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**Carlo Sforza and Diplomatic Europe**  
**1896-1922**

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*All he tasted; glory growing  
Greater after great embroil;  
Flight; and victory bestowing  
Palace; and the sad exile;  
Twice in the dust a victim razed,  
Twice on the altar victim blazed.*

Alessandro Manzoni, *The Fifth of May*, 1821

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## *Acknowledgments*

My chief focus in this study is on the diplomatic action of Carlo Sforza during his career as representative and Foreign Affairs Minister of the Italian Kingdom. Obviously, Sforza's political action continued after he resigned in 1922. He kept acting as a diplomat and politician, increasing his foreign contacts. He became an envoy of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He travelled across the world telling his story and also became the leader of the Italian exiles' movement. Finally, Sforza came back to Italy in 1943, and De Gasperi appointed him as Foreign Affairs Minister in 1947.

I had the opportunity to carry out my research in several archives in Italy, Great Britain, and the United States. I found numerous materials about Sforza; for this reason, I decided to divide my work. This would have been impossible without the support I received by Sapienza University and the Department of Political Science. Above all, I want to thank Professors Luca Micheletta and Massimo Bucarelli, for fostering my research, reading the first draft, and giving me recommendations and encouragement. I should also thank Professor Francesco Lefebvre D'Ovidio for his suggestions, and Professor Luca Scuccimarra for believing in my projects. I wish to express my gratitude to Professors David Mayers, Aviel Roshwald and Victoria De Grazia for welcoming me in their universities and helping me with my research. I would like to thank Professor Maria Grazia Melchionni and James Miller for the interesting talks we had.

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## *Foreword*

Biographies are not as common in Italian historiography as in the Anglo-Saxon. The historian Pietro Pastorelli writes that this kind of research can be “useful because they give a soul and a face to the central figures of politics and contribute to clarify their activity, relating it to their time.”<sup>1</sup> So, the aim of this work is to understand the actions of Carlo Sforza as a diplomat and Foreign Affairs Minister going beyond any preconceived opinion, and to relate his decisions and official documents to his “time.” Sforza lived through a period in which the world experienced many shocking events. His story encompasses the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the Russian Revolution, the crisis of the Chinese Empire, the First World War and the Second, the end of the European hegemony and the rise of the United States as a world power, and the beginning of the Cold War. The study of his action as an Italian diplomat, Minister, and exile enable the historian to understand the red thread of continuity – or discontinuity, in the Italian foreign policy during these crucial years for the world.

As regards Sforza’s life and political thought, important volumes have been written. Nevertheless, an all-embracing study of his diplomatic action, inclusive of the exile years, misses. Livio Zeno Zencovich and Giancarlo Giordano wrote important volumes about Sforza.<sup>2</sup> They represent essential sources for the reconstruction of the diplomat’s life. Zeno was Sforza’s assistant, and his work, rich with episodes and biographical details, can be

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<sup>1</sup> P. Pastorelli, “Sonnino e l’Europa,” in *Sonnino e il suo tempo, 1914-1922*, edited by Pier Luigi Ballini (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli: 2011).

<sup>2</sup> L. Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza: col carteggio Croce-Sforza e altri documenti inediti* (Le Monnier, Firenze: 1975); G. Giordano, *Carlo Sforza*, 2 voll. (Franco Angeli, Milano: 1987).

subsumed under the category of memoir. Giordano, as a historian, makes a different reconstruction based mainly on Italian diplomatic documents. His work is divided into two parts: the first covers the years of Sforza's diplomatic career from 1896 to 1922; the second is about the exile and Sforza's actions after the Second World War. Finally, Rinaldo Merlone's book deserves to be mentioned.<sup>3</sup> It deals with Carlo Sforza's "European thought." Merlone focuses on the second post-war period mainly scrutinizing Italian documents. The author, in fact, had access to new documentation provided by Sforza's family.

Sforza himself wrote many books and articles which help in better understanding his ideas. But this research has a different aim. As Sforza writes, "Historians cannot but describe what statesmen accomplished: at most, what they left undone; after having attempted. Historians can rarely describe the secret hopes, the doubts, the inner struggles of their heroes."<sup>4</sup> For this reason, without forgetting his memoirs, the objective of this work is to understand Sforza's actions and foreign policy decisions drawing heavily on – published and unpublished – diplomatic documents and correspondence. The collection of *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* is one of the most important sources with Carlo Sforza's personal file and Sforza's Papers, stored at Archivio Storico Diplomatico of the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry and Archivio Centrale di Stato of Rome. Also, the French and British collections have been taken into account: *Documents Diplomatiques Français* and *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, First Series*. The study also considers Sforza's exchanges of letters with other important

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<sup>3</sup> R. Merlone, *L'unificazione europea nel pensiero e nell'azione di Carlo Sforza* (Il mulino, Bologna: 2009).

<sup>4</sup> C. Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe: Portraits and Personal Impressions and Recollection* (London: Elkin Mathews & Marrot, 1930), 6.

personalities: i.e., Giovanni Giolitti, Luigi Alberitni, Gaetano Salvemini, Luigi Sturzo, Nicholas Murray Butler, Guglielmo Ferrero, and Max Ascoli.

Considering the amount of material related to Carlo Sforza, the study has been divided. The dissertation represents the first part of a more ambitious project which aims to reconstruct the entire life of Carlo Sforza and his international action. This work analyzes the first years of Sforza's career, from 1896 to 1922. In 1896 Sforza became a diplomat; meanwhile, the defeat of Adua shocked the Italian political system. In 1922 Sforza decided to resign because he strongly disagreed with the foreign policy that the new Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini adopted. This choice stressed the personal and professional change in Sforza's life. In fact, he had a career as a diplomat and a public servant which ended for good when he left Paris. Starting from that moment, Sforza acted as a politician and his actions would be related to his political career.

Entering the diplomatic career in 1896 meant not to be an ordinary observer of the political change ongoing in Rome. The defeat of Adua provoked the end of Francesco Crispi's era. It coincided with the return of the *Consulta* to the moderate Emilio Visconti Venosta, who imprinted the so-called "*colpo di timone*" in Italian foreign policy. This change culminated in the signing of the Prineti-Barrère agreements in 1902. This is a fundamental step in Carlo Sforza's trajectory. He grew up among the Tuscan moderates and in the "myth" of Alessandro Manzoni, whose family was related to him. As a young diplomat, he worked under Salvago Raggi, Giuseppe Tornielli, Visconti Venosta and Guglielmo Imperiali. He was raised according to the tradition of liberal and Cavourian diplomacy.

Sforza's reports and foreign policy choices are the best evidence of this attitude, as Sforza himself implies in some passages of his volumes. In particular, Visconti Venosta represented a guide for the young Sforza, who

was the old statesman's secretary at the Algeciras Conference in 1906. Sforza learned from his chief to frame every national problem in the context of a "European landscape."<sup>5</sup> When the diplomat became the Foreign Affairs Minister in the last Giolitti Cabinet in 1920-21, he abandoned the policy of "principles" to adopt a more conciliatory attitude with the aim to avoid isolation in a modified international system.<sup>6</sup> He was more interested in the opening of commercial paths than territorial acquisitions. He believed that Italy's true security resided in peaceful relations with its new neighbors, those countries born from the new territorial arrangements agreed upon by the Allies at Versailles.

In 1922 Benito Mussolini seized the power. Though, the well-known "march on Rome," on October 28<sup>th</sup>, was a pivotal moment chiefly for domestic politics, Sforza, observing the changes from his Parisian Embassy, decided to resign with a telegram transmitted *en clair* to the Consulta. The case hit the headlines and the foreign chancelleries. The diplomat declared that he did not share the new foreign policy's guidelines, which Mussolini had announced in Naples on October 24<sup>th</sup>. In the first years, however, the fascist leader acted in continuity with previous governments. Meantime, Sforza maintained his seat as an Italian Senator and preserved his international contacts. The ex-Foreign Minister left Italy only in 1926 and travelled across Europe, Asia, North and South America, becoming an "envoy" of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The documents do not always allow for full understanding of what transpire, so Sforza's memoirs are crucial, above all to understand the experiences that were most important to him. For instance, the study does not give much space to the periods Sforza worked in Rome as Chief of the

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<sup>5</sup> C. Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944: Quale io la vidi* (Verona: Mondadori, 1946 – 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

Cabinet or Undersecretary. He did not like to work at the Consulta; he felt away from international affairs and without opportunities to leave his mark. He knew the way to have his position changed, so those periods never lasted for a long time. As many said, Sforza had a strong sense of his own self-worth; he was ambitious, yet, this does not mean he was “blinded” by it. In contrast, based on the circumstances, he was ready to shift his positions and ideas. He labored constantly for Italian security and the maintenance of peace.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE INCEPTION OF A DIPLOMATIC CAREER

Carlo Sforza used to say that there was only a real kind of nobility, and it was the nobility that came from “landed property.”<sup>7</sup> His family owned several lands in Montignoso and Antognano, the two “castles” of Lunigiana – an Italian historical region located between Liguria and Tuscany, close to the basin of the river Magra.<sup>8</sup> The Sforza family had settled in this area for generations. Sforza’s ancestors had relocated to Lunigiana from Borgonovo Val Tidone and Castel San Giovanni: two hamlets in the province of Piacenza. These hamlets were, in ancient times, fiefs of Sforza Secondo Sforza, by-blow of Francesco Sforza, who was the first Duke of Milan in the fifteenth century.<sup>9</sup> However, Carlo’s grandfather, Pietro Sforza, was compelled to leave his possessions and to move to Tuscany in 1849, because he took part in the unsuccessful 1848 uprisings against the Duke of Modena, Francis V of Austria-Este, who had extended his power in this region since

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<sup>7</sup> L. Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza: col carteggio Croce-Sforza e altri documenti inediti* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1975), 38.

<sup>8</sup> L. Bazzi-Scotti, ‘L’Uomo’, Montignoso Town Hall (ed.), *Giovanni Sforza: la bibliografia dei suoi scritti e quattro discorsi commemorativi* (Pontremoli: Cavanna, 1923), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Enciclopedia Treccani, *Sforza, Sforza Secondo*, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sforza-secondo-sforza/> (accessed 09/17/2016).

1847, and imposed a less “liberal” regime.<sup>10</sup> His son Giovanni grew up in an atmosphere made of political inspirations and became an archivist and a well-known historian. When he was eighteen, he had already published his first manuscript about the history of Montignoso, and, as soon as he could go back to Lunigiana, he issued several studies about his homeland.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, his cousin, Giambattista Giorgini, married Vittoria Manzoni, daughter of the renowned writer Alessandro Manzoni, who gave him the chance to work on important primary sources. In 1882 Giovanni Sforza edited the first collection of Manzoni’s letters; this was just the beginning of a long series of studies about the author who became rather an obsession in the Sforza family.<sup>12</sup> Manzoni was such an obsession that Carlo Sforza even considered a manuscript of the *Fifth of May* as sacred, bringing the text with him on all of his travels up until his death. According to Carlo Sforza’s personal assistant, Livio Zeno Zencovich, it was a “memento” of his childhood spent in Montignoso.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.I. A YOUNG AMIDST “MODERATES”

Montignoso was for the young Carlo Sforza a melting pot of culture and politics. His family owned properties bordering those of Giorgini, and there

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<sup>10</sup> R. Mori, C. Morangio Bonaiuti (ed.), *Scritti minori sulla Toscana* (Roma: Jouvence, 1998), 179-180.

<sup>11</sup> G. Sforza, *Memorie storiche di Montignoso di Lunigiana* (Lucca: Canovetti, 1867).

<sup>12</sup> G. Sforza, *Epistolario di Alessandro Manzoni raccolto e annotato* (Milano: Paolo Carrara, 1881-1882). See L. Bazzi-Scotti, ‘L’Uomo’, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 36.

was a special relationship between the two families.<sup>14</sup> Giambattista Giorgini, was Carlo's favorite uncle, and Carlo loved Giorgini's tales about the Italian *Risorgimento*.<sup>15</sup> Giorgini had been a peer of Bettino Ricasoli, the leader of the Tuscan moderates who had supported Cavour's policies since 1859, and who had been an active player in the making of the Italian Kingdom. Ricasoli belonged to that exclusive regional elite, named *Consorteria*, composed of property owners that joined the so-called *Destra Storica*, the Right, once the Italian State had been established.<sup>16</sup> Despite previous skepticism about a possible union with the other Italian States under the Piedmontese Monarchy, the regional state was doomed to disappear; in fact, they had reasons for this belief based upon their own personal interests.<sup>17</sup>

During the Sixties most of them would change their businesses from sharecropping to international finance, and the Parliament's aisles would become places for commercial negotiations.<sup>18</sup> They did not have a real liberal State in mind, rather an "omnipresent" State to be an engine of the national economy. For this reason, when Ricasoli assumed the office of Prime Minister, on June 1861, he was particularly focused on the economic issues.<sup>19</sup> Giorgini, who had worked with Ricasoli in order to make Tuscany part of Italy, was not a minister of this executive, but he supported it as a member of the first Italian Parliament.

Giorgini's house had been the center where the Tuscan high society met the Piedmontese liberal school. This was in part due to his link with

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<sup>14</sup> Mori, Morangio Bonaiuti, *Scritti minori sulla Toscana*, 178.

<sup>15</sup> G. Giordano, *Carlo Sforza: La Diplomazia, 1896-1922* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1987), 12-14.

<sup>16</sup> M. Battini, 'Per una storia della Toscana Rossa', E. Fasano Guarini, G. Petralia, P. Pezzino, *Storia della Toscana: Dal Settecento a oggi* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2014), 119.

<sup>17</sup> Mori, Morangio Bonaiuti, *Scritti minori sulla Toscana*, 278-279.

<sup>18</sup> G. Mori (ed.), 'La Toscana', *Storia d'Italia: Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1986), 114.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

Massimo D'Azeglio, Manzoni's son-in-law, as the Giorgini family had hosted him in Pisa during the 1848 uprisings, before D'Azeglio became one of the most influential political men in Turin. Moreover, Giorgini and D'Azeglio both had been persecuted during Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi's rule in March 1849.

Guerrazzi tried to establish a republic in Tuscany, where Republicans could be "counted on the fingers of one hand."<sup>20</sup> According to Giorgini's memories, Guerrazzi profited from the absence of Grand Duke Leopoldo II, but he did not manage dissension, so he used violence. As a result, Tuscany was "neither a monarchy nor a republic, but the denial of all principles, the loss of all consciences, the freedom of all appetites, the anarchy born from the ruin of all political institutions."<sup>21</sup> When the Grand Duke returned to Florence thanks to Austrian help, the restoration was severe, and the moderates became more interested in the Piedmontese Monarchy, which led the war against Vienna for Italian independence. Nevertheless, the moderates did not choose the revolution. They preferred to wait rather than pursue actions similar to those in 1848-49. Indeed, they did not have a real plan to achieve their political goals until 1859, when Cavour's policies offered them the opportunity to realize the kind of State they wanted.<sup>22</sup>

Carlo Sforza did not live through that political period, since he was only born on September 23, 1872. He was born in Lucca, the hometown of his mother Elisa Pietrantoni.<sup>23</sup> He was the third of five siblings: his eldest brother, Pier Alessandro was born in 1866, and took up a military career; Cesare was born in 1870 and became a doctor; Ascanio Michele was born in

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<sup>20</sup> C. Sforza, 'La Toscana sotto Guerrazzi in una descrizione del tempo', *La Critica: Rivista di Letteratura, Storia e Filosofia*, n. 24, 1926, 254.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>22</sup> Mori, Morangio Bonaiuti, *Scritti minori sulla Toscana*, 284-286.

<sup>23</sup> Sforza, 'Mia madre', L. Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 399-400.

1877 and graduated in physics at the University of Genova and in civil engineering at Turin; his only sister, Luisa, was born in 1878 but she died few month after.<sup>24</sup>

During his adolescence Carlo saw his uncle daily, and Giorgini told him everything about the making of Italy. “He was then very old,” Sforza remembers in his memoirs, “but endowed with a miraculous memory.”<sup>25</sup> The young man was “steeped” in that kind of “liberalism” that was clearly different from other European ideals.<sup>26</sup> As the future Foreign Minister later taught to his American students, “Italian liberalism was above all the watchword common to all the elite of Italy, from Turin to Palermo, which would bring to fruition the cause of Italian liberty and independence.”<sup>27</sup> It was also an “optimistic” approach to life, asserted Sforza, which was a typical stance of people born after 1870 – after Rome had become part of the Kingdom, and the Pope had been deprived of the temporal power.<sup>28</sup>

The suppression of the Catholic political authority had been “one of the supreme aspirations of Dante [Alighieri]” and part of Manzoni’s political thought; even if Manzoni was an “ardent Catholic”, he voted for the annexation of Rome as Senator of the Italian Parliament. “His politics,” Sforza said, “were simple: he wanted the independence and unity of Italy; he believed ardently in the necessity of a moral law in politics.”<sup>29</sup> Manzoni, “acclaimed as the greatest Catholic poet of the nineteenth century,” was a real enigma for young Sforza, who asked his uncle about the writer’s conversion a “hundred times.” Giorgini was one of the Manzoni’s “dearest

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<sup>24</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 12; R. Merlone, *L’unificazione europea nel pensiero e nell’azione di Carlo Sforza* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2009), 31-32.

<sup>25</sup> C. Sforza, *Contemporary Italy: Its Intellectual and Moral Origins* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1944), 48.

<sup>26</sup> Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 87.

<sup>28</sup> Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 50.

and most intimate friends,” and he used to reply only with one word: “Grace.”<sup>30</sup>

This answer recalled the “Romantic Catholicism” that was, as the historian Federico Chabod explained, a set of “ideas and feelings flourished in Europe in the early nineteenth century, in a climate pregnant with the sense of religion, with messianic expectations of a new triumph of the faith.”<sup>31</sup> Manzoni was one of those intellectuals, along with the philosopher Rosmini, who “propounded an accord between science and faith, between the church and liberty, between the church and modern thought.” Somehow, a close point of view to the Cavouean principle, “free Church in a free State,” which inspired the Bon Compagni Bill in 1861 and the choice of the diplomatic method – rather than war – in order to find a compromise.<sup>32</sup>

Chabod claimed that the “latter disciple” of this tradition was Ricasoli; he “believed that it – the tradition of Rosmini and Manzoni – had to become a working faith even for the laity, and not remain the purely contemplative faith predicated by the Government.”<sup>33</sup> However, in the Seventies it was very hard to understand these theories, and the Left voices prevailed. “For them Italy would have no good reason to exist if it failed to meet the responsibility assigned to it by destiny”: i.e. free the papacy from the temporal power and make Rome the capital of the Italian Kingdom.<sup>34</sup> The “Roman Question” was the major issue between the two parties. “Moderates... felt that religious sentiment had, and could not lose, a

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>31</sup> F. Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 186.

<sup>32</sup> For an analysis about the diplomatic consequences of the Roman Question, see R. Mori, *La Questione Romana* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1963) and *id.*, *Il tramonto del potere temporale* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1967).

<sup>33</sup> Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 186.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-187.

fundamental importance in the social life of mankind.” On the Left side, “the Italian state would be truly and strongly established only when reverential subjection to the church had dissipated for good.”<sup>35</sup>

Some scholars, and Sforza too, tended to say that there were no real differences between the old Right and Left policies, with the exception that the Right had represented the majority until 1876 and the Left was the opposition.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that the Roman Question had not been dismissed with the conquest of Rome in 1870; it continued to influence the Italian domestic and foreign policy, for instance the signing of the Triple Alliance Treaty in 1882 and the Pact of London in 1915. Even when Sforza became the Foreign Minister in Giolitti’s government in 1920, he had to face the thorny problem of the relationship with the Pope.<sup>37</sup>

In 1875 the Foreign Affairs Minister Emilio Visconti Venosta, a moderate, told a French envoy that “he believed in the influence and development of Catholicism in the future.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, at university Carlo Sforza was bound to meet another Italian Catholic “intellectual soul” and outrider of the Christian Democracy Party, Giuseppe Toniolo. The latter taught Political

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>36</sup> C. Seton Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London: Methuen, 1967), 42; C. Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 87. For a different perspective, see L. Slavatorelli, *A Concise History of Italy: From Prehistoric Times to Our Own Days* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 588-589.

<sup>37</sup> C. Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 167-169; G.B. Varnier, *Gli ultimi governi liberali e la Questione romana, 1918-1922* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1976), 147-148. About the origins of the Triple Alliance, see G. Volpe (ed.), *L’Italia nella Triplice alleanza, 1882-1915* (Milano: Ispi, 1939); L. Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza. Storia diplomatica 1877-1912* (Milano-Varese: Ispi, 1939); G. Salvemini, *La politica estera dell’Italia, 1871-1915* (Firenze: Barbera, 1950); W. L. Langer, *European alliances and alignments, 1871-1890* (New York: Knopf, 1950); B. Croce, *Storia d’Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Milano: Adelphi, 1991 – originally published: 1928); C. Morandi, *La politica estera dell’Italia da Porta Pia all’età giolittiana*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1968); A. Torre, *La politica estera dell’Italia dal 1870 al 1896* (Bologna: Patron, 1969); R. Petrigiani, *Neutralità e alleanza: Le scelte di politica estera dell’Italia dopo l’Unità* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987).

<sup>38</sup> Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 196.

Economy and Statistics in Pisa, where Sforza was studying Law.<sup>39</sup> It has to be pointed out that young Sforza was not a brilliant student, at least in Toniolo's subject areas. He obtained twenty-three out of thirty in Statistics, and nineteen in Political Economy.<sup>40</sup> The poor performance might be due to his penchant for Humanities. Sforza attended the State high school Niccolò Machiavelli in Lucca,<sup>41</sup> and, according to the Casati Law which governed the education system at that time, this was the only way to access the universities.

Toniolo had theorized about the intersection of public economy and morality since the Seventies, becoming a "guide for the Catholic social movement".<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, in Sforza's memoirs the professor played a lesser role than Luigi Sturzo, who was the founder of the *Partito Popolare Italiano* in 1919. Toniolo represented the "champion of the *ancien régime*, detached and systematic, he used to tell his learners that the ideal of democracy was not ahead but behind, in the Middle Ages, when the society was organized in guilds." Sturzo, argued Sforza in 1944, was of a higher intelligence and had more heart; he was a "passionate, artist, philosopher, deeply loyal to the cause of those suffering, a free spirit, despite the catholic orthodoxy."<sup>43</sup> In other words, Sturzo reminded Sforza of Manzoni's "grace," and it was not by chance that in 1947 Sforza became the Foreign Affairs Minister in the Government guided by Alcide De Gasperi, the heir of Sturzo. Sforza decided to support the action of the Christian Democracy's

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<sup>39</sup> V. Negri Zamagni, "Toniolo, Giuseppe," *Enciclopedia Treccani, Il Contributo italiano alla storia del Pensiero – Economia* (2012), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-toniolo\\_%28Il-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Economia%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-toniolo_%28Il-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Economia%29/) (accessed 09/20/2016).

<sup>40</sup> Certificato generale di studi Università di Pisa, Dec. 16, 1895, Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Roma (ASD), Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1895, t. 22, fol. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Merlone, *L'unificazione europea nel...*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 305.

<sup>43</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 81.

leader for, according to Zeno, a simple reason: Sturzo and Manzoni both had embodied “an Italian policy free from clerical hierarchy’s pressure.”<sup>44</sup>

## 1.II. NEW DIPLOMATS AT THE TRAILHEAD

Despite receiving a low final grade, an 84 out of 110, Carlo Sforza graduated on December 4, 1895 at the age of twenty-three. Following graduation, he immediately participated in the open competitive exam in order to access a diplomatic career as a diplomatic and consular attaché.<sup>45</sup> It was just a lucky coincidence that he was even able to apply; originally, the exam had been scheduled for December 4th and there were only ten job openings instead of 12, but a few days before the original start date for the test, a ministerial decree delayed it to a future date.<sup>46</sup>

The Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry was understaffed and several new exams were expected. As a royal decree of December 8th stated in the new guidelines for the admission in the “first category” career, the careers were divided into diplomatic-consular service and internal officials.<sup>47</sup> According to the new rules, the applicants had to be Italian and not less than twenty years old, fulfill their military service requirements, be in good health and had irreproachable behavior, and hold a university degree or diploma from

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<sup>44</sup> L. Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 263.

<sup>45</sup> Certificato generale di studi Università di Pisa, Dec. 16, 1895, in ASD, Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1895, t. 22, fol. 4. See also P. Pastorelli’s speech, *In ricordo di Carlo Sforza*, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Istituto Diplomatico Mario Toscano (ed.) (Roma: Servizio Stampa e Informazione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2000), 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ministerial Decree, Dec. 1, 1895, in ASD, Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1894-1896, t. 21, fol. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Royal Decree ‘Per l’ammissione alla carriera di prima categoria,’ Dec. 8, 1895, Art. 1, ASD, Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1894-1896, t. 21, fol. 3.

the other State-recognized institutes. They also had to know two foreign languages, such as French, English, German or Arabic, Turk, Persian, Amharic, Japanese, and Chinese. Finally they had to demonstrate the financial ability to afford two years training using their own resources.<sup>48</sup> The examination would test the ability: to write essays about history, geography, law, economics or other international issues related to the Italian interests, also in a foreign language; and to speak in a foreign language. In the second part, essentially, the candidate had to be able to confirm his skills in front of a Commission.<sup>49</sup>

The Government attached great importance to this reform since the diplomatic service had some troubles in the previous years.<sup>50</sup> So, Foreign Affairs Minister Baron Alberto De Blanc wrote to the Commission's President, the Marquis Francesco Nobili Vitelleschi that the aim of the new recruitment system was to increase the quality of the service. The old exam, in fact, did not consider some important subjects, such as history and geography, nor did it require proficiency in other languages, even those considered "essential," like French, English, and German.<sup>51</sup> But the main change, in the Minister's opinion, was the training: the eligible candidates had to take on more than two years of service abroad without being paid and with no guarantee of being hired. This measure had a double meaning: it would have discouraged those interested in money, but attracted the real patriots, and it was thought to fill an experience gap that theoretical studies could not satisfy.

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Università degli Studi di Lecce, Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche e Sociali (ed.), *La formazione della diplomazia nazionale, 1861-1915: Indagine statistica* (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1986), 105.

<sup>51</sup> De Blanc to Vitelleschi, November 26, 1895, 2, ASD, Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1894-1896, t. 21, fol. 3.

To sum up, the real goal of the exam was to understand the candidates' flair for entering this period of practicing. For this reason, De Blanc asked Vitelleschi to develop broad topics for the essay prompts with the purpose of allowing everyone to display their culture and allow inadequacy as well true talent to reveal itself.<sup>52</sup>

It has to be learnt by practical experience that commercial, industrial, agricultural, financial interests are representing more and more the basis of political interests, they are increasingly garnering international relevance, and, if they do not lead directly to war or peace, they cause good or bad relations between countries, gather or alienate the spirits of people; as customs and rail fees, post, telegraphic and monetary unions, colonial and health affairs or the ones concerning emigration and foreign religious group, the different defense systems, or the implementation of the international civil law – all those issues – influence at the same time the wealth of the citizens and the power of States, which has its foundation on the same wealth.<sup>53</sup>

The truth is that most of the Italian diplomats came from the old regional states and were used to different systems, so their methods and analysis were obsolete. Moreover, Rome was experiencing a difficult phase in the international community. Crispi had been appointed once again President of the Italian government in 1893 with the purpose of reestablishing the order in the country, devastated by socialist protests, and a foreign policy. According to Crispi the two situations were strictly related; the Prime Minister was persuaded that France was financing the Socialist and Republican parties and working on destabilizing the country and

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

undermining the Triple Alliance.<sup>54</sup> Instead, Crispi's main goal were to bolster the Entente with the central Monarchies and achieve the alliance with Great Britain. With this purpose, he decided to call De Blanc as Foreign Minister.

Baron De Blanc had been a diplomat for a long time and came from the Right, but he was a committed "triplicist" and an advocate of the Anglo-Italian partnership.<sup>55</sup> In his mind, these were the two necessary tools to protect Italy, so it was heresy to let Great Britain join the Franco-Russian entente. He tried to revitalize the 1887 Mediterranean Agreement signed with London and Vienna, profiting from the change in London's Government in 1895, when the conservative party returned to office with the Marquess of Salisbury.<sup>56</sup> The strategy presupposed that England and Austria had to take some joint action against the Ottoman Empire. Rome would have backed up this intervention, ensuring its influence over an African territory. But, the time had changed, and Germany was not interested in such a system; consequently, Austria had no reason for getting involved, and England would have never acted alone. Blanc's policy was outdated, and he was not able to find any aid for his dreams of victory in Africa.<sup>57</sup> Hence, Rome had to face alone the strong resistance that its army was encountering in the Horn of Africa to defend the colony of Eritrea. Problems had arisen with Menelik, the Ethiopian Negus, from the

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<sup>54</sup> C. Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901: From Nation to Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 683.

<sup>55</sup> C. J. Lowe, F. Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940* (London-Boston: Routledge & Kegan, 1975), 61-63.

<sup>56</sup> On the Mediterranean Agreement, see W. L. Langer, *European alliances and alignments*, 675; P. Silva, *Il Mediterraneo. Dall'Unità di Roma all'Impero italiano* (Milano: Ispi, 1942), 492 *et seq.*; L. Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, 125 *et seq.*; R. Petrignani, *Neutralità e alleanza*, 400 *et seq.*

<sup>57</sup> A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 360-366.

demarcation of boundaries. Finally, Menelik, assisted by France and Russia, was able to defeat the Italian Army in the Adowa battle on March 1, 1896.<sup>58</sup>

The African setback represented a real landmark for the Italian foreign policy, somehow it also had consequences for other countries engaged in the administration of the East African territories. In fact, according to the historian Albrecht-Carrié, the withdrawal of Italian ranks provoked the English decision to reconquer Sudan in order to prevent a possible French advance to the Nile.<sup>59</sup> Rome was, obviously, the most effected, to such an extent that Crispi was compelled to resign as Prime Minister while people besieged the institutional buildings.<sup>60</sup>

In this context Carlo Sforza entered his diplomatic career. He had sat the first paper on February 24<sup>th</sup> and the others in the two following days; besides that, he chose topics about colonialism for both the essays. To be more precise, the tasks' titles assigned by the Commission were: concerning international law, "How to acquire or, particularly, to occupy territories according to the international law;" as regards history, politics, geography and economics, "The main colonial systems adopted by Spain, the Netherlands, England and the United States."<sup>61</sup> It would have been interesting to read them, but it was not possible to find the documents in the Archive. They were, clearly, the outcome of a different era because, after March, Italy entered a "serious crisis," which led the country into a real review of the foreign policy.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901*, 702-708.

<sup>59</sup> R. Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe since the Congress of Vienna* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 223; Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, 367.

<sup>60</sup> Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901*, 709.

<sup>61</sup> Processo verbale settima adunanza: Tema di diritto pubblico n. 1 (2<sup>do</sup> estratto), Feb. 24, 1896; 'Processo verbale ottava adunanza: Prova del 25 febbraio 1896,' Feb. 25, 1896, 2, ASD, Coll. Personale, Concorsi – 1894-1896, t. 21, fol. 3.

<sup>62</sup> W.L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 280-281.

The new cabinet, guided by the Marquis di Rudinì, was constituted on March 10<sup>th</sup> and immediately sat down with Menelik to found a compromise and the peace agreement which was signed in October. So, it is not by chance, that Sforza, who passed the first session of the exam, had to wait until the end of April for the interview and the final result was communicated to the Ministry only on May 10<sup>th</sup>. On May 20<sup>th</sup> Sforza was in the twelve who entered the diplomatic career, – he was the fifth in the slate – and his first mission was in Egypt.

### *1.III. VOLUNTEER IN CAIRO: WATCHING THE MODERATES' COMEBACK*

On May 29, 1896 the new Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Onorato Caetani, notified Sforza the result of his exam, and on June 1<sup>st</sup> the Assistant Secretary Lelio Bonin Longare wrote him about his first destination.<sup>63</sup> The young man was assigned as Consular Secretary at the Italian Agency in Cairo, directed by the Marquis Salvago Raggi.<sup>64</sup> The diplomat was one of those hostile to Crispi: “At this time there is no longer disgrace to our country that – quite late if you wish – has cleaned itself up,” wrote Salvago Raggi to Caetani in March 1896, when he took office as minister.<sup>65</sup> After all, Cairo was an important city for the European balance of power: a struggle for the Nile and the influence on Sudan was underway between France and

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<sup>63</sup> Caetani to Sforza, May 29, 1896; Bonin to Sforza, June 1, 1896, in ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>64</sup> Bonini to Raggi, April 13, 1896, ASD, Coll. Rappresentanza Diplomatica Egitto, Il Cairo 1864-1940, b. 8.

<sup>65</sup> *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (DDI), s. III, vol. 1, Salvago Raggi to Caetani, March 11, 1896, no. 2.

England, and the Italian withdrawal from the Horn of Africa worried London. However, the British were not inclined to support the Italians; they were more concerned about the Dervish conquest of the Nile valley. For this reason, on March 12<sup>th</sup> Salisbury launched a military mission against Dongola that was far away from Italian territories.

Italy was still isolated, and Rudinì, known for being Francophile and hostile to the Abyssinian adventure, had to ask the Chamber for a budget increase on March 17<sup>th</sup> in order to maintain the Eritrean garrison.<sup>66</sup> However, a few days before the Italian Ambassador in Paris, Tornielli remarked on the necessity to maintain the African colonies, since even Paris was interested in the Italian presence and entente with Great Britain, as antidote to any possible future entanglement in the European framework.<sup>67</sup> Doubts gathered around Italy when in April – a few months before Sforza’s arrival, a press agency broke the story of the Italian evacuation from Kassala, a Sudanese territory close to Eritrea, where Rome had extended its rule, as they were threatened by the Dervish army. Kitchener, Chief of the Egyptian army, was seriously upset by the news that he “could not believe true”, reported Salvago Raggi.<sup>68</sup> On April 10<sup>th</sup>, the English Ambassador in Rome told Caetani that such an event would have fostered the Dervish push, and if it was “necessary,” the Italian cabinet had to inform the Queen’s Government previously. But, by April Rudinì put an end to the discussion, at least until the Fall, confirming the seizure of Kassala, with the exception of severe military danger.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> W.L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 282.; L. Monzali, *L’Etiopia nella politica estera italiana, 1896-1905* (Parma: Facoltà di Giurisprudenza Università di Parma, 1996), 19 *et seq.*

<sup>67</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 1, Tornielli to Caetani, March 12, 1896, no. 6.

<sup>68</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 1, Salvago Raggi to Caetani, April 9, 1896, no. 67.

<sup>69</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 1, Rudinì to Caetani, Ricotti, Baldissera, April 20, 1896, no. 82.

Rudinì thought that the adoption of a genial attitude with the British was the best choice in order to defend the national interests. Rome and London, as he declared to the Chamber on May 25, 1896, were pursuing the same objectives in the Mediterranean area. Therefore, a cordial entente with Great Britain “fulfilled” the Italian “alliances system.”<sup>70</sup> He had in mind an “exchange of alliances:” it meant that the Triple Alliance was still essential for the Italian strategy, which mainly pursued peace in Europe.<sup>71</sup> Rome should have been very careful in his friendship with Berlin and Vienna, Rudinì urged, because it was the only way to maintain the *statu quo*, that meant national security.<sup>72</sup> The Kingdom of Sardinia had been involved in the Eastern question since the Crimean War of 1856. The Italian Kingdom inherited this position in 1861 and its policy had always been inspired by the two conflicting principles of maintaining the status quo and defending nationalities. According to the principle of “*inorientamento*” fixed in the Triple Alliance’s Treaty since 1887, Italy would obtain compensations if territorial changes occurred in the Balkans or on the coasts and islands of the Adriatic and Aegean seas. Indeed, the Italian Governments thought they could complete the unitary process – that meant to obtain the *terre irredente* which belonged to the Austrian Empire, by using diplomacy. Indeed, Rudinì let the agreement automatically renew until 1902. On the other side, it has to be underlined, that he had to face with a Parliament from the 1895 elections, where the majority was still pro-Crispi. He could not carry out a radical change, but some adjustments were in progress. He said that a peaceful policy should have been made up of true and deep

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<sup>70</sup> Portale Storico della Camera dei Deputati (PSC), Lavori Parlamentari, XIX Legislatura del Regno d’Italia, 2° Tornata, May 25, 1896, 4714, <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg19/sed131.pdf> (accessed Sept. 15, 2016).

<sup>71</sup> L. Saiu, *La politica estera italiana dall’Unità a oggi* (Bari: Laterza, 2006), 40.

<sup>72</sup> PSC, Lavori Parlamentari, XIX Legislatura del Regno d’Italia, 2° Tornata, May 25, 1896, 4713, <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg19/sed131.pdf> (accessed Sept. 15, 2016).

feelings of friendship towards everyone, “signally towards France and Russia.”<sup>73</sup>

I mean to maintain resolutely the Triple Alliance, to maintain resolutely the policy it asked for, agreed in the treaties and still effective. But, I mean to apply it in that way, and I mean to lead the Government’s policy with those principles, that would not be modified by good relations with Russia or France, relations that I want to make more friendly; more cordially, truly and, I wish to say, quite affectionately friendly.<sup>74</sup>

In those days Rome was trying to find a way to negotiate with Paris in order to normalize the commercial relations between the two countries, which went through a trade war almost ten years before.<sup>75</sup> The agreement was imperative to the Italian economy and essential to establish a political entente, but the French government did not seem interested. According to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Paris only wanted to arrange the deal concerning the Tunis dispute.<sup>76</sup>

The two parties were exactly on the opposite sides, and at the end of June, when Sforza arrived in Cairo, a solution had not been found yet. Rudinì overcame the stalemate with a cabinet reshuffle at the beginning of July, and he called Emilio Visconti Venosta as a guide for the Italian diplomacy.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 4715.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> With regard to the Franco-Italian trade war, an account that still stands is the one of the Italian Treasury minister Luigi Luzzatti, E. De Carli, F. De Carli, A. De Stefani (ed.), *Memorie*, 3 vol. (Bologna- Milano: Zanichelli, Istituto Centrale delle Banche Popolari Italiane, 1931-1966). Particularly, the second volume – published in 1935 – concerning the years 1876-1900. Moreover, a different perspective can be found in French ambassador memoirs, A. Billot, *La France et l’Italie. Histoire des années troubles, 1881-1899*, 2 vol. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et C., 1905).

<sup>76</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 1, Caetani to Tornielli, May 29, 1896, no. 103.

<sup>77</sup> Lowe and Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 72-73.

