negotiations, DSIP, Belgrade, 17 December 1958.

year.²⁹ However, the Italian government prolonged its approval, which caused doubts among the Yugoslavs that Rome was not interested in the constitution thereof and that the reason for this was the ever smaller number of Italians who lived in the former B zone and who had to be encompassed by the Special Statute.³⁰

Some important issues of bilateral relations bearing a strong political importance were nevertheless resolved. This above else pertains to the Agreement on local border traffic signed in August 1955 – known under the name of the Udine Agreement – which regulated the movement of people and goods in the area around Trieste and in the borderland. Both sides were satisfied with the results of this agreement since it functioned without major problems and thanks to it more than seven million border crossings were registered in both directions until the end of 1956. Another agreement was the Fishing Agreement. This agreement *per se* belonged to the domain of economic relations, however having a large political importance, particularly for the government in Rome as it enabled a part of the Italian population that dealt with fishing on the Adriatic coast to get a job.³¹ Since the first Fishing Agreement of 1949 was valid for only a year, after its expiry Yugoslavia often confiscated Italian fishing boats which continued to hunt in its territorial waters. The confiscation of the fishing boats caused political disputes as well, so the Italians were very eager to conclude a new agreement. In order to attract Yugoslavs, the same as in the time of signing of the first fishing agreement, Italy linked its signing to the realisation of an important credit-investment agreement which Yugoslavia and Italy had already negotiated and which was important for Belgrade. Finally, on 1 March 1956, after months of painful negotiations, the two states signed three treaties: the Special Delivery Agreement, Technical Cooperation Agreement and Fishing Agreement.

Both Belgrade and Rome were satisfied with the achieved agreements as an important step in consolidation of their bilateral relations which should expand the economic cooperation and be a decisive moment in the process of normalisation of political relations.³² The agreements had a broader value which exceeded their bilateral importance. Namely, the beginning of 1956 was marked by signing of a set of economic agreements between Yugoslavia and the USSR, i.e. the socialist states of Eastern Europe, worth several million dollars.³³ This economic link of Belgrade to

²⁹ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 27. doc. No. 416668, Note for the talks between Srđa Prica and the Italian Ambassador Guidotti, 10 December 1955.

³⁰ AMIP, PA, 1955, b. 29, doc. No. 414329, Office of the FPRY representative in Trieste on 21 October 1955. Str. Pov.br. 73/55 /strictly confidential/.

³¹ Under the Fishing Agreement Yugoslavia granted a concession to Italy for fishing of Italian fishermen in Yugoslav territorial waters in return for remuneration. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-46, Discussion material for the visit of the President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat to the SFR Yugoslavia in October 1969.

³² In words of the Deputy Prime Minister Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo, the agreements should not only expand the economic relations but also “deepen” the political cooperation. (TNA, F. O. 371, 124 320, RY 11322/6.) Like the Yugoslavs, Italians were “extremely” satisfied with the achieved agreements. *Ibid*, RY 11322/2.

³³ TNA, F. O. 371, 124320, RY 11322/4.

Soviets upset the Western countries, so in that sense the March agreements were perceived as a kind of restoring the balance in the Yugoslav foreign policy.³⁴

However, the Italians became disappointed very quickly. Namely, within the framework of the improvement of relations with the USSR and the socialist states of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia started the normalisation of its relations with Western European communist parties. On the eve of his visit to Moscow for a meeting with Khrushchev in June 1956, when party relations with Soviets were established, Josip Broz met with the leader of the Communist Party of Italy Palmiro Togliatti in late May in Belgrade.³⁵

In Italy, where there was a strong interest for the renewal of relations between the Yugoslav and Italian communists, the state authorities showed no understanding for this act because Togliatti was considered an “enemy No. 1” of the Italian government, so the Yugoslavs received the leader of the Italian communists in an official visit before any other Italian politician from the ruling parties. They also pointed to the fact that the visit took place in the time of intensive attempts of the government in Rome to work on the improvement of bilateral relations and that this would challenge the sincerity of the Yugoslav politics towards Italy.³⁶ Since Togliatti’s visit and throughout the coming period, many Yugoslav contacts with Italian opposition leftist parties were a permanent obstacle to the establishment of political cooperation between the two states.³⁷

In an aim to counter the objections that Belgrade was developing relations with the Italian opposition only, the Yugoslav political elite extended an invitation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Martino to visit Yugoslavia. The attempt to reach the exchange of visits of high state officials was aimed at establishing contacts with the leading Christian Democratic Party and other parties which participated in the government, with which there was no cooperation until then. Finally, in the background of the invitation to Martino there was Belgrade’s opinion that full normalisation of political relations and a resolution of open bilateral issues require a meeting of high-level officials. The Italian government did not accept the invitation for the Minister Martino to visit Belgrade. The Yugoslav contacts with Italian communists, who were not only the opponents to the government but also to the Italian political system, were only one of the reasons for which the official Rome approached the issue of establishment of political relations with a lot of caution and distrust. The

³⁴ The Italian representative in the NATO Alessandrini informed the NATO members of signing of the agreement at the meeting held on 7 March 1956. Alessandrini thought that agreements had a broader importance and that they would help the Yugoslav President to maintain the balance between the East and West, particularly because of Tito’s forthcoming visit to Moscow. TNA, F. O. 371, 124320, RY 11322/3; Minutes from the NATO Council meeting available at: http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/2/6/26332/C-R_56_10_ENG.pdf (visited on 7 May 2014).