He was a man of the Right, Cavour's disciple, and the only one who had been Foreign Minister for almost ten consecutive years, from 1866 to 1876, with a break between 1867 and 1869. His most famous phrase was "*indipendenti sempre, isolati mai*," – i.e., "always free, but never isolated" – instead, when he entered the *Consulta* the risk was even worse. Vienna, without respecting the consulting clause, signed an agreement on July 20th with which recognized the French protectorate over Tunisia. Paris was also driving a bargain with London concerning Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, and for this reason the new minister sent Caetani, his predecessor, to Great Britain.<sup>78</sup>

In Visconti Venosta's view the national problems had to be faced from a "European" perspective because every single action had effects on the entire international system. Moreover, as Chabod highlighted, "every one of the powers had, at a certain point, to be limited by a sense of the general expediency." It meant that every country should act according to notions of "European equilibrium" and the "concert of the great powers," that were "the essential precondition for the liberty and security of Europe and the safeguarding of peace." Particularly, Italy was a country which "cannot make a place" for itself or advance "except in Europe where there exists a certain equilibrium of forces."<sup>79</sup>

Visconti Venosta accepted the French conditions and recognized the French protectorate. Maybe, Italy had to pay a high price, but, at least, it was no longer isolated and normal relations with France could be restored: it was a real revolution for the Italian foreign policy, a "*colpo di timone*" – i.e. "changing the helm" – as it has been defined.<sup>80</sup> By the end of September,

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<sup>78</sup> E. Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1950), 49-50.

<sup>79</sup> F. Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy*, 482-483.

<sup>80</sup> E. Serra, *La questione tunisina da Crispi a Rudinì ed il 'colpo di Timone' alla politica estera dell'Italia* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1950); id., *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 51.

Visconti Venosta could sign the agreement that acknowledged the same privileges for the Italian community as for the French and the indigenous. Moreover, Paris accepted giving autonomy to Italian institutes and associations. Finally, they agreed on the most favored nation's clause concerning merchant navigation.

Carlo Sforza was just a volunteer, so he had little to do with the policy making, but clearly, he could watch the events from a special position. It is not possible to say which procedures the young secretary was following, since there is nothing in his private papers of this time, and he did not sign the reports sent to Rome. Nevertheless, he was not scared of displaying his ideas.

During a lunch an Austrian attaché teased him, talking persistently about Adua and the Italian Army retreat, when Sforza replied that the Italian "soldiers withdraw because of the weapons pressure, whereas yours fell back only once the Italians kicked them in their ass." It was a strong statement, maybe too much since later Salvago Raggi had to beg him not to provoke diplomatic incidents.<sup>81</sup> As a young man, sometimes he impulsively reacted. He did not tolerate the sarcastic remarks of his colleagues and he shared an anti-Austrian sentiment with most Italians. However, in those days his task was to write half-year reports. Some of them were published on reviews, as the historian Pietro Pastorelli noticed during his speech in Carlo Sforza's memory.<sup>82</sup>

The result of the Egyptian experience was an essay about the reform of the national prison system. The Italian Consulate was concerned because of the rise in the amount of criminals – above all among teenagers – which was partly caused by "incomplete mix of the European civilization with the

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<sup>81</sup> L. Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 24.

<sup>82</sup> P. Pastorelli, *In ricordo di Carlo Sforza*, 9.

Arabs.”<sup>83</sup> Consular Tribunals convicts’ treatment, particularly the treatment of minors who often did not serve the term of imprisonment. The problem was related to the fact that in Egypt there was not a detention camp for them, and it was impossible to transport them in Italy cause of the administrative procedures. “For the ethics of the country and the decency of that great Italian colony” which was protected according the regime of capitulations, Sforza wrote, “it is desirable that our Consulates could take advantage of the new camp and obtain the admission of those young undisciplined minors, who are sentenced by our Consular Tribunal to enter a reformatory.”<sup>84</sup> The essay was issued in 1898, at that moment Sforza was already in Paris where he had been appointed as Embassy attaché on May 1897.

#### 1. IV. *TORNIELLI AND THE PARISIAN PRACTICE*

It may be a coincidence that Tornielli, the Italian Ambassador in Paris, had been a member and the secretary of the Commission created by the Italian Ministry of Justice for the review of the Egyptian proposal for judiciary reform in 1871.<sup>85</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century Egypt was without doubts one of the major disputes between the European powers, namely

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<sup>83</sup> C. Sforza, ‘Sul Regime penitenziario in Egitto’, *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie*, Anno XXIII, f. 11, Roma 1898, 8.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Università degli Studi di Lecce, Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche e Sociali (ed.), *La formazione della diplomazia nazionale, 1861-1915: Repertorio bio-bibliografico dei funzionari del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1987), 719.

France and England – the previous Tornielli's office. Sforza arrived in Paris on June 9, 1897, when the Franco-English relations were becoming increasingly strained because of the clashes about the African territories.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the French destination had been Sforza's first choice, but there were no available positions when he began his career in 1896.<sup>87</sup>

Tornielli had already written to Rome asking for more staff; his Embassy was pivotal in the reorientation of the Italian foreign policy. After the signing of the Tunisian agreement, the Franco-Italian secret contacts carried on with the aim of reaching a commercial entente. So, when in May the Embassy's secretary left because of serious health issues the Ambassador urged prompt action from the Consulta.<sup>88</sup> For this reason, Sforza was ordered to leave Cairo and reach his new office as soon as possible. He would have been in the French capital city for the next four years which means he completed his period of practice there, with one of the most experienced Italian ambassadors.

Giuseppe Brusati Tornielli had served the Foreign Affairs Ministry since 1862, but he had already worked for the Sardinian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs since the Fifties. According to the English historian Duggan, Tornielli was a close friend of Rudini.<sup>89</sup> But, it was not enough for the new French Ambassador in Rome, Camille Barrère, who arrived in *Palazzo Farnese* – where the French embassy is located – at the beginning of 1898.

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<sup>86</sup> Tornielli to Visconti Venosta, June 09, 1897, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VIII-Rappresentanze italiane all'estero, Parigi (1884-1917). On the Franco-English rivalry see L. Albertini, *The origins of the War of 1914*, v. 1. *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952), 98 *et seq.*; W.L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 540 *et seq.*

<sup>87</sup> Malvano to Tornielli, June 10, 1897, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VIII-Rappresentanze italiane all'estero, Parigi (1884-1917); particularly, see the handwritten note of Malvano, undersecretary of the Ministry.

<sup>88</sup> Tornielli to Visconti Venosta, May 24, 1897, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VIII-Rappresentanze italiane all'estero, Parigi (1884-1917).

<sup>89</sup> Duggan, *Francesco Crispi, 1818-1901*, 671.

The two diplomats had opposite natures; the Italian was careful and detached, while the French was passionate and ambitious, as Sforza remembered. Consequently, Tornielli wanted to reach the political entente with the Latin sister adopting a moderate strategy, and, for this reason, Barrère tried to keep his Italian colleague out of every secret negotiation.<sup>90</sup>

Tornielli's action, instead, was relevant, even if his devotion to the Monarchy caused him a recurring crisis of conscience. "Would the rapprochement to France carry the disparagement of the royal institutions and of the 'moderates' ideals?"<sup>91</sup> This was the major fear for the old diplomat who asked to be replaced in the summer of 1897, argued Serra.

Visconti Venosta did not have doubts about his reliability and refused to lose such an important partner in a thorny situation. The problem was not Tornielli, but the incompatible interests of the two countries. Paris still wanted Italy's exit from the Triple Alliance; on the other side Rome needed good relations with Germany because of the irredentism. Barrère's diplomatic skill lay in persuading his government that it was not possible to accomplish this project at that moment. It had to remain as the final goal of French foreign policy; in the meantime, his action would have been focused on a program to tie Rome to Paris in some specific fields.<sup>92</sup>

The new course of the Franco-Italian relations was also fostered by a political overhaul in France, where a new Government established on June 1898. The radical Brisson led the Cabinet and the Foreign Affairs Minister was Delcassé, – previously, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Colonies – who had supported, as a journalist, the governments that started the trade

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<sup>90</sup> Sforza, 'Preface', E. Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 9. See also G. Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 17-19.

<sup>91</sup> Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 63.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

war against Italy during the '80s. For this reason, Tornielli was worried but there were other ministers favorable to a Franco-Italian entente.<sup>93</sup>

Paris was trying to overcome all the difficulties with its potential friends, having in mind a bigger design that was the isolation of Germany. Moreover, on May 1897 Russia, the only French ally, had signed an agreement with Austria concerning the Balkan situation and the maintenance of the *statu quo*.<sup>94</sup> Considering this framework, it is possible to understand the two main decisions of that year. At the beginning of November, Delcassé decided to yield to the English pressures in the Fashoda dispute that became the symbol of the rivalry between the two countries for the control of the upper Nile basin.<sup>95</sup> On November 21st the commercial treaty with Italy was signed.

The new Italian cabinet guided by Pelloux with Canevaro as Foreign Minister, took advantage from the French claims in Sudan choosing the neutrality between the two Mediterranean countries and pushing the bilateral negotiations on.<sup>96</sup> Finally, Italy recognized France as the "most favored nation," and France granted the minimum tariff to Italy. It was a commercial treaty, but it had a political value as the following events would reveal.<sup>97</sup>

Since that moment the contacts between Rome and Paris continued, with some difficult phases. For instance, on March 21, 1899 when the Anglo-French convention was signed, the two countries agreed on the establishment of limits for the relative African areas of influence and

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<sup>93</sup> Tornielli to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 28, 1898, in ASD, Coll. Affari Politici (1891-1916), S. P.

<sup>94</sup> Saiu, *La politica estera italiana dall'Unità a oggi*, 44.

<sup>95</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 102-111; Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 560-564.

<sup>96</sup> Lowe and Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940*, 76.

<sup>97</sup> Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 76-78.

expansion. France was excluded from the Nile basin, but Britain left to its rival the opportunity to extend its possessions into Western Africa and towards the internal zones in the direction of Sahara.<sup>98</sup> The Entente, was a “source of concern and annoyance to Italy, who feared that it might be interpreted as a British recognition of French claims to Tripoli.”<sup>99</sup>

Canevaro reacted immediately and tried to obtain some rewards from the two foreign governments. He asked for support in the occupation of the Chinese territory of Sun and Moon Bay on the Hainan Island, and Tripoli, but he failed. Consequently, he made a second proposal which envisioned an absolute commercial influence over the caravan routes coming from Chad and directed towards Tripoli.<sup>100</sup> Salisbury was also resolutely adverse this time. The French reaction was different, particularly Barrère thought to take some advantages from this situation. Indeed, Delcassé implied that he was not hostile to an Italian action, but he was concerned about the possible Turkish reactions since it seemed an invitation to occupy Ottoman territories. For this reason a secret arrangement was the best solution in the French Minister’s view.<sup>101</sup>

In May, Visconti Venosta was again appointed Foreign Affairs Minister, and one of his first acts was the confirmation of the Francophile policy.<sup>102</sup> Delcassé agreed with him, and, finally, the two men found a compromise. Obviously, the negotiations were also secret from the Italian Ambassador in Paris, who was painstakingly kept in the dark by his French colleague.<sup>103</sup> Barrère believed that Tornielli was a Francophobe. The Italian diplomat

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<sup>98</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 104.

<sup>99</sup> Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe*, 225.

<sup>100</sup> Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 81.

<sup>101</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 3, Tornielli to Canevaro, April 20, 1899, no. 241.

<sup>102</sup> Visconti Venosta to Tornielli, May 17, 1899, in ASD, Coll. Affari Politici (1891-1916), S. P.

<sup>103</sup> Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 95.

understood the game of his colleague and let him think that he was completely unaware of the contacts.

Tornielli wrote to Visconti Venosta on April 24, 1900 asserting the advantage of removing any reason of “mutual and constant suspects” on the African issue. In his opinion, the Italian government should benefit from the current French cabinet, which seemed to have markedly “peaceful purposes”, unlike its predecessors.<sup>104</sup> His doubts were more related to the method followed by the Italian governments. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, he reported a conversation with Delcassé, afterwards the latter had met the ex-minister Canevaro. The old Admiral had talked about the Italian skepticism on the French cordial policy, adding suspects to his interlocutor.<sup>105</sup>

Unfortunately, there are not few people, who use every opportunity to imply that the insurmountable obstacle, in order to achieve the perfect Franco-Italian entente, lay in the different political constitution of the two countries. Here it is well known: if the situation required an instant revolutionary action against our constitutional institutions, the authors of the inauspicious act would be also Italian. How our differences reinvigorate the antinational action of those people everyone can easily understand, and it is natural, in my opinion, to presume that also the ones, who are resolute in the correct and friendly course towards us, cannot avoid hearing the voices which dare to convince them to change their route.

Tornielli was worried about a possible change in French policy and in those “peaceful purposes” which had characterized the Delcassé’s strategy until that moment. Following his analysis, the situation was “one of the

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<sup>104</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 3, Tornielli to Visconti Venosta, April 24, 1900, no. 390. See also, Tornielli to Visconti Venosta, April 24, 1900, 3-4, ASD Coll. Affari Politici (1891-1916), S. P.

<sup>105</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 4, Tornielli to Visconti Venosta, December 7, 1900, no. 559.

most" delicate, and the problem was that different feelings prevailed in the two ruling classes; the French "cordiality" posed against the Italian "skepticism." For this reason, any wrong assertion could cause the failure of the reconciliation policy and the victory of those "voices." They represented a developing threat for the stability of the Italian regime, which could provoke a change in the policy of friendship that France was pursuing.

He had been very careful in observing every little "clue" of such a trend since the moment of his arrival.<sup>106</sup> There was, according to Sforza, a phenomenon that was attracting many people from the Peninsula, and it could represent a future threat for the royal institutions. Italians were going to Paris to observe how the "People's Universities" worked. Those cultural institutions were relatively new in France, but there was already a thirty-year experience in England under the name of "Movement of the University Extension." In contrast, to the English tradition, in France these centers became soon political tools of the Socialist party; they were born for opposing the Parisian Boulevards" conservative society.<sup>107</sup> Those Universities had gotten a political feature since the beginning, and in a short time, they became real electoral machines. The fact that so many Italians were going to Paris for the purposes of observing and replicating the same system represented a seditious potential.

Rome was "far away" from that kind of public safety measures needed for applying foreign experiences, Sforza argued. "Maybe, every system, after having the best results beyond the Channel, can fail miserably in Italy," he suggested. The young official had also another doubt related to the nationality; it may be that higher instruction over poor people had

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> C. Sforza, 'Un nuovo movimento: Le Università Popolari', extract from *Nuova Antologia*, July 16, 1901, 9.

different effects on the basis of their origins. It could be a “sedative” for an Anglo-Saxon, rather an “explosive” for a Latin.<sup>108</sup> Coming back to his origins, in conclusion, he envisaged a positive function of these centers as an attempt to “raise” the ethics of people, whereas leaving them in the hands of those people that wanted to engineer extremist struggle.<sup>109</sup>

Tornielli seemed to claim an assertive stance of the Italian cabinet in order to prevent the French turnaround. Indeed, the agreement – consisting in an exchange of letters between the Italian Minister and the French Ambassador – was signed on January 4, 1901, even if the documents dated back to December 14th and 16th, 1900. In the first note Barrère, referring to the 1899 Anglo-French convention, wrote that the boundaries of Tripoli *vilajet* would have marked the limits of the French influence in that area. In his reply, Visconti Venosta stated the Italian disinterest with regard to Morocco. But, if a change had occurred in the political system or in the country planning, on the base of the reciprocity principle, Italy would have been allowed to take action in Tripolitania.<sup>110</sup> However, it is impossible to argue that the Paris’ Embassy was a privileged place for observing the making of the Italian foreign policy because the agreement was negotiated in Rome.<sup>111</sup>

In those days, Sforza could not know what was happening in the Eternal city, but he could observe that his superior clearly believed in a strategy of convergence and was careful in every aspect of French political life, as his very detailed reports show. Between the two there should have been a good harmony, considering that in 1899 Tornielli and the Embassy’s Secretary Polacco wrote to Rome praising the qualities of Sforza and they

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>110</sup> Serra, *Camille Barrère e l’intesa italo-francese*, 98-100.

<sup>111</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 18.

recommended him for a promotion. The old Ambassador defined the young attaché one of the “best apprentices” for the diplomatic career. The daily affairs of that Embassy kept the staff busy for many hours, and “Mr. Sforza,” Tornielli wrote, “proved to be not only skilled, but also to have a consistent willingness that it is not possible in those who do not have that kind of awareness of their office duties.”<sup>112</sup> In June 1901, the diplomat heard sounds about possible promotions and wrote again to sponsor his “pupil” that had “special values.” In Tornielli’s opinion, he had a “broad knowledge, a brilliant intelligence, and, in the meantime, a tireless perseverance in daily tasks.” Moreover, it had to be added in the recommendation that Sforza had a “high sensitivity” and “excellent nature.”<sup>113</sup> This time, Sforza obtained his promotion and was appointed as Secretary of Legation in Constantinople.

#### *1.V. FROM PARIS TO ALGECIRAS: “CLASSES” OF METHOD*

Despite Tornielli’s words, it is hard to believe in the idea of the “excellent nature” of Sforza. The future Minister had his “secret” tricks to avoid the destinations that he did not like. So, after Paris and Tornielli, it was really difficult to find an office of the same class. He was headed for: Constantinople, where he arrived on October 1901; as a Counsel, Pechino in July 1903, and as chargé d’affaires, Bucarest in April 1905. Particularly, the

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<sup>112</sup> Tornielli to Canevaro, January 03, 1899, 1; Polacco to Malvano, January 03, 1899, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10. See also, Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 20.

<sup>113</sup> Draft of Tornielli’s letter to De Martino, June 13, 1901, 2, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10. See also, Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 21.

last one was for him a sort of demotion so he found a way to leave that city. One night in a club, Zeno shares, he pulled an armchair and a chair together to rest his “long legs,” and a royal law officer complained about that. The Italian diplomat’s answer was not very polite, rather ironic: “*Vous avez raison*’, he said ‘*mes pieds n’auraient pas dûs être au bout de cette chaise mais au bas de votre veston*’.”<sup>114</sup> Finally, Sforza was removed and went into retirement. By contrast, according to Giordano, behind Sforza’s forced retirement there was a story of women. The no longer very young man – he was already thirty-three by that time, had to leave the Romanian city because anonymous letters, threats and insults began to arrive at the Embassy.<sup>115</sup>

In any case this negative experience opened the way for a new one bound to be crucial in Sforza’s career. On December 14, 1905 he was appointed Secretary of the Italian Delegate, for the Ambassador in Spain, Silvestrelli, who was coincidentally the cousin of the Foreign Affairs Minister Tittoni. Sforza was to assist Silvestrelli at the Algeiras Conference, convened to dispose of the Moroccan *querelle* between France and Germany.<sup>116</sup> The dispute had opened on March 31, 1905 when German Emperor Guglielmo II landed in Tangeri in order to defend the economic interests in the North African country challenged by the French penetration.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Paris’ diplomats had worked for years on this project – maybe not enough, considering the resignation of Delcassé, and French action was under the guarantee of different treaties. Particularly, in 1902 Barrère signed a new

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<sup>114</sup> Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 24-25.

<sup>115</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 28.

<sup>116</sup> Tittoni to Sforza and Ferrara, Rome, December 14, 1905, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>117</sup> See E.N. Anderson, *The First Moroccan Crisis 1904-1906* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1966); S.R. Williamson, *The Politics of Grand Strategy. Britain and France Prepare to War 1904-1914* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969).

secret agreement with the Italian Foreign Minister Prinetti which brought into focus the 1901 Entente.

Prinetti and Barrère agreed on the freedom to develop their influence, respectively, on Tripolitania and Morocco without the necessity of the previous action of the other. In the second place, they committed to remaining neutral in case one of the two got involved in a conflict caused by a third power. Finally, Italy gave every assurance that she had not signed and would not sign a military agreement against France.<sup>118</sup> In April 1904, Paris also signed the *Entente cordiale* with London, which recognized Morocco as an exclusive French area of interest, and Egypt as an English one. In October, Madrid also gave its consent to Paris' action. Berlin was excluded and concerned about this new situation and resolute to reaffirm her power if that meant to have the guarantee of the open-door principle for Morocco. The position of Morocco was, in fact, ruled by international agreements, the last signed in Madrid in 1880. For this reason, the European powers agreed on the International Conference called for in January 1906.<sup>119</sup>

The new Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonino di San Giuliano, appointed on December 24, 1905, decided to substitute Silvestrelli with Visconti Venosta as delegate for the International Conference for "reasons of generic policy" officially.<sup>120</sup> Silvestrelli was known for being a "protegé"

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<sup>118</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 127-132; Serra, *Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese*, 135-142; Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe*, 234-235.

<sup>119</sup> Saiu, *La politica estera italiana dall'Unità a oggi*, 53-54.

<sup>120</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 9, Di San Giuliano to Silvestrelli, January 5, 1906, no. 405. This volume, published in 2013, does not introduce news for the historiography concerning the Algeiras Conference, but the Commission used also Carlo Sforza's private papers, which were not accessible for scholars previously. However, it is still not possible to understand which reports were prepared with the cooperation of the inexperienced diplomat and the documents are not between those currently available at the Archive of the Foreign Ministry in Rome.

of Crispi and a Triplicist.<sup>121</sup> There were pressures on the Italian government to have another delegate for the summit, mostly from Barrère and the English and the American Ambassadors, Egerton and White.<sup>122</sup> The latter was representative of the United States in the Spanish meeting as well.

White had a “liking” for Sforza, “as old men frequently have for beginners in their own fields,” remembers the diplomat. The American Ambassador was also Sforza’s golf teacher in Rome.<sup>123</sup> He was an “accomplished man of the world, and a conciliator by definition;” moreover, he “paid great deference” to Visconti Venosta. Even if White’s secretary Louis Einstein had the main role in Spain, as Sforza notes. Einstein, who became a lifelong friend of the Italian, “made up for the ignorance of his Chief in the matter of Mediterranean problems.”<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, one of the “suggestions” given to Visconti Venosta – who accepted the charge on condition that he would have been free of directions, was to cooperate with White, in view of the coincident interests: preservation of peace and mediation between the two quarrelers.<sup>125</sup>

At Algieras we lodged with almost all the other representatives at the Hotel Reina Cristina, which became for three months the harbor of European diplomacy. With its pointed bow-windows, central turret, its massive and squat belvederes, the hotel recalled an illustration from the works of Sir

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<sup>121</sup> F. Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della guerra: la politica estera di Tommaso Tittoni*, vol. 2 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1934); Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 162 et seq.; Lowe, Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy 1870-1940*, 93 et seq.

<sup>122</sup> E. Serra, Camille Barrère e l'intesa italo-francese, 200-201; G. Ferraioli, *L'Italia e l'ascesa degli Stati Uniti al rango di potenza mondiale, 1896-1909* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2013), 467-468.

<sup>123</sup> C. Sforza, *Europe and Europeans: A Study in Historical Psychology and International Politics* (Indianapolis, New York; The Bobb-Merrill Company: 1936), 151.

<sup>124</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 115. See also G. W. Liebmann, *Diplomacy Between the Wars: Five Diplomats and the Shaping of the Modern World* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 3.

<sup>125</sup> Ferraioli, *L'Italia e l'ascesa degli Stati Uniti...*, 468.

Walter Scott. The building is low extended, like the houses of that land. Galleries face the bay; little columns ornament them as well as the octagonal bow-windows. In the center a patio adds an Andalusian note. The entire ground floor opens on the patio-billiards and ping-pong rooms, reading rooms, smoking rooms furnished English style. The garden has the luxuriant vegetation of the south; gardenias, magnolias, eucalyptus, myrtles, palms, lemon and orange trees blended their violet shadows and heavy perfumes. The very long dining room had at one of its extremities, two round belvederes which gave a semi-privacy. One of them had been reserved by the Spanish diplomats who had come on the staff of the Duke of Almodovar. But the other belvedere was, for them, a cruel problem: Should they favor Germany or the friends of France? It had been decided to close it when the news arrived that Visconti Venosta had been chosen in place of Silvestrelli. The Spanish master of ceremonies felt relieved and reserved the belvedere for him.<sup>126</sup>

Given this picture, on January 16<sup>th</sup> the Conference began, and Sforza was there as personal assistant of the eighty-year-old ex-minister and was also appointed as secretary of the conference, so he had to attend all the works.<sup>127</sup> This was an important experience to Sforza who had the opportunity to work with the toast of the Italian foreign policy. At the opening meeting it was decided that the conference had to concern itself with problem of a Moroccan State Bank and the organization of police. Above all the latter was a delicate issue, and the two main Powers gave opposite directions to their delegates. France would have shared the control of the Moroccan police only with Spain, whereas Germany wanted a solution distributing the mandate between several Powers or entrusting it to a minor Power or to

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<sup>126</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 115.

<sup>127</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 31.

neutral Powers' officers. According to the German point of view, this one would have been the only way to grant economic equality.<sup>128</sup>

Visconti Venosta's goal was to maintain the Italian international setting without displeasing the Allies, but avoiding the allegation of lack of respect for the commitments which would have caused the loss of their "compensation," that was Tripolitania.<sup>129</sup> Finally, he did not support the German claims provoking the disappointment of Berlin that immediately complained to Rome, where a new cabinet had established in February, with Sidney Sonnino as Prime Minister and Francesco Guicciardini – who was considered a Germanophile – as Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, neither of the two tried to interfere with the Italian representative's action, rather they reconfirmed the esteem for his "experienced and knowledgeable work" carried out with "not minor difficulties nor easily negotiable."<sup>130</sup>

Visconti Venosta was aware of the charged atmosphere and believed the hurdles could be overcome with "perfect loyalty and a proper behavior."<sup>131</sup> For instance, Sforza remembered that one day Tattenbanch, one of the German delegates, "more a German than diplomat" went to complain directly to Visconti Venosta "about the cold attitude" the Italian delegation adopted.<sup>132</sup> The Italian diplomat told him, frankly, that Italy was behaving in accordance with the clauses of the Triple Alliance Treaty and the Italo-French accords on Morocco, "well known in Berlin." Tattenbanch reminded Visconti Venosta the "true interests" of Italy, and the ex-foreign Minister listened to him "with long and patient courtesy," Sforza noted. But, finally,

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<sup>128</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 169.

<sup>129</sup> Saiu, *La politica estera italiana dall'Unità a oggi*, 55.

<sup>130</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 9, Guicciardini to Visconti Venosta, February 13, 1906, no. 489.

<sup>131</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 9, Visconti Venosta to Guicciardini, February 12, 1906, no. 487.

<sup>132</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 115-117.

the experienced man asked him if he had been instructed by his government to give those statements. Having a negative answer, he replied, "The idea you have of diplomatic negotiations is that one ought to jump at the throat of one's adversary, throw him to the ground, kick him and say: "Let's have an accord." That method, if it gets to be general among you, will bring you misfortune."<sup>133</sup> Visconti Venosta had another idea of diplomacy, and maybe this is the reason why he had "a phobia of voting."<sup>134</sup> So, when his colleague left, and he found his assistant smiling, he just said, "You are right. Let's go for a walk. If we sent [sic] a telegram about this we'd risk having the thing taken seriously."<sup>135</sup>

The negotiations lasted for more than two months, and they were in the opinion of Sforza, "in themselves senseless." Just one meeting made an impression on the assistant, as it was "the turning point of the adventure... and also because it showed an aspect of the sudden dangers that can surge up, in the midst of a gathering diplomats."<sup>136</sup> On March 3<sup>rd</sup> a procedural matter brought to light German isolation. The Conference should decide the adjournment "in view of the fact that the reports on the Bank were not yet ready, and the Germans did not want a discussion on the Police so long as the question of the Bank had not been settled." Germany was defeated, since just Austria and Morocco voted her motion.

Writing to Guicciardini, Visconti Venosta minimized the importance of the event, but it is true that in the days after there was a "gradual and progressive acceptance of the French demands by the German Government."<sup>137</sup> The final agreement was signed on April 7, 1906 on the

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>134</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 171.

<sup>135</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 118.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>137</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 9, Visconti Venosta to Guicciardini, March 3, 1906, no. 561; Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 173.

base of the compromise reached on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The police would have been recruited between Moroccan Muslims and placed under the authority of the Sultan. The North African sovereign would have also appointed French instructors in four ports, Spanish in two others, and French and Spanish jointly in Tangier and Casablanca. The Inspector-General would have been Swiss or Dutch with his residence in Tangier, but without the power of exercising direct command. His task consisted in the control of the police action, that should be in compliance with the international agreements and the needs of public order.

In brief, the peace was maintained, but the “shadow of the war” passed over the diplomats. In Sforza’s view, the fears of William II saved Europe from the conflict, even if they were undermining the prestige of the Reich and, in particular, the Triple Alliance.<sup>138</sup> As he remembers, three days after the end of the Conference he was in Paris with his superior, and together they read the telegram sent by the German Emperor to the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Goulochowski. William II praised the Austrian delegates – totally freezing out the Italians – for the support given to Germany and concluded, “You have accomplished a fine action as a faithful ally. You were a brilliant second in field and, in a similar case, you can count on a like service on my part.”<sup>139</sup> “He’ll lead Austria to her ruin” was the verdict of Visconti Venosta. Sforza was “more irritated” by his superior and wrote, “in silence, then and there, on the menu a project for an autograph letter of the King to the Kaiser.”

Briefly, the letter affirmed our loyalty to the alliance, guarantee of peace, but added that a firm alliance could exist only between equals, not between

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<sup>138</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 13.

<sup>139</sup> Sforza, *Contemporary Italy*, 121.

duelists and «seconds» and that Italy being a country of public opinion, such manifestations as the telegram to Goluchowski did not strengthen the alliance.

Sforza also suggested asking the German Emperor to recall Ambassador to Italy Count Monts in the name of “loyalty.” Finally, the young diplomat read it to Visconti Venosta and Guicciardini and told them that he “considered the letter a service rendered to the solidity of the Triple Alliance.” They agreed, but Guicciardini wanted to submit it to Sonnino before giving it to the King. The Prime Minister “dissuaded” his colleague “from attaching any importance to Monts’ words” and said that “it would be better to keep silent” in order to avoid any diplomatic incident.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. Sforza gives more details about this event in *Makers of Modern Europe*, 51-52.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SHIFTING ALLIANCES

Algeciras was a defining moment for the young diplomat Carlo Sforza. He had formerly been a “loyal partisan of the Triple Alliance” like “all responsible Italians.”<sup>141</sup> Sforza, nurtured with the *Risorgimento*’s values, was never a Germanophile, but he was aware that the fracture of the Alliance would have aroused suspicions and intuitions which might have turned into a war. The diplomat thought that even Paris was interested in keeping the Triple Alliance alive.<sup>142</sup> Above all, the “responsible” Italian politicians and diplomats had a common belief: expressly, “No conquest of *irredente* lands is worth a war.”<sup>143</sup> Such a statement came from the belief that Italy would complete its unification by following a diplomatic method and thanks to article 7 of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance.

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<sup>141</sup> Sforza, *Europe and Europeans*, 151.

<sup>142</sup> Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 26.

<sup>143</sup> Sforza, *Europe and Europeans*, 158. See also Merlone, *L’unificazione europea nel...*, 39.

Due to this firmly held belief, the alliance with Austria had to be accepted even if it was difficult to be enthusiastic, as it meant choosing between peace and war. In one of his works, issued in 1940, Sforza remembered that at the beginning of the XX century it was common to say, "With Austria, we can only be at war or in alliance."<sup>144</sup> Sforza's point was that no one wanted a war, and "peace worked for the constant strengthening and progress of Italy, the alliance proved satisfactory, despite the inevitable clashes in a marriage of reason."<sup>145</sup>

Between 1906 and 1914 Sforza served in different embassies such as the one in Constantinople and London. He had the opportunity to attend events at the Austrian Court thanks to his wife's family. To sum up, Sforza was a Triplicist because the Alliance was a guarantee of European peace. Nevertheless, he gradually left the Triplicist feelings because of his experiences and circumstances.

## 2.I. MADRID: CUT AND RUN WITH DIPLOMACY

Since February 1906, Sforza had known that his new appointment was at the Embassy in Madrid, but he showed no interest in the new assignment. The diplomat was ordered to go to Madrid as soon as the conference closed, in part because Ambassador Silvestrelli requested it.<sup>146</sup> In those days, beyond any doubt, Spain was not the center of the European relations, and

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<sup>144</sup> C. Sforza, *Fifty Years of Diplomacy in the Balkans: Pašić and the Union of the Yugoslavs* (New York, AMS Press: 1966 – first issued in New York, Columbia University Press: 1940), 66.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Sforza to Guicciardini, Algeciras, March 6, 1906, p. 1, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

Sforza would have likely felt himself downgraded after the “important success” of Algeciras.<sup>147</sup> What seems more decisive on the young diplomat’s attitude is that the Ambassador had been designated as delegate for the Conference, before being replaced by Visconti Venosta. Sforza found a ruse to avoid the new office – as he was prone to do, and adopted a dilatory behavior excusing himself on several different pretenses.

In March, when the Conference was almost ended, he wrote to the Foreign Affairs Minister that he had familial matters which requested him to stay in Italy for a few days. Moreover, Sforza believed that to not accompany Visconti Venosta in his return trip to Italy from the Conference in Algeciras was inadvisable.<sup>148</sup> Sforza reminded the Minister that the old diplomat had asked for his political secretary to keep the accounts of the journey. Surely, during the Conference he was always a very diligent assistant and showed a great esteem for his chief, but it must be underlined that Visconti Venosta also had a private assistant with him, his son Enrico. This meant that the Italian delegate would not have been alone.

Visconti Venosta was fully satisfied with his secretary, as the final report he sent to Rome proves. He acted as a reference for Sforza and wrote to the Minister that the note was a “certification” of the young attaché’s entitlement to obtain an advance in his career. Visconti Venosta was sure that Sforza would have done honor to the Italian diplomatic corps.<sup>149</sup> Consequently, Sforza obtained the promotion as “second category” Secretary of Embassy and his wage increased by 4,000 Italian lire, but it was not enough for him. He complained to the Ministry about the fact that he would have been the only official in that Embassy without the title of

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<sup>147</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 34.

<sup>148</sup> Sforza to Guicciardini, Algeciras, March 6, 1906.

<sup>149</sup> Visconti Venosta to Guicciardini, Algeciras, April 6, 1906, p. 2, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

Counselor.<sup>150</sup> Nevertheless, his request was not accepted, and the experience in Madrid was not as promising as the Conference.

When the international meeting ended, Sforza decided to go to Italy without listening to Silvestrelli's recommendations. The Ambassador was disappointed by the official's behavior and in the following months little changed. Meanwhile, the administrative staff of the Consulta had to deal with the embarrassing situation. Silvestrelli also became the new Foreign Affairs Minister's cousin. In May, once again, Giolitti had appointed Tommaso Tittoni as Chief of the Italian Diplomacy with the aim of restoring the relations with the Central Empires after the breach of Algeciras had created in the Alliance. Tittoni was right wing, free of any irredentist ambition, an admirer of Germany, and respectful of Austria-Hungary.<sup>151</sup> Even if the international situation was markedly altered, the main issue the new Minister found on the table was the automatic renewal of the Triple Alliance. This would occur by July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1907 unless there was a request for changes or any denouncements.

Considering Tittoni's conservative approach, the Italian security meant the maintaining of European and Mediterranean peace. The Alliance with the Central Empires was still considered vital for the continental issues; whereas, the friendship with England was necessary to achieve the Mediterranean and colonial aims. Vienna and Berlin were aware of that despite Tittoni's ambiguous behavior. As Albertini highlights quoting Monts, the German Ambassador in Rome, "The Italian Minister is not yet

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<sup>150</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 33.

<sup>151</sup> F. Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra: La politica estera di Tommaso Tittoni*, v. 3, (Bologna, Zanichelli: 1937), 215 *et seq.*; E. Decleva, *Da Adua a Sarajevo: La politica estera italiana e la Francia, 1896-1914* (Bari, Laterza: 1971), 331 *et seq.*; L. Micheletta, "I diplomatici Italiani di fronte alla scelta della pace o della guerra," in *L'Italia neutrale 1914-1915*, edited by G. Orsina, and A. Ungari, (Roma, Rodorigo: 2016), 418.

born who will refuse to be part of an Anglo-French defensive arrangement, strengthened at need by agreements with Russia.”<sup>152</sup>

Somehow, this ambiguity seems to be confirmed by the new mission assigned to Sforza in June 1906. He was one of the members of the Italian delegation sent to the Moroccan Sultan guided by the ambassador-at-large Giulio Malmusi, representative of all Great Powers gathered in Algeciras. Sforza had to leave Madrid to reach Fez, where the Sultan resided, to obtain the ratification of the Algeciras final document. It was a difficult task, but not so relevant considering the consequences. In effect, Tittoni had already tried to minimize the meaning of the Conference when he was in charge in November 1906 by choosing Silvestrelli as the delegate.<sup>153</sup> After six months his strategy did not seem to be different.

The Sultan was reluctant to sign the document: notably, Malmusi wrote that the Moroccan Sovereign was strongly influenced by groups which didn't agree with the Conference's decisions.<sup>154</sup> Consequently, the Monarch formulated some reservations, and Malmusi promised that the Italian King would notify the other Great Powers of them, but it did not happen. As a result, the Moroccans were disappointed, but the agreement reached during the Conference was safe – meanwhile, any major conflict was avoided.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 178-84: 181. Albertini criticizes Tommasini's analysis arguing that Italy should have adopted a "greater frankness" in order to have more cordial and trustful relations with her allies; so that, maybe, they would have been more cautious in 1914. See also Decleva, *Da Adua a Sarajevo*, 331.

<sup>153</sup> Decleva, *Da Adua a Sarajevo*, 288.

<sup>154</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 10, Malmusi to Tittoni, June 19, 1906, no. 25.

<sup>155</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 10, Nerazzini to Tittoni, November 24, 1907, no. 543. After more than a year Nerazzini, who was a member of the delegation, wrote to Tittoni that Malmusi destroyed or hid all the recordings of those talks with the Moroccan Sultan. In fact, the mission has not been considered by Francesco Tommasini, – Tittoni's major biographer – and only the two documents quoted are included in the recently published volume of the collection of the Italian Diplomatic Documents. There is nothing about the mission in Sforza's Papers.

The mission, understated by the Italian diplomacy, represented a new opportunity to escape from Madrid for Sforza. During the trip back to the Embassy, Sforza – who had received Malmusi’s praise,<sup>156</sup> was notified of his mother’s serious disease. So, he left the group in Larache and took the last part of the trip “in two days instead of the usual six.” But, he had an accident and fell from the horse he was riding.<sup>157</sup> Sforza finally arrived in Turin where his mother was, but it was 24 hours after her death. He asked to stay in Italy until the end of August to accomplish the succession’s bureaucratic procedures and have his injured knee treated. Silvestrelli was annoyed by his long absence. The Ambassador wanted him back in Madrid by August 15<sup>th</sup>, since Silvestrelli would be on leave from September 10<sup>th</sup> on, and Sforza was the chargé d’affaires of the Embassy.<sup>158</sup>

The young diplomat addressed Tittoni talking ironically about the Ambassador’s directions to the point that in Rome there was some embarrassment about the awkward situation. The Undersecretary wrote to Sforza on August 17<sup>th</sup> asking him to respect his chief and to find a compromise with him.<sup>159</sup> In fact, Silvestrelli wrote to the Minister on August 22<sup>nd</sup> complaining about Sforza’s behavior which was directed to escape from “any kind of authority and control.”<sup>160</sup> Silvestrelli asked Tittoni to act on Sforza’s insubordination in order to respect his directions. As a consequence, Sforza went to Madrid by the end of August.

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<sup>156</sup> Handwritten note with no date and signature, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>157</sup> Sforza to MAE, Montignoso di Lunigiana, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1906, 2; Gentile to Mae, Tangier, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1906, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>158</sup> Sforza to MAE, Montignoso di Lunigiana, August 1, 1906, 2, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>159</sup> Pompilj to Sforza, Roma, August 17<sup>st</sup>, 1906, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>160</sup> Silvestrelli to Tittoni, Madrid, August 22, 1906, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

Nonetheless, the relationship between the two had already reached a point of no return, and Sforza was moved to another Embassy with the Royal Decree of October 3<sup>rd</sup>. In November, he received communication saying that he had to go to Constantinople, where he would work with Ambassador Guglielmo Imperiali di Francavilla. The latter was an experienced diplomat coming from Southern Italy. Imperiali's family was close to the Bourbons; but, as young student he supported the establishment of the liberal State. Imperiali entered the career in 1882, the year the Treaty of the Triple Alliance was signed, and drew the Minister Mancini's attention. Indeed, he served in embassies such the one of Berlin, Paris, Washington and Brussels. Before arriving in Constantinople, Imperiali was appointed as Consul General in Sofia and, then, plenipotentiary in Belgrade. He had been in the Ottoman capital as Italian Ambassador since June, 1904.<sup>161</sup>

Sforza had to wait for his successor before leaving Madrid. So, when Silvestrelli went back, the young secretary was still there, even if he was trying to accelerate the procedures necessary to leave the Spanish city. Silvestrelli wrote in his final report that in those few days Sforza acted as if he had no superior: he went to the office only to get his mail, he tried to write every report related to him, and attempted to appoint his successor as Counselor without the consent of the Ministry.<sup>162</sup>

To sum up, according to Silvestrelli, "Sforza could have been an excellent diplomat, but he should have been more disciplined and duteous, and respect his superiors not only as a pro forma, but as substance."<sup>163</sup> However,

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<sup>161</sup> F. Grassi Orsini, "Guglielmo Imperiali di Francavilla," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, v. 62 (2004), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guglielmo-imperiali\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/guglielmo-imperiali_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) (accessed June 23, 2017).

<sup>162</sup> Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 35.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

at the end of November the Ministry permitted Sforza another leave from his office in order to get medical treatment for his injured leg before going on to Constantinople. By the beginning of the new year, Sforza was in Constantinople.<sup>164</sup>

## 2.II. A NEW BEGINNING IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Sforza returned to Constantinople five years after his first mission there. At that time the Ottoman Empire, better known as the “Sick Man of Europe,” was experiencing a deep crisis, and its days seemed to be numbered. The situation was particularly difficult; the European States were deeply involved in the diplomatic struggle for the purpose of securing their own zone of influence. The construction of the Eastern Railway and the Macedonian uprisings were the touchstone of this rivalry between the Great Powers.

According to the principle of “*inorientamento*” fixed in the 1887 Triple Alliance’s Treaty since, Italy would obtain compensations if territorial changes occurred in the Balkans’ map without recurring to war. So, if a change had occurred, it should not have endangered any Italian interest.<sup>165</sup> Assuming this perspective, the Macedonian situation was explosive because in that territory converged the interests of the Balkan States – namely, Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks, and those of Austria-Hungary and

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<sup>164</sup> MAE to Silvestrelli, Rome, November 27, 1906, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>165</sup> Pastorelli, “Albania e Tripoli nella politica estera italiana durante la crisi d’Oriente del 1897,” *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1961, n. 3, p. 370-421: 373.

Russia. The Emperor and the Tsar had found an agreement in October 1903, the "Mürszsteg Punctuation." The entente concerned the reforms to be applied in the Ottoman province. The principal points consisted in: the institution of two civilian agents nominated by Austria and Russia, who should work with the Inspector-General Hilmi Pasha; the reorganization of the Gendarmerie and the boundaries of the administrative areas. Moreover, "steps should be taken to reorganize the administrative and judicial institutions."<sup>166</sup>

Italy, like the other Great Powers, was not considered in the agreement, despite Tittoni's attempts. Nevertheless, the Italian government was instructed to support the reforms in order to avoid any major clash within the European Concert. Though, "keen annoyance" was felt in the diplomatic circles of Constantinople with respect to the Austro-Russian entente. Regardless, a new secret agreement was signed in October 1904 by Aehrenthal, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in St. Petersburg and Lamsdorf, the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister. With this agreement the two Powers, with the purpose of maintaining the status quo, guaranteed each other a "loyal and absolute neutrality" in case of war against a third Power "which sought to endanger the security."<sup>167</sup>

In 1907, Constantinople was concerned as well for the Anglo-Russian Entente and the ongoing financial and commercial penetration of the Germans in the Ottoman territories. As a matter of fact, at that time secret negotiations between the Austrians and the Sultan's delegates were underway in order to obtain a concession for the construction of a railway

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<sup>166</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 135-136.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

from the Bosnian frontier to Mitrovitsa through the Sanjak of Novibazar.<sup>168</sup> At the Italian Embassy no one knew about them, even though the main directive given to the Ambassador was to act in agreement with his colleagues of the Triple Alliance.<sup>169</sup> Tittoni, as a conservative, robustly opposed any adventurous policy. He was a brilliant champion of Giolitti's pragmatism and empiricism: in other words, a belief in freedom and faith in facts. In Tittoni's opinion, the action of the Foreign Affairs Minister should always have a specific goal and an actual effect.<sup>170</sup>

According to what Sforza suggested to the Army General, Romei, for his meeting with the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II on May 1907, Italy would not renounce its peaceful policy. The chargé d'affaires advised the military official to tell the Sultan that the Triple Alliance was unanimously desired by Italians, since it was the safest guarantee for maintaining peace. Moreover, Sforza believed that the Alliance was even more prized because it allowed a friendship with other Powers, who were historically bound to Italy. No doubt, these relations were useful to the strengthening of the peace.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless, Sforza had to notify Tittoni of the danger provoked by the "state of extreme drain on the Ottoman treasury," which was leading Constantinople to become closer to Britain and France. In effect, the state of war in territories like Yemen and Macedonia requested continuous military and financial efforts that forced the Sultan to request a new loan of 200,000 Turkish lire from the Ottoman Bank, which while it was the State bank, was

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<sup>168</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 193-194; Richard A. Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy, 1908-1915*, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1975), 218 *et seq.*

<sup>169</sup> Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 3, 511.

<sup>170</sup> G. Spadolini, *Giolitti e i Cattolici (1901-1914): La conciliazione silenziosa* (Le Monnier, Firenze: 1990), 37 and 41.

<sup>171</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 10, note enclosed to the telegram of Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, May 3, 1907, 325.

mainly controlled by French financiers.<sup>172</sup> The total amount of the Ottoman debts with the Bank equaled 800,000 Turkish lire.<sup>173</sup>

Sforza noticed that this situation alarmed the Germans, who were the new factor in the region. They had already lost the Constantinople's Society of Platforms because of the Franco-English Entente. Almost certainly, Berlin hoped that the "granted income," which the Sultan had used as a guarantee to obtain the loan, would have been used to finance the construction of the second section of the Baghdad Railway. Germany aimed to keep its privileges in the Ottoman territories and defend its interests from the Anglo-French competition. The three Great Powers tried to find a compromise on the Baghdad Railway, but Sforza, claiming to have confidential information, foresaw the failure of the negotiations.<sup>174</sup>

To underline the point, Sforza was worried about an increased French and English influence in the Ottoman Empire. The dangerous signals were the French ownership of the public debt and the daily communications with the English Embassy concerning the Ottoman debt. The young diplomat wrote that the importance of such a situation was greater than the railway issue and concluded his report with a quote from the Ambassador O'Connor. The British representative had told Sforza that he was recommending the study of the financial status to the Sultan, since the Empire was close to bankruptcy.<sup>175</sup>

Sforza's goal was to highlight the growing rivalry and urge action. In 1907 the Italian interests "represented only a little over one percent of the total outstanding Ottoman debt." This allowed Italy to have a representative on the Ottoman Public Debt Council; any Ottoman

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<sup>172</sup> Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy*, 198.

<sup>173</sup> DDI, s. III, vol. 10, Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, May 9, 1907, 330.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

Government which wanted to alter the fiscal system also had to obtain Italian consent.<sup>176</sup> However, this membership was not enough to reach the same level of influence as the other European Great Powers. Moreover, the relations with the Empire were prejudiced by the Sultan's suspicion related to the Italian interests in North Africa and Albania.

In this context, Tittoni's prudence was strategical, despite the fact he believed in the strategy of economic penetration of the East. The main goals of the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister, in fact, should have been the conservation of the status quo and to stop any fight between nationalist groups that could cause the fall of the Empire.<sup>177</sup> The same approach was adopted in the Macedonian question. As a Sforza's note shows, the Italian policy aimed to go beyond the Mürszsteg Punctuation and internationalize the reforms' issue – so that, Rome also could play a role.<sup>178</sup>

Imperiali agreed with Tittoni's strategy even if he had a different personality.<sup>179</sup> The Ambassador, not always in step with Sforza, was an "excitable and rhetorical" man.<sup>180</sup> However, "in the critical years of 1908-14," Italians succeeded in "penetrating both the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans." The reason for this success would lay mainly in the "skilled and professional" Italian labor, which was employed in several fields. Secondly, the Italian diplomats' "art of dealing with the Ottomans consisted largely in underhanded and private contacts."<sup>181</sup> Indeed, the Ottoman diplomatic

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<sup>176</sup> Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy*, 202.

<sup>177</sup> Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 3, 491.

<sup>178</sup> *Mémoire sur la réorganisation des institutions judiciaires en Macédoine*, the note is without signature and date, but "1907" is written on the side, in ASD, Archivi di Personalità, Carlo Sforza (CS), b. 3.

<sup>179</sup> Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 3, 431 *et seq.*; F. Grassi Orsini, "Sonnino nel «Diario» di Imperiali," in *Sonnino e il suo tempo*, 251-52.

<sup>180</sup> See Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 33-4; Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers* (Cambridge University Press, New York: 1979) 104. The Australian historian argues that Imperiali's experience in the Ottoman Empire was not successful. A different opinion in, Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy*, 200-1.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

atmosphere was a complex system of “checks and balances” where the alliances were not always so obvious.

To Sforza, those days were particularly important. As a regular of the *Cercle d'Orient*, Sforza was in contact with many colleagues and Turkish elites. In this period the diplomat also met his future wife, Valentine Errebault de Dudzeele et d'Orroir, who was member of one of the most ancient Belgian family with connections to the Habsburg family.<sup>182</sup> Her father was the Belgian Ambassador in Constantinople, Count Gaston Errebault de Dudzeele, and her mother was Marie-Hélène d'Abensperg Traun, who belonged to an Austrian noble family.<sup>183</sup> At that time Belgium was a strategical partner for Italian exports, but also for the flow of direct investments coming from Brussels that contributed to the development of the Italian modern industries.<sup>184</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, Belgians worked closely with French and British, that meant having their diplomatic support in that territory.<sup>185</sup> In 1909 Count Gaston would have been appointed as Ambassador in Vienna. Consequently, he introduced the future son-in-law at the Austrian Court.

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<sup>182</sup> H. Chambert-Loir, “Le chagrin d'un Belge. Le journal de campagne du comte Edouard Errebault de Dudzeele durant la guerre de Java,” in *Archipel*, v. 60, n. 4 (2000), 267-300: 272; <https://gw.geneanet.org/pierfit?lang=en&n=errebault+de+dudzeele+et+d+orroir&oc=1&p=gaston> (accessed June 23, 2017).

<sup>183</sup> Count Gaston Errebault de Dudzeele et d'Orroir was ambassador at Constantinople between 1898 and 1909, so it is possible that Sforza had already met Valentina during his first experience in the Ottoman capitol city, as Zeno writes; see *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 390. However, Sforza made references about his fiancée's family in his books from this moment of his career. Moreover, Merlone, who interviewed Sforza's granddaughter, Valentina Scott, affirms that the two met in these years; see *L'unificazione europea nel...*, 39.

<sup>184</sup> Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy*, 41 et seq. and 136.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

### 2.III. THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION

In order to seize a zone of commercial influence, Italy, like Belgium, should have worked with the other Powers hoping that a joint pressure would have convinced the Ottomans “to abandon their systematic obstruction and vexation.” At least this is Webster’s point. He argues that the Ambassador in Constantinople could do little, and it seemed to be confirmed by the events occurred in the first months of 1908.<sup>186</sup>

As Tommasini suggested, by that time the Great Powers’ representatives heightened their awareness of the impossibility of applying their program of reforms and the increasing power of nationalisms. Nevertheless, the British Government were determined in forcing the Sultan to enlarge the Ottoman Gendarmerie to fight the Macedonian militias. The proposal encountered not only the opposition of the Ottoman sovereign, but also of the other States, particularly Russia, Austria, and Germany which supported different national groups. Tittoni, who had cooperated with England since 1903 in the Eastern Question, understood that the stability of the Empire was seriously compromised, and Italy could do little. Therefore, Rome should be cautious and act in accordance with the other Great Powers in order to save its interests in case of a change of the status quo.<sup>187</sup>

On January 27, 1908 when the negotiations for the Macedonian judicial reform were still ongoing, Aehrenthal – who had become Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister in 1906 – decided to communicate to the Delegations of the Austro-Hungarian representatives the agreement reached with the Sultan

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>187</sup> Tommasini, *L’Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 3, 504 *et seq.*; Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 194; a different perspective in G. Ferraioli, *Politica e diplomazia in Italia tra XIX e XX Secolo: Vita di Antonino di San Giuliano, 1852-1914* (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli: 2007), 286 *et seq.*

for Mitrovitsa Railway. The day after a long memo left the Italian Embassy in Constantinople directed to Rome. Imperiali related the meeting he had the day before with his Russian colleague concerning the details of the Austro-Ottoman relations. It is worth mentioning that a draft of the document is also among Sforza's papers.

The document could be a detailed description of the diplomatic atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire, made of duplicities and trickeries.<sup>188</sup> The Italian diplomats from Constantinople suggested a cautious behavior to Tittoni. Imperiali was distrustful of the Russian Ambassador, Zinoviev, who was particularly bothersome in highlighting the importance of the Austrian foul play.<sup>189</sup> In particular, the St. Petersburg representative stressed the connections between the construction of the railway and the Austrian attempt to secure his influence in the Albanian territory, that counted for the Italian national security in the Adriatic area. Imperiali, thinking of a possible intrigue, did not react and maintained his reserve with the excuse of waiting for the Ministry's orders. Meanwhile, he recommended a cautious and discreet attitude to Rome in order to prove the Italian loyalty to the Alliance.<sup>190</sup>

Such a stance was also confirmed by the statement of the German Ambassador, Marschall, who was no nearer to believe that a final agreement for the railway had been reached. On one side the Sultan did not have said a conclusive word on that question, instead the Russian would have done everything to break the entente. On the other side, a compromise for the Macedonian judicial reform had not be found yet, and the Germans

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<sup>188</sup> Imperiali to Tittoni, Constantinople, January 28, 1908, 10, in ASD, Archivi di Personalità, Carlo Sforza (CS), b. 3.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

did not want to jeopardize their relations with the Empire to support the Austrians.<sup>191</sup>

Meanwhile, the Great Powers' representatives in Constantinople were evaluating any possible option in order to submit a reform of the Macedonian judicial institutions to the Sultan. However, in February the Conference of the ambassadors decided to postpone the question, since it was impossible to find any compromise that would have obtained the consent of the Ottomans without resorting to violent means. While the diplomatic negotiations continued, on March 12<sup>th</sup> Tittoni spoke to the members of the Italian Parliament and restated loyalty to the Triple Alliance.<sup>192</sup> He seemed to agree with Imperiali; in fact, it was not the right moment for changing sides.

One month after Tittoni's speech, Sforza wrote to Rome in order to report about the severe and rigorous policy adopted by the Sultan towards the Italian economic endeavors, in particular against the opening of new post offices. According to the diplomat's confidential sources, the Ottoman government "was resolute on carrying out a major resistance." Indeed, watchmen would have been placed at the entrance of every Italian office, even at the Embassy in Constantinople. Sforza recommended to act strongly in order to make it immediately clear that Rome was determined to not accept any limit on its action. Therefore, he suggested to envoy warships to every harbor of interest.<sup>193</sup> He noticed that the balance of power in the Sultan's Empire was changing, and Germany was taking important shares of the Ottoman debt while French financiers refused to grant new

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>192</sup> Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 3, 516-17.

<sup>193</sup> Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, April 13, 1908, in ASD, CS, b. 3.

loans, “abiding by a command.”<sup>194</sup> Moreover, on April 27<sup>th</sup> he wrote another cable to Tittoni denouncing the hostility of the English representatives mainly in Cyrenaica. He noticed that all across the Ottoman Africa the Italian and the English counsels feuded, and he was worried about the consequences of such a situation.<sup>195</sup>

However, by the beginning of May the relations with the Sultan seemed to return to normal, and also the consular personnel were asked to not act without consulting the Embassy.<sup>196</sup> Meanwhile, in Macedonia the revolt had flared. The core of this conflict was in Salonika where the movement of the Young Turks, supported by the armed branch of the “Committee of Union and Progress,” led the protest against Constantinople.

The official troops refused to fight against their compatriots, and on July 24, 1908 the Sultan was forced to restore the 1876 Constitution and yield to the requests of the rioters.<sup>197</sup> According to Sforza’s memory, most of them did not know what a Constitution was, but they “learned history of the French revolution in the lodges of secret societies of Salonika, simply hastened the day of the ‘*rayahs*’ deliverance.”<sup>198</sup> Italians were particularly interested in the commercial activity of the Macedonian city. Sforza, as acting ambassador since Imperiali was on leave,<sup>199</sup> met one of the leaders of the movement: Mustafa Kemal, who was only 28 at that time and not yet the “Father of the Turks” (i.e., *Atatürk*).

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<sup>194</sup> Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, April 21, 1908, [Serie XVI, *Situazione generale interna della Turchia*, n. 1809, 67], in ASD, CS, b. 3.

<sup>195</sup> Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, April 27, 1908, in ASD, CS, b. 3.

<sup>196</sup> Sforza to Tittoni, Constantinople, April 28 and May 5, 1908, [s. XVI, *Situazione generale interna della Turchia*, n. 1810 and 1813], in ASD, CS, b. 3

<sup>197</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 196-97.

<sup>198</sup> C. Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans: Pašić and the Union of Yugoslavs* (AMS Press, New York: 1966 – first ed. Columbia University Press, New York: 1940), 86.

<sup>199</sup> Sforza to Tittoni, Terapia, June 16, 1908; and Tittoni to Imperiali, Rome, July 1, 1908, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

In 1908 Kemal was just one of the member of the revolutionary movement. As the others, he “believed the proclamation of the New Turkey, ‘one and indivisible,’ sufficient to fulfill the aspirations of the subject peoples.” In Sforza’s opinion, however, the Young Turks were not thinking of a dismantlement of the Empire. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Salonika was –Sforza writes, a “melting pot” of different cultures.” The “Turks were all the more nationalistic because they were often streaked with Jewish blood.”<sup>200</sup> The point, unclear to Sforza – in this moment and later, is that the movement expressed above all the refusal of tolerate the Great Powers’ meddling in the Ottoman internal affairs.

The attempt of restoring the 1876 Constitution was a tool to avoid any other external influence. Imperiali has a better understanding of that situation. In July, the Ambassador once again recommended to act with caution. In his opinion, one of the main causes of the unrest among the army officials and the Muslims was the anger against the Ottoman authorities. The reason of their protest was the fact that the Government had disfranchised the population of any kind of freedom, but nothing was done to contrast the European political, financial and commercial influence on the domestic affairs.

The Ambassador point was that Europe had forgotten the importance of the Muslims, deeply enraged at the European interferences. Therefore, he suggested to shelve any project of reform in Macedonia. This was, as a matter of fact, the first consequence of the Young Turks’ revolution which caught the European Powers, as the other Balkan States, unprepared and marked their diplomatic failure in the **Easter** Question. They could not do anything but observe the events. The result was, in Tommasini’s view, a

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<sup>200</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 346. See also, Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe*, 263.

widespread resentment across the Empire, chiefly oriented towards the Germans. Suspicion about the Italian attitude also grew. By contrast, England garnered good repute.<sup>201</sup>

#### 2.IV. THE BOSNIAN CRISIS

According to the Statute of the new constitutional Regime, a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies had to be established. Senators were nominated for life by the Sultan, and Deputies were elected by citizens. The members of the Chamber would be 278: 4 Jews, 44 Christians, and the rest were Muslims. The elections, held between August and mid-September 1908, confirmed the Young Turks' tremendous success as they obtained the majority of the votes and 200 seats in the new Parliament.<sup>202</sup> There were great expectations of modernization and enfranchisement in the new Regime.

That was not true for the Italians. The Young Turks treated Italians "with less respect than they did the other official great powers." At the Consulta they "were well aware that the new regime meant trouble."<sup>203</sup> In his memoirs, Giovanni Giolitti, who was the Prime Minister at that time, recalled that, before 1911 he had already thought about a possible intervention in the Ottoman territories of Northern Africa.<sup>204</sup> After all, the Italian expansion in Tripolitania was envisaged by the 1887 Triple

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<sup>201</sup> Tommasini, *L'Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 4, 157-63.

<sup>202</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 197.

<sup>203</sup> Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy*, 236-37.

<sup>204</sup> G. Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita*, v. 2 (Fratelli Treves, Milano: 1922), 330.

Alliance's Treaty. Everyone was aware of the Italian ambitions, even the Ottoman authorities. The Young Turks made no difference and, when they attained power, inflamed people's political and fanatical sensitivities addressing them chiefly against the Italians. They adopted, primarily, the same strategy of the previous Turkish governments; they stalled when giving any answer and offered impossible deals, which if accepted, would have created a basis for conflict between the Great Powers.<sup>205</sup> Sforza's scornful description of the new Ottoman rulers should be considered in this framework. Moreover, it must be said that he left his office during the summer, and when he returned the international crisis was about to begin.<sup>206</sup>

In September, Aehrenthal communicated to Tittoni his will to proceed with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a right descending from the final resolution of the Congress of Berlin. In 1878 the Assembly of the Great Powers recognized to Austria-Hungary the right to occupy and administer Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the provinces should have remained under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. The 1908 revolution of the Young Turks was an opportunity to the Austrians, who profited from the crisis to annex the region, before the new Turkish regime could regain control over it. To do that, Aehrenthal had previously obtained the Russian consent on Sept. 16, 1908; in exchange the chancellor had promised not to oppose the opening of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits to Russian warships.

Sforza wrote that the Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister used "vague, ambiguous phrases, calculated to mislead the Italian minister by not permitting him to understand that the act was imminent."<sup>207</sup> Tittoni, in

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>206</sup> Imperiali to MAE, Terapia, July 5, 1908, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>207</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 67.

Sforza's view, was a "cold, deliberate" and "honest mind." The two men would have the opportunity to work together several times in the next years, and Tittoni seemed to be held in a quite good estimation by his official, despite their "differences on several problems, [...] which concerned the finality of ideals rather than immediate decisions of the moment."<sup>208</sup>

Sforza does not hesitate in his conviction that the Italian Government was "unaware" of the Austrian decision and was "rendered powerless to reproach Vienna with a flagrant violation of Article VII of the Triple Alliance, since Aehrenthal replied that he had not failed to apprise the Italians of his Government's intention."<sup>209</sup> After all, Tittoni was not the sole victim of the Austrian design; the Russian Minister Izvolsky received the same treatment, if not worse.<sup>210</sup>

In *Makers of Modern Europe*, and in his other books, Sforza wrote an *apologia* of Aehrenthal, "The most intelligent among the many Franz Joseph's ministers."<sup>211</sup> In 1908, the Habsburg's representative was accused of "foul play, of deceit, at the least of Machiavelism;" but, Sforza argues that it was a force majeure decision. Of course, it must be considered that the diplomat writes his books after many years and could have been influenced by other contemporary writers. Nevertheless, it is worth to quote his ideas. According to Sforza, "It was not fault of Aehrenthal if the Russian Imperialists played into his hands with their dreams."<sup>212</sup> Sforza agreed with Imperiali in describing the secret and conflictual negotiations that were ongoing in Constantinople. As Sforza points out, "complicated lies were

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 209 *et seq.*

<sup>211</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia quale io la vidi*, 32.

<sup>212</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 49.

connected on all sides after the *fait accompli*; but if the annexation of Bosnia was the first grave element of disturbance in the Europe of the 'armed peace,' Izvolsky was eagerly working at the same time to secure a free passage for Russian warships from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean through the Straits, which would have been just as serious a factor of unrest." To confirm his thesis, Sforza reminds that the Russian Minister "three months before the annexation of Bosnia, offered to Aehrenthal his approval of the annexation in return for the latter's acceptance of the Russian plans."<sup>213</sup>

Sforza believed that Aehrenthal strategy was aimed: firstly, to reduce the Russian power in the Balkans; secondly, to give "new life and new prestige to the Monarchy."<sup>214</sup> Those two goals determined the decision to accomplish "the Bosnia-Herzegovina coup and visit public humiliation upon Serbia," which was a Tsar's protégée. St. Petersburg was the "guardian" of the Slavs and of their interests in the Balkans and, according to a Tittoni's memorandum quoted by Sforza, "The violence inflicted on Serbia was to destroy the growing sympathy the Southern Slavs under the Habsburg rule felt for the little kingdom."<sup>215</sup> To sum up, the 1908 choice was, in Sforza's analysis, a tool to reaffirm the power and influence of the Austrian Empire. In the second place, Aehrenthal was thinking, as Sforza states, about a more independent policy from Berlin. This point is relevant in the diplomat's view; it brought the Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister closer to Italy.

Tittoni also wanted to reach a full entente with Austria, and he was sure of Aehrenthal desire of having better relations with Italy.<sup>216</sup> The Bosnian

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 67.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

coup provoked a strong reaction and a keen anger among the Italians; in 1908 the movement of Italian nationalists arose to fight that cautious policy which had been the cause of that humiliation.<sup>217</sup> Instead, the Foreign Affairs Minister and Giolitti were determined to handle the situation following the diplomatic channels. Tittoni was careful in avoiding the word “compensations,” but he asked for a “gentle act” of the Emperor. For instance, the Foreign Affairs Minister tried to obtain the creation of an Italian University in Austria or a little change in the borders, so that Aquileia’s ruins would be into the Italian territory. They were little recognitions but would help the Government to face the strong domestic discontent.<sup>218</sup> Nevertheless, Sforza believed that there was little that the Italians, like the Serbians, could do in order to change the *fait accompli*. It would have been pointless “begging” for compensation.<sup>219</sup>

## 2. V. MEETING “THE MAKERS OF MODERN EUROPE”

Considering Sforza’s leanings, it is not surprising that the diplomat was appointed in the summer of 1909 to Counselor of the Italian Embassy in London. In the English city, Ambassador San Giuliano was representing the Italian interests. At that time, he was well known for being one of the member of the *Neocrispini* – a political group, born after the African failure occurred in 1896 – and one of the earliest exponents of the Nationalists.

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<sup>217</sup> F. Gaeta, *Nazionalismo italiano* (Edizioni scientifiche italiane, Napoli: 1965), 73-88.

<sup>218</sup> Tommasini, *L’Italia alla vigilia della Grande Guerra*, v. 4, 317 *et seq.*; Decleva, *Da Adua a Sarajevo*, 350 *et seq.*

<sup>219</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 67.

*Neocrispini* believed that Italy should not renounce to be a “colonial Power” but build a diplomatic network able to open new avenues for expansion in the Mediterranean area.<sup>220</sup> However, at the beginning of the XX century economic factors were becoming increasingly important in international relations; the conquest of new territories also meant the opening up of new markets. Thus, the *Neocrispini*, exhorted that the Government take action in order to defend the Italian sphere of influence from the other States’ enterprises.<sup>221</sup>

In this perspective the Triple Alliance needed to be brought in line with the Mediterranean aspirations of Rome. In San Giuliano’s opinion, the Triple Alliance was a marriage of interests since it was essential to the achievement of the Italian design in the Mediterranean thanks to the principle of compensations. Nevertheless, the friendship with Great Britain would be important to grant the Italian achievements in the Mediterranean Sea. An Anglo-Italian *entente cordiale* should be the pivot around which Italy would negotiate with the other Powers. Indeed, San Giuliano’s goal in London was to obtain English support in order to relaunch Italian colonial action, but he was required to deal with the Anglo-German rivalry, which was making the international position of Rome difficult to handle.<sup>222</sup>

In his books, Sforza confirms that this topic was a predominant theme at the Embassy. As a result, the counselor remembers that he had major debates with his chief about the Anglo-German quarrel. The two, indeed, used to promenade through Hyde Park, and “sometimes” they had “very

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<sup>220</sup> Ferraioli, *Politica e diplomazia in Italia tra XIX e XX Secolo: Vita di Antonino di San Giuliano, 1852-1914* (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli: 2007), 129.

<sup>221</sup> M. Petricoli, *L’Italia in Asia Minore. Equilibrio mediterraneo e ambizioni imperialiste alla vigilia della Prima Guerra Mondiale* (Sansoni, Firenze: 1983), 24-25.

<sup>222</sup> G. Andrè, *L’Italia e il Mediterraneo alla vigilia della prima guerra mondiale: i tentativi di intesa mediterranea, 1911-1914* (A. Giuffrè, Milano: 1967), 3-10; Ferraioli, *Politica e diplomazia nell’Italia del XX secolo*, 276-277.

marked” arguments. According to Sforza, “San Giuliano was convinced that Germany was on her way to omnipotence, whereas England and France were on a down-hill path.” The young diplomat, in contrast, believed that Germany was in a decadent stage because of the “flattery” that marked the Hohenzollern court. This aptitude was “fatally lowering the moral character of the Germans.” So that, Sforza concluded, Paris and London were taking the lead, since “history is made with men.” Finally, San Giuliano answered ironically, “You are a moralist...”<sup>223</sup>

However, Sforza stayed in London just for a few months because he was recalled in December 1909 from Rome in order to work as Chief of Cabinet with the new Minister, Francesco Guicciardini. It was a short experience, in fact a new Government was formed in March 1910 by Luigi Luzzatti, and San Giuliano was appointed as Foreign Affairs Minister. Regardless of the previous divergences, Sforza was confirmed as Chief of Cabinet for few months.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, San Giuliano sent the diplomat to Budapest as an Italian general counsel. Despite it was not an Embassy, the destination was somehow strategic for the Italian foreign policy. Indeed, Sforza’s father-in-law was the Ambassador in Vienna, and the young diplomat had become a *habitué* of the Austrian capital. So that, he did not seem to be disappointed about the new office nor the letter sent by his former colleague De Bosdari, who had defined the city as “boring.”<sup>225</sup>

In 1910, Sforza was introduced to Vienna’s Court thanks to Count Gaston Errembault de Dudzeele et d’Orroir. His relationship with Valentine often brought Sforza to the Austrian capital city for the weekend and allowed

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<sup>223</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 283.

<sup>224</sup> Ferraioli, *Politica e diplomazia...*, 324. The historian argues that the decision of removing Sforza from his post by the end of June was a clear manifestation of the disagreement between the two men.

<sup>225</sup> De Bosdari to San Giuliano, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1910, ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Politica Ungheria*.

him entry into the European *beau monde*.<sup>226</sup> Sforza was invited to the Cercle or “*Ball bei Hof*”; in those days it was important to differentiate between that and a *Hoafball* which was far less exclusive.”<sup>227</sup> Indeed, the latter was an official ball which brought together the descendants of sovereign medieval families and governmental officials. The *Ball bei Hof*, instead, was a sort of “private party for those whose birth entitles them to be received on intimate terms.” As such the Emperor’s attitude was different depending on the occasion, and he was less reserved at the *Ball bei Hof*.<sup>228</sup>

Sforza remembers that he was the only stranger at the ball, and Franz Joseph, making an exception from protocol, answered to his bow “with a novel question, and in Italian: ‘*Ce un terribil calor qui dentro: no le par?*’.” Instead of asking if he had liked Vienna, the Emperor had asked Sforza if he the room was too much warm in a bad Italian. It was a shocking event for the Palace, and the day after, “at the Jockey Club, Prince Montenuovo, the Hof-Marshal, commented upon the extraordinary favour the Kaiser had shown me by speaking to me in Italian.” Sforza was aware of the Austro-Italian dispute for the protection of the Italian language in the territories under the Habsburg’s rule and ironically replied, “Whether the Italian had not really been Venetian patois.” Montenuovo “never forgot that” and referred Sforza’s comments to Franz Joseph, “who soon tired of formality, declared the patois to have been Veronese.”<sup>229</sup>

Sforza writes that this episode made him “rather popular in the Austrian society.” As a consequence, he points out that he was chosen to have a series of confidential meetings with Aerenthal without regard to the fact that he

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<sup>226</sup> Sforza to San Giuliano, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1911, ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Politica Ungheria*.

<sup>227</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 12.

<sup>228</sup> Roger Maria Hermann Bernhard Rességuier, *Francis Joseph and His Court: From the Memoirs of Count Roger de Rességuier* (John Lane Company, New York: 1917), 32-3.

<sup>229</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 12-3.

was still a young second rank Counsellor of Embassy.<sup>230</sup> According to Sforza's memory, the mission was thorny. He had been instructed to tell Aehrenthal the plain truth concerning the bilateral relations. It would not be accepted from a higher rank representative, as the Ambassador. In fact, Avarna, who was the Chief of the Italian Embassy in Vienna, told Sforza that he did not want to know anything about the secret talks; he preferred to be informed by San Giuliano whether the mission would have been successful.<sup>231</sup>

Sforza in his books spoke of his meetings with Aehrenthal. The two men met more than once in "the study of a common friend near Vienna, and sometimes even at Nemzeti Casino at Budapest," where "free language was permissible."<sup>232</sup> The diplomat broached several delicate matters such as the issue of the increasing naval armaments, the opening of an Italian University in the Austrian territory, and "the pin-prick policy against Austria's Italian subjects."<sup>233</sup> Aehrenthal was "suspicious and irritated" at the beginning, but then he became "interested" and "sympathetic."<sup>234</sup> This was a cause of joy for Sforza, who felt free to talk sincerely to the Austrian Foreign Minister and took private notes of the conversations.

You cannot expect us to remain indifferent to your efforts at denationalizing the Italians. Italy has risen from the dead in virtue of the law of nationalities. But if your Italians could be proud and happy to be Italians, and at the same time glad of being Austrian subjects, just as Italians of Tessin are proud to be Italian and are yet loyal Swiss; we should, indeed, be very pleased. Kill

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<sup>230</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 54; id., *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 32-3.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>232</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 54.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.* See also V. Sommella, *Un console in trincea. Carlo Galli e la politica estera dell'Italia liberale* (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli: 2016), 44.

<sup>234</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 54.

irredentism by satisfying them – and we shall all be the better off. I believe in influences greater than those of territorial aggrandizement.<sup>235</sup>

Sforza was neither an irredentist nor a nationalist. As his experience shows, he seemed to have a pragmatic approach. Clearly, he had an idea about the finality of the Italian foreign policy, but what seemed to prevail was the awareness of the need that Italy had to maintain the balance of the European Powers – that meant peace – in order to develop and grow. In the meantime, during his career he was never scared of expressing his thoughts; Silvestrelli's and Imperiali's reports offer some evidence of Sforza's particular personality and relationship with his superiors, so Aehrenthal was not an exception. Sforza's words were tough, and the Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister "was silent for a few moments." However, Sforza tells that Aehrenthal replied later, "I believe you, I not only believe in your sincerity, but also in the objective truth of what you say. But were I to repeat your words and to admit that I believe them, I should be taken for a madman here."<sup>236</sup> Therefore, it should be assumed that the unconventional talks were not successful, as Avarna expected, - and, perhaps, San Giuliano too. Yet, in Sforza's perspective, San Giuliano represented an important insurance for the Austrians against any possible rupture of the Alliance.

In other words, San Giuliano was essential for the maintenance of European peace. As the Minister stated at Parliament on December 2, 1910, "the main goal of [the Italian] policy [was] the preservation of the peace and the continental status quo, that was an imperative condition."<sup>237</sup> It is not by

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>237</sup> PSC, Lavori Parlamentari, XXIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia, 1° Sessione, Discussioni, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1910, 10170, <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg23/sed228.pdf> (accessed June 16, 2017).

coincidence that in a report on January 17, 1911, Sforza, after a new meeting with Emperor, wrote about the appreciative comments of Franz Joseph for the Minister's speech.<sup>238</sup> San Giuliano's words had, in fact, a considerable impact on Austro-Hungarian politics. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, writing about the Kingdom's Foreign Affairs balance report, Sforza mentioned once again San Giuliano's speech. Particularly, he noted, there was a convergence on the objectives of the Alliances.<sup>239</sup> If the major purpose was European peace, they were all aware that it was connected to the wholeness of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan States. Moreover, this approach, in San Giuliano's point of view, allowed Italy to keep also its relations with the other States which were not members of the Alliance, namely, Great Britain, France and Russia. In the meantime, the penetration to the East would continue with "calm and temperance [...] avoiding shows of bravado."<sup>240</sup>

Those were the guidelines of San Giuliano's foreign policy. Italy would continue its cautious policy of expansion to the East, even into the Far East. In the Spring of 1911, just after the wedding with Valentine, celebrated in Vienna on March 4, 1911, Sforza was moved to China, where he could resume the policy of commercial and financial penetration.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Sforza to San Giuliano, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1911, 1, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Politica Ungheria*.