³⁵ Togliatti was the first leader of a communist party which after 1948 paid an official visit to Yugoslavia without being a member of a state delegation.

³⁶ AMIP, PA, 1956, b. 37, doc. No. 49575, Note about the talks of Berislav Žulj with Orlandi in Rome on 30 May 1956.

³⁷ Already in autumn 1956 Yugoslavia was visited by a high delegation of the ICP headed by the Vice President of the Party Luigi Longo.

reasons were in fact numerous: negative experience from the recent past, relations of Yugoslavia with the USSR, and the socialist camp, different social systems between the two countries. To all this, one should add a very negative mood against Yugoslavia which prevailed in Trieste and in the border area, which the ruling structures in Rome used as a good excuse for postponing political initiatives of Yugoslavia which during 1956 started to arrive from Belgrade. Hence upon the request of Yugoslavia to establish contacts at the political realm, messages from Rome said that the conditions for such high-level meeting did not mature yet, and they proposed a start from a lower level, with a visit of Albert Folchi, one of the Under Secretaries in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁸ The rejection to realise Martino's visit was very badly received by the highest Yugoslav state officials who were "disappointed, and even insulted" by such Italian gesture.³⁹ Consequently, the full normalisation of political relations had to be waited for a while.

In early 1957 Yugoslavs became more and more skeptic about the establishment of political relations, so that the emphasis, as before, was placed on further development of economic cooperation. In the field of politics, the old suspicions about the intentions of the Western neighbour did not disappear. The opinion of the Yugoslav State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (DSIP) was that Italy, regardless of the changed international circumstances after World War II, did not yet divest itself from "some tendencies" which stemmed from the period when the official Rome considered that Italy should have a dominant role in the territory which Yugoslavia belonged to.⁴⁰ The main reason was the bloc affiliation of Italy, most obvious in its consistent attempts to start with military cooperation with the aim of "approaching" and "incorporation" of Yugoslavia into the military-strategic concepts of the West. The ultimate goal of the Italians was further enhancement of the influence and affirmation of this state as an "important, if not the decisive factor in the balance of powers in the eastern Mediterranean".⁴¹ The main obstacle for the Italians on that road was the socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore the DSIP's attitude was that there were no "particularly favourable perspectives" for the development of political relations.⁴² Nevertheless, in March 1957, Belgrade resumed the issue of Martino's visit,⁴³ and next month it started to probe the ground for the visit of an Italian parliamentary delegation to Yugoslavia.⁴⁴

³⁸ AMIP, PA, Italy, 1956, b. 37, doc. No. 48337, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 27 May 1956; *Ibid.*, doc No. 411415, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 14 July 1956; *Ibid.*, doc. No. 412818, Telegram of the Embassy in Rome sent to Belgrade on 6 August 1956.

³⁹ TNA, F. O. 371, 124304, RY 1051/20.

⁴⁰ AMIP, PA, 1957, b. 40, doc. No. 44347, Relations Yugoslavia-Italy.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-5, Note about the talks of the Under Secretary of State Mladen Iveković with the Ambassador Guidotti on 13 March 1957.

⁴⁴ The initiative came from Antun Vratuša after his visit to Italy in February 1957 (AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-5). The idea was conveyed to Italians by the Under Secretary Iveković in the talks with the Ambassador Guidotti in April the same year. *Ibid.*

Although the two states in principle agreed that the visit of the parliamentary delegation should be realised in October that same year, the unstable interior situation in Italy, crisis and fall of the Segni's government hampered the realisation of this idea. Considering that in the new government, led by the Prime Minister Adone Zolli, Pella replaced Martino on the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Yugoslav opinion was that the new minister should not be extended an invitation to visit Belgrade.⁴⁵ There were no changes in the issue of the visit of the Italian parliamentary delegation as well. Besides internal instability in Italy and the beginning of electoral campaign for parliamentary election that was to be held in May 1958, one of the reasons for postponing the parliamentary visit was the Yugoslav recognition of East Germany, which led to colder relations between Yugoslavia and Italy and served Rome as an excuse to postpone the talks about the visit of the parliamentary delegation.⁴⁶

That the establishment of political relations was to a high extent depending on and conditioned by the actual foreign political position of both countries – particularly Yugoslavia – is even more obvious from the opening of the issue of installing missile bases in Italy which marked the first days of spring 1958. Namely, after the speech of the Italian Minister of Defence Paolo Emilio Taviani in previous December and the wording of the Italian press, it became obvious that Italy would allow the building of launching pads for missiles with nuclear warheads in its territory, on 21 March 1958. Yugoslavia addressed an *aide-memoire* through its Ambassador in Rome Darko Černej, expressing its strong protest against such an act.⁴⁷

Belgrade motivated its protest against the installation of missile bases in the Italian territory, particularly in its northeastern part close to the Yugoslav border, for numerous reasons. It seems that the least intention was to disturb the improved overall bilateral relations – particularly the economic ones – which in Yugoslavs' opinion would not be seriously damaged by this move, having in mind that only a few weeks before it was publicly emphasised on several occasions that they were very good.⁴⁸ Besides the obvious concern for its own security, Yugoslavia also had in mind its overall foreign political position, as well as the desire to play a more significant role in the bipolar world by raising its voice against such an act which led to the bloc division of the world and emphasising the importance of hearing the voice of the non-bloc countries as well.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report on the visit to Yugoslavia of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi held between 11 and 14 November.

⁴⁶ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 46, doc. No. 421156, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 4 September 1958.

⁴⁷ For the text of the *aide-memoire* see: AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-6.