<sup>239</sup> DDI, s. IV, v. 5-6, Sforza to San Giuliano, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1911, 813.

<sup>240</sup> PSC, Lavori Parlamentari, XXIII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia, 1° Sessione, Discussioni, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1910, 10171 and 10176.

<sup>241</sup> Note signed by Fasciotti, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1911, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

## 2.VI. A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE ON THE EUROPEAN “ENIGMA”

In 1911 Beijing was not a prime interest in Italian foreign policy, in fact there was not a representative with the rank of ambassador, but just a minister plenipotentiary. However, San Giuliano aspired to foster Italian presence in China where Italy had obtained in 1902 the concession of Tientsin, thanks to the participation in the expedition against the rebels.<sup>242</sup> A change had already been underway in Rome since 1910. In January, the Director General of Political Affairs Bollati had addressed a memo to the Director General of Economic Affairs where he indicated the guidelines in order to seize political and economic influence in China like the other Great Powers. At that time, Sforza was Chief of the Foreign Affairs Minister’s Cabinet and worked with Bollati, who belonged to the “Moderate” group and was close to Tittoni.<sup>243</sup> Indeed, Bollati highlighted the lack of action of the Italian financiers, who did not contribute to the Chinese industrial development making the Italian action marginal in the Far East, a situation that could be no longer accepted. Bollati had in mind the German model; indeed, Italy and Germany were both Country which only recently had reached the national unity.<sup>244</sup>

Several ambassadors had been consulted by the Director General, i.e. the representatives in Tokyo, Berlin, London, Paris and Brussels, for suggestions regarding an economic and political strategy to develop in

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<sup>242</sup> G. Samarani and L. De Giorgi, *Lontane, vicine: Le relazioni fra Cina e Italia nel Novecento* (Carocci, Roma: 2011); A. Di Meo, *Tientsin: La concessione italiana: storia delle relazioni tra Regno d’Italia e Cina, 1866-1947* (GBE, Roma: 2015), 95-104; G. Samarani, “The Italian Presence in China: Historical Trends and Perspectives (1902–1947),” in *Italy’s Encounters with Modern China*, edited by M. Marinelli, G. Andornino (Palgrave Macmillan, New York: 2014), 49 *et seq.*; S. Donati, “Italy’s Informal Imperialism in Tianjin During The Liberal Epoch, 1902–1922.” in *The Historical Journal*, 59, no. 2 (2016), 447–68.

<sup>243</sup> Micheletta, “I diplomatici Italiani...,” 416.

<sup>244</sup> DDI, s. IV, vol. 5-6, Bollati to Vaccaj, Rome, January 1910, 102-107: 102.

Beijing. Among the many initiatives exhorted, there were actions such as an advertising campaign, both domestic and in China, in order to promote new investments and Italian products. They recommended the institution of a permanent commercial chargé, a Chamber of Commerce, and direct sailing routes. Moreover, they suggested the creation of “joint-ventures” with other States to be certain of the Great Powers’ diplomatic support, as it was routine in Belgium.<sup>245</sup>

Finally, Bollati let the Director General of Commercial Affairs to decide which action would have been the most effective. Meantime, he urged the importance for Italy of taking part in the Chinese market in order to not be in a subsidiary position compared with the other Great Powers.<sup>246</sup> In particular, according to Sforza’s recollections, in the years preceding the First World War Germany had become the main economical actor in the Far East. Berlin – starting with the improvement of the privileges acquired in 1898 for the province of Shandong, increased its commercial presence and railway and mining concessions.<sup>247</sup> The Italian diplomat in one of his books remembers that “the rise of the German business and enterprises seemed to be astounding.” A fact that was confirmed by the reports of the Italian counsels, that agreed in saying that “the German trade was overwhelming, whereas the English was dropping.”<sup>248</sup>

In short, it should be noticed that San Giuliano supported the idea of the economical penetration, so that it cannot be a coincidence that Carlo Sforza was sent to China, where he had already been as a counsel in 1903, after the Boxer Revolution. The Tientsin “settlement” was the result of the Italian

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<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-106.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>247</sup> A. Francioni, *Il banchetto cinese: L’Italia fra le treaty powers*, (Nuova immagine, Siena: 2004), 111.

<sup>248</sup> C. Sforza, *L’Enigme Chinoise* (Payot, Paris: 1928), 120-21.

contribution in the restoration of the order after the revolt. The purpose behind the concession consist in developing Italian business in Northern China, but Governments did not show a real interest in Tientsin until 1912.<sup>249</sup> Somehow, Sforza's presence was strategical. The diplomat knew the situation of the Italian interests in that region and was an advocate of the policy of commercial and financial penetration, as he had shown from Constantinople. It is true that he did not agree on important topics with San Giuliano. The Hyde Park conversations are an example of that. Sforza's books, nevertheless, evidence a great esteem for the Italian Minister. As a matter of fact, in June, after his arrival in the Far East, the diplomat received a promotion and was appointed as First Class Counselor of Legation.<sup>250</sup>

The problem was that China was a litmus test for the Great Powers' rivalry, and on July 1, 1911 Europe reached a new level of crisis because of the Franco-German quarrel about Morocco.<sup>251</sup> San Giuliano suspected that Berlin and Paris would have found an agreement at Rome's expense, that meant the loss of Libya. For this reason, and partly also from the pressure of public opinion, San Giuliano stressed the importance of the intervention in Libya and finally convinced Giolitti.<sup>252</sup> Therefore, by the end of September Italy sent its ultimatum to the Sultan, and the war began. This violent action was strongly condemned by the Chinese newspapers since it symbolized European brutality and imperialism against Eastern countries, which could do nothing but cope with.

According to a cable that Sforza sent on October 13, 1911, the Chinese attitude was a genuine reaction coming from the "secret terror" which the

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<sup>249</sup> Francioni, *Il banchetto cinese*, 150-55.

<sup>250</sup> San Giuliano to Sforza, Rome, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1911, ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>251</sup> Albertini, *European relations from the Congress of Berlin to the eve of the Sarajevo murder*, 327-329.

<sup>252</sup> Ferraioli, *Politica e diplomazia...*, 408-09.

Eastern countries felt for Europe. Beijing, in fact, was “sympathetic” to Constantinople. It should also be considered that at that same time a revolution had broken out in the city of Wuchang, where the rioters protested against external influences and Imperial rule.<sup>253</sup> Meanwhile, Russia, profiting from the Qing government’s weakness, threatened China to occupy the Mongolian territory. Therefore, as the Russian representative told Sforza, the Italo-Turkish was a good “apologue” for the Chinese. Nevertheless, Sforza thought that the Mediterranean conflict was a pretext used by the newspapers to push the government to hasten and complete the rearmament.<sup>254</sup>

Sforza noticed that the opinion on Italian behavior changed only with the news of the landing in Tripolitania, “an evidence of the Italian diplomacy’s power to secure its freedom of action in Europe.” So that the newspapers’ titles passed from the “reckless assault” to the recognition. “The success and the strength demonstration were a special topic for the Orientals,” Sforza ironically commented.<sup>255</sup> Thinking about those “special readers who needed to see a different Italy from the weak and sectarian one,” the Italian diplomat did not have any “concern about exaggerating the news.”

Against this strategy was acting German press agency, the Ostasiatischer Lloyd. The impression was “miserable,” even if there was not a real objective of libeling the Italian endeavor, but in Sforza’s view it was just a “tactless” attitude. As a result, the Italian representative decided to talk with his German colleague. Sforza told the Berlin official that he was aware of the attention Germany owed to Turkey in Europe and in the Near East. On the contrary, China’s situation was different; there the “Turks did not

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<sup>253</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 378-90.

<sup>254</sup> DDI, s. IV, vol. 6-7, Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1911, 368.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

exist. It would have been better whether the instructions had required to show the Triple Alliance, as it happily was, united and harmonious."<sup>256</sup>

By the end of November, after the Moroccan crises was settled, Sforza had a new meeting with the German representatives. This time he talked with Count Karl von Luxburg; at that time, the young diplomat seen as "a great resource of the German diplomacy."<sup>257</sup> Luxburg went to visit Sforza for lunch on November 25<sup>th</sup> and told the Italian diplomat that he was in close contact with Berlin.<sup>258</sup> Consequently, Sforza felt free to reveal to his colleague that he was "shocked" by the violent attacks of the German press against Italy.

Luxburg replied that he did not agree with the articles – "thoughtless," according to him – but added that the Italian Government embarrassed the Germans. The reason was that the European peace had been broken before the Moroccan Question was completely solved. The problem, in Luxburg's opinion, was that French military power was now a considerable danger, since its factor of "*force noire*" was too high. Once occupied the region of Souss, Berlin wanted to use it to derange the French Africa. Germans counted on Tripolitania, in case of war, to "spill" weapons and munitions from there to Tunisia and Algeria in order to rise the locals.<sup>259</sup>

Sforza replied that in that case it should not have been a risk if Italy took Tripoli, since it meant that an ally occupied the territory. Luxburg said that Rome did not communicate its intention with enough notice in contrast to the Austrian behavior of 1908. Sforza was baffled by the comparison with the Bosnian crisis, since he remembered that Marschall, who was the

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<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>257</sup> Draft of a letter from Sforza to San Giuliano with a note saying, "Not sent," Beijing, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1911, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

German Ambassador in Constantinople in those days, asserted he had not been informed about the Vienna's action.<sup>260</sup>

Undoubtedly, the rivalry with the Allies of the Triple was a recurring theme in Sforza's cables from Beijing. The Chinese Empire was collapsing, and the European Great Powers were replicating the same scheme he had already seen in Constantinople. On one hand, Sforza communicated with the Republican leadership represented by Yuan Shi-Kai who counted on the Italian diplomatic support for the survival of the new political system. Indeed, he did not believe that the Imperial Government had any chance of survival.<sup>261</sup> The Italian State-building became a sort of model for the new rulers in order to handle the complicated relationship between the State and the Emperor. In one meeting, the Chinese provisional president asked Sforza about the Law of Guarantees, "that famous Italian law which I have heard spoken of as a masterpiece of wisdom." According to Sforza's memoirs, the real point of interest was the compromise "by which Italy had made a sovereign of the Pope at the very moment she was dispossessing him, and through which it had been possible for two sovereigns to live together in the same capital?"<sup>262</sup> In effect, Sforza believed that in Yuan Shi-Kai's ideal political system the Imperial Court would have become a sort of symbol representing the unity of China. Instead, on this point the revolutionary groups did not find an agreement, and, on February 12, 1912 Empress Lung Yu signed on behalf the Child Emperor, Puyi, and proclaimed the Republic with an imperial decree.<sup>263</sup>

Whether a compromise had been found in the regime, this was the beginning of an instable time. Like the Ottoman Empire, China had to find

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<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>261</sup> Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 46 e ss.

<sup>262</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 381.

<sup>263</sup> Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 47-49.

a way to keep the different territories together, now there was not a symbolic figure to maintain the unity of the State. Additionally, the financial situation was critical and required a “honest” and “tougher” stance, in Sforza’s opinion.<sup>264</sup> The new Government needed help from foreign financiers in order to overcome the crisis that was engulfing the entire country. Sforza addressed San Giuliano highlighting the efforts Vienna was supporting in order to participate in the Chinese loans. He urged a similar engagement from Rome if there was any interest in economic expansion. The Italian diplomat argued that immediate action was needed in order to not jeopardize the access to the potential market Beijing represented thanks to its 400 million inhabitants.<sup>265</sup>

Is the fact that we do not want to move our capitals from more essential endeavors enough to excuse the non-expression [...] of our broadest reserves related to the right of the Italian finance to not be excluded from the shares of the international loans for China and – seizing the opportunity to assert it implicitly – from every kind of control and akin situation where the Great Powers are involved in?

Can we – even if we have more moral, if not material, interests than Austria and [...] greater expectations of expansion for the future – be less than Vienna’s Government which, as I had previously said, has already claimed its rights?<sup>266</sup>

Sforza was following the guidelines Bollati gave in 1910, and the same guidelines San Giuliano had used when he was Ambassador in London and

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<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-55.

<sup>265</sup> Draft of a telegram from Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1912, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*. Cf. Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 53-54.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

wanted to foster the Italian expansion in the Mediterranean. San Giuliano answered that the Government would stay focused on the national objectives and the Italian role in the European Concert.<sup>267</sup> Evidence of this stance is that the Italian interests in China were also marked by a military presence. There were several missions of the Royal Navy underway. In particular, the Italian soldiers would protect the religious missionaries and the small Italian manufacturers' activities developed in that country.<sup>268</sup> However, as Sforza's reports outlined, the European alliances were changing. If in 1911 Sforza went to the German residence to ask for explanations, by 1912 he was working in close contact with the English representative, Sir John Jordan, in order to help Yuan to maintain the power endangered by internal conspiracy. The Italian diplomat was aware of the limits of the man, but for the moment the Chinese President "proved to be self-reliant and silent, leaving a little to chance, knowing how to weaken the hands of almost every man in whom he saw a rising danger."<sup>269</sup>

In short, Yuan was enough to grant the conditions Rome needed to accomplish that plan of economic penetration of the Far East. The problem was that in the summer of 1913 the Italian initiatives were still minute. So minute that, Italy risked to be excluded from future possible organizations that would have been created to protect the interests of capital invested in those territories.<sup>270</sup>

At the beginning of 1914, Sforza received an offer by the new Chinese Minister of Finance to create a Sino-Italian Bank with an initial capital of 5 billion Italian Lire. Indeed, the cabinet reshuffle occurring in those days,

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<sup>267</sup> Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 54.

<sup>268</sup> A. Rastelli, *Italiani a Shanghai: La Regia Marina in Estremo Oriente* (Mursia, Milano: 2011), 32-33.

<sup>269</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 382-83.

<sup>270</sup> Draft of a telegram from Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1913, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

was a manifestation of Yuan Shi-Kai's will to centralize the power in the President's hands, that could mean a more favorable situation for Rome.<sup>271</sup> Actually, the new Government committed to secretly deposit 50 percent of the total capital of the future joint Bank. It would be a "success," according to the Italian official since usually foreign banks have to fight against Chinese wariness, instead Rome would have Beijing's secret cooperation.<sup>272</sup> Nevertheless, the European situation was quickly degrading, and Sforza was compelled to observe the events from his faraway lookout.

When the World War broke out San Giuliano asked all the ambassadors their opinion on the situation, and "exceptionally" the Italian minister also consulted Sforza, who considered the request as evidence "that he bore [him] no grudge" for the divergence in opinions they had in the past.<sup>273</sup> The diplomat answered his chief from the Chinese perspective. In fact, Sforza noted the progress Germany had made in the Far East challenging the English influence. "Even from a diplomatic point of view, Germany was about to reach the primacy she enjoyed in Constantinople with Marschall," he remarked. Despite its predominant position, Germany had undertaken an inescapable path to war. It meant "that the leading spirits in Berlin [were] not up to their task or that they harbor dangerous claims to domination." It was not important at that point, but Sforza noted that Italy did not have any option. "Neutrality becoming for us a manifest duty," he wrote. The only choice to be made was related to the shape this stance would have taken.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 60-61.

<sup>272</sup> Draft of a telegram from Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, February 24, 1914, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

<sup>273</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 283.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

For my part, unless you send me different instructions, I shall intensify and develop our interests here without any mystery of my friendship for the colleagues of the Entente.

Finally, San Giuliano would have never sent “different instructions,” but the truth is that Sforza had already launched that policy few years before, without asking for any permission as he was prone to do even when he was a simple chargé d’affaires. After one month, the Foreign Affairs Minister, “tormented with gout,” wrote to Sforza to tell him that his young official was, perhaps right, “and the old tottering mail-coach [was] safer than the shining motor-car.”<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Sforza was on leave when he wrote the telegram to San Giuliano in support of the choice of neutrality. The diplomat was spending his vacation with his pregnant wife in Shanhaiguan, close to Manchuria. Their first daughter, Fiammetta Bianca Maria, was born on October 5, 1914.<sup>276</sup> Sforza recalls in his memoirs that San Giuliano “began [...] to ponder on the manner in which Italy might enter into the war on the side of the Entente” as soon as the Government declared neutrality on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sforza argued that San Giuliano had a plan that was “marked with a clearness of vision.”<sup>277</sup> In his memoirs the Italian diplomat considers San Giuliano’s choice to avoid the denouncement of the Triple Alliance as a necessary step. “To remain patient” was Italy’s duty. The “eventual decision to abandon neutrality” would be made when the Italian minister had been sure of the Entente’s commitment in defeating the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Sforza in his memoir, does not take into account that San Giuliano, in the meantime, was

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<sup>276</sup> See Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 43-44; and Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1914. See also, San Giuliano to Sforza, Rome, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1914, ASD, and Sforza to San Giuliano, Beijing, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914, in ASD, Coll. Personale, s. VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati - Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>277</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 285.

trying to obtain the “*terre irredente*” on the basis of Article VII of the Triple Alliance Treaty in exchange for leaving Austria free to act against Serbia. This option would allow Italy to accomplish his national unity without going to war.<sup>278</sup>

### 3.I. ITALIAN NEUTRALITY AND ORIENTAL WARFARE

The Austro-German warfare challenged Italian diplomacy and the project of seizing zones of influence in which Sforza had been strongly committed. The Austrian attack against Serbia and the German invasion of neutral Belgium, his wife’s homeland, were clear signs of the imperialistic stance of Vienna and Berlin. Moreover, Valentine’s family was strongly connected with the Belgian Court, and since August 4<sup>th</sup> the couple had followed the events with apprehension.<sup>279</sup> Indeed, King Albert and Queen Elisabeth did not leave the country after the invasion, but they “settled on the last parcel of free Belgian soil, and wove around them a legend.”<sup>280</sup>

Sforza did not understand how it was possible to stay on the Austro-German side “discarding any other consideration, such as the fact that the Treaty was purely defensive.” The diplomat was far away from the internal political quarrel that followed the Italian declaration of neutrality, but he followed the debate.<sup>281</sup> According to Sforza, there was only an Italian

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<sup>278</sup> Ferraioli, *Politica e Diplomazia...*, 860 *et seq.*

<sup>279</sup> Zeno, *Ritratto di Carlo Sforza*, 56.

<sup>280</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 255.

<sup>281</sup> On the Italian neutrality, see B. Vigezzi, *L’Italia neutrale* (Ricciardi, Napoli: 1966); W. A. Renzi, *In the shadow of the sword: Italy’s Neutrality and Entrance into the Great War 1914-1915* (Peter Lang, New York: 1987).

politician who supported the intervention on the side of the Central Empires in the summer of 1914. This man was Sidney Sonnino who would succeed San Giuliano at the *Consulta*, after the old Minister's death on October 16<sup>th</sup>. Sforza's view in hindsight was probably influenced by his later relationship with the new Foreign Affairs Minister, whose "essential trait" was the "puritanical" and "pharisaical" obsession of "thanking God that he was 'not as other men are.' A mania which may easily become intolerable cant in private life and an element of incomprehension in public life." The diplomat preferred different political models. For instance, Cavour was the kind of statist able to "[assent] to compromises in transitory incidents" without being opportunistic; he had always "in view some general noble purpose."<sup>282</sup> San Giuliano "possessed neither the courage nor the vision of Cavour," but he was a "believer in diplomatic finesse."<sup>283</sup>

To confirm his analysis, Sforza recalled a conversation he had with the former Minister and Senator Pietro Bertolini some years later, during the Spa Conference in 1920.<sup>284</sup> Bertolini explained that Sonnino was "unconsciously" influenced by his Tory tendencies and endowed with a "naïve pride of going against the country's unanimous opinion."<sup>285</sup> On August 17, 1914 Bertolini, worried about irredentist pressure motivating an entrance into the war, wrote to Sonnino. In his answer on August 18<sup>th</sup>, the future Foreign Affairs Minister recognized that while he was previously for the intervention with the Allies, the majority of the people supported the choice of neutrality. Once the Government had made their decision, it

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<sup>282</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 287; id., *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 47. On Sonnino's stance, see also G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a Dream: Sidney Sonnino and the Rise and Fall of Liberal Italy, 1847-1922* (Olschki, Firenze: 1999), 395 *et seq.*; L. Monzali, "Sidney Sonnino e la politica estera italiana dal 1878 al 1914," *Clio*, XXXV-3 (1999), 397-447: 441 *et seq.*; L. Riccardi, "Sonnino e l'Intesa durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale," in *Sonnino e il suo tempo*.

<sup>283</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 118.

<sup>284</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 287-88.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

should be maintained, “resisting the airy incitements of the public opinion.”<sup>286</sup>

Instead, in September, San Giuliano, when Germany seemed close to a defeat, changed his policy. At that point, the Foreign Minister started looking for an agreement with the Entente in order to obtain the missing Italian lands.<sup>287</sup> This does not mean that he had not already scrutinized the alternative option in the previous months. Since July 1914, he ordered his ambassadors to plumb the Entente’s willingness towards Rome.<sup>288</sup> In fact, he made a program in the case Italy would enter the war on the side of Great Britain, France and Russia. Sforza reported San Giuliano’s plan as follow:<sup>289</sup>

- Italy should make sure that the Entente fought and opposed the survival of the Austrian Empire in the postwar system, instead of “wrongly” considering Germany “as the main enemy,”;
- Italy should seek an alliance with Romania and an agreement with the Serbian Government;
- The new Italian border should be the natural frontier, that meant the Alps until the gulf of Fiume – “where Dante had fixed, in the Divine Comedy, the Eastern boundaries of Italy,” so that Dalmatia would be excluded except for the annexation of few islands.

San Giuliano also had a plan for the postwar Europe, which consisted of an alliance among the winners to “maintain the new map of Europe” and an Italo-Serb entente to ensure “the pacific Italian influence in the Balkans.” Sforza believed that this program was “far-seeing,” mainly because it was

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<sup>286</sup> Sonnino to Bertolini, Quercianella (Livorno), August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1914, in *Nuova Antologia*, v. 306, Jan.-Feb. 1923, 214-215. Cf. *Makers of Modern Europe*, Sforza reported that that the date of Sonnino’s letter is August 13<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>287</sup> Ferraioli, *Politica e Diplomazia...*, 891 *et seq.*

<sup>288</sup> M. Toscano, *Il Patto di Londra: Storia diplomatica dell'intervento italiano, 1914-1915* (Zanichelli, Bologna, 1934), 76.

<sup>289</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 285. See also, Ferraioli, *Politica e Diplomazia...*, 899-900.

limited to the lands inhabited by Italians. The new Minister should have adopted his predecessor guidelines upon appointment.<sup>290</sup> The Prime Minister Salandra, instead, chose Sonnino as new Chief of the *Consulta*, a choice that Sforza strongly opposed. The two men had two different approaches to Italian foreign policy. Sonnino was the major rival of Giolitti, and Sforza advanced his career thanks to men close to the latter. Sforza was “convinced of Italian superiority and sure of [its] power of penetration,” and the main goal of a Foreign Affairs Minister should be “to throw open the doors of the East to Italian influence.”<sup>291</sup>

As Foreign Affairs Minister – after November 5, 1914, Sonnino did not change his attitude. His name meant a total change in the diplomatic method, especially when compared to San Giuliano’s approach. The two men had different characters: the latter was as flexible as the former was rigid. It was impossible that Sonnino kept his predecessor’s legacy alive: he wanted to shed some light on the Italian foreign policy. Rome had to make its decisions regardless of the development of the European war, and consider its objective to be national unity.<sup>292</sup> There were two possible ways to obtain Trento e Trieste. Italians could negotiate their passage under the Italian Kingdom with Vienna in exchange of the Italian neutrality. Otherwise, the war against Austria would be the only way to realize the fulfillment of unity. The greatest problem with the first option was that Sonnino wanted a real commitment from Austrians, who should have

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>292</sup> See also J. Burgwyn, *The Legend of the Mutilated Victory: Italy, the Great War and the Paris Peace Conference, 1915-1919* (Greenwood, Westport: 1993), 17-19.

yielded the territories by a definite time; but he chose this stance in November coherently with the neutrality declared in August.<sup>293</sup>

In this complicated situation, Sforza's legation had become more marginal than before; even if, the European conflict had consequences also in the Far East. The Chinese Government had issued a declaration of neutrality on August 6, 1914, but Japan declared war to Germany on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, which meant attacking Berlin's concessions in the Shandong peninsula. The Japanese warfare had been supported by the British. London was not only allied with Japan but also its influence in the Far East had been endangered by the Germans. The divergence from the Japanese plans was that these were more ambitious actions than the mere exclusion of Germany from the area. Since the end of 1914, Tokyo had made a list of requests to submit to Beijing in order to find a conclusive settlement of the Sino-Japanese relations. They were presented directly to Yuan Shi-Kai in January 1915. No one was informed of the Japanese action, not even the Chinese Foreign Minister Sun Pao who compelled to resign, or the British Ambassador, who represented an ally of Japan. All the other foreign representatives were also kept in the dark about the Sino-Japanese talks.<sup>294</sup>

Regardless of the secret that was covering the negotiations, on January 23<sup>rd</sup> Sforza sent a long memo to Sonnino. Tokyo had seized the opportunity of a previous Chinese note, related to the Japanese military operations out of the Shandong territory, to ask for several privileges and concessions in the "richest provinces [...] which would assure to the close Empire a preponderant influence."<sup>295</sup> Sforza foresaw that Tokyo wanted to take

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<sup>293</sup> P. Pastorelli, *Dalla Prima alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale: momenti e problemi della politica estera italiana, 1914-1943* (LED, Milano: 1997), 25-27. See also Toscano, *Il Patto di Londra*, 76-77.

<sup>294</sup> M. Toscano, *Guerra diplomatica in Estremo Oriente (1914-1931): I Trattati delle ventun domande*, v. I (Einaudi, Torino: 1950), 112 and 126.

<sup>295</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 2, Sforza to Sonnino, Beijing, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1915, 570.

advantage of the actual international situation and present Europe with a series of *faits accomplis*. What was happening in Beijing should be placed in the European war context.<sup>296</sup>

Western Powers' lack of action, due to the European war, meant that Yuan Shi-Kai would have to accept the Japanese requests, perhaps after having adopted some dilatory ruses. In fact, when the Japanese intervention had already started, the Chinese President replied to some Southern officials' call for resistance that "the only stance that China could adopt was the one of patience."<sup>297</sup> On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Yuan Shi-Kai answered to a new plea coming from the governors of the major provinces suggesting they wait and informing them that the "Demands" were not as severe as they were expected to be.<sup>298</sup>

Sforza reported on the content of the Japanese requests on February 11<sup>th</sup>. They could be divided in five groups concerning four different zones (i.e., Manchuria, Eastern Mongolia – that meant the Southern Manchuria, Shandong and Fukien) and some general requests related to control of the army and the administration and to cooperate in the maintenance of the national order. The Italian representative was personally not surprised and considered the demands obvious to Beijing. Only the fifth group seemed too improbable to be accepted. However, if Yuan's government could resist, it meant that Tokyo, "as in the oriental way," made more questions in order to pretend to yield something and obtain the most important.<sup>299</sup>

The Japanese goal was the exclusion of every Western country from an area that Tokyo considered to be an exclusive zone for its development. Japanese authorities had planned to achieve that objective without

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<sup>296</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 2, Sforza to Sonnino, Beijing, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1915, 571.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 571.

<sup>298</sup> Toscano, *Guerra diplomatica in Estremo Oriente*, 130.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

resorting to the military power but using diplomacy. Among the Great Powers, no one seemed to have the necessary tools to stop the Japanese advance, not even Germany. Great Britain's difficulties were also evident in Beijing. Clearly, Lloyd George was not able to stop Tokyo, and his main concern was the reaffirmation of the open-door policy. London did not have any other option; this was the only way to save the English endeavors in the Far East.

Germany, according to the Italian diplomat, was literally doomed to lose everything. Having this in mind, Sforza had already interrupted any cooperation with Berlin's representatives preferring the Triple Entente side. The diplomat also began to support the group of the interventionists in Italy. On February 15<sup>th</sup> he wrote to the director of the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Luigi Albertini, to endorse his battle in favor of the intervention against the Central Empires.<sup>300</sup> In a cable addressed to Sonnino on April 19<sup>th</sup>, Sforza ruled out any possibility of German interference in Beijing behaviors, a hypothesis contended mainly by the French Press. There were no Chinese authorities who believed that Berlin could have any influence in the Far East in the near future.<sup>301</sup>

At that time, Sforza was unaware of the ongoing negotiations between Italy and the Triple Entente Powers, and he did not know the contents of the so called "Pact of London." The secret agreement, signed on April 26<sup>th</sup>, was the legal precedent of the Italian intervention; it represented the guarantee to obtain in case of victory those territories needed to complete

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<sup>300</sup> L. Albertini, *Epistolario 1911-1926* (LAE), v. 1 (Mondadori, Milano: 1968), Albertini to Sforza, Milano, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915, 339-38. Sforza's letter is not published, but it is possible to know the date of the document and the main content from Albertini's words, "Dear Sforza, thank you for the letter of February 15<sup>th</sup>, that I have just received, and, above all for the appreciation that you give indirectly to *Corriere della Sera*'s behavior. [...] now, it is needed to gain votes so what is invoked by the best Italians of all parties – and I am glad you are among those, can happen."

<sup>301</sup> Toscano, *Guerra diplomatica in Estremo Oriente*, 194.

the national unity and achieve the strategic security of the country. The Italian requests were mainly focused on the Adriatic side.<sup>302</sup> The Entente promised Rome, in Article 4, the regions of Trentino and southern Tyrol to the natural boundary of Brenner, plus, Trieste, Gorizia, Gradisca and the Istrian Peninsula to the Kvarner, including Volosko and the major islands of Cherso and Lussino with the nearby minor islands. Fiume would be part of Hungary. In Article 5, it was established that Italy would control the Dalmatian coast from Zara to Cape Planca and the Dalmatian islands, excluding Brac, Bua, Solta and the two Zirona. The left part of the Dalmatian Coast would be neutralized. Italy also obtained Valona, Sazan and the creation of a small Muslim Albanian State in the central part of Albania, which would be under its protectorate. The remainder of the Albanian territories would be divided between Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. In regards to the Middle East and the African territories, in Article 9, France, Great Britain and Russia recognized, "to a degree," that Italy was interested in the maintenance of the *statu quo* in the Mediterranean area. For this reason, Rome would have a sphere of influence in the province of Antalya, in the southern coast of Anatolian Turkey, and an enlargement of the African Italian colonies in case of division of the German colonies. On those conditions, Italy committed itself to enter the conflict one month later and on May 23<sup>rd</sup> declared war on Austria-Hungary.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, China and Japan signed the "Twenty-one Demands" agreement. It might be said that Tokyo strategy was successful, but London had a major role in the negotiations. The British did not want a war between Japan and China that would endanger Chinese independence – one of the objectives of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. So that they placed pressure on Japan to moderate its requests in the Fifth Group and on Yuan Shi-Kai to

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<sup>302</sup> See M. Toscano, *Il Patto di Londra*, 82-86, 160 and 183-188.

accept the other terms, even if Beijing considered them “modified in the terms rather than in the substance.”<sup>303</sup> Tokyo would have its requests satisfied, in particular, those related to Manchuria, Shandong and Fukien. The only exceptions were the Eastern Mongolia and the fifth group. To conclude, the British believed that the crisis in the Far East was settled and Sforza, as a simple onlooker, was certain of the influence that London would exert in that zone in the future. The Italian official argued that his Government should act in agreement with London and earn its favor in order to enhance the Italian endeavors in the Oriental region. He appeared to be truly confident about the cooperation with the British, “especially now that the Royal Government left the ‘wise neutrality’.”<sup>304</sup>

### 3.II. APPROACHING THE EUROPEAN WAR

By the end of the summer, Sforza was appointed as Italian Minister in Serbia.<sup>305</sup> None of his previous appointments made him the most suitable for the role, except that San Giuliano had thought Sforza as Italian representative in Albania in June 1914.<sup>306</sup> At that time, when the relations between Rome and Vienna were particularly strained, the diplomat could have been considered because of his family’s ties with the Austrian Monarchy. San Giuliano was still trying to save the Triple Alliance, but it is

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<sup>303</sup> R. J. Gowen, “Great Britain and the Twenty-One Demands of 1915: Cooperation versus Effacement,” in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Mar. 1971), 76-106: 101-03.

<sup>304</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Beijing, May 29, 1915, 3, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

<sup>305</sup> Sonnino to Sforza, Roma, August 26, 1915, in ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

<sup>306</sup> L. Aldrovandi Marescotti, *Guerra diplomatica: Ricordi e frammenti di Diario, 1914-1919* (Mondadori: Verona: 1937), 48.

not clear why Sonnino chose him.<sup>307</sup> One year later the balance of Powers was totally changed; the Italian role in the new Alliance remained marginal because of the refusal to declare war against Germany and sending more troops in Balkans to support the Serbian resistance.<sup>308</sup>

Sforza had openly joined the interventionists, and in China he had supported the cooperation with the Entente, chiefly with Great Britain. The new office represented an advancement in Sforza's career and strained the relationship with Sonnino. The instructions the Italian Minister sent to Sforza did not arrive, and the two had apparently a misunderstanding related to the diplomat's return from Beijing. The Foreign Affairs Minister had to send directions twice to the official. Sforza was ordered to secretly leave the Chinese legation without waiting for his replacement, to avoid a long period of "uncertainty" for the Serbian Government.<sup>309</sup> Finally, Sforza left Beijing with his family by ship on September 30, 1915 and arrived in Rome by mid-November to meet the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister.<sup>310</sup>

Regardless of the previous instructions, Sonnino did not allow Sforza to reach his new destination, and the diplomat – disappointed, was put on leave without further explanation.<sup>311</sup> Sforza seized the opportunity to spend some time in his hometown. He left Montignoso on November 27<sup>th</sup> to meet the King Vittorio Emanuele at his headquarters close to the front line in Udine. En route Sforza first stopped in Bologna with his university fellow and the leader of Socialist party Giuseppe Modigliani. The city was blacked

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<sup>307</sup> M. Toscano, Introduzione al diario di Sforza, in *Nuova Antologia*, dicembre 1967, 447-454: 449; Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 64-65.

<sup>308</sup> L. Riccardi, *Alleati non amici. Le relazioni politiche tra l'Italia e l'Intesa durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale* (Morcelliana, Brescia 1992), 252-55.

<sup>309</sup> Sonnino to Sforza, Roma, September 13, 1915, ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cina*.

<sup>310</sup> "Promemoria per la Divisione II", Roma, November 30, 1915, in ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>311</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Roma, November 14, 1915, in ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

out when they arrived. It was a sign of the war which upset the diplomat, as it was his first real contact with effects of the conflict.

During the trip, the two men deeply debated the Italian intervention. Modigliani was sure of the German victory, which would not be a danger to democracy. According to the socialist advocate, if Berlin became a world power, it would have been compelled to acquire modern institutions. Sforza's companion argued that the Italian intervention had been decided by few people in Rome and Milan, who were influenced by the Nationalist and French propaganda. Modigliani jeered at the Belgian resistance, glorified by the press to inflame the Italian masses. Obviously, Sforza did not agree with this analysis, and he reported Modigliani's speech to the King when they met on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Vittorio Emanuele was skeptical about a possible German renovation. He seemed to be worried about the German attempt to build a new alliance with Vienna and St. Petersburg.<sup>312</sup>

There is no other information about this meeting, but in those days the diplomat was appointed as a secret envoy in Bern. It is definite that, after December 8<sup>th</sup>, Sforza was in the Swiss capital.<sup>313</sup> The Italian representative writes that "Sonnino begged [him] to go to Switzerland first on confidential mission and investigations."<sup>314</sup> On February 1, 1916, Sforza sent a confidential note to report about a meeting of January 24<sup>th</sup> with Monsignor Heylen, bishop of Namur – a Belgian city in the Meuse Valley which was under German occupation.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, in Nuova Antologia, 455-56.

<sup>313</sup> Lucchese Palli, Consul general in Paris, sent a telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome on December 8, 1915, with which he asked Sforza's address in Bern. See ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>314</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and...*, 143.

<sup>315</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Bern, February 1, 1916, in S. Sonnino, *Carteggio 1914-1916*, edited by P. Pastorelli (Laterza, Roma-Bari: 1974), 680-81. There are no other documents related to those days in Sforza's papers. See also I. Garzia, *La Questione Romana durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale* (Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli: 1981), 134-39.

The meeting, organized by the Belgian Minister, Baron de Groote, was crowded. Indeed, Monsignor Heylen was coming back from Rome, where he and the Belgian Jesuit Father Hénusse had met Pope Benedict XV.<sup>316</sup> According to Monsignor Heylen's account, Benedict XV authorized him to reveal that the Vatican would never support the peace negotiations without having a guarantee for Belgian independence and the commitment of paying acceptable compensation.<sup>317</sup> Monsignor Heylen's words came from a misunderstanding: indeed, the Italian newspapers, as *Corriere della Sera* and *Osservatore Romano*, denied any statement related to the Belgian situation coming from the Pontifex.<sup>318</sup>

Benedict XV wanted to maintain a position of neutrality and, in the previous months, had tried to mediate between the two fighting parts. The Pope was determined to enhance his international role in order to take part in the future peace conference contrary to what the Entente Powers agreed on with article 15 of the Pact of London in 1915. In October 1915 the Vatican worked in order to facilitate a separate peace between Germany and Belgium. For this reason, the Belgian prelates were invited in Rome, but the Entente Powers and the Belgian clergy were resolute to obstruct such an agreement.<sup>319</sup> On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1916, the Japanese Ambassador informed Sonnino by accident of an Anglo-French proposal for a joint declaration about the role of Belgium in the postwar negotiations. London and Paris wanted Brussels to have a place among the delegations which would decide the peace terms. They thought the Entente should declare that a peace agreement would be unacceptable if it did not recognize the complete independence of Belgium and include sufficient compensation for the

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<sup>316</sup> Garzia, *La Questione Romana*, 134.

<sup>317</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Bern, February 1, 1916, in S. Sonnino, *Carteggio 1914-1916*, 680.