⁴⁸ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 47661, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 28 March 1958.

⁴⁹ In the opinion of the US Embassy in Belgrade, Italy could have only been a "scapegoat" in such Yugoslav politics, whereas the actual aim was that Yugoslavia as a "neutral" country should receive more space in a debate between the East and West about the bases and missiles by directly

The Yugoslav *aide memoire* provoked a vigorous reaction of the state leadership of Italy, particularly of its Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella. At the same time, indignation because of interference into the interior issues of Italy was mixing with the fear of Rome that Belgrade would, for the reason of strengthening its own security, itself resort to the purchase of nuclear weapons which in that moment it could get only from the East, i.e. from Soviets. This was a pessimist impression of the Ambassador Guidotti as well, and he got it after a set of meetings he had held with the leading people of the Yugoslav DSIP, including the State Secretary Koča Popović.⁵⁰

The fears that Yugoslavs might return to the Soviet orbit were dispelled by the events at the Seventh Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia held in late April 1958, which resulted in an open break-up with the USSR.⁵¹ When it became entirely clear that the relations between Yugoslavs and Soviets again fell into a crisis, Belgrade attempted to re-establish good relations with Italy. These attempts of Yugoslavia were also influenced by unofficial messages from the Palazzo Chigi which underlined that out of all Western countries Italy was able to do the most to help Yugoslavia and that it also felt indirectly threatened by the most recent pressure on Yugoslavia. Thus it was suggested that the moment was mature for strengthening the friendly relations between the two countries. Such statements made Ambassador Černež to conclude that Italy “attempts to use the opportunity to act as much as possible as Yugoslavia’s link with the West”.⁵² Until then reserved Italian press started to write more positively about Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav party did not want to “owe”, so in the leading article in *Borba*, published in early June on the occasion of the Italian Republic Day, no single word mentioned the missile bases issue; instead, it emphasised that the relations between the two countries were “an extraordinary example of practical implementation of the active coexistence principle” and their border as “one of the most open in the world”.⁵³

However, the pre-electoral situation in Italy, the parliamentary election held in May 1958 and the post-electoral combinations disabled the starting of particular initiatives for the establishment of political cooperation until the formation of the new government in Rome. Already after the news that the government was formed

involving one NATO member into the dispute, in order to “win the main event ticket”. FRUS, 1958–1960, Vol. X, doc. 121, Despatch from the Embassy in Yugoslavia to the Department of State, 10 March 1958, available at: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p2/d121> (visited on 20 May 2014).

⁵⁰ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-6, Note about the talks of the State Secretary Koča Popović with the Italian Ambassador Guidotti, held on 9 April 1958.; On Guidotti’s impressions after the talks with the DSIP Under Secretary Srđa Prica see: TNA, F.O 371, 136821, RY 10322/1 and RY 10322/2.

⁵¹ For more details about the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR see: Dragan Bogetić, *Drugi jugoslovensko-sovjetski sukob. Sudar Titove i Hruščovljeve percepcije politike miroljubive koegzistencije*, Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961, ed. Slobodan Selinić, Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, Belgrade 2008, 49–65.

⁵² AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 411621, telegram from Rome No. 406 of 14 May 1958; Ibid, b. 46, doc. No. 414222, telegram from Rome No. 453, 12 June 1958.

⁵³ *Borba*, 3 June 1958.

on the first day of July 1958, headed by the Christian Democrat Amintore Fanfani (who kept the foreign affairs department as well) and with participation of the Social Democratic Party of Italy, Yugoslavs thought that the new government, "the most leftist in the last ten years", was ready to establish political contacts with Belgrade. This opinion was enhanced after the exposé of the new Prime Minister who put Yugoslavia among the neutral countries together with Austria and Switzerland⁵⁴, as well as during the first meetings of Yugoslav diplomats in Rome with Fanfani who kept emphasising that he was strongly committed to do everything to bring the bilateral political relations to the level of a "sincere friendship".⁵⁵ Therefore already after mid-July the manner of establishing political contacts between the two states started to be carefully considered. The plan envisaged a series of bilateral visits which had already been on the agenda but never occurred. Above else this pertained to the visit of the Italian parliamentary delegation, i.e. the visit of the Under Secretary Folchi which he himself offered in order to commence the political cooperation.⁵⁶ These visits should have been an introduction into a broader political cooperation which would imply the visits of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two states. The visit of the Yugoslav President to Italy should be the culmination. The visits would not only mark the establishment of cooperation at the political level but, in the opinion of the DSIP, they would lead to faster resolution of certain unresolved issues of bilateral relations.⁵⁷

In the opinion of the Embassy in Rome, it was possible to organise Folchi's visit already in autumn. In contrast to the previous period, Folchi became more acceptable for Yugoslavs as a person who could establish political relations, because a large number of votes he won at the May election significantly improved his reputation in the Christian Democratic Party. Moreover, in the new government he was the only political Under Secretary in the Italian MFA so he was believed to take over the leadership over this department, particularly because of his close relations with the President of the Republic Gronchi. Finally, Folchi was the only one in the highest ranks of the Palazzo Chigi whose view about the relations with Yugoslavia was positive and who advocated their improvement.⁵⁸ Josip Broz also agreed with the plan to realise Folchi's visit, which would lead towards the visits of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, i.e. Presidents of the two states. In the talks with the ambassador Černež he stated that it was "desirable and possible, in addition to the development of economic relations, to improve and enhance the exchange of views about political issues and check the possibility for closer cooperation in the issues in which it is possible to obtain an agreement".⁵⁹

⁵⁴ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 416654, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 11 July 1958.

⁵⁵ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 46, doc. No. 419225, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 10 August 1958.

⁵⁶ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 416454, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 5 July 1958.

⁵⁷ AMIP, PA, 1958, b. 45, doc. No. 419080, Note about the envisaged bilateral political visits between the FPRY and Italy of 19 August 1958.

⁵⁸ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report on the visit to Yugoslavia of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi held between 11 and 14 November.

⁵⁹ AJ, KPR, 1958, I-5-b/44-6, Note from the talks on the occasion of reporting of the comrade Ambassador Černež to the comrade President on 2 September 1958.

Even when it seemed that there were no obstacles on the road towards the definite establishment of political cooperation, they nevertheless appeared. This time it was not about complex international circumstances or internal instabilities, but again about unresolved bilateral issues. First during the month of October the Italians started to condition Folchi's visit by signing of the new Fishing Agreement, whereas Yugoslavs responded by the request for resolution of a set of economic-political issues such as the beginning of trade negotiations and resolution of issues important for the position of the Slovene minority in Italy, i.e. the building of the Slovene Cultural Centre in Trieste, opening of the Trieste Credit Bank and many others. When the new Fishing Agreement was signed on 20 November⁶⁰, the bilateral relations became seriously aggravated by the resumption of the criminal proceedings against the members of the so-called Beneš squad.⁶¹ On the eve of the trial scheduled for December 1958 in Florence, Yugoslavia in the last days of November addressed a protest note to the Italian side pointing to serious consequences which the trial might entail for bilateral political relations. An aggressive news campaign started at the same time and the DSIP received a large number of letters in which citizens and organisations expressed their disagreement with the Italian act.⁶² The dispute further deepened in early 1959 and Slovenes particularly insisted on the hard-line Yugoslav attitude.⁶³ This problem soon put on hold all the attempts to start the cooperation at the political realm.⁶⁴ The trial against the members of the Beneš squad was carried out at the time of one of many internal crises in Italy, which ended in mid-February with the fall of the Prime Minister Fanfani and the formation of the new Christian Democratic government headed by Segni and Pella as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although Belgrade assessed Segni's government as more right-wing oriented than the previous one, changes of politics towards Yugoslavia were not expected, but a delay and more

⁶⁰ Dragan Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije 1956–1961*, Institut za savremenu istoriju, Belgrade 2006, 302.

⁶¹ The trial against the group of about 50 Italian partisans from the former Beneš squad, mostly of Slovene nationality, for the crimes committed during World War II started already in mid-1955, but Yugoslavia, through pressure on Italy, managed to prevent its holding until December 1958. In the same time, it persistently requested the application of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty which envisaged amnesty for this type of acts.

⁶² AMIP, PA, 1959. b. 50, doc. No. 414 358, III Dept., Note of the Head Slavoljub Petrović about the talks with Farache on 23 May 1959.

⁶³ In the words of Italian diplomats in Belgrade, Slovenes exercised strong pressure on the Belgrade government and prevented the newly appointed Ambassador in Rome Mihaljlo Javorski to take over the duty before the dispute was resolved. At the same time, they unsuccessfully attempted to make Kardelj issue a public statement on this occasion. TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/3.

⁶⁴ In January 1959 the Speaker of the Italian Parliament Giovanni Leone opened the issue of the visit of an Italian parliamentary delegation to Yugoslavia, while the Ambassador Javorski spoke on this same issue with the President of the Senate Cesare Merzagora. The message from Belgrade, however, was not to start the issue of the visit before the end of the trial to the Beneš squad. AMIP, PA, 1959, f. 50, doc. No. 41969; doc. No. 41969; doc. No. 42753.

sluggish resolution of the open bilateral issues.⁶⁵ Since the first days of the new government it was obvious that there was an intention to start with the establishment of political contacts with Yugoslavia. Besides public statements, such as Pella's in his presentation before the parliament, the newly appointed Yugoslav Ambassador in Italy Mihajlo Javorski could see this well in his talks with the Prime Minister Segni, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella and the administration of the Palazzo Chigi.⁶⁶ All of them emphasised the need for the closest possible cooperation with Yugoslavia and the desire for establishment of political contacts. The climate improved further with the final signing of the Protocol on trade exchange on 24 March, which made significant concession to Yugoslavia in the field of liberalisation of Yugoslav exports to Italy.⁶⁷

In spite of steps forward in the economic sphere, the issue of the trial to the members of the Beneš squad and the unresolved issues of bilateral relations still had a negative influence. In the last days of March they were aggravated by the resumed issue of installing the missile bases in Italy. Upon the news that Italy decided to implement the agreement with the USA on building the missile bases, the Yugoslav public reacted fiercely and the DSIP gave a statement as well.⁶⁸ Minister Koča Popović spoke about the problem of the missile bases in Italy and its negative influence on the development of cooperation between the two states at the joint session of both houses of the Federal Assembly on 13 April.⁶⁹ Although Italians objected through the Ambassador Francesco Cavalletti against the re-opening of this issue, this did not prevent Yugoslavs to address to the government in Rome in late April a new aide-memoire, as in March the year before, with the warning of the Yugoslav President Tito that the unwanted building of missile bases would "deteriorate the relations between Italy and Yugoslavia which had recently improved a lot".⁷⁰

The problem caused by Italy's decision to start building the missile bases was additionally enhanced after the visit of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to Albania in the late May 1959. The unusually long and secret visit was the Soviet reply to the Western and US acts regarding the building of missile bases in Italy and Turkey, i.e. the announcement that the same might happen in Greece as well. By this act Khrushchev wanted to show his interest in developments in the Balkans and Mediterranean and on that occasion he advocated the creation of the non-nuclear

⁶⁵ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 44629, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 18 February 1959.