<sup>318</sup> Garzia, *La Questione Romana*, 135-36.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 126 and 130-34.

damages. The total amount of the reparations should be enough to insure the country a stable recovery of its economy and political institutions.<sup>320</sup> The day after Sonnino spoke with the Japanese delegate, he met the English ambassador in Rome, who confirmed the Anglo-French initiative. The Italian minister at Le Havre – the French city where the Belgian government was exiled, also confirmed this information.<sup>321</sup> Finally, on February 1<sup>st</sup> Sonnino met the French Ambassador Barrère and showed his skepticism about the declaration. The Italian Foreign Affairs Minister defined it “dispensable” because there was nothing new to justify such an act.<sup>322</sup>

The restoration of the Belgian independence, in the Italian Foreign Minister’s view, was already an essential condition for peace negotiations and the Allies were bound by the London Treaty of September 5, 1914. Sforza was allegedly not aware of Sonnino’s talks in Rome, but Bern was a strategic location for secret negotiations during the war. The Belgian sovereign, King Albert, had made overtures of agreement with Germany in order to spare his own country further destruction and ruins.<sup>323</sup> Sforza’s contacts with the Belgian royal family were not a secret and, facing with such a circumstance, the diplomat advocated for Monsignor Heylen’s reliability and reiterated his support for an Italian declaration of war against Germany. The Italian official assured the “literal accuracy” of his report and shared that Monsignor Heylen did not overstate the Pope’s words.<sup>324</sup> Sforza would have preferred a greater Italian commitment against Germany, instead Sonnino was opposing a determined resistance which endangered the Italian position among the Entente Powers. In those days the relations

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<sup>320</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 5, Sonnino to Imperiali et al., Rome, January 30, 1916, 283.

<sup>321</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 5, Carignani to Sonnino, Le Havre, January 31, 1916, h. 7.05 p.m. (for h. 9.30 p.m.), 284; and Sonnino to Imperiali et al., Rome, January 31, 1916, h. 9.00 p.m., 285.

<sup>322</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 5, Sonnino to Imperiali et al., February 1, 1916, h. 9.00 p.m., 286.

<sup>323</sup> Garzia, *La Questione Romana*, 138-39.

<sup>324</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Bern, February 1, 1916, in Sonnino, *Carteggio...*, 681.

with the Allies also were strained. The crucial issues were the Italian reluctance to send more troops in the Balkans and the Italian non-declaration of war against Germany, from which brought on distrust from the other Allies. London and Paris were acting together, often without informing their Mediterranean partner.<sup>325</sup> The different views between the Italian Foreign Minister and the diplomat could also explain why Sforza was recalled to Rome where he had to stay for some months.

Waiting to leave in order to reach the Serbian Government, Sforza was authorized by Sonnino to submit a project of reform for the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On March 16<sup>th</sup> Sforza addressed a new letter to Sonnino with his proposal. The diplomat argued that considering the future peace negotiations the bureaucratic system needed a major renovation inspired by the principles of expertise and efficiency.<sup>326</sup>

In future peace negotiations, the Minister will personally manage our vital interests; but only the administrative branches of the Ministry can get to the heart of the many minor matters – which, frequently, have long and byzantine precedents and, if possible, will be easier to resolve with a peace agreement.

For this reason, those departments should be something more than superficial.

In fact, the reform should be fast and based on experience; it does not have to increase offices, expenses and officials. (The previous reforms of the Ministry always had personal objectives, even if they were legitimate; their

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<sup>325</sup> Riccardi, *Alleati non amici*, 271-73; *id.*, “Sonnino e l’Intesa durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale,” 57.

<sup>326</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Rome, March 16, 1916, in Sonnino, *Carteggio...*, 704-707.

goals, covered by fine words, were just the enhancement of a division rather than another.)<sup>327</sup>

Sforza stressed the need to create effective and competent departments. The diplomat noticed that political and economic matters were always intertwined, and the political division was often more competent than the economic one. He added that legations, having limited possibilities, could not act in situations where political and economic elements had to be considered together. As a result, Sforza proposed to join the two General Directions of Political and Commercial Affairs into one structure: to have all the materials related to each country in one office. However, to avoid complaints from the actual General Directors, the diplomat suggested to maintain the two Divisions for European Affairs and Overseas. Sforza's project included the abolishment of the internal hierarchy and the creation of offices dependent on the general directors. This would have been a way to increase accountability.<sup>328</sup>

Sforza's project did not have a follow-up. Sonnino was clearly occupied with more serious situations. The spring of 1916 was marked by a new deterioration of the Allies' relations. In May, England and France secretly signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which determined the future spheres of influence in the Middle East. The Italian officials were informed about the existence of treaties related to the Mediterranean area, but the English Prime Minister Grey refused to communicate the exact contents. This refusal was related to Rome's rejection of declaring war against Germany. As a consequence, Sonnino and his officials began to change their strategy, but there was still some resistance among the members of the Government.

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<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 705.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 706-07.

The turning point was marked by the violent Austrian attack in Trentino from mid-May to mid-June which caused the crisis of Salandra Cabinet on June 10<sup>th</sup>.

On June 11<sup>th</sup> Sforza met the King in Udine.<sup>329</sup> The diplomat was about to leave for Corfu, the Greek Island in the Ionian Sea where the Serbian Court and his Government were exiled under Franco-Italian military protection. Vittorio Emanuele was worried about the internal political situation and appeared to be aware of the weakness of the Italian position. He warned Sforza about the fact that “Serbs were mad at Italians.” Nevertheless, “they seemed to be furious also about French.” In the meantime, Vittorio Emanuele praised the Serbian King, Peter I Karageorgevic, and his regent, Prince Alexander. That was the opportunity for the diplomat to question Vittorio Emanuele about which attitude should be adopted for the Adriatic Question. According to the sovereign, Italians should be willing to negotiate with Serbs; otherwise, by ten years’ time, another war would break out.<sup>330</sup> The King, as the *Statuto Albertino* established, has a prerogative on Foreign Policy so that he determined the main line to follow; his words would inspire Sforza’s action in Corfu.

Sforza’s departure coincided with a new direction of the Italian foreign policy. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the new Executive, guided by Boselli, was established with representatives of different political groups to have a broader support for the warfare policy. On one side, this makeup made the Government weaker; on the other, Sonnino gained a privileged position which allowed him to lead the Foreign Affairs with more determination and take action to

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<sup>329</sup> On June 9, 1916 the Cabinet approved Sforza’s mission to the Serbian Court; see the note in ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>330</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 456-57.

position Italy on a more equal footing with its Allies.<sup>331</sup> On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the decree which appointed Sforza as Minister in Corfu had already been signed.<sup>332</sup> According to what he wrote to the Consulta's General Director of Political Affairs, Salvatore Contarini, the diplomat left Rome on June 28<sup>th</sup> with Fiammetta and Valentina, who was now pregnant with their second son; Sforzino would be born on September 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>333</sup> The family spent a night in Brindisi from where they took the Royal Navy ship and arrived in Corfu on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

### 3.III. THE ARRIVAL IN CORFU: A NEW MAP FOR THE BALKANS

Sforza arrived in Corfu five months after the establishment of the Serbian Government on the island. The Italian diplomat stayed at the Hotel St. George, "in the lower town, on the Spianata, a pleasant square lined with trees opposite the old fortress." His French and English colleagues, Auguste Boppe and Sir Charles des Graz, also resided there until the end of the war, "with trunks virtually unpacked." Sforza was not as "optimistic" as the

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<sup>331</sup> Riccardi, *Alleati non amici*, 279 et seq.; *id.*, "Sonnino e l'Intesa durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale," 58-61. See also D. Veneruso, *La Grande Guerra e l'unità nazionale. Il ministero Boselli* (Sei, Torino: 1996).

<sup>332</sup> Contarini to Sforza, Rome, June 16, 1916, h. 10.00 p.m., ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>333</sup> Sforza to Contarini, June 24, [1916] h. 3.00 p.m., ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10. In the handwritten note there is no indication of the place from where Sforza is writing, but it is possible to think that he was in Rome. Indeed, he wrote on a letterhead with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' logo, and he mentioned also a conversation with "B." without giving more information, but it is plausible he met Boselli.

other Entente's delegates about the end of the war and signed a two-year lease. Sforza's family moved to *Villa Condi*, "at Mandukio on the seashore, ten minutes by motor from the city."<sup>334</sup>

In his new residence, Sforza met the was the minister of national economy and future Foreign Affairs Minister of Yugoslavia, Vojislav Marinković, who also was the leader of the Progressive Party. Marinković rented the house before the Italian diplomat's arrival, but he had never inhabited it and went to Villa Condi just to remove his belongings. It was an opportunity for Sforza to talk about the Serbian Prime Minister, the Radical Party's leader, Nikola Pašić. The latter was 70 years old in 1916 and, for the last 25 years, had hold a political role, mainly as a Prime Minister. Marinković looked up to the Executive leader but also showed a kind of annoyance for his "over-cultivation." Pašić was the "sort of man" that if someone "told him to go to the North Pole, he would prepare for a Polar expedition." This temperament was "particularly useful," according to Sforza who would become close to Pašić. The Prime Minister settled at the Hotel Bella Venezia, "in the upper quarter [of the island], far from shops and the crowd." For three years, the Allies' legates – such as Sforza, had to go there to meet the Serbian leader, but Pašić often went to Villa Condi for lunch or tea. Pašić and Sforza shared a passion for swimming. The two men, during their stay in the Greek island, would go "more than once swimming together in some creek near the Villa Condi. [...] Amusingly enough, this man [Pašić ] who never knew the base pangs of vanity derived as much pleasure as an adolescent from the fact that he sometimes crossed the creek more quickly" than Sforza.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 145.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

The Italian diplomat, as the other Entente's officials, interacted mainly with the Serbian Prime Minister and rarely met the Prince Regent. Alexander, indeed, "would leave his army in Macedonia only for short sojourns in Corfu, the time necessary to maintain contact with the members of the Government and the three Entente plenipotentiaries."<sup>336</sup> Sforza's first official meeting with the Prince to present his credentials was not until July 13, 1916.<sup>337</sup>

My mission starts after creating a glorious brotherhood in arms has created between the two countries that kind of supreme bond made of the blood spilled against the common enemy. This will forever inspire my action. I am glad to think that, even if today I have to be received by you away from Serbia, the day is coming when the national independences are reclaimed and I will be able to follow His Majesty the King and Your Highness to the Serbian territory with the people whose pains and bravery have inspired such a deep and touching consideration in Italy and in the free Europe.

Sforza's words did not represent the real state of relations between Serbia and Italy. As Vittorio Emanuele noticed, Serbian authorities were disappointed by the Italian lack of support against the "common enemy" (i.e., Austria).<sup>338</sup> Sonnino was trying to operate a major revision of the Italian commitment to the war; at least, it seems that Sforza understood his mission in these terms. Sforza also talked about "national independences" and not only about the Serbian independence. Considering his memoirs, he had already understood the end of the Austrian Monarchy. The socialist

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<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>337</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 6, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 13, 1916, n. 118, 80.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

Leonida Bissolati may have inspired Sforza's future ideas.<sup>339</sup> Bissolati and Gaetano Salvemini had been the main representatives of the democratic interventionism in 1914 and both of them believed that Italy should renounce to the annexation of the Dalmatian coast and the Dodecanese islands. Indeed, according with the Mazzini's tradition, Italy should become the "guardian" of the freedom of the countries formerly subdued to the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire.<sup>340</sup> But, in 1916, Sforza was still acting as a diplomat: his words were connected to the Minister's directives and, even in the future years, he maintained the idea of the necessity to control Valona. The Albanian Port city – and the Albanian coast in general, were among the most important Italian interest at that time. The Italian troops had been stationed there since December 1914.<sup>341</sup> The Pact of London, even if paradoxical, talked about an Independent Muslim State under the Italian protectorate.<sup>342</sup> Serbs were aware of the Pact's contents – the Serbian Government had been informed when the Entente Powers were negotiating with Bulgaria for its entrance into the war in the summer of 1915. So, Prince Alexander's skepticism is also understandable.<sup>343</sup> The Regent remarked that the Serbian blood was "spilling" because of the national ideal, and he would expect "empathetic, perfect and friendly support" from the Allies.<sup>344</sup>

The point is that the two countries had similar war aims: the achievement of national unification; Serbs wanted an outlet on the Adriatic Sea, and

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<sup>339</sup> Haywood, *Failure of a Dream*, 512.

<sup>340</sup> M. Bucarelli, "Mussolini, la questione adriatica e il fallimento dell'interventismo democratico," in *Nuova Rivista Storica*, XCV, Jan.-Apr. 2011, v. I, p.137-206: 139.

<sup>341</sup> On the Italian military operations in the Balkans see, A. Vagnini, *L'Italia e i Balcani nella Grande Guerra: Ambizioni e realtà dell'imperialismo italiano* (Carocci, Roma: 2016), 45 et seq.

<sup>342</sup> P. Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana, 1914-1920* (Jovene, Napoli: 1970), 3-7.

<sup>343</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy...*, 125 et seq.. See also W. A. Renzi, *In the Shadow of the Sword*, 219-29: 228. Even if Serbs did not know the contents of the Pact, the Allies – in order to silence the rumors, "communicated territorial promises to the Serbian government on August 15, [1915]."

<sup>344</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 6, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 13, 1916, n. 118, 80.

Italians aspired to a strategic control of the Adriatic Sea; finally, both of them had as their main enemy the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In the Italian program, the London Agreement represented a “working formula” from which Serbia also could profit, but, it effectively was the “beginning of a cold and diplomatic war between Rome and Belgrade.”<sup>345</sup> Despite the Pact of London also envisaged an enlargement of the Serbian State, Belgrade was against such an arrangement. As Italy plotted to replace the Austrian Empire as the “major regional power,” Serbia could not tolerate another country’s hegemony in that area.<sup>346</sup> Pašić progressively became closer to the Yugoslav exiles, like Supilo and Trumbić who were among the founders of the Yugoslav Committee in 1915. Besides, the radical leader had already given his endorsement to the cause of the Serbian-Croatian-Slovene tribes by the end of 1914, when in Niš he declared that “Serbia would put all her forces” for that cause.<sup>347</sup>

Starting on July 19, 1916, Sforza sent reports about the difficult situation of the Serbian Army, which was mainly supported by the French. The diplomat seemed more worried about the French influence in the area. The Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister told him that the Serbs needed at least the presence of a Russian contingent in Thessaloniki to contrast the Austrian propaganda. There were rumors about a secret agreement between Moscow and Sofia which caused bad morale among the soldiers.<sup>348</sup> On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, once again Sforza touched the military question.<sup>349</sup> In a long report addressed to

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<sup>345</sup> M. Bucarelli, “Allies Or Rivals? Italy and Serbia During the First World War,” in Dragoljub R. Živojinović (edited by), *The Serbs And The First World War 1914 – 1918. Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Belgrade, June 13–15, 2014* (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade: 2015), 247-62: 247-48; *id.*, “Il problema dell’intervento italiano in guerra e la questione nazionale serba;” in *L’Italia neutrale, 1914-1915*, 475-492: 481-82.

<sup>346</sup> Bucarelli, “Allies Or Rivals?,” 251.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>348</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 6, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 19, 1916, n. 143, 95.

<sup>349</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 6, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 22, 1916, n. 164, 109.

Sonnino he established a connection between a potential Italian advance into Albania – particularly, into Valona’s hinterland, and the Allied occupation of Thessaloniki. Sforza supported a major war effort in order to increase the international value of the Italian occupation of the Albanian port city, which had appeared an “exclusive Italian affair” until that moment. He also stressed the strategic importance of such an action in order to prevent a “reformed” Serbian army moving toward Southern Albania.

Sforza thought that Valona was a crucial point to Rome’s strategy. The Italian interest might have been restricted to the coast and Sazan before the war broke over Europe, but the modern naval technique in warfare involved the adoption of a new “formula.” Italy should take every territory needed to make Valona “safe.” Even if it was still neutral, in the summer of 1916, Athens represented the main rival. Sforza was worried about the rise of Panhellenism due to Venizelos’ movement. The Greek nationalistic leader, backed by the French, opposed the King’s refusal to enter the war and supported the intervention on the Allies’ side. The goal of the nationalistic movement was the creation of a Greater Greece, including southern Albania. An event that could be accepted by Italian authorities, according to the Pact of London, if the disposal of the Treaty would be respected.

Sforza, instead, thought that the Italian occupation was needed in order to present the other Entente members with a *fait accompli*, prevent a Greek action – which would make Southern Albania “more Greek than the Hellenic Kingdom,” and avoid the creation of a zone of French influence.<sup>350</sup> Sforza also kept urging the enlargement of the Italian occupation in Southern Albania to contrast the Franco-Serb of Korçë. It was the right

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<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109. See also Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism*, 463; Riccardi, *Alliati non amici*, 360-64.

moment for the Italian troops' expedition into the Greek territory because it would look like an action of support for the Allied operations. Thus, Italy would achieve a privileged position. Pašić, instead, was wary; when he met Sforza for the first time, on July 26<sup>th</sup>, he did not show any interest in talking with the Italian delegate of this topic. The conversation was formal and short.

Pašić recognized the common interests, but he was also aware of the need for an agreement in which Rome and Belgrade would settle their different views on the future boundaries of the Balkan States. From this moment Sforza started to put pressure on his chief to enter into negotiations with Serbs. Sonnino disagreed with the diplomat. The war was still underway, and the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister was unwilling to negotiate about the future European map. Sonnino was chiefly concerned with the Anglo-French secret agreements on Middle Eastern area, from which Italy had been excluded. His goal was to bring Italy to a position of equality with the Allies. To achieve this status, in August Sonnino obtained the Government's consent to send an Italian division to Thessaloniki, and on the 27<sup>th</sup> he was able to issue the declaration of war against Germany.<sup>351</sup>

Sforza communicated the Italian decision to the Allies' representatives in Corfu with a private letter as soon as he received the information from Rome during the night of the 27<sup>th</sup>.<sup>352</sup> The Italian diplomat also informed the French General, Baumann, who sent him back the text of the speech he made to the soldiers to announce the event. Baumann defined the Italian declaration as the "official blessing" of the Alliance. The document,

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<sup>351</sup> Seton-Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism*, 458-59; Riccardi, "Sonnino e l'Intesa durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale," 61-61.

<sup>352</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu August 29, 1916 with attached a note from la Mission Militaire Française where Sforza wrote, "Aug. 28, 16. Deliver to me by Gen. Baumann," ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cose di Corfù*.

according to Sforza, was nothing but the emblem of a “nationalistic point of view,” but he did not attach importance to it. He wrote to Sonnino that nothing would have changed the relations with his colleagues in Corfu which were already “friendly and continuous.”<sup>353</sup>

Sforza was less restrained with the Chief of Cabinet Aldrovandi. In a “strictly confidential” letter the diplomat expressed his annoyance about dealing with the French General. More than once, Baumann ironically told Sforza that when French soldiers had left Corfu, Italians would have taken the “key” of the island alluding to Rome’s rivalry with Greece.<sup>354</sup> The bright side of this “state of mind” was that Italy had made its priorities clear and was not intending to let Greece expand into Southern Albania. Sforza thought that acting as the major interested party in the area was crucial for the balance of power among the Allies, for this reason a limited Italian participation in the battle against the Central Empires should not be an option.

By the end of September, Sonnino authorized the advancement of the Italian troops in Northern Epirus. An action urged by Sforza because his program went beyond warfare, as the diplomat revealed in October. Greece should be lessened to allow the Serbian expansion towards South across the Vardar Valley as an alternative to the Adriatic coast.<sup>355</sup> At that time, indeed, the “Pan-Serb intoxication, the desire to reach the sea and the pugnacity of the race” made Italy the main Serbs’ enemy.<sup>356</sup> Propagandistic books, issued by the Yugoslavian committees, condemned the Italian annexation of the

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<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>354</sup> Sforza to Aldrovandi, Corfu, August 28, 1916, ASD, CS, b. 1, f. *Cose di Corfù*.

<sup>355</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 6, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, October 24, 1916, n. 606, with an enclosed letter from Sforza to Sonnino of the same day, 408-411. See also, I. J. Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiersmaking* (Yale university press, New Haven, London: 1963), 23-24.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 410.

territories on the Eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. This option conflicted with the creation of a Great Serbia and its economic development. Sforza, by contrast, argued that the Serbian growth was impossible without the control of the Vardar basin. The river rises in the same region of Morava, which heads North and flows into the Danube. Together the two rivers create a great corridor from Belgrade to Thessaloniki. The railway line between the two cities was evidence of this natural connection. All the other lines, which could be created despite any complication, would have been subsidiary. "A Serbia without the Vardar Valley would never be a Balkan Power alive."<sup>357</sup> This was the crucial point in Sforza's view; it should be the base for the future Entente between Italy and Serbia. If Serbians addressed their territorial drives to South instead of West, the points of the contention would vanish. Plus, Greece would be weakened.

To conclude, Sforza imagined a European map with a Great Serbia going from Belgrade to Thessaloniki, including the Macedonian region inhabited by Bulgarian speaking people who were also Orthodox. Bulgaria would obtain Serres and Kavala. Slovenia and Croatia would be excluded from this Great Serbian State.<sup>358</sup> He did not say if those new entities would be independent or a part of the Austrian Monarchy as third autonomous State. Instead, Albania would be independent with Valona and its hinterland under the Italian sovereignty. This was the perfect country planning to protect the Italian borders. The division of the Slavs excluded the rise of the great and neighboring Yugoslavian State. Moreover, this option would have weakened the Slavs' innate militaristic and Germanophile tendencies.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1916 the diplomat was sure that Austrian sympathizers were present even in the most passionate Yugoslavian committees: i.e., the President of the Yugoslavian Committee in London, Trumbić; and Frano Supilo, one of the leaders of the movement for the Croatian independence.<sup>360</sup> The main purpose of the London Committee was the reunion of Southern Slavs in a sole State. The new national body would include: the entire Dalmatia, Istria, Trieste, Gorizia, the region of Carnia, part of Carinthia and Styria, Bačka and Banat. Sforza was concerned about the Committee's influence on the Allies' policies and urged the opening of negotiations with Serbs to find an agreement before the war ended. For this reason, he asked Sonnino to be summoned in Rome for a confidential meeting. The Italian official ignored the fact that the Foreign Office was moving in a different direction. English diplomats suggested the "union of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Southern Slavs into one strong federation of States." According to the British pundits, this would be the best solution to obstacle the German advance in the Balkans.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 409. Sforza's idea would change in the future. In his book, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, he championed the Yugoslavian cause and the action of men as Supilo and Trumbić. About the latter, Sforza wrote, "He was the most honest of men and the most ardently patriotic of Slavs, he had one defect which, in the course of discussion, irritated Italians and Serbs alike. He reasoned as everyone had learned to reason in Austria, from the standpoint of his historic rights based upon an extremely theoretical jurisprudence." See, *ibid.*, 157.

<sup>361</sup> Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference*, 23.

### 3.IV. THE RISE OF THE YUGOSLAVIAN KINGDOM

By the end of 1916, the rivalry among the Allies became more palpable. On the one hand, there was the Greek Question. In December France and Great Britain officially recognized Venizelos' Government, established in the northern part of Greece. On the other, the Albanian Question contributed to increase tension. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, French military authorities assumed the protection of the so-called Republic of Korçe in Southern Albania. In January 1917, to further complicate matters, Austria issued a protocol with which granted the protection of the Albanian State.<sup>362</sup>

Pašić was aware of the Italian interests and thought that this was the right moment to enter into negotiations with Rome. Indeed, the relations between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee had also become increasingly difficult. The South Slavic people were unwilling to submit to the Serbian Kingdom, rather they wanted a "Yugoslav State where the three tribes could live together."<sup>363</sup> Nevertheless, the Serbian initiative surprised Sforza. Pašić thought that Albania, as it was established after the London Conference in 1913, was not an alive State; the Albanian people had never been an independent nationality. Tirana needed an autonomous or special regime, but it could not survive without the guide of other States. As a consequence, the Serbian leader preferred to find an agreement with Italy. Sforza's answer was "ambiguous and moot."<sup>364</sup> Pašić did not mention another important point in the Italian strategy: the future of Montenegro, from where the Italian Queen, Elena, came. Thanks to his French colleague Boppe, who was "totally imbued with Serb views and

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<sup>362</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 42-44.

<sup>363</sup> Bucarelli, "Allies Or Rivals?," 256.

<sup>364</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 7, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, January 30, 1917, n. 185, 130. See also Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 52-53.

ambitions,” Sforza knew that Serbs were acting in order to include the coastal territory in the future State.<sup>365</sup>

Serbian ambiguity and Greek nationalism, both backed by the Allies, endangered the Italian interests in the Balkans. So that, a few days after Sforza had met Pašić, Sonnino called the diplomat to Rome. The Italian representative stayed in Italy from February 7<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>366</sup> During these days the Foreign Affairs Minister gave instructions in order to contrast the French and Greek action in the area.<sup>367</sup> As mentioned above, Sforza had complained about the Greek threat and French diplomatic and military authorities’ behavior in Corfu more than once. Since his arrival Sforza had urged a greater commitment of the Italian army in the island and in Southern Albania. During the spring Sonnino moved in that direction and Pašić seemed to appreciate that.<sup>368</sup> The latter constantly informed the Italian delegate about the activities on the Italo-Serbian front, recognizing Sforza’s effort. Nevertheless, in June the decision to claim the principle of unity and independence of the future Albanian State under the Italian “protection” provoked a new stalemate in the bilateral relations.<sup>369</sup>

The so called *Proclama di Argirocastro* also had internal consequences. Three ministers – members of the Socialist Party, namely Bissolati, Bonomi and Comandini resigned. They believed that the Protocol contrasted with the ideal of national independence which had inspired the struggle against the Central Empires. Only Sonnino’s clarification allowed the Government to emerge from the crisis. The Foreign Affairs Minister had to explain that

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<sup>365</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 7, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, January 30, 1917, n. 186, 130-31.

<sup>366</sup> Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, February 19, 1917, ASD, Coll. Personale-Serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>367</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 7, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, March 17, 1917, n. 503, 382-83.

<sup>368</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy in the Balkans*, 152.

<sup>369</sup> Pastorelli, *L’Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 46 et seq.

“protection” did not mean “protectorate.”<sup>370</sup> Sonnino’s words, however, did not have the same effect on the Serbian Government. Pašić did not comment on the Italian initiative with Sforza, but with the other delegates. Obviously, he strongly disagreed with Rome’s choice to grant the Albanian independence and would have appreciated being consulted beforehand.<sup>371</sup>

Sforza maintained his support for a major deployment of Italian forces across the southern part of the Albanian territory. There were no alternatives to face the Greek advance and French influence in the Adriatic, but he did not consider the Serbian reaction.<sup>372</sup> Considering the collapse of the Tsarist regime – “the main supporter of the Serbian cause” – in March 1917 and the Anglo-French attempts to start secret negotiations with Austria-Hungary, Pašić, whose office was also threatened by internal opposition, decided to invite the Yugoslav Committee to Corfu.<sup>373</sup> On July 20<sup>th</sup> an agreement was signed, better known as the Corfu Declaration. It established the principles for the foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes ruled by the Serbian Dynasty of Karadjordjević. The territories of the three countries were considered to be part of the new State without any exception. In the Preamble, France, England, the United States and Russia are quoted as models of democracy and freedom. There is no mention of Italy. Sforza did not hesitate to question the Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister. According to the Italian diplomat, the decision came from the Croats and Slovenes, who were fighting against the Italian army.<sup>374</sup>

As a result, Sonnino accepted Sforza’s proposal to meet Pašić by the end of the summer. In the Italian diplomat’s view, the meeting represented the

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<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-9.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-5.

<sup>372</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 8, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 17, 1917, n. 589, 376.

<sup>373</sup> Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference*, 25-26. See also, Bucarelli, “Allies or Rivals? Italy and Serbia During the First World War,” 256-57.

<sup>374</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 8, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, July 24, 1917, n. 720, 464.

opportunity “to come to a compromise” and be ahead in the future negotiations with the Allies. Sforza accompanied Pašić, “who in his careful speeches” told the Italian Minister that “he was ready to accept a reasonable formula. Sonnino listened – and in the end answered nothing.”<sup>375</sup> The Corfu Declaration had left no chance to find an agreement. The Italian Foreign Affairs Minister thought that the Serbian Government had chosen the policy of “absolute values, which do not allow compromises.”<sup>376</sup> Sonnino was concerned about the consequences in the domestic political debate; Italy would have no interest to carry on the conflict if the Allies recognized the Yugoslavian claims. By contrast, Pašić did not consider the Declaration an insurmountable obstacle. The Italian military supremacy in the Adriatic Sea would be ensured by the annexation of Trieste, Pula, a part of the Istrian Peninsula, some islands and Valona. The proposal was not enough for the Italian Minister who claimed the respect of the Pact of London and excluded further negotiations on those conditions for the moment.<sup>377</sup> Once, the Italian requests were accepted, they could negotiate adjustments.

“Pašić , who was silent as Sonnino,” only said to Sforza, “I expected that.”<sup>378</sup> The Italian diplomat dissented from his chief’s decision; now he openly agreed with those who supported the constitution of a Yugoslavian State. This line would have been the only one able to protect Italy from the Yugoslavian propaganda that was endangering the Italian interests in the Adriatic Sea.<sup>379</sup> For this reason, the diplomat “urgently requested Sonnino to have [him] recalled.” The latter, nevertheless, wanted him to maintain

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<sup>375</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 295.

<sup>376</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 9, Sonnino to Sforza *et al.*, Rome, September 10, 1917, n. 31, 21. See also Sidney Sonnino, *Diario, 1916-1922*, v. III, ed. by Pietro Pastorelli (Laterza, Bari: 1972), 190-93; Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 74-75.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 295.

<sup>379</sup> Albertini, *Epistolario*, v. 1, Albertini to Sforza, Milano, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1917, 755-56.

his post in Corfu. Sforza wondered about the meaning of such a choice since Sonnino “contradicted [his] language and policy.” He replied:

You will go on speaking according to your conscience; I shall never lie to you. Even now, I have not done so. Only – and there he stopped a moment, and then went on, somewhat ashamed – I am like the peasants; it is on the market-place, at the last minute, that I cut down my prices.

It was not a Machiavellian strategy, in Sforza’s view, but Sonnino’s character, and there was no chance he would change his mind. On October 17<sup>th</sup> the Serbian leader tried to establish a new line of communication with the *Consulta*, sure that Croatians were ready to find a compromise even if Slovenes were still more inclined to negotiate with Austria.<sup>380</sup> Sforza was skeptical, but he believed in Pašić’s will to have, at least, extinguished the nationalistic campaign. Meanwhile on the Isonzo front, the Italian troops were compelled to retreat after the battle of Caporetto and a new Government guided by Orlando was established in Rome.

Sonnino – appointed as Foreign Affairs Minister once again, called Sforza to go to Rome. The Italian official was leaving Corfu when Pašić met him to confirm the reliability of his words. Nevertheless, Sonnino’s stance was always the same. On November 10<sup>th</sup>, Sonnino confirmed his doubts about the Slavs, talking to Sforza.<sup>381</sup> The diplomat describes the Minister as “dejected” and “shattered.” The Russian retreat from the war, provoked by the Bolshevik Revolution, had made real the danger of an Austrian victory, as the defeat of Caporetto proved. However, in Sonnino’s view, this was not enough to lower the South Slavs’ ambitions. Once again, the different

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<sup>380</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 458.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

approaches emerged. Sforza's was mainly worried about Berlin's influence. His fear was that Germans and Germanophiles would be masters of the new Austria. Italy should secure its own zone of influence in the Balkans; the exclusion from that area was unacceptable. There was no difference between Germans, French or Greeks. If Italy did not want other major European Powers in the Adriatic Sea, there would be no alternatives but a compromise with Serbs who were fighting for their national freedom.

### 3. V. THE END OF THE WAR

The diplomat knew he could do nothing to change Sonnino's mind, but he also thought to be "in duty bound to state [his] conviction once more."<sup>382</sup> Sforza had a new occasion in January 1918 when Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson stated their policies for the postwar system. The English Prime Minister, talking to the Trade Unions on January 5<sup>th</sup>, recognized the principle of national self-determination for the Austro-Hungarian territories. With regard to the Middle East, Lloyd George envisaged the Ottoman Empire's survival on condition of neutralization and internationalization of the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Three days later the President of the United States addressed to the Congress proclaiming the Fourteen Points. The new international order should be based on people's self-determination, democracy, free trade and the ban of secret diplomacy.<sup>383</sup> In this new atmosphere, Sforza, also warned

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<sup>382</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 296.

<sup>383</sup> For a more detailed account on the Italian reactions see Riccardi, *Alleati Non Amici*, 600-05.

by his American colleague, was sure that the defense of the Treaty of London's secret terms would be counterproductive.<sup>384</sup>

At the Peace Conference they will all know how to pay lip-service to Wilson's Fourteen Points, and, underhand, to think only of their interests; we alone, bound by a formula too antithetical, will risk being at variance with Wilson and with everybody; and in a desperate struggle for the Treaty of London, we shall endanger all our interests. European hypocrisy will give itself face, as the Chinese say, by denouncing the Italian *sacro egoismo* which will probably turn out to be the least realistic of all the Allied egoism.<sup>385</sup>

The Italian diplomat argued that the Allies would take advantage of American Points to invalidate the London Treaty: a secret agreement with which Italy also reclaimed no-Italian territories. Sonnino admitted that President Wilson could "complicate" the postwar negotiations and authorized Sforza to "renew" the conversations with Pašić, temporarily absent from Corfu. In the meantime, the Italian Prime Minister went to London and met with Trumbić, thanks to the good offices of the Times' editor Wickham Steed. They had **general** exchange of views, and Orlando also invited the Yugoslavian leader to visit Rome. This overture did not coincide with a change in Sonnino's attitude. In fact, when Pašić came back, the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister had cancelled his instructions. Sonnino "begged" Sforza to wait for new ones, "which never arrived."<sup>386</sup>

In London, however, the contacts with the Yugoslavian Committee continued. In February, Andrea Torre, chairman of a new parliamentary

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<sup>384</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 460. See also Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 76-78.

<sup>385</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy...*, 155.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-56. See also Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 296.

committee for cooperation with the subject people of the Habsburg Empire, met with Trumbić. Sforza thought that “friendly and sincere expressions towards the achievement of Yugoslavian independence” were the most “useful and expedient decision” to make for Italy, in view of its relations with Serbia and the Allies. He was aware in the meantime that the Balkan Question was more complicated. “The most enthusiastic Italian supporters of the Yugoslavian unity” should consider that some Croato-Slovene ambitions were exaggerated even for Serbs. In private conversations, they often talked about Yugoslavians as a group in which Serbia and Serbs were not enclosed.<sup>387</sup> It was possible that they would not agree, and Trumbić would find a compromise with Vienna. However, at the moment, it was important that Italy behaved as a friend of Serbia and other “oppressed nationalities.” There might not be immediate war advantages from this strategy, but from a political point of view, it made Rome a faithful member of the alliance against the Empires.<sup>388</sup>

Sforza received the decision to host the Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities in Rome in this perspective. The initiative followed the London talks and was scheduled for April. It represented “one fresh fact [that] broke the psychological status quo,” according to Sforza. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the diplomat met with Kosta Stoyanović, among the members of the Serbian delegation. Stoyanović was also President of an ancient Italo-Serb Committee and told the diplomat that he was ready to work for a “real reconciliation.” Sforza was sure of that but had doubts on Trumbić.<sup>389</sup> Pašić had confidentially informed the Italian official of a conversation he had with the Croatian leader. Trumbić thought that Stoyanović and the other members of the Serb delegation were unreliable because they did not

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<sup>387</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 10, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, April 5, 1918, n. 511, 417-18.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>389</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 467.

recognize his leading position. Pašić reportedly told him that the Yugoslavian action also included a special partnership between Italy and Serbia.<sup>390</sup>

Sforza had met Trumbić only twice and, despite his previous remarks, found him to be reliable. “Nothing saddened [him] so much as to meet people who would ask in a whisper if was really sure that Trumbić was not an Austrian agent.”<sup>391</sup> The diplomat, talking with Pašić, argued that the information was “spread by important foreigners” interested in maintaining unfriendly relations between Italy and the future Yugoslavian Kingdom.<sup>392</sup> Sforza had to admit that there was a legitimate reason for questioning the sincerity of Trumbić to the alliance with Serbia, not just to the relation with Italy. The Croatian leader, during the negotiation for the Corfu Declaration, strongly opposed any attempt to limit the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. The union and freedom from any external dominion of Southern Slavs were unquestionable. For this reason, there were Serbs who believed that Trumbić could find a compromise with Austria to the detriment of Belgrade.

Sforza’s main concern was the Austrian background of Trumbić. He, as the majority of his fellow citizens, believed in “historic rights,” so that an agreement to be effective had to abide by the theoretical jurisprudential structure. Principles, indeed, were considered to be inviolable; only after “endless bargaining” could they be changed with a new juridical formula – which would constitute the basis for future generations’ disputes. As a consequence, for those born under the Habsburgs’ rule “no possibility was excluded.”<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 10, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, April 2, 1918, n. 491, 400.

<sup>391</sup> Sforza, *Fifty Years of War and Diplomacy...*, 157.

<sup>392</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 467.

<sup>393</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 10, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, April 5, 1918, n. 511, 417-18.

Finally, the delegates signed an agreement on April 10<sup>th</sup>. All members of the Conference agreed to follow a common action against Vienna. In particular, the Italians and the Yugoslavians agreed that the unity and independence of the Yugoslavian nation were Italy's vital interest, as the achievement of the Italian unity was a vital interest for the Yugoslavian nation. The delegates committed themselves to act together during the war and the peace negotiations to reach their common goals. They also claimed the freedom of the Adriatic Sea from any kind of enemy. The territorial controversies were postponed to future negotiations which would resolve the question according to the principle of nationality.<sup>394</sup>

The document had only a symbolic value but it was a considerable step forward in Sforza's view, and it deserved some consideration from the Italian Government. The Executive, instead, appeared to be divided between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs' chief. The day after, Orlando received all the delegates during a solemn ceremony where the Foreign Affairs Minister did not participate. Sonnino did not want to meet the members of the Conference. Sforza strongly disagreed with this choice and believed that the Entente should claim credit for having appeased the Slavs' attitude.<sup>395</sup>

The Italian diplomat could be right. On one hand, Trumbić was less Austrian after the Conference. He came back with a "democratic air" and used to have conversations in Italian with Sforza. Even the French Minister in Corfu was surprised by the accord between the Italian and the Slavs' representative.<sup>396</sup> Trumbić was now ready to recognize the value of the Pact of London. The agreement would make impossible transactions that also represented a threat for the Slav interests. He seemed to be reassured by the

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<sup>394</sup> Carlo Sforza, *Jugoslavia: Storia e ricordi* (Rizzoli, Milano: 1948), 140.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 140-41.