⁶⁶ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 44963, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 20 February 1959; *Ibid*, doc. No. 410338, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 15 April 1959; *Ibid*, doc. No. 411997, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 30 April 1959.

⁶⁷ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 305.

⁶⁸ Statement of the DSIP representative at the regular press conference held on 3 April 1959. *Borba*, 4 April 1959.

⁶⁹ *Borba*, 14 April 1959.

⁷⁰ Josip Broz wrote these words on the margins of the instruction which the DSIP sent to the Ambassador Javorski in Rome. AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44/7.

zone in the Balkans.⁷¹ Regarding Belgrade, his statement was reconcilable and the Soviet leader invited Yugoslavia to join the idea about the non-nuclear zone.⁷²

Upon the news of Khrushchev's visit to Albania, the Italian side reacted very fiercely, both because of concern for its position in Albania and because of the influence this visit might have on the relations between Belgrade and Moscow. The Italian-Albanian relations which since the mid-1950s recorded good results, particularly in the economic sphere,⁷³ were shaken in the second half of 1958 precisely due to the information that Italy would install launching ramps for missiles with nuclear warheads.⁷⁴ Rome also feared the information that Soviets had installed their bases for nuclear missile weapons in this country. As far as Yugoslavia was concerned, they were worried about the possibility that the reconcilable Khrushchev's statement might mean the reconciliation of Belgrade with Soviets, particularly because of the rumours which started in diplomatic circles about a possible meeting of Tito and Khrushchev. Already in the Palazzo Chigi it could be heard that the Yugoslav horizon was blurring again, and that Yugoslavia was making a political turn re-approaching the Eastern bloc. Thus in numerous talks with the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Rome they attempted to learn Belgrade's attitude towards Khrushchev's initiatives and the actual moment in Yugoslav-Soviet relations. In doing this, everybody, starting from the Minister Pella, assured Yugoslavs that the missile bases in Italy would not be installed near the Yugoslav border and that they were no threat for Yugoslavia's security whatsoever.⁷⁵ On the basis of the instructions received from the DSIP, Javorski attempted to assure Italians that there would be no approaching to the USSR and underlined that Yugoslavia remained on its non-bloc foreign political course.⁷⁶ However, the speech of the Yugoslav President in Smederevo on 8 June in which on the one hand he spoke positively about the Soviet proposal for the non-nuclear zone in the Balkans while on the other hand he addressed a lot of sharp words on the account of Italy because of its decision to allow the building of missile bases in its territory, additionally worried and disturbed Italians who invited Cavalletti to consultancies in Rome.

Upon returning to Belgrade in late June, Ambassador Cavalletti not only requested to be received by the Minister Koča Popović but also by Vice President Edvard Kardelj, with an explanation that he brought "positive" news from Rome. To

⁷¹ D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 226.

⁷² *Ibid*, 227.

⁷³ In mid-December 1954 the two states signed a trade agreement, the first that Albania concluded with a Western country. This was an introduction into a series of other agreements which culminated in signing of the peace treaty in 1957. Luca Micheletta, *La tacita alleanza: le relazioni tra Italia e Albania durante la guerra fredda. Una proposta interpretativa* in Aldo Moro *L'Italia Repubblicana e i Balcani*, ed. Italo Garzia et. al, Besa Editrice, Nardò 2011, 169; Aleksandar Životić, *Jugoslavija, Albanija i velike sile (1945–1961)*, Arhipelag, Belgrade 2011, 599.

⁷⁴ A. Životić, *op. cit.*, 605.

⁷⁵ On the talks of Javorski with the Minister Pella, MFA Under Secretary Folchi and the Palazzo Chigi administration on the topic of missile bases see the documents in the AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 416067; *Ibid*, b. 50, doc. No. 415678; *Ibid*, doc. No. 416182; *Ibid*, doc. No. 415456.

⁷⁶ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No 415767, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 7 June 1959.

the Yugoslav state leadership he conveyed the message of the leading Italian politicians that they had “full confidence” in the independent foreign policy of Belgrade as well as the desire for “further development of economic and political relations”.⁷⁷ Yugoslavs accepted the readiness of Segni’s cabinet to continue the policy of good neighbourhood and cooperation carried out by the previous Fanfani’s government, of which the Ambassador Cavalletti could be assured in the talks with Koča Popović and particularly Edvard Kardelj.⁷⁸

The Cavalletti’s meeting with Popović and Kardelj was followed by two acts which in practice showed the Italian effort to accelerate the establishment of political relations with the Eastern neighbour. First, the decree of the President Gronchi of 14 July about the general amnesty for all who committed political crimes in the period from 1943 to 1946 encompassed the members of the Beneš squad, removing in that manner the problem which kept spoiling the bilateral relations for years.⁷⁹ Only a day later, another agreement on special deliveries was signed in Belgrade, granting Yugoslavia an extremely favourable loan of 50 million dollars for the payment of goods imported from Italy.⁸⁰

Although the road for the establishment of political relations was clear, the former distrust in the sincerity of Italian politics towards Yugoslavia was still there. For Yugoslav diplomacy it was without doubt that Italy this time neither carried out its independent politics towards Belgrade, but acted in “full agreement with major Western powers”,⁸¹ and that in fact it was only a conductor of the politics created by the USA and the NATO. Moreover, in that sense it was awarded a special role to keep Yugoslavia on the positions so far taken towards the Soviet Union and the camp.⁸² This conclusion was in accordance with the opinion of many Yugoslav diplomats that Italians were the most ready to cooperate with Yugoslavia in the moments when Belgrade’s relations with the East were stagnating or aggravating, and that these situations always yielded their most responsible and most positive statements.⁸³ Besides the above, in the enhanced interest of Italy for political cooperation, Belgrade saw the contours of ever present “national” and traditional politics towards the Balkans.

⁷⁷ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Note about the talks of the State Secretary Koča Popović with the Italian Ambassador Cavalletti on 27 June 1959.

⁷⁸ Cavalletti and the Palazzo Chigi administration were particularly satisfied with the talks with Kardelj. (AMIP, PA; 1959, Italy, b. 50, doc. No. 419094, telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 14 July 1959.) Minister Pella also expressed satisfaction with the attitudes which the two Yugoslav officials presented to the Ambassador. Ibid, doc. No. 419217, Telegram from Rome sent to Belgrade on 15 July 1959.

⁷⁹ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/3D.

⁸⁰ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, 1959, Agreement on special deliveries concluded between the FPRY and Italy in Rome on 15 July 1959; D. Bogetić, *Nova strategija spoljne politike Jugoslavije*, 305–306.

⁸¹ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Italy, 1959, Remark by Koča Popović with the note about the talks with the Ambassador Cavalletti of 27 June 1959.

⁸² AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, March 1960.

⁸³ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 415922, Report of the Embassy in Rome, str. pov. No. 60/59-1, of 13 June 1959.

Belgrade thought that one of Italy's motives to make a final decision about the establishment of political relations with Yugoslavia in 1959 was to enhance its own positions in the immediate neighbourhood, at the time when its relations with Austria started to get seriously aggravated due to problems about the German minority in the South Tyrol region.⁸⁴ Having in mind that Yugoslavia as well at that time had serious disputes in its relations with Austria because of the aggravated position of the Slovene minority in Carinthia⁸⁵, it was obvious that Rome was looking for a "natural ally" in its eastern neighbour, for a joint action against Austria.⁸⁶ This conclusion is corroborated by the remark of the Ambassador Cavalletti in his talk with Kardelj that Italy and Yugoslavia should make joint steps because of the "resurrection of Austrian nationalism".⁸⁷

Italy started the long postponed establishment of political cooperation, however with remaining doubts and reserves about the sincerity of the non-bloc position of Yugoslavia. Therefore its relation with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp was always under a magnifying glass.⁸⁸ At the same time, the cooperation of Yugoslavs with the opposition parties kept causing suspicions. Although unofficial objections continued to arrive from different sides, it seems that they were lesser than during 1956. Certainly the reason was more cautious and tactical approach of Belgrade to the contacts with Italian opposition parties than it had been the case a couple of years before.⁸⁹ On the other hand, the remark of the Italian diplomacy to Belgrade was that it developed relations with the opposition at the expense of

⁸⁴ After the agreement between the Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi and Karl Gruber, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria in 1946 about the creation of the autonomous region of Trento-Alto Adige within Italy, the issue of the status of the German minority in South Tyrol had not been topical until the second half of the 1950s when it was opened again. After a series of protests of the citizens of this area – including bomb attacks – requesting separation from the existing region and obtaining an autonomous status, the crisis deteriorated in 1959 when the Austrian state supported the South Tyrol requests for autonomy.

⁸⁵ From October 1958 to April the next year, Yugoslavia addressed several protest notes to the Austrian government for discrimination against the Slovene minority in the field of education in the province of Carinthia. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Material about Alberto Folchi's visit to Yugoslavia.

⁸⁶ AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, March 1960.

⁸⁷ AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Material about Alberto Folchi's visit to Yugoslavia.

⁸⁸ The elaborate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy about the Yugoslav foreign and domestic policy from 1965 states that the approaching of Belgrade to Moscow in the time of Khrushchev – in spite of occasional ups and downs – was permanent. Archivio Centrale dello Stato Roma, Carte Aldo Moro, 1965, busta 78.

⁸⁹ A good illustration of such approach was postponing of the meeting of Edvard Kardelj with the head of the Socialist Party Pietro Nenni which should have occurred in Italy upon return of the Yugoslav leader from the official visit to Scandinavia. The postponing of the meeting was made exactly in consideration of the official Italy. (AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, Talks of the SSRN Secretary General Edvard Kardelj with the member of the Directorate of the Socialist Party of Italy Gentile on 15 May 1959) Nenni visited Yugoslavia in December 1959 and Belgrade took care that this visit should not take place before or at the same time of the Alberto Folchi's visit.

contacts with ruling parties, particularly with the dominant Christian Democratic Party. Yugoslavs already noted this flaw in their relations with Italy and the damage it inflicted to the bilateral political relations. The reports of the Embassy in Rome, particularly during 1959, underlined the importance of establishment of contacts with Christian Democrats for the development of bilateral political cooperation.⁹⁰ Broader goals were also kept in mind. Close relations of Christian Democrats with the Vatican could help in the normalisation of Yugoslavia's relations with the Holy See and in return contribute that the Vatican cease to be an obstacle to the development of cooperation with Italy.⁹¹ Yugoslavs, however, noticed that the influence of the Vatican on the politics of Christian Democrats, as well as the ideological differences between the two parties, limited the possibilities for cooperation. Namely, it turned out that the ideological barrier which separated the League of Communists of Yugoslavia from the Christian Democratic Party was too high to be crossed at that moment. Belgrade's attempts to establish contacts with the Christian Democratic leadership met with no reply from this party. Although the party considered the possibility to establish contacts, an opinion prevailed that the time for such kind of cooperation did not mature yet.⁹² Belgrade was therefore assured that the Christian Democratic Party did not want cooperation and that it "condemns the entire Yugoslav political-economic system as godless, materialistic, communist".⁹³ Although Christian Democrats did not want to establish party relations with Yugoslav communists at that moment, the government which was composed exclusively of the members thereof decided in summer 1959 to start political cooperation with the Eastern neighbour, for the purpose of which the previously planned visit of Alberto Folchi should be realised.