<sup>396</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 469.

Foreign Affairs Minister's character.<sup>397</sup> On the other hand, Pašić, whose position was endangered by a strong internal opposition, needed external support.

In May, the Serbian Prime Minister went to Villa Condi and tried to revive the project of a bilateral entente on the Albanian question.<sup>398</sup> Pašić placed the potential agreement in the warfare situation and was ready to go to Rome in order to meet Sonnino. Pašić revealed that Vienna had decided to undertake an extreme action and destroy the Italian army on the Piave frontline.<sup>399</sup> According to some secret informers, Austrians and Germans were so sure of a victory that they were ready to invade Lombardy, Piedmont and Southern France. Sforza had never seen the Serbian leader so worried and tried to assuage his concerns by explaining that Italians had become stronger after the defeat of Caporetto and no enemy could break the line. Pašić understood but wanted to remark on the need to strengthen the alliance between the two countries. From this viewpoint, he raised doubts on the treatment of Yugoslavian prisoners. As the Chief of Staff, Marshal Diaz also recommended to Sforza, the Serbian Prime Minister suggested the creation of a Yugoslavian legion within the Italian Army – wearing Serbian uniform and flag – to support the troops on the Eastern front. This would have been useful to weaken the Croat divisions that were still fighting against the Entente.<sup>400</sup>

Sforza was not convinced and kept his composure. In his report, he highlighted the ambiguity of the Serbian leader, noticing that he was still looking for a political agreement on Albania. Sonnino agreed to maintain

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<sup>397</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 10, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, April 5, 1918, n. 695, 560.

<sup>398</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 468.

<sup>399</sup> Sforza, *Jugoslavia*, 144.

<sup>400</sup> DDI, s. V, v. 11, Sforza to Sonnino, Corfu, June 5, 1918, n. 17, 34. See also Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 55.

silence on the Albanian Question and on a special treatment for the Yugoslavian prisoners but did not mention their participation in the war. Sonnino opted for an “inscrutable silence,” and then, when the idea of a Yugoslavian troop seemed to become real, he said that he would exercise his “veto.”<sup>401</sup>

Sonnino’s behavior would not cause any problem in the warfare. Sforza was quite sure of the Austrian defeat, but he was more worried for the aftermath of the conflict. He dealt with this issue during the meeting with Orlando in August. The Prime Minister was willing to find a compromise with Serbia, considering a Yugoslavia entirely independent.<sup>402</sup> It was the best decision to make in Sforza’s opinion. Even if he was not sure that the Allies wanted the new State, a different approach would jeopardize Italy during the peace negotiations. At this point, Sforza was sure that the Austrian Empire could not survive. By contrast, Sonnino seemed to have still doubts.<sup>403</sup>

In September, during a confidential conversation, the Foreign Affairs Minister narrated a memory from his youth when he was still living in Florence. Sonnino overheard two people talking and one said “they hate each other as if were two brothers.” The story, according to Sforza, could explain the Minister’s secret strategy: i.e., “it would always be more advantageous to look for support... in the German world.”<sup>404</sup> The two men found only one common thread in October when the Balkan line was close to defeat. Indeed, they agreed to launch a new offensive on the Italian front.<sup>405</sup> The battle begun on October 24<sup>th</sup> and the Austrian resistance was

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<sup>401</sup> Carlo Sforza, *Jugoslavia*, 145.

<sup>402</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 468. See also, Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 83-86.

<sup>403</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 472-73.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.* and Sforza, *Jugoslavia*, 146.

stronger than in Macedonia. Only after six days were the Austrian troops defeated on Mount Grappa, and on November 4<sup>th</sup>, finally, the Italian troops could enter Trento and Trieste. On the same day Austria signed the Armistice, and in the night a telegram from Sonnino informed Sforza that he had been appointed High Commissioner in Constantinople.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, 475.

CHAPTER FOUR  
THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR:  
RETHINKING THE ADRIATIC QUESTION

On October 30, 1918 the Allies' representative, the British Admiral Calthorpe, signed the Armistice with the Ottoman Empire's delegates on the British battleship "Superb." The Entente did not set harsh terms of disarmament or demobilization for the Sultan as they had for the other defeated Powers. According to Sforza, this was evidence that the Allies had not yet envisaged the collapse of the Sultanate.<sup>407</sup> Indeed, after ten days, they decided to appoint three High Commissioners in Constantinople to maintain the relationship with the Sultan and protect their interests until the peace treaty would be signed.<sup>408</sup> The three appointed officials were Calthorpe, the chief of the French division in the Levant Amet, and Sforza.<sup>409</sup> The Italian diplomat had already been in the Ottoman capital in previous years, but his role was different in 1918, and he felt charged with a real

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<sup>407</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 348.

<sup>408</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. I, Sonnino to the Ambassadors in London, Imperiali, *et al.*, Rome, November 12, 1918, n. 121, 62.

<sup>409</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. I, Sonnino to the Ambassadors in London, Imperiali, *et al.*, Rome, November 12, 1918, n. 121, 62.

authority. As Sforza writes, "Ottomans and foreigners addressed him and his colleagues for any kind of claim or need."<sup>410</sup>

#### 4.I. LAST DAYS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: BACK TO THE NEXT

##### TURKEY

Remembering his arrival, Sforza writes that he "struck" by the "relative abundance of victuals." Having the Italian situation in his mind, he expected something even worse in a "vanquished country." Instead, "Turkey was far from dead; [...] it was only temporarily down." According to his memoirs, Sforza thought that if the Allies "pulled the rope too tight," Turkey "would escape [their] hands."<sup>411</sup> . Turkish resiliency would make it challenging to occupy the country. For this reason, the Italian High Commissioner would declare that he was willing to work for an "early and honorable peace" which would protect all national interests. He would also add a refusal to participate of the Turkish partition – "knowing the projects of division" of the Ottoman Empire. Sonnino did not reply, but he did not recall Sforza either. The diplomat also writes that during those days he always agreed with his colleagues, and they worked "nearly" free from "nationalist jealousies."<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 63-64.

<sup>411</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 350.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*

But, it is known that before 1914, Italy had struggled to increase its economic interests in Turkey.<sup>413</sup> In 1908 Sforza, as chargé d'affaires, had advocated actions in order to strengthen the Italian commitment in the Ottoman Question. After entering into the war, Sonnino tried to prevent Rome's total exclusion from matters concerning the Near East. Article 9 of the Treaty of London recognized Italy's role in the restoration of the balance of power in the Ottoman Empire and "just a share of the Mediterranean adjacent to the province of Antalya where Italy [had] already obtained rights and interests." In fact, in August 1917 the Allies, signing the St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement, made a provision that would allow Italy to occupy the vilayet of Konia and the southern part of the vilayet of Aidin, whose importance lied in the port of Smyrna.<sup>414</sup>

As mentioned above, in the last months of the war Sforza and Sonnino were on the same page. Both of them believed in the necessity to use military force and occupy the Adriatic territories obtained by the Pact of London. It was an act of force to compel the Allies to do what they had promised in 1915. On November 3<sup>rd</sup> the Italian troops began the operation and after two weeks they entered Fiume. The Dalmatian city was not included in the 1915 Treaty but the decision was motivated by the military activity of the Croatian Committee.

In Turkey, Sforza maintained the same attitude and advocated for the use of force in the Near East. Using military force would be the last resort, and only used if Italian interests were in danger. As he told the Ottoman

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<sup>413</sup> R. J. B. Bosworth, "Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Marian Kent (Frank Cass, London: 1996), 51-72.

<sup>414</sup> L. A. Cretella, "Carlo Sforza and the limits of Italian Revisionism," in *Diplomazia e Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali: Studi in onore di Enrico Serra*, edited by A. Migliazza, E. Decleva (Giuffrè, Milano: 1991). On the the St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement, see M. Toscano, *Gli accordi di San Giovanni di Moriana: Storia diplomatica dell'intervento italiano, 1916-1917* (Giuffrè, Milano: 1936).

Foreign Affairs Minister on November 22, the choice of a diplomat as a High Commissioner represented the friendly attitude of the Italian Government.<sup>415</sup> Meanwhile, he was determined to demonstrate the importance of the Italian contribution in the restoration of order. In the first days of December, he decided to claim the Venetian Ambassadors' palace, which had become Austrian property after Campoformio. Sforza waited for the departure of the Habsburg representative and led the occupation himself. A French division joined the expedition, and its chief told the diplomat that French soldiers had received the order to support the Italian initiative with their presence.

Sforza appreciated the French recognition. In his memoir, the diplomat writes that in this way the Ally showed consideration for his diplomatic conduct; "a clear and nonchalant attitude."<sup>416</sup> In contrast, Sonnino's behavior was influenced by the suspicion that the Allies were plotting against Rome. Indeed, the Foreign Affairs Minister was not able to defend Italian rights on the Palace when the United States' pundits criticized the initiative. Sforza believed that "the suspicious creates suspicion," whereas Sonnino should "Smile and let them have their say."<sup>417</sup>

The documents from that time show a different situation. Sforza had been concerned about the Allies' behavior since his days in Corfu. He complained about the French ambiguity and repeatedly warned Rome that Venizelos' political ideas represented a danger for Italian interests in Albania, regardless of the Pact of London. Now the question on the table was the Anatolian region. That was of vital interest in Sforza's view, considering that the ideal objective of Italian foreign policy should be the penetration to the East.

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<sup>415</sup> See also Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 91 et seq.

<sup>416</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 64-65.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

Sforza knew that London sided with Athens. He was also aware of the French antagonism, and he denounced several times the attitude of the French Commissioner.<sup>418</sup> He found in the Ottoman capital the same Italo-French rivalry that he had seen first-hand in Corfu. The occupation of the Venetian Palace was just his first move. The second act consisted in the research of contacts with the only people able to obstruct the Greek aspirations and the Allies' influence in the Near East; in other words, the Turkish nationalists. He had already met the leaders of the Union and Progress in 1908, during the Young Turks Revolution. Sforza did not have a great opinion of those people, but as he wrote to Sonnino on December 17<sup>th</sup>, they were the "main vital and organized energy of the country."<sup>419</sup>

For instance, the Nationalists' leader – and former Young Turks' exponent, Mustafa Kemal was able to avoid a police search in his house calling the Italian Commissioner.<sup>420</sup> The delegates of the Union and Progress also visited Sforza in mid-December on a Turkish initiative. The Italian diplomat, according to his reports, accepted the meeting without informing anyone of his colleagues. Sforza considered their return to power possible, but they needed to recognize the reality of a multicultural society. Sforza told them that their mistake in 1908 had been addressing only the Ottomans. Instead, they should consider the different racial groups and promise them autonomy. They had to transform the ancient patriarchal privileges into a new configuration, as if they wanted to create the "United States of Turkey." In this way, they would have a chance to survive. Finally,

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<sup>418</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 1, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, November 22, 1918, n. 281, 138.

<sup>419</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 1, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, December 17, 1918, n. 582, 317.

<sup>420</sup> Working on Turkish documents, an Italian scholar found evidence of the Italian protection of Mustafa Kemal's movement. See, F. L. Grassi, *Atatürk: Il fondatore della Turchia moderna* (Salerno, Roma: 2008), 147. See also of the same author, "Diplomazia segreta italo-turca dopo la prima guerra mondiale; convergenze ed equivoci (1919-1920)," in *Clio*, XXXIX 2003, n. 1 pp. 51-84: 54.

if they survived, they would need Western Powers' support. He strongly recommended choosing European counsellors, mainly Italians "in their own interest."<sup>421</sup>

Mustafa Kemal gives a different account in his diaries. The Turkish leader writes that different meetings occurred with several Italian representatives.<sup>422</sup> The Italians arranged the talks, and in the second one, Sforza offered unconditioned support to the Union and Progress' actions. Kemal felt as if he was about to become a "servant" of the Italian Government and avoided any kind of commitment, asking if there were other matters to discuss. Kemal, indeed, had been told that important issues needed to be examined. The Italian diplomat had to admit that there was nothing to consider.<sup>423</sup>

Sforza was aware that the Italian presence in the region needed to be supported by locals. The international system had changed with the intervention of the United States in the European conflict; the idea of annexations or administrative zones was now excluded. The Mediterranean Powers had reviewed the approach to their interests in the Near East according to the new rules. The new strategy was focused on assisting local people based on a precise territorial division. The interested Powers should help and guide these populations to freely choose their national governments. The Italian diplomat believed that British and French aims could easily be harmonized with Wilson's principles.<sup>424</sup> As he wrote to Elia, chief of the Italian army in the Aegean Sea, there were tendencies of absolute independence among Arabs. Nevertheless, Great Britain and France had people working for them in Syria and elsewhere. They had

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<sup>421</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 1, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, December 17, 1918, n. 582, 318.

<sup>422</sup> Grassi, *Atatürk*, 148.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 2, Sforza to Elia, Constantinople, February 11, 1919, n. 312, 215-217.

expert agents, who could easily organize a movement of self-determination with Francophile or Anglophile tendencies. It was necessary to organize something similar “with extreme urgency.” The same kind of movement should arise in the Italian reserved zone. “It was a vital interest,” in Sforza’s view. In fact, it would be essential to prevent the diplomatic actions of Italy’s opponents. They could resort to the American formula and argue that locals were not asking for Italian assistance.<sup>425</sup>

Since I arrived here, I strengthened a policy of friendship towards the Turkish race. The rest is made by the fear, the disgust, of the Turks against the simple idea that the Greeks could dominate them somewhere.

Venizelos formally claimed in Paris the entire vilayet of Smirna (except for the Cazà of Denisli) and other territories. The Turks know it. It has been easy to persuade them to believe that the only route they have to save themselves from the Greeks is to ask for Italian assistance. It has been easy because it is the truth; they do not have another lifeline.<sup>426</sup>

Sforza seemed totally skeptical about the glimmer of hope offered by the British government.<sup>427</sup> He clearly said that he entrusted “two” or “three” Turkish people in order to achieve the national independence. He also told them to ask for Italian assistance because the creation of an independent country would be impossible without the help of a European Power, and Italy represented the “most favorable” choice.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> L. Flussi, “La diplomazia delle cannoniere: Gli sbarchi italiani in Anatolia nel 1919,” in *Analisi Storica*, v. 1, July-December 1983, 39-56: 42.

<sup>428</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 2, Sforza to Elia, Constantinople, February 11, 1919, n. 312, 217.

Sforza applied the same formula for the Italian administration of Libya. The diplomat believed that to pacify the North African country, and to contrast the external influences, Italy should negotiate with Turks and a local political force. That was the only option Rome had in order to make Libya a resource for the Italian economy.<sup>429</sup> He thought that the Senussi's religious clan – which mainly controlled Cyrenaica, was the best Libyan representative to find a compromise. In February 1919, Sforza met Ahmed al-Sharif, ex leader of the group which fought alongside the Entente against the Ottomans since 1916.<sup>430</sup> The deal agreeing to cooperate together was signed by al-Sharif's cousin, Muhammad Idris II. The latter, who was also the young son of the clan's founder, Muhammad Idris, had become the head of the clan after al-Sharif left the country.<sup>431</sup> Until 1916, al-Sharif had sided with Ottomans and Germans, who helped him to escape and find refuge in Anatolia. The Senussi's ex leader became established in the city of Bursa from where he began to support the nationalist movement.<sup>432</sup>

In his memoirs, Sforza writes that he met al-Sharif more than once.<sup>433</sup> He considered al-Sharif as the “true” chief of the clan and other governments – namely, the French and British, were trying to reach him. Al-Sharif, nevertheless, knew that the Italians were the most interested, and he was willing to reach an agreement with Rome. Sforza believed that the Senussi's representative still had disciples in Libya and was in contact with his cousin. Thus, the Italian diplomat wanted to use the exiled leader as a

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<sup>429</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 2, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, February 28, 1919, n. 570, 393-95.

<sup>430</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 70-71.

<sup>431</sup> F. Cresti, M. Cricco, *Storia della Libia Contemporanea. Dal dominio ottomano alla morte di Gheddafi* (Carocci, Roma: 2012), 82-84.

<sup>432</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 70-71.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

mediator and create a system of cooperation with the whole Senussi's clan, with possible support from the British.<sup>434</sup>

Sforza's plan would never succeed because Idris held the leadership and did not intend to share it with his cousin. Moreover, in 1917, the Italian government had recognized Idris' role with the signature of the so-called "*modus vivendi*."<sup>435</sup> The government was more interested in finding a better deal with Idris, and eventually, using Sforza's contact with al-Sharif, to inform the Senussi about their ex leader's intentions.

The experience was useful to Sforza in order to understand Kemal's intentions. The diplomat writes that he was worried about a possible misunderstanding with the Union and Progress' movement related to the conversations. To avoid troubles with Kemal and his group, he decided to give them "some hint" of the negotiations with al-Sharif. The answer received was surprising because Kemal expressed his total indifference toward the North African territory. The revolutionary leader thought that the maintenance of the Turkish domination over the Arabs was one of the causes of the Ottoman Empire's fall.<sup>436</sup>

#### 4.II. LEAVING THE CONFERENCE: A "DANGEROUS" DECISION

The "courage" of the answer impressed Sforza.<sup>437</sup> This response confirmed to the diplomat the kemalist idea of a Turkish nation. The Union and

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<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 2, Colosimo to Sonnino, Roma, March 20, 1919, n. 901, 675.

<sup>436</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 364-65-; *id.*, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 70-71.

<sup>437</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 365.

Progress' leader had understood that the Imperial structure of the Ottoman Empire was a factor of weakness. Differently, a national State could become a factor of progress, which would help Turkey to play a more active role in central Asia. That awareness prompted Sforza to modify his attitude. The military force would not be useful in establishing an Italian influence but as a contrast to the other Powers' actions. The choice of supporting the nationalist movement against those countries – which wanted to divide Turkey into zones of influence, could be more strategical in order to obtain commercial privileges in the long term.<sup>438</sup>

The events of the spring confirmed the Italian diplomat's hunch. In the first days of March, Elia wrote to Sonnino to report about the situation of civil disorder in Adalya.<sup>439</sup> That would be the perfect excuse for a military intervention. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Patriarch of Constantinople claimed the annexation of the city to the Greek State.<sup>440</sup> After twelve days, the Christian neighborhood of Antalya was shocked by a bombing. The attack provoked the reaction of the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister, who had secretly projected the occupation. Italian troops entered Antalya on the 28<sup>th</sup> following Sonnino's instructions, which had been given to the High Commissioner to carry out.<sup>441</sup> The soldiers advanced forward, along the railway Antalya-Burdur, but the British stopped the Italian action. To make the atmosphere even more tense, in the first days of April the French media dispersed false news that ten Italian ships had docked in Smyrna.

That was a litmus test of the Allied Powers' attitude against Italy. Particularly, the delegation led by Sonnino and Orlando, in the Allies' opinion, was fixated on the defense on the Pact of London's dispositions. In

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<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>439</sup> Flussi, "La diplomazia delle cannoniere...", 45.

<sup>440</sup> Grassi, *Atatürk*, 150 *et seq.*

<sup>441</sup> Flussi, "La diplomazia delle cannoniere...", 45.

those days, the talks were at a standstill. According to Sforza's point of view, in Paris there was an unwholesome atmosphere, and Sonnino's "undeniable" honesty could not succeed against the secret and selfish plans of his foreign colleagues. His stubbornness brought Italy into a condition of isolation.

Sforza was among those who thought that the war had represented a victory for Italy. Indeed, the age-old enemy had been defeated: i.e., the Habsburg's Monarchy.<sup>442</sup> Instead, Italian nationalists created the myth of the "mutilated victory." The High Commissioner shared that belief with other diplomats, such as the Director of General Affairs at the *Consulta*, Salvatore Contarini. In their opinion, the First World War had been the last war of the *Risorgimento*.<sup>443</sup> Both of them were critical of the Italian policy; it was excessively focused on the "Adriatic Question." The delegation did not consider that such an attitude could impair other vital interests, like the Italian role in the Near East. Their position could be encapsulated in the concept of "gradualism."<sup>444</sup>

The Italian Government could not accept a compromise also because the nationalist reaction could provoke a governmental crisis. For the same reason, when Wilson had visited Rome in January, Orlando and Sonnino were particularly careful to avoid any contact of the President of the United States with Italian people.<sup>445</sup> That was not enough, because in April Wilson addressed the Italian people after the Italian formal request for a full respect of the Pact of London on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The American President highlighted

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<sup>442</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 58-59.

<sup>443</sup> Legatus, *Vita diplomatica di Salvatore Contarini (Italia fra Inghilterra e Russia)* (Sestante, Roma: 1947), 48-49.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> See M. G. Melchionni, *La vittoria mutilata. Problemi e incertezze della politica estera italiana sul finire della Grande Guerra, ottobre 1918-gennaio 1919* (Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma, 1981), 236-47: 237.

that Italy could obtain the natural boundaries which excluded the Dalmatian territories and Fiume. Finally, he recalled the principles that inspired the United States' intervention into the war and hoped that Italy respected those values. The huge domestic debate, which followed that statement, provoked the strong response of the Italian delegation. On April 24<sup>th</sup> Orlando and Sonnino went back to Rome and left just a "delegate" in Paris. The Italian High Commissioner was concerned about the consequences of such an act.<sup>446</sup>

Sforza did not agree with Sonnino's strictness and impetuous decisions. Sonnino claimed the full respect of the Pact of London and wanted to separate the problem of Albania from the question of the Eastern boundary.<sup>447</sup> By contrast, the American President was determined in considering the Albanian Question as a part of the whole Adriatic Question. In Sforza's view, Italy could do nothing but to accept the American conditions and negotiate the settlement of the whole Balkan region. Sforza thought that the President of the United States had made a "serious formal mistake" in addressing the Italian people. But, in the diplomat's opinion, the Pact of London was nothing but a confidential "entente" based on the idea that the Habsburg's Empire would have survived.<sup>448</sup>

In those days, the Allies agreed on the distribution of the mandates for the territories lost by the Ottoman Empire and invited Greece to occupy Smyrna. According to Sforza, this decision was the most mediocre action Wilson could have made; even if the Allies' delegates did not ask for the American president's opinion.<sup>449</sup> Lloyd George had replaced Italy with Greece, as the Mediterranean strategic factor of English foreign policy with

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<sup>446</sup> See Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 58-59.

<sup>447</sup> See Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 101-102.

<sup>448</sup> See Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 58-59.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*

an anti-Turkish function.<sup>450</sup> As a consequence, on May 6<sup>th</sup> the important city was offered to Venizelos, and while Orlando went back to Paris on the 7<sup>th</sup>, it wasn't until May 12<sup>th</sup> that this was communicated to him.

Sforza had been aware of the new situation of Smyrna since the 9<sup>th</sup> thanks to his contacts in Constantinople.<sup>451</sup> For this reason, and in accordance with Sonnino's previous directives, he ordered the occupation of Makri and Bundrum. The Italian operations started on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and the day after Calthorpe invited his colleagues to the English Embassy to communicate about the occupation of Smyrna. Sforza "was convinced that the affairs of the Entente would take a very bad turn in Turkey." But, the "instructions were categorical and nothing could be done."<sup>452</sup>

The Greek soldiers entered into Smyrna on May 15<sup>th</sup>; meanwhile, in Paris the Allies reacted against the Italian military operations. They claimed that the Italian behavior threatened the Conference's talks and the achievement of Italian interests in the Near East. Alternatively, Sforza believed that this situation would be counterproductive for all the Great Powers. In his memoirs, the diplomat writes that he "was the only High Commissioner who told his capital and Paris that it was not only desirable, but imperative, to conclude a satisfactory peace with Turkey;" Turkish satisfaction was the Allies' best guarantee to acquire equal privileges in the area.<sup>453</sup>

From Sforza's books emerges the frustration of a diplomat that found no opportunity to influence the decisions in Paris. As he highlights the Great Powers were focused on their particular interests, without considering the broader framework: "The French, engrossed as they were by their situation

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<sup>450</sup> De Martino to Sforza, London, June 16, 1921, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, (ACS), CS, b. 1, f. 1. See in particular p. 3.

<sup>451</sup> Flussi, "La diplomazia delle cannoniere..." 47. See also Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 100 *et seq.*

<sup>452</sup> Sforza, *Diplomatic Europe...*, 54-55.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57.

on the Rhine, were not inclined to oppose too plainly the English on a part of the chessboard less vital to themselves. It was the same with the Italians, preoccupied exclusively in their turn, with the Adriatic question. The English – instead – were Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon.”<sup>454</sup>

Sforza admired Lloyd George, at least for his attitude during the war. The situation changed in the postwar years. The diplomat believed that the British Prime Minister was wrong in considering the East as if it was the West. His ideas had been influenced by Venizelos; “a remarkable man [...with] a great idea, ‘the megala idea’ which had consoled so many generations of Greeks during the centuries of slavery and misery.”<sup>455</sup> Venizelos’ plan was to realize the ‘the megala idea’ with the help of England and London wanted to use Athens to acquire a major influence in the Near East. In Sforza’s view, both of them did not consider the Turkish factor.<sup>456</sup>

The Powers had chosen the wrong strategy, and Sforza did not hesitate to express his objections: it would be “a thankless task.”<sup>457</sup> For instance, when Lloyd George offered the substitution of the English troops in the Caucasus with the Italian soldiers, the High Commissioner discouraged the Italian Government more than once. In April, the High Commissioner noticed the difficulty pacifying a territory inhabited by Georgians, Tartars from Azerbaijan, Armenians and Russians, who publicly hated each other and would not like a colonial Power, as they did not accept the British administration. Sforza also noticed the danger of compromising the

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<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>457</sup> M. Petricoli, *L'occupazione italiana del Caucaso: un ingrato servizio da rendere a Londra* (Giuffrè, Milano: 1972), 45-49:46.

relationship with Russia. Seeking commercial and financial advantages should be considered preferable in any military adventure.<sup>458</sup>

The diplomat asked if there were active oil wells in that territory because experts told him that there were few possibilities to have good results from the research. As an alternative, Sforza suggested a joint venture with a Russian company to obtain concessions in Baku. In the diplomat's opinion, the local population would accept a pacific commercial penetration.<sup>459</sup> Those recommendations, backed up by the King's doubts about the expedition, were not considered by Orlando and Sonnino.<sup>460</sup> In particular, the Prime Minister addressed the King to remark the importance of controlling a territory which was rich of natural resources.<sup>461</sup> Orlando also wrote that the expedition would not threaten the Italian relations with Russia.<sup>462</sup> The truth is that the Government had already taken the decision in the first days of June and the troops were ready to leave. The only thing that made it impossible was the fall of the government on June 19<sup>th</sup> and the appointment of Francesco Saverio Nitti as Prime Minister. His first decision was the cancellation of the expedition which would have cost 1 billion and 200 million.<sup>463</sup> The main purpose of the new Prime Minister was, indeed, to disarm in order to suspend the state of war, which Orlando had maintained.<sup>464</sup>

Sforza appreciated that decision, above all because some people from the Bank of "Sconto" tried to dissuade the Prime Minister from canceling the

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<sup>458</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 3, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, April 18, 1919, n. 232, 232. See also Pretricioli, *L'occupazione italiana del Caucaso*, 45.

<sup>459</sup> DDI, s. VI, v. 3, Sforza to Sonnino, Constantinople, April 19, 1919, n. 240, 241. See also Pretricioli, *L'occupazione italiana del Caucaso*, 58.

<sup>460</sup> Flussi, "La diplomazia delle cannoniere...", 51-3.

<sup>461</sup> Petricioli, *L'occupazione italiana del Caucaso*, 69.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>463</sup> Flussi, "La diplomazia delle cannoniere...", 51-3.

<sup>464</sup> Petricioli, *L'occupazione italiana del Caucaso*, 75-6.

expedition.<sup>465</sup> Nitti – as the other statesmen of democratic Italy, was “straight as an arrow,” according to Sforza. However, the Prime Minister paid his opposition to the Georgian endeavor with a strong campaign against him. From this moment, financial and military groups cooperated to have Nitti out of the Cabinet. Nevertheless, Sforza thought that the “tragedy” of Nitti’s government was that the Prime Minister was not able to lead the State. The diplomat appreciated Nitti’s eloquence and his skill in convincing: as a professor, the Prime Minister expressed himself better in speeches than in action, but, finally, nothing would happen.<sup>466</sup>

#### 4.III. ROME CALLING: NITTI’S UNDERSECRETARY

The new Government was established on June 23, 1919. As mentioned above, Nitti’s main purpose was the Italian disarmament and the economic reconstruction, that meant the European recovery. To reach these goals, the cooperation with the United States and Great Britain was necessary in order to limit the French *revanchisme* against Germany. Indeed, he appointed, as Foreign Affairs Minister, Tommaso Tittoni who was well known for his Germanophile inclination.<sup>467</sup> On the same day, Nitti also wrote to Sforza. The Chief of the Consulta communicated to the High Commissioner that the Council of the Ministers had approved his proposal to recall him in

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<sup>465</sup> Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 86.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>467</sup> L. Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna nel primo dopoguerra: Le relazioni diplomatiche tra Roma e Londra dal 1919 al 1922* (Jouvence, Roma: 1999), 20-1.

Rome as the new Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs.<sup>468</sup> Tittoni also asked Sforza to go to Rome as soon as possible. The Minister, in fact, had to reach Paris where the Peace Conference was going on, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> the delegates would sign the Treaty with Germany, which also included the Statute of the League of Nations – the new international organization that the President of the United States wanted to maintain the world peace.

The diplomat had already been informed of his new role by Nitti on the 20<sup>th</sup>, according to his memoirs. Nitti chose Sforza as he was a young diplomat who could cooperate with a Minister like Tittoni. The latter had a long experience in politics and international affairs; Sforza would enter his political career in that moment, at the age of 47, becoming “Count” by mistake.<sup>469</sup> Nitti writes in his memoirs that an official wrongly titled Sforza as a Count on his appointment as Undersecretary. The King thought that it was not necessary to edit the document and since that moment Sforza had maintained the aristocratic title with which he would be known in Europe and the United States.<sup>470</sup> The Italian historian Maria Grazia Melchionni, who interviewed Valentine Sforza, writes that the King himself erroneously titled Sforza as a Count during a royal reception.<sup>471</sup> Having saying that, the High Commissioner was not enthusiastic about leaving the Ottoman capital where he acted as a “leader.”<sup>472</sup> Sforza was aware that he would not be free to act in Rome, as a “simple undersecretary,” but he could only give

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<sup>468</sup> Tittoni to Sforza, Rome, June 23, 1919, ASD, coll. Personale-serie VII, Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati, Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>469</sup> F. S. Nitti, *Scritti politici. Rivelazioni, meditazioni e ricordi*, edited by Giampiero Carocci (Laterza, Bari: 1963), 416-17.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>471</sup> M. G. Melchionni, “La politica estera di Carlo Sforza nel 1920-21,” in *Rivista di studi politici internazionali*, v. 36, n. 4 (ottobre-dicembre 1969), 537-70: 539.

<sup>472</sup> See also Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 83.

recommendations and suggestions.<sup>473</sup> Plus, the diplomat had spent the last three years abroad and was not familiar with the domestic situation.

In the summer of 1919, the internal political debate had become exasperated. The prewar clash between interventionists and neutralists was now transformed into a dispute among those who cried a “mutilated victory,” and those who believed in the necessity to find a compromise with the new states that had succeeded to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first group denounced the failure of the Italian delegation in Paris as something that they could have expected. The ongoing diplomatic disaster in Paris was due to all those who had been in favor of the war.<sup>474</sup> Despite the fact that Italy was among the winners of the war, the political climate had come to a showdown. The legacy left by Orlando and Sonnino was difficult to handle because the international isolation coincided with the internal crisis, which was worsened by the unfavorable economic conditions.

Nitti had been the Minister of Finance since November 1917. He resigned only in January 1919 because Orlando and Sonnino rejected his plan for a fast withdrawal of the Italian troops from the occupied territories.<sup>475</sup> As mentioned, Orlando and Sonnino were not always in concord, and before the Conference began, the Prime Minister had thought about changing the Foreign Minister. Orlando had a conversation with Nitti, and the latter suggested to appoint a young person who could serve the Country’s interests. Nitti was thinking about Carlo Sforza.<sup>476</sup> In his memoirs, Sforza writes that he met Nitti when he was the Minister. The two

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<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*; Giordano, *La Diplomazia*, 107.

<sup>474</sup> G. Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia: Lezioni di Harvard*, edited by R. Vivarelli (Feltrinelli, Milano: 2015), 25-33.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 206-07.

<sup>476</sup> See LAE, v. 3, Amendola to Albertini, Rome, January 1, 1919, n. 954, 1141.

men talked about the Adriatic Question, and both of them criticized the attitude of Sonnino and Orlando, but Sforza did not like Nitti's cruel sarcasm. The Minister did not understand Sforza's idea of "changing to create." In Sforza's opinion, Nitti was just interested in "changing to dismiss," and his government followed this line, which was fully supported by his Foreign Ministers: Tittoni and his successor Scialoja, who in June was a member of the new Italian delegation at the Peace Conference.<sup>477</sup>

One of the first decisions of the Cabinet was the change of the delegates in Paris. The Ambassador in London, Imperiali, who was among the members of the old delegation, was informed about his return to Great Britain on the afternoon of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was a clear sign of the intention to give a new direction to the Italian foreign policy. Imperiali also negotiated the Pact of London in 1915. His name was strongly connected to Sonnino's behaviors, even if the Ambassador did not agree with the first Italian delegation's choice.<sup>478</sup> According to Imperiali, Sforza's appointment was a proof of the "new atmosphere" and was strategic in dealing with the Near Eastern Question, which Tittoni had to face upon his arrival in Paris on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> Tittoni received an Anglo-French memorandum where the Pact of London was contested and the Italian occupations in Anatolia were considered illegitimated actions. The Allies exhorted Italy to find a compromise which would reconcile the Italian interests with the other involved countries' aspirations. To conclude, the document announced that Rome would lose all its rights and support if the troops did not withdraw.<sup>479</sup>

Sforza might have been a thorny presence in Constantinople. As a High Commissioner, he had been a loyal executor of Sonnino's plans and an

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<sup>477</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 83

<sup>478</sup> G. Imperiali, *Diario, 1915-1919* (Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli: 2006), 760-62.

<sup>479</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 126-27.

advocate of a stronger action against the Greek expansionism. The diplomat was strengthening his contacts with Mustafa Kemal and his movement when he was recalled in Rome. On the basis of Kemal's account, the idea of a nationalists' expedition against the Greeks came from Sforza, who promised Italian support.<sup>480</sup> Lloyd George and Lord Curzon were aware of the Italian action, and their suspicion did not disappear with the removal of the High Commissioner.<sup>481</sup> Lloyd George, in his memoirs, denounces the Allies and their lack of loyalty towards the British, which would become unabashed in the following years. Referring to the 1921-22, the British Prime Minister writes that Rome – and Paris – supported Mustafa Kemal and his men; Italy and France sold them weapons and helped them to avoid police controls. Otherwise, Athens could easily have defeated the revolutionaries.<sup>482</sup>

Obviously, Sforza had a different opinion: English and Greek obstinacy was the real driving force of the nationalists.<sup>483</sup> He disagreed with Tittoni's program which focused on the restoration of the relationship with Great Britain, which meant a compromise with Greece. Looking for an alternative, Sforza ran to Paris to meet his chief as soon as he took his new office. The diplomat advanced the proposal of talking with Pašić in order to find an agreement on the Adriatic Question, avoiding the Allies' directives. However, that conversation was not actualized, and Sforza had no choice but to come back to Rome and to oppose Tittoni's plan secretly from there.<sup>484</sup>

The Foreign Minister – having Nitti's consent – began the negotiations with Venizelos on July 15<sup>th</sup>. The pivot of the Minister's program was the

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<sup>480</sup> Grassi, *Atatürk*, 150 *et seq.*

<sup>481</sup> Imperiali, *Diario*, 57.

<sup>482</sup> D. L. George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, v. 2 (Gollancz, London: 19138), 1349.

<sup>483</sup> Sforza, *Diplomatic Europe*, 65-66.

<sup>484</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 144-45.

obtainment of a protectorate over the central part of Albania and its partition as it was planned in the 1915 Pact of London: Serbia also enlarged by annexing the northern part of the Albanian territory, whereas Greece obtained the South. As a consequence, Venizelos gave his support to the Italian mandate; in return, Italy recognized Greek interests in Thrace and Northern Epirus. On these premises, the Agreement was signed on July 29<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the two statesmen agreed on Italy's renouncing the Dodecanese's islands – with the exception of Rhodes. Greece confirmed the neutralization of the Canal of Corfu and promised to leave a part of Southern Anatolia to Italy.<sup>485</sup>

The day after Sforza obtained Nitti's signature on a letter addressed to the Foreign Affairs Minister.<sup>486</sup> The document recommended a public declaration in favor of the Albanian independence, as Sonnino had claimed when he was still in office. The unusual convergence of ideas between Sforza and Sonnino was caused by the Undersecretary's belief that such an act would grant the Italian influence in Western Balkans and weaken Yugoslav and Greek aspirations. Moreover, Italy would side with nationalists, showing respect for the American principle of people's self-determination. Allegedly, the Undersecretary did not force the Prime Minister to sign the document, but the withdrawal of Italian troops from Albania meant a reduction of Italian public spending, which was important to Nitti's program. However, Tittoni easily understood that Sforza was the real writer of the letter. The minister replied reaffirming his stance, and

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<sup>485</sup> See, H. J. Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1940* (Praeger, Westport-London: 1997), 14-16; Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna nel primo dopoguerra*, 28-31.

<sup>486</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 143.

from that moment Sforza was left in a marginal position without a chance to influence any decision.<sup>487</sup>

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, Tittoni presented a new proposal to solve the Adriatic Question. The Agreement with Venizelos was included in the project, and the Eastern border would match the so-called Wilson line's position. In the American President's plan Istria had been divided into two parts: the first part, Trieste and Pula, along with the railway connecting the two cities, was included in the Italian borders; the second part, Fiume and Ljubljana, was given to the Yugoslavians. The Italian Foreign Minister was willing to accept this division on the conditions that no concessions were made to Yugoslavia in the Drin Valley and Albona that should be in the Italian zone. Two options were left for Fiume: the creation of an independent state with a special statute; or the neutralization of the territory after which it would then be divided between Italy and Yugoslavia. Tittoni was also ready to renounce the Dalmatian coast with the exception of Zara.<sup>488</sup>

On August 6<sup>th</sup> the French Ambassador, Barrère, visited Sforza. The Parisian representative praised the new Government's work. Barrère said that Athens was causing friction in the relationship with France.<sup>489</sup> In his diary, Sforza did not comment, but he had become critical of the Executive decisions and had major problems acting inside the Ministry.<sup>490</sup> Sforza understood the importance of the Albanian national movement; so, if accepted, Tittoni's program would create an unstable system. Sforza warned his superiors about the risk of the local populations' uprisings, but, probably, without enough conviction. Not only were they indifferent

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<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, 150; Melchionni, "La politica estera di Carlo Sforza nel 1920-21," 544-45.