Finally, after all the details about the visit were defined during the early autumn, Alberto Folchi arrived in Yugoslavia on 11 November 1959.⁹⁴ Besides the talks in the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, he met with some members of the Federal Executive Council and other prominent politicians, and on 13 November Tito received him on Brioni Islands.⁹⁵ The hosts did their best to welcome the Italian delegation, while the press followed its stay in Yugoslavia with a lot of attention and affinity.⁹⁶ However, this did not mean that their four-day stay in Yugoslavia was without disagreements. They were caused by the different interpretation of the

⁹⁰ On the attitude of the Embassy in Rome about cooperation with the Christian Democrats see: AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 415922, Minutes from the consultation held on 8 and 9 May 1959 in the Embassy in Rome.

⁹¹ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 427 144, Report of the Embassy in Rome str. pov. 87/59 of 15 October 1959.

⁹² AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, Monograph about Italy, October 1959.

⁹³ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 49, doc. No. 427144, Report of the Embassy in Rome str. pov. 87/59 of 15 October 1959.

⁹⁴ For the material about Folchi's visit see: AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-7, as well as: AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50.

⁹⁵ Minutes from the talks between Josip Broz and Alberto Folchi in: AJ, KPR I-3-a/44-12, Reception of Alberto Folchi, 13 November 1959.

⁹⁶ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145 125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November; AJ, KPR, I-5-b/44-8, Monograph about Italy, Belgrade, March 1960.

character of the visit, which was the most clearly expressed in drafting of the final communiqué. While the hosts wanted it to be of a working character and to yield results in resolving certain bilateral issues, Italians primarily attributed a ceremonial character thereto and focused on the exchange of opinions about current international developments.⁹⁷ The official part of the discussions mostly concerned the current international issues, but the Yugoslavs also insisted on the talks about bilateral issues hoping that on that occasion they would solve some of the major issues which remained open even since the time of signing the Peace Treaty and the MoU, such as the definitive demarcation. Although upon insisting of the Yugoslav side the topics of bilateral relations were also discussed, the Italian representatives refused to include the borderland issues into the final communiqué, justifying this by expressive instructions not to do so, received on that occasion from the Prime Minister Segni and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Pella.⁹⁸ Yugoslavs, on the other hand, insisted that the communiqué should include this subject matter as well, particularly the national minority and demarcation issues. The communiqué issue led to severe conflicts so after a lot of tensions the document was completed in early morning hours of 13 November.⁹⁹ It was a kind of compromise, since it only mentioned the disputable bilateral issues, however without entering into details. Yugoslavs were nevertheless the more satisfied side, as they managed to include all these issues into the communiqué and in that manner force the Italian side to publicly declare that their resolution was necessary.¹⁰⁰

The visit of Alberto Folchi to Yugoslavia was much more than a visit of an Italian State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a neighbouring country. It was the first and decisive step in the establishment of political cooperation which had been waited for since the end of World War II.¹⁰¹ The Yugoslav press announced the birth of a new epoch at the Adriatic while the Italian press, otherwise not particularly inclined to Yugoslavia, did not save the praises.¹⁰² Folchi brought an

⁹⁷ The hope that the visit might resolve some of the disputable issues of bilateral relations was reinforced by Italians themselves. Thus on the eve of Folchi's visit, Rome after several years of silence started the talks about demarcation in the Trieste Gulf. This made Yugoslavs to conclude that Italy was ready to start negotiations about the final demarcation. AJ, KPR, I-3-a/44-12, Reception of Alberto Folchi, 13 November 1959.

⁹⁸ AMIP, PA, 1959. b. 50, No. 430269, IV dept. of the DSIP unit for Italy, 21 November 1959. In the words of Carlo Marchiori who was one of the members of the Italian delegation, the communiqué should not mention anything related to borders, minorities, restitution and property-financial issues from the borderland.

⁹⁹ TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November.

¹⁰⁰ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, No. 429739, Telegram from Veljko Mićunović's cabinet sent on 17 November 1959 to the Embassy in Rome – Javorski.

¹⁰¹ This was the manner in which the visit was seen by the foreign diplomats in Belgrade. On British attitude see: TNA, F.O 371, 1959, 145125, RY 10322/10, Yugoslav-Italian relations. Visit of Sig. Folchi to Yugoslavia, 11–14 November.

¹⁰² Ibid.

invitation to the State Secretary Koča Popović to visit Italy, which he accepted. Popović's visit occurred already next year, to be followed by a series of meetings of political officials of both states.¹⁰³

By the establishment of political cooperation with the neighbouring country with which it had a lot of disputes in the past, Yugoslavia wanted to act on two fronts. On the one hand, it had broader foreign political goals: it attempted to break a kind of isolation in which it came due to poor relations with the states of both blocs and to practically affirm its politics of "peaceful active coexistence" through the cooperation with an ideologically different state and a NATO member.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, it hoped that political cooperation with the Adriatic neighbour would accelerate the resolution of all remaining border-wise issues. However, the manner in which it was treated during the visit, and particularly the Italian insisting on the temporal and provisory territorial solution achieved by the MoU brought concerns among the Yugoslavs since it showed that the thesis about a provisory solution to the Trieste issue was not advocated only by certain circles not inclined to Yugoslavia, but that it was the attitude of the Italian state, and that these unsolved issues would continue to be the source of crises and a permanent threat for stable development of bilateral political relations. As much as a decade and a half had to be waited for until the signing of the Treaty of Osimo in 1975 to finally relieve the bilateral relations of this burden.

¹⁰³ On the eve of Popović's visit to Italy, in late June 1960 an Italian parliamentary delegation led by the head of the parliamentary committee for public works Salvatore Aldisio finally visited Yugoslavia. During 1961 Yugoslavia was visited by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy Antonio Segni while next year Aleksandar Ranković visited Rome. However, the highest-rank visits had to be waited for several more years. First in November 1969 President of the Republic of Italy Giuseppe Saragat paid an official visit to Yugoslavia and Josip Broz came to official visit to Italy in March 1971.

¹⁰⁴ AMIP, PA, 1959, b. 50, doc. No. 430149, Report about the visit of the State Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Mr. Alberto Folchi to Yugoslavia held between 11 and 14 November.

Saša MIŠIĆ

**LA NORMALIZZAZIONE DEI RAPPORTI POLITICI TRA L'ITALIA E LA JUGOSLAVIA
DOPO IL MEMORANDUM D'INTESA DEL 1954**

Sommario

Dopo la firma del Memorandum d'Intesa nel mese di ottobre del 1954, con il quale è stata risolta la crisi di Trieste, si riteneva che i rapporti politici tra l'Italia e la Jugoslavia sarebbero migliorati rapidamente. Tuttavia, restavano ancora numerosi ostacoli da superare. I più grandi di questi ostacoli erano legati alla realizzazione degli articoli del Trattato di Pace del 1947 e del Memorandum d'Intesa, come la definizione dei confini e la regolamentazione delle minoranze nazionali in entrambi i paesi. Inoltre, lo sviluppo dei rapporti politici era in gran parte dipendente dal clima della Guerra fredda, che aveva rallentato il processo di riavvicinamento politico. L'Italia aveva dubbi e riserve sulla posizione della Jugoslavia e teneva costantemente sotto osservazione i suoi rapporti con l'Unione Sovietica. D'altra parte, Belgrado riteneva che l'Italia non agiva autonomamente verso la Jugoslavia, ma seguendo una politica decisa dagli Stati Uniti e dalla NATO.

Ci sono voluti ben cinque anni dalla firma del Memorandum d'Intesa perché entrambe le parti finalmente riconoscessero la necessità e i vantaggi dello sviluppo dei rapporti bilaterali. Il passo decisivo in questa direzione avvenne nell'autunno del 1959, con la visita in Jugoslavia del sottosegretario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri italiano, Alberto Folchi. Nonostante gli sforzi di Belgrado per raggiungere un'intesa, la visita non risolse nessuno dei problemi esistenti. Tuttavia essa diede l'avvio alla normalizzazione dei rapporti bilaterali.

Parole chiave: Jugoslavia, Italia, guerra fredda, questioni aperte, relazioni estere, Alberto Folchi.

Саша МИШИЋ

**НОРМАЛИЗАЦИЈА ПОЛИТИЧКИХ ОДНОСА ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ И ИТАЛИЈЕ НАКОН
МЕМОРАНДУМА О САГЛАСНОСТИ 1954. ГОДИНЕ**

Резиме

Након потписивања Меморандума о сагласности октобра 1954. године, којим је *de facto* решена Тршћанска криза, очекивало се да ће врло брзо доћи до успостављања политичких односа између Југославије и Италије. Показало се, међутим, да је то био дуготрајан процес током кога су морале бити превазиђене бројне препреке. Највећу препреку представљао је читав низ нерешених билатералних питања везаних за испуњавање одредаба Уговора о миру из 1947. године и Меморандума о сагласности, попут дефинитивног разграничења и регулисања статуса националних мањина са обе стране границе. Поред наведеног, успостављање политичких односа било је у великој мери зависно од хладноратовске климе која је уносила додатно неповерења у међудржавне односе, те отежавала и успоравала политичко приближавање. У Италији су биле присутне сумње и резервисаност у искреност ванблоковског положаја Југославије, па су стално под лупом били њени однос са Совјетским Савезом и земљама лагера. Са друге стране, у Београду су сматрали како Италија не наступа самостално, већ према Југославији спроводи политику креирану од стране Сједињених Америчких Држава и НАТО пакта.

Требало је да прође пуних пет година од момента потписивања Меморандума о сагласности да се обе стране коначно усагласе око неопходности и корисности успостављања билатералних политичких односа. До одлучујућег корак у том правцу дошло је на јесен 1959. године када је у званичну посету Југославији дошао подсекретар италијанског министарства иностраних послова Алберто Фолки. Мада његова посета није решила ни једно од крупних међудржавних проблема упркос настојањима званичног Београда да бар нека – попут разграничења – буду скинута са дневног реда, ипак се може рећи да су политички односи од тог момента били у потпуности нормализовани и подигнути на ниво двеју влада.

Кључне речи: Југославија, Италија, Хладни рат, отворена питања, међународни односи, Алберто Фолки.