<sup>488</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna...*, 32-36.

<sup>489</sup> C. Sforza, "Diario prefascista," in *Nuova Antologia*, n. 2005 (January 1968), August 6, 1919, 47-74: 47.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, August 20, 1919, 48.

toward those suggestions, but Nitti and Tittoni did not realize Sforza's objection to their action.<sup>491</sup> As Nitti writes in his memoirs, the diplomat always remained loyal to his ministers.<sup>492</sup>

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Allies signed the Treaty with Austria and the Italian government had to withdraw its troops from Fiume, where they had been stationed since the signing of the Armistice on November 3, 1918. As Sforza writes, "For many Italians, irritated as they were by the difficulties which they attributed to the blindness of the Allies," the city had become "something like the symbol of victory."<sup>493</sup> Sforza also thought that Fiume was "undeniably" Italian and should be included in Italian territory. The crucial point consisted in the need of finding a compromise between the national principle and the new States, which were the new factor in the international system.<sup>494</sup> After all, the diplomat had advocated the necessity of an agreement with the neighboring country since his days in Corfu. Moreover, the economic and social crisis which Italy was experiencing stressed the importance of peace with the Allies. For instance, in September an agreement with France was signed in order to obtain protection for the Italian migrants.<sup>495</sup> Italy was also reliant on United States' credits and Great Britain's coal.<sup>496</sup>

The Government's efforts to negotiate a solution for the Adriatic Question were brought into question on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919 by the well-known expedition of Fiume, led by the Italian poet Gabriele D'Annunzio.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 186.

<sup>492</sup> Nitti, *Scritti politici*, 80.

<sup>493</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 308.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>495</sup> Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia*, 47.

<sup>496</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna...*, 44-45.

<sup>497</sup> See, P. Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e la questione adriatica: 1919-1920* (Feltrinelli, Milano: 1959); R. De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario, 1883-1920* (Einaudi, Torino: 1965), 545 *et seq.*; Id., *D'Annunzio politico 1918-1938* (Laterza, Roma-Bari: 1978); E. Longo, *L'Esercito italiano e la questione fiumana, 1918-1921* (Ufficio Storico SME, Roma: 1996); M. Bucarelli, "Delenda

According to Sforza, D'Annunzio's feat was the result of the wrong policies followed by the Italian government and Nitti's incapability in controlling the Army.<sup>498</sup> During the summer, Italy had been appalled by the popular riots for the high cost of living. The protests continued until September, and Nitti did not intervene; indeed, the rioters had the sympathy of the soldiers as well as D'Annunzio.<sup>499</sup>

In his diary Sforza defines the Italian authorities as people who were not able to lead, nor could they take on their own responsibilities.<sup>500</sup> Sforza strongly disagreed with Nitti's method. The Prime Minister did not understand that presenting Fiume as a national interest was not enough to persuade Wilson to be on the Italian side. On September 25<sup>th</sup>, after a "Council of the Elders," Sforza criticized Nitti's decision of sending a new telegram to the President of the United States. Wilson would see such an act as an "anxious weakness."<sup>501</sup> The Government should have looked for a compromise with the local authorities and the Allies. This way the Italian soldiers' presence would have been legitimate. French and British troops could be stationed in the North of the city, and their ships, in the Port, could be augmented.<sup>502</sup> It was a way to create a *fait accompli*, which could have forced Wilson to accept the Italian presence in the city. Sforza believed that a national problem had to be framed in the broader field of the European

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Jugoslavia. D'Annunzio, Sforza e gli intrighi balcanici del '19-'20," in *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, n. 6 (2002), 19-34.

<sup>498</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 86-87.

<sup>499</sup> Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia*, 228-33.

<sup>500</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, September 22, 1919, 48.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, September 25, 1919.

<sup>502</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 87.

political scenario to influence American decisions.<sup>503</sup> Nitti, instead, was sure that there was no chance of success and rejected Sforza's proposal.<sup>504</sup>

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, Sforza met Sonnino who had not attended the Council of the Elders. The Undersecretary had been ordered by Tittoni to question the ex-Foreign Minister about his opinion on Fiume. Sonnino suggested not to challenge the Americans, but to play for time while the Government negotiated with the neighboring countries which offered better possibilities to reach a compromise.<sup>505</sup> After all, Wilson's international position was weakened by his internal opposition. However, the negotiations with the Allies entered into a new phase of paralysis. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, Tittoni addressed the Italian Parliament and declared that Italy was ready to give up to the Albanian mandate, but not to Valona. The Italian Minister's speech was not enough to overcome the international stalemate; indeed, nothing was decided on about the Adriatic Question.

In the meantime, the Albanian nationalists began new protests, and Sforza opened a line of communication with D'Annunzio and his legionaries. Sforza suggested that Tittoni use the poet as a mediator with the Yugoslavian nationalist and separatist movements.

By the end of October, the contacts had been established.<sup>506</sup> Formally, Sforza – with Marshal Badoglio (who was first Commissioner for Venezia Giulia and then, from December 2<sup>nd</sup> on, was Chief of Staff) – was charged of negotiating a "*modus vivendi*" with D'Annunzio's aides. The agreement was reached in December, but D'Annunzio did not accept it, and the situation remained the same, even if the contacts with the separatists

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<sup>503</sup> Sforza to Ferrero, Rome, October 1, 1919, Ferrero Papers (FP), b. C, Columbia University's Rare Books and Manuscript Library, New York (RBML).

<sup>504</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, September 25, 1919, 48. See also, Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*; 87; Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 119-127.

<sup>505</sup> Sonnino, *Diario*, 347-48.

<sup>506</sup> Bucarelli, "Delenda Jugoslavia," 19-34.

continued.<sup>507</sup> His approaches to D'Annunzio and to the Yugoslavian separatists continued during the first months of 1920. The Undersecretary was seen as the "outsider" of the Government by D'Annunzio and his entourage.<sup>508</sup> However, those connections did not necessarily represent the intention to destabilize or destroy the new Kingdom. The diplomat thought that D'Annunzio and his "legionnaires" were a useful tool in order to put pressure on the Allies and Belgrade. His real aim was to find a compromise – which he considered vital to maintain domestic and international order.<sup>509</sup>

In January 1920 Sforza's personal life bridged once again to his professional life. On January 9 his brother-in-law, Gaston, married Nathalie Kostantinović who was a descendant of the Obrenović, ex-reigning family of Serbia and the widow of Mirko Petrovic-Njegos of Montenegro, son of the exiled King Nicola and brother of the Italian Queen Elena. Nathalie had three sons from her previous marriage, Stefan, Stanislav and Michel, who could claim the Serbian Crown, but Sforza acted as a mediator with the royal family to avoid the spread of a dispute for the throne.<sup>510</sup> Sforza, as a diplomat, was careful in maintaining contacts with everyone.

In the meantime, the negotiations on the Adriatic Question were still on going. Nitti presented a new proposal to solve the Adriatic Question, following the Allies' memorandum of December 9<sup>th</sup>. This joint declaration established the acceptance of the Wilson line more Albona, which was included in the Italian territory. The request for the independence of Fiume was rejected; the city would be an autonomous *corpus separatum* within a buffer state under the control of the League of Nations, which would also

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<sup>507</sup> See Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e...*, 335-346; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, 551-52.

<sup>508</sup> Bucarelli, "Delenda Jugoslavia," 25.

<sup>509</sup> G. Salvemini, *Carteggio* (GSC), a cura di E. Tagliacozzo (Laterza & figli, Roma-Bari: 1984), Salvemini to Sforza, Rome, December 20, 1919, n. 494, 531-32.

<sup>510</sup> Zeno, *Ritratto di un grande diplomatico*, 393.

have authority over the independent Zara. The Dalmatian city, nevertheless, would be in a customs union with Yugoslavia. Italy obtained the sovereignty over the islands of Lissa, Lussino, Unie, Pelagosa and Valona. Italy also got the mandate for Albania, whose northern borders were those of 1913; while, future negotiation would decide the southern limits. However, the Yugoslavs obtained the right to build a railway in the Drin Valley.<sup>511</sup>

As the Allies memorandum restated the connection between the Italian resignation to Albania and compensation in northern Adriatic, Nitti's proposal, of January 14<sup>th</sup>, included the same principle. The new compromise referred to the memorandum of December with few differences. Fiume would be an independent – but contiguous state under the League of Nations' authority. Dalmatia was yielded to Yugoslavia with the exception of Zara, which would be also independent and under the League of Nations' authority. The islands of Lussino, Lissa and Pelagosa were ceded to Italy, and all the Adriatic islands should be demilitarized. As for Albania, the Tittoni-Venizelos' agreement was confirmed: Italy would obtain Valona and the mandate on central Albania; the Yugoslavian State would annex the northern part; and Greece would have the South, with Koritza and Argirocastro. However, "Nitti's compromise" was a new fiasco; so that, the Allies referred to bilateral negotiations the settlement of the Adriatic Question.<sup>512</sup>

Meanwhile, Italian society was still experiencing a deep crisis. December and January were the most turbulent months; almost all Italian workers

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<sup>511</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 99-103: 100; A. Becherelli, "L'Albania nella politica estera italiana (1913-1920)," in *L'Albania indipendente e le relazioni italo-albanesi (1912-2012). Atti del Convegno in occasione del centenario dell'indipendenza albanese (Roma, 22 novembre 2012)*, edited by A. Becherelli and A. Carteny (Nuova Cultura, Roma: 2013), 45-65: 59.

<sup>512</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 110-19; M. Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia, 1922-1939* (B. A. Graphis, Bari: 2006), 9-10.

went on strike, stopping trains, mail service, industrial and agricultural production.<sup>513</sup> The Government had to deal with the rise of prices and the lack of resources, so that the German and Eastern Questions became particularly compelling. Nitti needed to stabilize the internal situation, and an economic recovery was impossible without agreements able to secure Italian supplies. Considering this premise, Italy's economic reconstruction was closely related to the Prime Minister's broader design of European recovery which would also include the German Question and the relations with France. The clash between Italian and French interests was an inevitable conclusion. Paris, in fact, was determined in obtaining a total execution of the Treaty of Versailles; whereas, Nitti thought that the Allies should try to keep their demands within reason.<sup>514</sup>

In March, the conflict between the Allies' policies emerged during a reunion of the Supreme Council in London, where Berlin requested access to the Ruhr for its troops in order to restore the social order. France strongly opposed the German request and was also ready to intervene once it obtained the Allies' consent. Nitti openly expressed his opposition to the intervention during a conversation with the French Ambassador Barrère. Henceforward, the Italian Prime Minister maintained an attitude of harsh criticism with respect to French behaviors towards Germany.<sup>515</sup> Such an attitude determined a deep crisis in the relationship with Paris, but the Undersecretary also seemed to disagree with his Chief. Sforza, indeed, on the eve of the San Remo Conference, wrote to Albertini that French politics were partially legitimate, even if not entirely embraceable. A rearmament of Germany was possible, and for this reason, it was necessary to avoid

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<sup>513</sup> Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia*, 34-35.

<sup>514</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 151-52.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-56.

Berlin taking possession of all the resources which had previously been under its control.<sup>516</sup>

According to Sforza, the cooperation with France was important to secure Italian interests.<sup>517</sup> He reaffirmed his idea also in a letter addressed to Nitti on the eve of the Conference of San Remo, which was scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup>.<sup>518</sup> The Undersecretary had a confidential conversation with Barrère on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The French Ambassador complained about the political difficulties he was encountering. Sforza replied that if the bilateral relations were changed, the responsibility laid in the French representatives: “*Grands hommes de Versailles.*”<sup>519</sup> Yet, the Undersecretary thought that Barrère should not be considered as an enemy because his name was related to the relationship between Rome and Paris. Sforza believed that the French Ambassador was aware of the unfairness of the memorandum of December 9<sup>th</sup>.<sup>520</sup> If Italy accepted that document as a compromise to solve the Adriatic Question, the public opinion would be right in claiming that the peace agreement was an act of disloyalty by the Allies. As a result, Barrère would do everything he could to push the Serbs to yield Fiume to the Italians.<sup>521</sup> To conclude, in Sforza’s view, the Government could not forget that France was a “bad animal, which bit as long as it was alive;” the maintenance of a friendly relationship was convenient until it could be ignored with security.<sup>522</sup> In San Remo, Nitti made a new proposal which acknowledged the memorandum of December with a few changes in order to protect the Italian interest in Fiume. The Allies did not accept the new project, and no

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<sup>516</sup> LAE, Sforza to Albertini, Roma April 14, 1920, 1398-97.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> Sforza to Nitti, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 8, f. IV.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

solution was found; so, the problem was definitely deferred to bilateral negotiations.<sup>523</sup>

In regards to the German Question, Nitti could do nothing but to reiterate his position, entering into a new dispute with the French Prime Minister Millerand. In this atmosphere Rome's action was doomed to be thwarted with regard to the Italian interests in Germany as in the Near East.<sup>524</sup> The Ottoman Question was the other important issue on the table of the inter-Allied Conference. Sforza had kept working on this problem since his arrival in Rome. He paid particular attention to the procedures which brought to the so called Tripartite Agreement. The Undersecretary was still convinced that the commercial expansion in the Near East was crucial to Italy to get beyond its lack of resources. Indeed, the deal aimed to establish zones of exclusive commercial and industrial influence in the Ottoman territories, including areas under the British and French mandate (i.e., Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia). The Entente affirmed the principle of equality in the composition of the International Committees which controlled the different branches of the Ottoman administration. The former German enterprises were turned over to a Tripartite corporation. Each Power committed to respect the limits of the assigned area and to support the others in maintaining the position acquired.<sup>525</sup>

However, London refused to sign the document until Turkey signed the Peace Treaty while final draft was agreed upon in San Remo. As a result, the Tripartite Agreement assigned privileges to Italy that were impossible to realize without Ottoman cooperation.<sup>526</sup> Among those privileges there was also the concession of the Eraclea's coal deposit. Despite de marginal

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<sup>523</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 171-72.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-70.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>526</sup> Grassi, *Atatürk*, 203.

importance of the miner, the question became important to the Italian government. In May, Sforza urged the necessity to activate production in the area.<sup>527</sup> Indeed, the Italian lack of resources did not allow them to wait longer. Sforza wanted the British Government to intercede with the Turks so that they could allow Italian society to begin production. The Undersecretary brought that matter up again when he was in London without success.<sup>528</sup>

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, Sforza left Rome to reach London where he had to meet Lloyd George. The Undersecretary's official mission consisted in explaining the Italian policy on the Reparations, but unofficially, Sforza was told to contact Krassin, who was the Soviet Commissioner of Foreign Commerce.<sup>529</sup> Since the beginning of the year, thanks to the Allies' openings, Nitti had started a transformation of Italian policy towards Russia, which was considered a crucial factor in the process of European – and Italian, reconstruction as well as the cooperation with Germany. The Italian Government had to handle the permanent lack of resources which was even more urgent in postwar crisis.<sup>530</sup> Indeed, the purpose of the Prime Minister was not a formal recognition of the Bolshevik regime, but the relaunch of commercial relations. Nitti also thought about obtaining the socialists' support for his Government. However, the Russo-Polish conflict, which flared during the spring, had caused a stalemate in this process of approaching the East.<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Sforza to the Embassies in Paris and London, Rome, May 15, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 8, f. IV.

<sup>528</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 175-76.

<sup>529</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, June 5, 1920, 53.

<sup>530</sup> E. Serra, *Nitti e la Russia* (Dedalo, Bari: 1975), 173.

<sup>531</sup> G. Petracchi, *La Russia rivoluzionaria nella politica italiana 1917/25*, (Laterza, Roma-Bari: 1982), 147 *et seq.*

In his diary, on June 9<sup>th</sup> Sforza wrote that he had a long conversation with Krassin. The meeting was positive for both of them. The Undersecretary confirmed the Italian will of restoring commercial relations and communications, but he also said that a relaunch of political relations was impossible. Nevertheless, the Russian historiography has seen this meeting as the first official contact between Italy and Soviet Russia.<sup>532</sup> Sforza told Krassin that Italy would do anything to get wheat and essential resources from the Black Sea.<sup>533</sup> In his report to Moscow, the Russian Commissioner urged a resumption of commercial relations, but he also warned about a possible political crisis in Rome which would end Nitti's experience.<sup>534</sup> The danger was mentioned by Sforza, who would take up the duties of Foreign Minister in the future Government and the negotiations with the Soviets.

#### 4.IV. FOREIGN MINISTER: SFORZA AND THE ADRIATIC QUESTION

On June 10, 1920 the news of the governmental crisis reached Sforza while he was about to leave London in order to reach Paris.<sup>535</sup> As requested by Nitti, the Undersecretary had to meet with the French Prime Minister Millerand before coming back to Rome.<sup>536</sup> On the same day, Sforza was informed that the new Prime Minister, Giovanni Giolitti, had chosen him as

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<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-91.; id., "Carlo Sforza e il mondo sovietico 1917-1950 (Apparenze diplomatiche e realtà psicologiche)," *Il Politico*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1984), pp. 381-404: 382-83.

<sup>533</sup> Serra, Nitti e la Russia, 159.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>535</sup> ASD, CS, b. 11, f. *Varie*, Sforza to Scialoja, [London], June 10, 1920.

<sup>536</sup> ASD, CS, b. 11, f. *Varie*, Nitti to Sforza, Rome, June 7, 1920.

Foreign Affairs Minister.<sup>537</sup> The Allies were alarmed by the return of the old statesman, who was well known for being a neutralist. So that, the choice of Sforza as chief of the Italian diplomacy was a clear sign that the old statesman wanted to cooperate with the Allies.<sup>538</sup> Moreover, Sforza extensively knew the situation of the Italian international relations because of his previous role.<sup>539</sup> The priority Giolitti had placed on foreign policy was necessary to focus later on the domestic issues.<sup>540</sup> According to this plan the new Cabinet would immediately deal with the following issues: Albania, Fiume, and Yugoslavia.<sup>541</sup>

In his diary, Sforza wrote that he wanted to stay away from the ongoing discussions in Rome, and for this reason, he stopped in Paris.<sup>542</sup> His name had not been the only one on the table when Giolitti was considering candidates; several others were rumored: Carlo Alberto Aliotti, at that time Commissioner in Bulgaria, would be Giolitti's second choice if Sforza refused; Pietro Bertolini, who was the Italian delegate for the Reparations' Commission; Giacomo De Martino, who was an ambassador in Berlin.<sup>543</sup> The latter was also suggested by Tittoni, who wrote to Giolitti on June 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>544</sup> According to the ex-Foreign Minister, De Martino had all the necessary skills to guide the Consulta and to negotiate with foreign authorities. Sforza, instead, was not the most suitable person for that job because he was not a fluent enough speaker for addressing the Chambers.

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<sup>537</sup> ASD, CS, b. 11, f. *Varie*, Roddolo to Sforza, Rome, June 10, 1920.

<sup>538</sup> *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (DDF), 1920, Tome II, Charles-Roux to Millerand, Rome, September 12, 1920. See also, F. Charles Roux, *Souvenirs diplomatiques: Une grande ambassade à Rome, 1919-1925*, (A. Fayard, Paris: 1961), 126; Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 141.

<sup>539</sup> Giolitti, *Le mie memorie*, 293.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>542</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 53.

<sup>543</sup> ASD, CS, b. 11, f. *Varie*, Roddolo to Sforza, Rome, June 10, 1920; Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana, 371-72*; Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna...*, 192.

<sup>544</sup> Tittoni to Giolitti, Rome, June 10, 1920, in Aldo A. Mola, Aldo G. Ricci (edited by), *Il carteggio*, v. 2 (Bastogi, Foggia: 2009), 733.

Tittoni suggested confirming Nitti's previous decision to send Sforza in Tripolitania as Governor. The ex-Minister added that the proposal had also been accepted by Sforza.<sup>545</sup> Actually, the diplomat was not enthusiastic about the idea of Governor and saw it as a clear attempt to move him away from Rome.<sup>546</sup>

The political crisis made Nitti's plan impossible to realize, and on June 12<sup>th</sup> Sforza met Millerand in a changed atmosphere. They talked about the political change which was ongoing in Italy. The Undersecretary said there was nothing to worry about; Giolitti wanted the Allies to forget his old choices.<sup>547</sup> The day after, Sforza was in Rome and met the new Prime Minister. The two occasionally had come across each other in Parliament when Sforza was Undersecretary, and on the train to Frascati, a town close to Rome, where they went on vacation with their families.<sup>548</sup>

According to Sforza's memoirs, when he met Giolitti on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Prime Minister did not mention the formation of the new Cabinet. He directly asked about the diplomat's opinion on the "whole Adriatic problem."<sup>549</sup> Sforza first explained his idea about Fiume. In his opinion, the city represented "a pretext" for D'Annunzio to "try the conquest of Italy as a new aesthetic sensation." Nevertheless, that situation "contained worthy elements of patriotic feelings," and it was up to the Minister of the Interior – who would be Giolitti – to deal with it. Sforza added that he did not agree "with any of the so-called cautious and practical men who think that, cost what might, we must heal the gaping wound of the Adriatic question."<sup>550</sup> He referred to Tittoni who had thought about a "liquidation" of the Adriatic

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<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7. See also Nitti to Sforza, Rome, June 7, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 11, f. *Varie*.

<sup>546</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, June 11, 1920, 53.

<sup>547</sup> DDF, 1920, Tome II, Millerand to Barrère, Paris, June 14, 1920, n. 109, 140.

<sup>548</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 104-05.

<sup>549</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 234-36.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

Question. By contrast, Sforza warned Giolitti that he wanted to follow a policy of “reconstruction.”<sup>551</sup>

Sforza meant that the Italian government needed to “impose on Belgrade [the] amplest and most complete geographic frontier line.” As he had always thought, the diplomat argued that Italy did not have to insist on Dalmatia because such a possession would mean the necessity of safeguarding the other side of the Adriatic. The result of such a line would be a limitation of the Italian “diplomatic freedom for the future.” That design had a major concern: the “danger of Habsburg restoration.”<sup>552</sup> Sforza believed that a potential return of the Austrian Monarchy made an agreement with the neighboring country essential. Indeed, if the Habsburg’s restoration “would mean a lessening of the value of Italian victory,” it also represented a real danger for the Yugoslav unity.<sup>553</sup>

Sforza’s program wanted Italy to be “the leading power in Central and Oriental Europe,” and such a goal could be achieved only if Rome, as a great Power, gave its support to the Successor States of Austria-Hungary.<sup>554</sup> While, he could not **been** completely sure, in Sforza’s opinion, the Allies would support such an action. The future Minister had not been clear when he talked with Millerand in Paris.<sup>555</sup> On that occasion the diplomat had also complained about the French behavior in the Balkans, so the Albanian Question still potentially represented a limiting factor in the bilateral relations. Sforza remembers that Giolitti was also skeptical of his plan, but all the same Giolitti offered the Foreign Minister position to the ex-Undersecretary.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, June 15, 1920, 53.

<sup>552</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 235-36.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>555</sup> DDF, 1920, Tome II, Millerand to Barrère, Paris, June 14, 1920, n. 109, 140.

<sup>556</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 236.

Sforza accepted, and again met Giolitti on June 18<sup>th</sup>. The first problem they dealt with was the **Albanian Question**. Their plan was to focus on the independence of Albania and the renunciation of the mandate, but the retention of Valona, at least at first. Indeed, it was well known that the Albanian Government was determined on having the Italian troops out of their territory.<sup>557</sup> Sforza tried to find a compromise in order to maintain Valona when, in July, he met his Albanian colleague, Konitza, in Paris. The latter, according to Sforza's diary, seemed to agree on having further meetings in Rome.<sup>558</sup> On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, however, the Albanians attacked the Italian troops stationed in Valona and they could hardly defend their position. The news upset Sforza, but not enough to give up.<sup>559</sup> He thought that the repeal of the Tittoni-Venizelos' agreement would allow the opening of new negotiations. The Italian Minister had already announced the decision to Venizelos during the Spa Conference in the first days of July, but the new situation accelerated his decision. On July 26<sup>th</sup>, the Greek Ambassador, Coromilas, was notified of the Italian decision, but the Albanian authorities were not willing to negotiate at all: they left no choice to the Italian government but to evacuate the Eastern Adriatic shore.<sup>560</sup> As a result, on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the agreement was signed, and Sforza completely changed his attitude, causing the disappointment of the Allies.<sup>561</sup>

The Albanian Question was "cleverly" closed, in Sforza's opinion.<sup>562</sup> It was true that the initial program was different, but it was impossible to contrast the Albanian nationalists with the Italian means. The Government had no alternative but to renounce Valona, which clearly had a strategical

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<sup>557</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 369-74.

<sup>558</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, July 18, 1920, 58.

<sup>559</sup> Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 389.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 390-92.

<sup>561</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 201-07.

<sup>562</sup> C. Sforza, *Albania: Memo*, 8, in ACS, CS, b. 1, f.1.

importance but only if the Albanians agreed with the Italians.<sup>563</sup> Despite Sforza also had followed a different strategy until that moment, Tirana became the “safety valve” in case of impossibility to reach an agreement with Belgrade. Henceforward, Rome’s purpose should be to have a friendly relationship with Tirana, indeed the Foreign Minister would be careful not to touch the Albanian Question during the negotiations with the Yugoslavs.<sup>564</sup> The agreement of August 2<sup>nd</sup> was the first step toward a peaceful Italian penetration into the Balkans and the Albanian independence became an anchor of Italian foreign policy.<sup>565</sup>

Rome had to oppose the Greek and Serbian plans of annexation in the Albanian territories. With regard to Greece, on August 10<sup>th</sup> was signed the Bonin-Venizelos Agreement with which Sforza renewed almost all the commitments previously taken by Tittoni. In this way, the Minister tried to compensate for repealing the previous agreement. That action, indeed, disappointed the Allies and the Serbs who did not appreciate the change in the Albanian policy.<sup>566</sup> Moreover, on the same day the Treaty of Sèvres was signed. It was unreasonable to go back on the most important commitments undertaken with Athens. However, the Albanian agreement would inevitably influence the negotiations with the Yugoslavs. Even if the Yugoslavs did not accept the Pact of London, the Albanian deal should not be jeopardized.<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> C. Sforza, *Discorsi parlamentari* (Il Mulino, Bologna: 2006), “Sul disegno di legge ‘Approvazione del Trattato di San Germano ed annessione al Regno dei territori attribuiti all’Italia’,” Camera dei Deputati, August 9, 1920, 80.

<sup>564</sup> M. Bucarelli, “‘Manicomio jugoslavo’. L’ambasciatore Carlo Galli e le relazioni italo-jugoslave tra le due guerre mondiali,” *Clio*, 2002, n. 3, 467-509: 482.

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>566</sup> Pastorelli, *L’Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 400-03. With regard to the negotiations for the Treaty of Sèvres, see also, Grassi, *Atatürk*, 198-204; Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 334-42.

<sup>567</sup> Sforza, *Albania: Memo*, 8.

In July, during the Spa Conference, Sforza had started the negotiations with the Yugoslavs. On the 17<sup>th</sup> the Italian Minister had a long meeting with Trumbich.<sup>568</sup> The chief of Italian diplomacy announced his intention of negotiating because he wanted the two countries to be allied. As the Minister explained to Giolitti, Rome should act with Belgrade as an “equal” and recognize its aspirations in order to realize in the Balkans the “true Italian colonies.”<sup>569</sup> Sforza was thinking of an economic penetration of the Adriatic Eastern shore. He was determined to obtain “real” Italian borders, which guaranteed the protection of Trieste, and he was ready to abandon the Dalmatian territories with the exception of Zara. It meant that Mount Nevoso should mark the Italian boundaries: it had a strategical importance and was demanded by the public opinion.<sup>570</sup>

Once the Government’s program had been decided, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister worked to obtain internal support.<sup>571</sup> During the summer, Sforza met Sonnino and Benito Mussolini, by that time leader of the *fasci di combattimento* (i.e., “fighting leagues”). The meeting of August 23<sup>rd</sup> with the ex-Foreign Affairs Minister was not a success. The two men wrote different accounts of the conversation. According to Sforza, Sonnino begged him not to yield the Dalmatian territories, as established in the Pact of London.<sup>572</sup> Instead, Sonnino wrote a long report about the conversation of that day.<sup>573</sup> Starting from the disrespectful behavior of the Foreign Minister, the old statesman criticized the Government for following a policy of “renounces.” The Albanian Protocol and the decision to leave Valona had

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<sup>568</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1920, 58.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920, 59.

<sup>570</sup> See also Sforza, Jugoslavia, 160; Giordano, *La diplomazia*, 154-61; B. Bracco, *Carlo Sforza e la Questione adriatica. Politica estera e opinione pubblica nell’ultimo governo Giolitti* (Unicopli, Milano: 1998), 101-124: 108.

<sup>571</sup> De Felice, *Mussolini: Il rivoluzionario*, 637.

<sup>572</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, August 23, 1920, 59.

<sup>573</sup> Sonnino, *Diario*, August 23, 1920, 357-63.

been “big mistakes.”<sup>574</sup> The abandonment of Dalmatia in favor of the Yugoslavs would be another one. Sonnino did not agree with the approach of the new Government; they were just following the previous “bad policies” of finding a compromise regardless to the cost. A “good policy” would consist in solving the problems in the best way. If this was impossible, the Government should resist and not give up on a vital national interest. The agreement with Belgrade was an illusion. A situation of friendship and peace was impossible, because the hate against Italy constituted the sole bond which kept together the Kingdom. Sforza agreed with Sonnino on this point. In fact, in the diplomat’s opinion, the agreement would mean the end of Yugoslavia.<sup>575</sup>

Sforza established a better relationship with Mussolini, who during the war sided with democratic interventionists and understood the need of closing the dispute with the Yugoslav Kingdom. Sforza, in a letter written in 1947, wrote that he had met the fascist leader already in 1918, when it was decided to hold the Congress of Nationalities in Rome. On that occasion, Mussolini approved the idea of an entente with the Yugoslavs.<sup>576</sup> In the same document, Sforza affirmed that he received Mussolini at the Consulta during the summer of 1920. Mussolini still had the idea of reaching a compromise with the neighboring countries to the point that he agreed on the constitution of Fiume as a free State and suggested focusing the negotiations on Zara as an autonomous city “with the diplomatic representation under the Italian control.” The two men met again during

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<sup>574</sup> On the negative reaction of the public opinion and of the Nationalists, see, Pastorelli, *L’Albania nella politica estera italiana*, 403.

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>576</sup> *Mussolini e D’Annunzio: Una lettera di Carlo Sforza*, Rome, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1947, in ASD, CS, b. 12, f. 1920. See also Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia*, 20-26, *id.*, “Mussolini, la questione adriatica e il fallimento dell’interventismo democratico,” 199.

the fall, and Sforza obtained Mussolini's cooperation in dealing with D'Annunzio and convinced him to accept the future disposal.<sup>577</sup>

In the meantime, Giolitti and Sforza secured the Allies' approval. The Prime Minister met Lloyd George at Lucerne on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> and Millerand at Aix-les-Bains on September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.<sup>578</sup> Both foreign leaders accepted a mediation with Belgrade, but the turning point was the French action, as the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Vesnić confirmed.<sup>579</sup> The French Prime Minister also recommended Giolitti delay the conversation with the Yugoslavs and to wait for the American elections in order to avoid Washington's intrusion.<sup>580</sup>

On this basis, the bilateral negotiations were opened at Rapallo on November 7<sup>th</sup>. It took only five days to reach the final entente which was signed on November 12<sup>th</sup>, but it was not easy.<sup>581</sup> At the beginning, the Yugoslavs did not accept Mount Nevoso as a new border nor the Italian annexation of Zara. "They found it hard to cede half a million Slavs."<sup>582</sup> On the first question, the Government was determined; it was "necessary" to obtain Mount Nevoso.<sup>583</sup> Sforza remembers in his memoirs that "the discussion, one night reached a degree of dramatic tension." The Italian Minister threatened Trumbić and told him that such a stubbornness could bring to the ruin of his country. Sforza said that everything could be used

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<sup>577</sup> Sforza to the Prefect in Milan, Rome, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 7, f. *Mussolini*. See also, Sforza, *Diario*, October 26, 1920; De Felice, *Mussolini: Il rivoluzionario*, 638.

<sup>578</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna...*, 230-41.

<sup>579</sup> G. Marsico, *L'Italia e la Conferenza economica di Portorose*, 24 ottobre-23 novembre 1921 (Giuffrè, Milano: 1979), 33.

<sup>580</sup> See also, Melchionni, "La politica estera di Carlo Sforza nel 1920-21," 558 *et seq.*

<sup>581</sup> On the negotiations see also, *Libro Verde*, n. 111, *Negoziati diretti fra il Governo italiano e il Governo serbo-croato-sloveno per la pace adriatica. Documenti diplomatici presentati al Parlamento italiano dal ministro degli Affari Esteri, Sforza, il 20 giugno 1921* (Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, Roma: 1921); Sforza, *Jugoslavia*, 167- 171.

<sup>582</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 236-37.

<sup>583</sup> Contarini to Sforza, Rome, November 8, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 7, f. 3.

as a weapon against them: Albania, Hungary, Montenegro, and the Habsburg.<sup>584</sup>

The Chief of the Consulta was clearly taking advantage of the isolation which Belgrade was experiencing in that moment because of the French and British indifference. That situation in turn was caused by the Yugoslavia's disagreeable attitude against Austria.<sup>585</sup> Plus, the Yugoslavs also had lost the support of the United States where Wilson's policy was called into question by the elections. Indeed, Trumbić had to change his mind and to accept the condition of Mount Nevoso. The same strategy was used for Zara. Vesnić asked Sforza to wire Giolitti and to inform him the reasons why they opposed the Italian requests.<sup>586</sup> The Prime Minister was willing to renounce the littoral town; its independence or the autonomy would have been acceptable.<sup>587</sup> Instead, Sforza said that Giolitti "completely" supported his views, and the Yugoslavs gave up.<sup>588</sup>

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the Treaty of Rapallo was signed. Italy had obtained the Alpine frontier line, Istria, the islands of Lussin and Cherso, Zara and privileges for the Italians of Dalmatia. Fiume became an independent city although "contiguous" with the Italian boundaries. In addition, there was a secret exchange of notes between Sforza and Trumbić related to Porto Baros. The agreement placed the Port outside the territory of the independent State, in the Yugoslav part. The agreement was possible thanks to this disposal, according to Sforza.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, November 9, 1920, 60. See also, Bracco, *Carlo Sforza e la Questione adriatica*, 127-28.

<sup>585</sup> Sforza, *Diplomatic Europe*, 41; Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 248.

<sup>586</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 237.

<sup>587</sup> Giolitti to Sforza, Rome, November 10, 1920, in ASD, CS, b. 7, f. 3.

<sup>588</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 237.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, 238-39.

The Treaty of Rapallo definitely solved the Adriatic Question, allowing Italy to follow a free diplomatic action. It also marked the independence of the Albanian question and the end of the D'Annunzio's expedition. Finally, in Sforza's view the importance of the entente laid in **anti-Habsburg Protocol**. During his speech at the Italian Parliament to obtain the ratification of the agreement, the Minister highlighted the importance of the disposal with which the two Governments agreed on opposing any potential action that was geared toward the restoration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.<sup>590</sup>

Italy will protect its own wealth and the one of its neighboring Country, which should have been a ruthless rival, instead has transformed into a friendly, economic and political Ally with the purpose of avoiding the reconstitution of unnatural conglomerates as the dynasties, which left such a bitter memory as in Rome and as in Belgrade. Nothing divides the two Countries anymore, and there is no illusion in hoping for a near future in which Italians and Yugoslavs will find in the common friendship a precious gift in a political and in a moral field.

Indeed, by the Treaty of Rapallo, the Austrian ideal, with its lasting anti-Italian feature, has been definitely destroyed. It was a danger which could jeopardize the best result of our victory.<sup>591</sup>

Sforza, like Contarini who had an essential role in the negotiations, believed that the Great War had to be considered as the final chapter in the

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<sup>590</sup> M. G. Melchionni, "La convenzione antiasburgica del 12 novembre 1920," in *Storia e Politica*, 1972/1-2, 543-555; Alessandro Brogi, "Il trattato di Rapallo del 1920 e la politica danubiano-balcanica di Carlo Sforza," in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, 1989/1, 3-46.

<sup>591</sup> Sforza, *Discorsi parlamentari*, "Sul disegno di legge 'Approvazione del Trattato di Rapallo ed annessione al Regno dei territori attribuiti all'Italia'," Camera dei Deputati, November 26, 1920, 87-88.

long story of the Italian unification process.<sup>592</sup> Finally, Rome had succeeded in the defeat of its most dangerous enemy: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a result that the Government had to protect. Indeed, Sforza completed his design with the support he gave to the formation of the **Little Entente**, which was an alliance among Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. The Foreign Affairs Minister also signed a commercial agreement with his Czechoslovakian colleague Beneš in February 1921.<sup>593</sup>

The ententes with the Yugoslav Kingdom and the other successor States of Austria-Hungary answered to the necessity of protecting the Italian borders and increasing Italian influence in territories where it was impossible before – also coming up against other European Powers, mainly France. The King, recognizing the importance of Sforza's diplomatic action, gave the title of *Collare dell'Annunziata* to the Foreign Minister, that meant to become the cousin of the sovereign. Moreover, Contarini, who went to *Stazione Termini* to greet the Minister coming back from Rapallo, was appointed as a Senator.<sup>594</sup> Nevertheless, the Treaty had to face a strong domestic opposition. Sforza was labeled as a defeatist by the nationalists who were not sensitive to the political or economic advantages which would come from the entente. In particular, **Luigi Federzoni**, one of the main representative of the nationalist group, blamed the Government for giving up territories – which had been conquered by the Italian Army – for nothing but a promise of friendly relations with the Yugoslav Kingdom – i.e., with Serbs.<sup>595</sup> Federzoni did not believe in the principle of political and economic cooperation with the neighboring country, above all because the

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<sup>592</sup> Legatus, *Vita diplomatica di Salvatore Contarini*, 48-50.

<sup>593</sup> Sforza, *Diplomatic Europe*, 33-50.

<sup>594</sup> Legatus, *Vita diplomatica di Salvatore Contarini*, 53.

<sup>595</sup> PSC, *Lavori Parlamentari, XXV Legislatura del Regno d'Italia, 1° Sessione, November 26, 1920, 5903-5940: 5915*, <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg25/sed105.pdf> (accessed on October 30, 2017).

cohabitation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was seen as a factor of instability.<sup>596</sup> The common fight against a potential Habsburg restoration was not enough to create a steady relationship. As a consequence, he also criticized the Italian support for the Little Entente. The weakest point of the Treaty, indeed, lied in the lack of guarantees for Italian security since the Austrian danger was replaced by “Yugoslav imperialism.”<sup>597</sup>

#### 4.V. SFORZA’S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER RAPALLO

A few days after his return from Rapallo, on November 28, Sforza left Rome to meet Millerand at the Elysée.<sup>598</sup> The conversation focused on the Turkish Question. The Italian Foreign Minister had opposed the Allied policy in favor of Venizelos’ requests more than once. In June, during the Conference of Boulogne, and in July at Spa, he did not hesitate in saying that the entrance of Hellenic military forces into Anatolia was a mistake. It was the best move to strengthen the Turkish nationalism and militarism.<sup>599</sup> Nevertheless, the Chief of the Italian diplomacy could do nothing but to imply that his Government would not wait to take advantage of the favorable occasion.<sup>600</sup>

The atmosphere was changed by the results of the Greek elections in mid-November. The leader of the Greek nationalist, Venizelos, was

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<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, 5916.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 5925.

<sup>598</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, November 28, 1920, 61.

<sup>599</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 357.

<sup>600</sup> Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 340.

defeated and King Constantine could come back to lead the country. Constantine had opposed the Greek entrance into the war and the Allies were concerned about his return. Millerand realized that it was time to change the policy towards the Turks and invited Sforza to visit him before going to London, where an inter-allied Conference was scheduled. The Italian Government would participate to the meeting, even if they had been invited last minute at the meeting.<sup>601</sup>

The Turkish question would be at the center of the inter-allied Conference and was also the main topic of the conversation with the French president. It was an evidence of a changing spirit in the relations between the two Mediterranean Countries. Millerand said that it was impossible to rely on Greeks for the future in order to stabilize the region. After all, there was no chance for a military intervention of the Allies. As a consequence, there was a "last solution:" i.e., the Turks.<sup>602</sup> The French President was also concerned about a possible alliance between the Turks and the Bolsheviks against the Western countries. They had a vital interest in finding as soon as possible a solution of the problem.<sup>603</sup> Sforza, obviously, agreed with Millerand and, on the same day, left Paris to reach London.

At Victoria Station the Italian Minister found Imperiali and Lord Curzon waiting for him.<sup>604</sup> On the night of the 28<sup>th</sup> and the day after, Sforza had long conversations with his English colleague. The Chief of the Consulta had to defend himself from the accusation of selling weapons to the Turks. Lord Curzon remarked the ambiguity of the Italian policy. Sforza said that he was willing to cooperate for a solution in the public interest. It meant

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<sup>601</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 269.

<sup>602</sup> DDF, 1920, Tome III, Peretti De La Rocca to Paul Cambon and Barrère, Paris, November 28, 1920, 352-54.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.* See also, Grassi, *Atatürk*, 216 *et seq.*

<sup>604</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, November 28, 1920, 61.

reaching a peaceful compromise and taking action in order to divide the Russians from the Turks. The Greek question represented a less important problem.<sup>605</sup> Lloyd George agreed with Sforza on this point when they talked a few days later. However, he could not support Sforza's stance and agreed on negotiating with Kemal. As the Italian Minister wrote to Giolitti, the British Premier was "intoxicated" against Constantine and "for reasons of protestant psychology was also against every attenuation of the Turkish Treaty."<sup>606</sup> Sforza replied that he would endorse every preventative measure against the Greek sovereign, but "it would be difficult to him to go against the will of people."<sup>607</sup>

In the British capital, the Allies did not agree on the terms of the revision of the Treaty of Sevres and decided to postpone the discussion. Sforza, during the proceedings highlighted the need of talking with Kemal and his representatives. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, he argued that the Allied policy was doing nothing but creating conditions for an alliance between the Turks and Russians, as Krassin had told him.<sup>608</sup> The French representative Berthelot supported that argument, but Lloyd George was not worried about that. The main concern of the English Prime Minister was the Greek political situation and a possible return of King Constantine, which was not acceptable.

The final resolution was a joint declaration which was addressed to Athens. In the document, the Allies stated their freedom of action if Constantine returned.<sup>609</sup> They also convened on waiting for the decision of the Greek Government to decide the necessary actions in order to establish

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<sup>605</sup> Sforza to Giolitti, London, November 29, 1920, in ACS, CS, b. 1, f. 2.

<sup>606</sup> Sforza to Giolitti, London, December 1, 1920, in ACS, CS, b. 1, f. 2.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>608</sup> *British Documents on Foreign Policy (BDFP)*, First Series, v. VIII, *Notes of a Conference*, December 3, 1920, n. 98, 847.

<sup>609</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 270.

a lasting peace in the Near East. Such a statement aimed to “open the path for a revision of the Treaty, which was the main goal,” in Sforza’s view. Indeed, the Minister’s goal was exactly a change of Sèvres’ dispositions.<sup>610</sup>

In the meantime, in London, Sforza negotiated the commercial agreement with Krassin. As Minister, Sforza had not abandoned the policy of the previous Government, but delayed the closure of the entente in order to wait for London’s decision on Moscow. By the end of the year, Sforza was ready to sign the deal, at the same time as the British. Instead, Krassin refused to sign a pact that was the exact copy of the English one. The Soviets were interested in having political recognition from Italy, so that they would create a breach in the Western Alliance.<sup>611</sup> Obviously, the Russians could count on the Italian lack of resources, but it is true that Sforza was trying to follow a differentiation strategy. At that time, Italy was largely dependent on Great Britain in terms of coal imports, and Sforza’s policy of “penetration to the East” has to be framed in this situation.<sup>612</sup>

British exporters were not enthusiastic about that strategy. Lloyd George was clear in expressing his disappointment over a lunch with Sforza in Paris, during an Allied Conference in January 1921.<sup>613</sup> To further complicate the Anglo-Italian relations was the decision to remove Imperiali from his office. The latter was replaced by Giacomo De Martino who was well known for being Germanophile and close to Tittoni; indeed, the ex-Minister had suggested the Ambassador as a Foreign Minister to Giolitti.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> ACS, CS, b. 1, f. 2, Sforza to the Italian Embassy in Constantinople and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London, December 3, 1920.

<sup>611</sup> Petracchi, *La Russia rivoluzionaria*, 191-94.

<sup>612</sup> *Weekly Report of the Commercial Attaché*, Rome, December 10, 1920, in National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Embassy Files (EF), Italy 1920, v. 324.

<sup>613</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, 63.

<sup>614</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 274-81; Imperiali, *Diario*, 61-62.

Once again, the Italian Foreign Affairs Minister had to defend his actions. Sforza declared that the Italian Government was not interested in an isolated action in the Near East, but the goal consisted in creating “a close entente with England.”<sup>615</sup> The Executive hoped for the creation of an independent and vital Turkey where it was possible to expand Italian trade and firms. Rome was ready to use “all its influence” to reach peace as soon as possible.<sup>616</sup> Indeed, in January Rome had also hosted a Congress of the nationalist Turks, and the Minister offered his mediation with the Government of Angora.<sup>617</sup> Lloyd George ironically declined the offer, but all the same, Sforza authorized informal contacts with Mustafa Kemal in order to find a bilateral entente. The Italian Minister also invited the Turkish leader to participate at the Conference of London, on his own initiative.<sup>618</sup>

The eminent Turkish personalities who gathered in Rome had adopted a resolution which included a program of revision of the Treaty of Sèvres. The assembly from the Italian capital declared that “liberty must be given to [the Turkish State] to live and act” as it had been reduced to its “ethnographical limits.” They demanded “the expulsion of the Greeks from Thrace and Asia Minor [...], but also the abolition of the zone of economic influence, of system of control, of the policing of Straits, and of capitulations.”<sup>619</sup> Considering these premises, Sforza’s policy seems impracticable. He did not understand why the British Government refused to receive the Turkish delegation in February during the Conference of

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<sup>615</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, January 29, 1921, 63.

<sup>616</sup> Sforza, *Discorsi Parlamentari*, “Sull’interrogazione relativa ai lavori e ai risultati della Conferenza interalleata di Parigi,” Senato del Regno, February 7, 1921, 103.

<sup>617</sup> Grassi, *Atatürk*, 217.

<sup>618</sup> Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 346-47.

<sup>619</sup> Johnson to the Secretary of State, Rome, February 3, 1921, in NARA, EF, Italy, v. 331.

London— which “should have opened the eyes of the most confident,”<sup>620</sup> as the Italian Minister writes.

The results, in fact, were not satisfying. The British Government did not believe in the Italian project of a Mediterranean Entente and, above all, had no confidence in Sforza. The Foreign Office was informed about secret transactions going on in Rome in which members of the Angora Government were purchasing “arms, ammunitions, & c.”<sup>621</sup> The American Embassy also observed the presence of an “unofficial Legation of the Angora Government at Rome, located at *Piazza dell’Esquilino*.” According to Washington officials, this Legation was mainly focused on propagandistic activities, and the members of the staff were correspondents for Constantinople newspapers or former Turkish officials in “close relations” with the Italian Government.<sup>622</sup>

It is stated by the informant that the Kemalist party is at present cooperating with the Italia Foreign Office at the Conference in London. The support of the Italian Government has been gained by concessions in Asia Minor and it has made several political sales of manufactured goods to the Angora Government. However, the Kemalist here seem to believe that it would be to their interests to have a radical revolution in Italy, rather than to rely on the good faith of the present Government. They feel that once this Government is strong. It will willingly throw over the Turkish nationalists and keep the concessions which were given it as the price of its support. However, there is no doubt that for the present, although puzzled by the obscure political situation in Italy, the Kemalists are not intriguing against the Giolitti

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<sup>620</sup> Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, 359.

<sup>621</sup> BDFP, First Series, v. XVII, Sir E. Crowe to the Italian Ambassador, Foreign Office, March 18, 1921.

<sup>622</sup> Carter to the American Ambassador, Rome, March 10, 1921, 1, in NARA, EF, Italy, v. 331.

Government, and would prefer to have it remain in power, but only as a weak and precarious Government on which they can bring pressure.<sup>623</sup>

The American information was correct. Sforza signed an agreement with Bekir, chief of the Turkish delegation at the Conference of London which was held from February 21<sup>st</sup> to March 12<sup>th</sup>. Indeed, the Turkish and the German Question were the main topics of the reunion. With regard to the latter, the impossibility to reach an agreement with the Germans on the reparations, on March 5<sup>th</sup>, provoked the decision to occupy the Ruhr river ports of Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Ruhrort. Sforza openly revealed his opposition to the military action, but did not take any concrete action: Italian Government was against severe measures in Germany, but Sforza did not want to endanger the friendly relations with France.<sup>624</sup> Moreover, the resolution taken by the Conference also established the Allied control of the the Rhenish customs offices and a levy on German exports of 50 percent. So, there was an economic interest to protect, and Sforza requested – and obtained, an Italian representative in the Allied Rhineland Commission, in which Rome had not been represented until that moment.<sup>625</sup> Finally, Sforza had already announced to Lloyd George that Italy would support no British action in Germany as long as it did not obtain any privilege in the Mediterranean.<sup>626</sup> As a consequence, on March 8<sup>th</sup> the Allies occupied the three German cities without the Italian support and on March 13<sup>th</sup>, Sforza signed the agreement with the Turks. The entente established the principles of the Italo-Turkish cooperation in the zones that the Tripartite Agreement assigned to Italy. There was also an additional

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<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>624</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 326.

<sup>625</sup> Sforza, *Discorsi Parlamentari*, 109.

<sup>626</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 327.

disposition with which the Italian Government committed themselves to support all the Nationalists requests related to the Treaty of Sèvres and to the situations in Thrace and Smyrna.<sup>627</sup>

The French Government also reached a compromise with the Turks. When Lloyd George and Lord Curzon discovered the agreements, they immediately asked for the two texts. Sforza, as usual, played for time. The Italian Minister communicated to the British Ambassador in Rome all the provisions except the last one, mentioning the Italian support for the Turkish aspirations of revisionism.<sup>628</sup> The Chief of the Consulta, moreover, did not produce a written copy because of “parliamentary reasons.” He said that “in no way” the entente constituted a “real and special international pact.”<sup>629</sup> In Sforza’s view, it was a guarantee of the privileges already recognized by the Tripartite Agreement. The Italian Minister was not thinking to anything more. However, Sforza realized that the Turks could make more requests once they obtained the Greek defeat.<sup>630</sup>

Sforza did not have to wait too long to understand that the compromise with Kemal was impossible. By the end of May, the Italian troops had to start the withdrawal from the Anatolian region because of the “predominance of fanatic elements.”<sup>631</sup> However, if his real goal was a Mediterranean Entente, the mistake would consist in annoying the Foreign Office. The March agreement marked the relations with Great Britain and opened a crisis difficult to recover. Another example of this policy was the attitude he had towards Afghanistan. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, he received a delegation from Kabul with the purpose of establishing economic and political

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<sup>627</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 322 et seq.; Grassi, *Atatürk*, 243.

<sup>628</sup> BDFP, First Series, v. XVII, Buchanan to Earl Curzon, Foreign Office, March 24, 1921.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>630</sup> Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 350.

<sup>631</sup> L. Micheletta, “Un’impresa inutile e dispendiosa: occupazione italiana dell’Anatolia (1919-1922),” in *Italia Contemporanea*, 2009, 555-72: 565-67.

relations. The agreements were signed on June 3<sup>rd</sup>: the first provided that an Italian commercial mission would be sent to Afghanistan to study a formula of economic and technical cooperation; the second established diplomatic relations between the two countries with the exchange of permanent political delegations.<sup>632</sup>

During those same days, the Government entered into a political crisis which would determine the end of Sforza's experience at the Consulta. The Foreign Affairs Minister and the Prime Minister were attacked by the nationalists when the secret disposal of Porto Baros came out. The critics were strong because of their "pliant" policies. Thus, the Government was compelled to resign, and Ivanoe Bonomi was appointed as the new Prime Minister. The latter, as Minister of War in the previous Cabinet, was one of the negotiators of the Treaty of Rapallo. Bonomi would have been favorable towards confirming Sforza at the Consulta, but the diplomat refused. The ex-Foreign Minister did not consider his confirmation appropriate, but someone else should follow his foreign policy's guidelines.

#### 4.VI. SFORZA, THE PARIS EMBASSY AND THE FAREWELL

Bonomi appointed Pietro Tomasi Della Torretta as Foreign Affairs Minister. When the Prime Minister asked Sforza's opinion, the diplomat replied that Della Torretta was a "honest" man. He was not brilliant but he could be good, if Bonomi led the diplomatic action and prevented the nationalist

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<sup>632</sup> L. Monzali, *Un re afghano in esilio a Roma: Amanullah e l'Afghanistan nella politica estera italiana, 1919-1943* (Le Lettere, Firenze: 2012), 17. See also P. Quaroni, *Il mondo di un ambasciatore* (Ferro, Milano: 1965), 135-36.

influence on himself.<sup>633</sup> Della Torretta, in Sforza's view, could be only an "executor."<sup>634</sup> Despite his skepticism, in September the diplomat recognized that the Government was following his foreign policy. This was positive since, as he wrote to Albertini, his policy was a "historical imperative."<sup>635</sup>

Nevertheless, Sforza was left apart for few months. He was an observer until October when rumors about his possible appointment as Italian delegate at the Washington Naval Conference came out. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Sforza met Bonomi who confirmed that the diplomat was the most suitable person for that role.<sup>636</sup> The problem was represented by the many adverse voices to his name. Considering those voices, Sforza wrote to Della Torretta and informed the Minister that he would be available to go to the United States and represent his Country.<sup>637</sup> He could boast a full knowledge of the American diplomatic method and of previous agreements, plus a good reputation in the Far East, since the Conference would deal with the security of the Pacific area.<sup>638</sup> Those skills were not enough for his appointment, and he had to resign himself to accept his exclusion from the diplomatic life, at least until December.

After being a Minister, Sforza represented a burning issue for the new Government. It was necessary to find an acceptable office for his rank that meant: Ambassador in France or Great Britain, first delegate of an important international mission, or Minister, again. Clearly, Sforza aimed to come back to the Consulta: he kept in touch with everyone, above all with Giolitti. Days before Christmas, Sforza met the Prime Minister. Bonomi hinted at the possibility of Sforza's appointment as Ambassador in Paris.

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<sup>633</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, July 25, 1921, 67.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, August 20, 1921, 67.

<sup>635</sup> LAE, Sforza to Albertini, Forte de' Marmi, September 19, 1921, 1493.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, September 30 and October 2, 1921, 68-69.

<sup>637</sup> LAE, Emanuel to Albertini, Roma, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1921, 1301-2.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*

The bilateral relations between Italy and France were in a difficult moment. Della Torretta's behavior, influenced by the nationalist pressure, jeopardized the reconciliation with the neighboring Ally. By the end of the year, the atmosphere was charged to the point that Bonomi was worried about the isolation of Rome. In October, the French government had denounced the commercial agreement provoking a strong propagandistic campaign in Italy. In November, Millerand announced a decree which could modify the regime of nationality in Tunisia. To complicate the situation, a diplomatic incident occurred during the Conference of Washington between Briand, the French Prime Minister, and Schanzer, the first Italian delegate.<sup>639</sup>

Despite his initial reluctance, Sforza accepted the new appointment. He would have preferred to be appointed in London, but Paris would be a diversion from his main political objective of returning to the Consulta.<sup>640</sup> Seeing the domestic political crisis, it was better to be away from Rome and avoid to being called as a Minister in one of those Governments "which last six months."<sup>641</sup> Paris represented a good placement for waiting for the formation of a more stable Executive where, eventually, he could come back as Minister.<sup>642</sup> When he was officially appointed as Ambassador in Paris on January 29<sup>th</sup>, Barrère expressed his appreciation for the Italian choice. The French Ambassador wrote to Poincaré, Foreign Affairs Minister, that Sforza had represented the only exception among the Italian Ministers in the postwar years, mainly oriented towards the English partnership. Sforza

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<sup>639</sup> See Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 561-64; Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 359-65.

<sup>640</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 596.

<sup>641</sup> LAE, Emanuel to Albertini, Roma, January 18, 1922, 1545.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*

“played the role of mediator between the English and the French point of view.”<sup>643</sup>

Barrère did not know that Sforza had been the author of the letter with which Nitti had requested the Ambassador’s recall to the French government in the spring of 1920.<sup>644</sup> The French diplomat knew that the former Minister had been supportive of Paris’ policies, above all towards Germany.<sup>645</sup> For instance, in 1921 Sforza entered into a major dispute with the Foreign Office for the Question of Upper Silesia where on March 20<sup>th</sup> – as the Treaty of Versailles established, people voted to choose the State, between Germany and Poland, which would control the territory. The importance of the area laid in the presence of important coal deposits. Until that moment, the principle, which had inspired the Anglo-Italian concordant action, was the exclusion of the division of the industrial area. This would be not economically viable, but Sforza completely changed the Italian approach. He made a new proposal – the so-called Sforza line, which envisaged the division of the region according to the principle of nationality.<sup>646</sup> As a result, Upper Silesia would be divided, and Poland would obtain the richest part. After all, as he wrote to Albertini in the spring of 1920, the Allies should avoid the rearmament of Berlin. Moreover, Italy could easily reach a commercial agreement with Warsaw which was annoyed with the French yoke.<sup>647</sup>

Sforza’s policy was Francophile as long as it was convenient to the Italian interest, which, in his opinion, consisted in the “penetration of the East” and in finding a solution for the lack of resources. In this context, the opening of

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<sup>643</sup> DDF, 1922, Tome I, Barrère to Poincaré, Rome, January 20, 1922.

<sup>644</sup> Nitti, *Scritti Politici*, 80-83.

<sup>645</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 295-99.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, 343-50.

<sup>647</sup> LAE, Sforza to Albertini, Roma April 14, 1920, 1398-97.

new commercial channels was crucial. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1922 Sforza arrived in Paris having this design in his mind. His arrival in France coincided with the establishment of a new Government in Rome. The Prime Minister was Luigi Facta – who belonged to Giolitti’s group. Sforza did not think highly of his ex-colleague. His Cabinet represented just a transition’s moment. According to the diplomat, Facta was chosen because “the great leaders agreed on reserving themselves for a future Executive; in this case, Facta was appointed to pave the way for a new Giolitti’s Government.”<sup>648</sup>

The Foreign Affairs Minister, Carlo Schanzer, was also a member of the group which was close to the old Italian statesman. The new Chief of the Consulta started his career as a civil servant and entered the political career siding Giolitti. He had also been Minister of Finance in the Government led by Nitti, who had already suggested the name of Schanzer to Bonomi.<sup>649</sup> According to Sforza, that would be enough to know that Schanzer was an “awful choice.”<sup>650</sup> In 1914, the new Minister had supported the choice of neutrality and, during the Washington Conference, had run into the diplomatic incident with Briand. Even if in the United States he had achieved the important result of the naval equality between Paris and Rome, the new Foreign Minister encountered major critics abroad and in Italy.

Paris was concerned about the political changes in Rome. The Ottoman Question and the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres were still the main issues when the Sforza arrived in the French Capital.<sup>651</sup> In the first days of March, during a meeting with Millerand, Schanzer had made clear that the Italian

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<sup>648</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 138.

<sup>649</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, May 22, 1921, 64.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>651</sup> M. R. Mouton, “L’Italie et le mandat français en Syrie,” in *La Francia e l’Italia negli anni Venti: Tra politica e cultura*, edited by E. Decleva and P. Milza, (SPAI, Milano: 1996), 82-102.

cooperation in the pacification of the Near East depended on two conditions: the confirmation of the Tripartite Agreement's legitimacy; and the inclusion into the new Treaty of financial clauses which could easily activate the Tripartite's stipulation. The Allies should not yield the control of the concessions to the Turkish Government. If that happened, Italy would have to deal with a new and more independent Turkey which offered no guarantee for Italian economic penetration. Indeed, in the Italian strategy, the Tripartite represented an important tool to protect the balance of power in the Mediterranean.<sup>652</sup>

The Italian Minister in that occasion did not connect the Agreement with the French and British mandates in the ex-Ottoman territories, but the relation was implicit and would become definite in a short time, provoking Sforza's embarrassment. The diplomat was not at ease with Schanzer who was unable to have any international design.<sup>653</sup> In April, Sforza wrote in his diary that the Minister wanted him to be anti-French for the only reason that Francophobia was the trend of the moment in Italy.<sup>654</sup> The disagreement between the two men became clearer in London on the eve of the opening of the XIX League of Nations' Council. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, Sforza had to inform the Quai d'Orsay that the Italian Foreign Minister had not enough time to study the project of the Syrian mandate and asked for a delay of the reunion. The Italian Ambassador, however, added that his Government adopted that attitude because Turkey had not approved the Tripartite Agreement yet. The Tripartite should secure, for his country, a counterweight to the Allies' mandates.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 604-05.

<sup>653</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, April 6, 1922, 73.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.* See also, Micheletta, *Italia e Gran Bretagna*, 596-97; Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 367.

<sup>655</sup> Mouton, "L'Italie et le mandat français en Syrie," 88-89.

According to the French Minister Poincaré, such a stance was unacceptable. Indeed, the deal had not been recognized by the Turks because it was *res inter alios acta*, but the Allies had already agreed on considering the Entente effective among them.<sup>656</sup> Italy had a definitive guarantee and a complete satisfaction. France could not accept that the mandates were connected to the Tripartite. The mandates could not depend on a condition which had been already fulfilled. Sforza agreed with the French Minister and did not reply.<sup>657</sup>

The question of the mandates marked an irreparable fracture between the Ambassador and the Minister – a “miserable” person, in Sforza’s view.<sup>658</sup> However, the Embassy’s staff seemed to have its hands tied. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, the Italian Chargé d’affaires, Carlo Galli, tried to justify the Italian request of opening new negotiations with the difficult Italian domestic situation.<sup>659</sup> The press had not stopped to attack the Allies behaviors. As Galli said, the Peace Conference’s procedures were still bright in the memories of Italian people. The Adriatic Question, the mandates and the Greek expedition of Smyrna were considered as acts against Rome.<sup>660</sup> So that, Schanzer wanted to be able to show the Parliament an agreement which secured the national interests. “*Tout à fait intolérable*,” according to Poincaré and his official, who told Galli that Sforza would be able to find a compromise with the French Foreign Minister and to persuade the Consulta to respect the previous agreements.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> DDF, 1922, Tome II, Poincaré to de Saint-Aulaire, Paris, July 17, 1922, 39, 56-57.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>658</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, July 9, 1922, 73.

<sup>659</sup> DDF, 1922, Tome II, Note, “Visite du Ministre d’Italie à M. De Peretti,” Paris, July 21, 1922, 54, 74-77: 74.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

Though, it has to be mentioned: Italy was noticeably experiencing a critical time. In July, the Italian workers called for a new general strike; in the meantime, conversations for the formation of a new Cabinet were ongoing in Rome. Schanzer's concerns were comprehensible because on July 19<sup>th</sup> the Government had been defeated in the Chamber. Sforza followed the national events and was concerned about the "social disorder."<sup>662</sup> He considered the Prime Minister to be unable to handle the situation. A simple Cabinet reshuffle meant the "death" of the liberal system, and for this reason, the Ambassador solicited Giolitti to form a new Government.<sup>663</sup> His name was enough to represent the "passage to a broader atmosphere." That meant a Government able to obtain the support of the "honest fascists" and the socialists.<sup>664</sup> But the King decided not to replace Facta and to make only make minor revisions in the Executive team because it was necessary to reestablish the order in the Country.<sup>665</sup> The authorities were scared of a possible revolution, and on August 1<sup>st</sup> a new parliamentary vote of confidence confirmed Facta, with Schanzer as Foreign Minister. Even if the strike was not a success, it represented the opportunity for the fascists to occupy the city halls and other meeting places during the month of August.

As a matter of fact, no one had understood what the fascism really meant and, between 1921 and 1922, Mussolini was able to transform the movement in a party. The Government could barely stabilize the situation and Mussolini was considered as a representative to speak with for the formation of a new Cabinet able to control the country.<sup>666</sup> Those political

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<sup>662</sup> Sforza to Giolitti, Rome, July 3, 1922, in ACS, GP, *Fondo Cavour*, b. 19, f. 49.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>665</sup> Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia*, 366-69.

<sup>666</sup> R. De Felice, *Mussolini: Il fascista*, v. I: *La conquista del potere, 1921-1925* (Einaudi, Torino: 1996), 281-88: 286.

conversations were still ongoing when Sforza was in Italy for his vacation on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. He spent almost a month in the countryside, but he also met Giolitti.<sup>667</sup> Facing the precarious social and political conditions, Sforza also had contacts with Mussolini.<sup>668</sup> The Ambassador aimed to dissuade the fascist leader from organizing fascism in the Italian colonies in France. Plus, Sforza was worried about the effects fascism could have in southern Italy.<sup>669</sup> Informing Giolitti about the conversation, Sforza explained that in the North fascism had “useful” effects because “historical and moral elements” controlled it. By contrast, in the South “*brigantaggio*” (i.e., banditry) could spread and provoke a war to extirpate it. The result could be the formation of a fascist cabinet or, as alternative, a Giolitti’s Cabinet.<sup>670</sup> As regards France, Mussolini relied on Sforza to persuade his agent not to act unwisely. The Ambassador, however, “somehow” regretted the Mussolini’s “limited” authority. Both of them shared the criticism of the “weak” action carried out by Schanzer with regard to Fiume, a topic on which the two agreed.<sup>671</sup>

The Ambassador went back to Paris on September 17<sup>th</sup>, and after few days he received a telegram announcing the death of his father, so he was back in Italy on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>672</sup> In the meantime, there was an ongoing Congress of the Socialist Party in Rome. The political crisis – which had been formally solved in August, had not ended yet. The result of the Congress was the fracture of the Party, so that the Right wing formed the “*Partito Socialista Unitario*.” The latter could count 70 members of the

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<sup>667</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, August 22-23, 1922, 73. See also, Sforza to the Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, July 12, 1922, in ASD, Fondo Personale, s. VII “Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati,” Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

<sup>668</sup> Sforza to Giolitti, Milan, September 16, 1922 in Mola, Ricci, *Il carteggio*, v. 2, 854. See also G. Giordano, *Carlo Sforza: La politica (1922-1952)* (Franco Angeli, Milano: 1992), 43-4.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>672</sup> Sforza to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, October 2, 1922, in ASD, Fondo Personale, s. VII “Diplomatici e Consoli Cessati,” Carlo Sforza, p. S10.

Chamber who were ready to support a new Government with the Democrats and the Popular Party.<sup>673</sup> During those days Mussolini also had meetings with Giolitti and Nitti. The general conviction was that a broadly based Government would be formed. Many democrats and liberals believed that Fascism could be regimented in a constitutionalizing process. According to those political circles, the crisis could be solved by the formation of a new Government which would be led by a liberal leader and would include members of the fascist party. Indeed, the fascist leader demanded six Ministries and new elections.<sup>674</sup>

The Ambassador also thought that if a new Cabinet was formed, he would be appointed as Foreign Affairs Minister.<sup>675</sup> In his opinion, Albertini was the only other prominent person who could hold that office.<sup>676</sup> In the meantime, the Ottoman Question was still the priority of Sforza's office. Indeed, the Allies signed on October 11<sup>th</sup> the **Armistice of Mudanya**, which ended the war between Turkey and Greece. The Entente's Powers were preparing for the Conference which needed to discuss the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres. Sforza was ready to go to the Conference as the first Italian delegate, but the diplomat also asked for Albertini's willingness to go.<sup>677</sup> The request could depend on the fact that he believed himself to be appointed as future Minister.

Sforza would lose his expectations in few days. According to the diplomat's memoirs, in the days which came before the well-known "*Marcia su Roma*," he received a visit from Gustavo Nesti, director of the

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<sup>673</sup> Salvemini, *Le origini del fascismo in Italia*, 372. On the political negotiations on going in Rome see also, De Felice, *Mussolini: Il fascista*, v. I, 375-87; F. Lefebvre D'Ovidio, *L'Italia e il sistema internazionale: dalla formazione del Governo Mussolini alla Grande Depressione (1922-1929)*, v. I, (Edizioni di storia e letteratura, Roma: 2016), 156 *et seq.*

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, 379-81.

<sup>675</sup> LAE, Sforza to Albertini, Paris, October [10], 1922, 1587-88.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, 1588.

Italian press agency Stefani. Nesti told the Ambassador about Mussolini's regret for the impossibility to appoint the diplomat as Foreign Minister in the Cabinet which the fascist leader "was sure to lead."<sup>678</sup> Nesti offered the diplomat the opportunity to lead the Italian delegation at the Conference of Lousanne and negotiate as a "real plenipotentiary," the peace Treaty with Turkey and the Allies. Sforza could also keep the Embassy in Paris.<sup>679</sup>

Sforza observed the events of October 28<sup>th</sup> and of the following days from his office in Paris, and on October 31<sup>st</sup>, he resigned as soon as he received the telegram announcing the appointment of Mussolini as President of the new Government. Referring to a speech the fascist leader had delivered at the Theatre San Carlo di Napoli on October 24<sup>th</sup>, Sforza argued that in order to adopt "a foreign policy which is a policy, and not just a sum of feelings and resentments, it is necessary to assign the most delicate places to men who agree with the new Government's view."<sup>680</sup> The diplomat did not leave any chance of negotiation as his staff suggested: to be sure that the King would not insist on him to retire his resignation, the Ambassador sent his letter of resignation *en clair*. The news immediately spread out.<sup>681</sup> Mussolini tried to persuade Sforza not to leave his office; in fact, the new Government had not explained their foreign policy guidelines yet.<sup>682</sup>

Contarini and the Embassy's staff were "surprised" by the ex-Minister's decision.<sup>683</sup> In particular, the Foreign General Secretary tried to change the Ambassador's position. Contarini suggested waiting for the explanation of

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<sup>678</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 140.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>680</sup> DDI, s. VII, v. I, Sforza to Mussolini, Paris, October 31, 1922; the message is in note to Contarini's telegram to Sforza, Rome (same date), n. 2, 1. See also, Giordano, *La politica*, 44-57; De Felice, *Mussolini: il fascista*, v. I, 480; Bucarelli, "Manicomio jugoslavo," 486-87; Lefebvre D'Ovidio, *L'Italia e il sistema internazionale*, 158-61.

<sup>681</sup> Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 141.

<sup>682</sup> DDI, s. VII, v. I,

<sup>683</sup> DDI, s. VII, v. I, Contarini to Sforza, Rome, October 31, 1922, n. 2, 1. See also, Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 367-70.

the new Government' foreign policy. The moment, indeed, would require responsibility to overcome the "severe crisis" which the Country was experiencing.<sup>684</sup> For this reason, all the responsible men should "facilitate the formation of the Government with a realistic program in order to protect the national interest." To conclude, the abandonment of the Cabinet was "a mistake" because other forces were ready to push Mussolini in an opposite direction."<sup>685</sup>

Contarini's attempt was fated to fail. Sforza explained the reasons of his decision in a private letter addressed to Giolitti.<sup>686</sup> In the first place, the Ambassador did not want to create a "question of self-esteem." In the second place, he did not want to damage the Country's international relations. Finally, he sent the letter *en clair* to demonstrate that he was determined in leaving his office.<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> DDI, s. VII, v. I, Contarini to Sforza, Rome, October 31, 1922, n. 2, 1.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>686</sup> Sforza to Giolitti, Paris, November 1, 1922, in Mola, Ricci, *Il carteggio*, v. 2, 883.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conclusions

Sforza, as a Foreign Minister of Giolitti, belonged to the Italian Liberal Party, according to the Foreign Office.<sup>688</sup> He was not just a diplomat but also a politician.<sup>689</sup> In October 1922, Sforza was among those who had supported the idea of a Government including different parties, and he also believed in the “honest fascists.”<sup>690</sup> In his memoirs, the ex-Minister writes that his relationship with Mussolini was positive.<sup>691</sup> The disappointment came from the presence of personalities such as Federzoni, who was appointed Minister of the Colonies. The latter belonged to the Nationalist Party and had strongly criticized Giolitti-Sforza’s policy, in particular the Treaty of Rapallo.<sup>692</sup> When Sforza went to Rome and had an hour of conversation with Mussolini on November 6<sup>th</sup>, Federzoni also arrived at the Consulta.<sup>693</sup> In the diplomat’s opinion, the new Minister did not want him to go back to Paris. Instead, the Ambassador would be in the French capital city until November 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>694</sup> Before leaving, he said to his chargé d’affaires, Carlo Galli, that the new Government would last only three months. As a consequence, the Ambassador thought he would be recalled as Prime Minister.<sup>695</sup>

Sforza’s resignation was functional to his return as Chief of the Executive. So that, the diplomat could complete his foreign policy’s design. On June 13, 1922, in a report addressed to Rome, Sforza wrote that he had

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<sup>688</sup> Foreign Office, *Memorandum: “Sforza,”* November 30, 1943, in National Archives, London (NAL), FO 371/43899.

<sup>689</sup> Lefebvre D’Ovidio, *L’Italia e il sistema internazionale*, 231.

<sup>690</sup> See p. 178.

<sup>691</sup> Sforza, *L’Italia dal 1914 al 1944*, 159.

<sup>692</sup> See p. 162-63.

<sup>693</sup> Sforza, *Diario*, November 6, 1922, 74.

<sup>694</sup> See also, *Verbale della prima riunione del governo Mussolini*, November 1, 1922, in De Felice, *Mussolini: Il fascista*, v. I, 768-72: 770.

<sup>695</sup> Sommella, *Un console in trincea*, 373.

strongly opposed the theory which considered the epilogue of the First World War as major Italian defeat.<sup>696</sup> Italy had come out of the War as a “Mediterranean Power,” but it was just a formal result which needed to be preserved. Obviously, France and Great Britain had been able to realize the aspirations they had before the conflict flared up. They obtained new territories which also meant a growth in financial responsibilities.<sup>697</sup> Taking care for the mandates in the Near East was an expense Italy could not afford because of the economic crisis which struck the country. Plus, Sforza was not sure that such an effort would have been enough to maintain the control on the Arab countries, which were on the way of a complete independence.<sup>698</sup>

Considering the Italian situation, Rome could not be able to impose its authority in a region such Anatolia. The only wise decision to make was an action aimed towards being accepted as an external influence over the Angora Government. This strategy would have allowed the commercial and industrial penetration in the Near East. It would also be an important political tool to use in the Arab world.<sup>699</sup> Of course, the Allies would oppose their reasons against this policy, but in Sforza’s view, those disputes always ended in nothing but words. So that, there was no reason to worry about protests and threats. Sforza believed that the strength of a country did not lie in the extension of territorial possessions, above all with regard to Italy. As a realist, he thought that Rome could only follow a policy of influence, because it did not own enough resources.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> Sforza to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 13, 1922, in ACS, CS, b. 3, f. 6.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Sforza belonged to a post-Crispi diplomatic generation. He entered the career in 1896 when Italy had been shocked by the defeat of Adua. As a young official, Sforza worked many years in Paris with Tornielli in the years of the Italo-French reconciliation. He understood that a positive relation with France was as crucial for the Italian security as the cooperation with Great Britain. His conversation of Hyde Park with San Giuliano should have left a sign in the young diplomat, who made of the commercial penetration of the East his main goal.

Nevertheless, he did not oppose the Triple Alliance as long as it was a tool to maintain the European peace. Considering this context, the experience of Algeciras with Visconti Venosta held a tremendous importance to the young diplomat, who could see the premises of the war in those days. The old statesman, who had worked with Mazzini and Cavour, taught him how to maintain an equidistant behavior from the extreme Franco-German rivalries. Sforza looked at him as a mentor. It was not a coincidence that in 1922 Barrère stated that Sforza had been the only postwar Minister committed in the mediation between the British and French interests. From Visconti Venosta – and Giorgini's accounts, Sforza also inherited Mazzini's idea of the inevitability of the dissolution of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire and Cavour's tradition of European equilibrium.<sup>701</sup> According to this tradition, Italy's major interest lied in the opposition to the creation of any major force in the Balkans and in the Mediterranean and, after the First World War, the reconstruction of such balance of power was a major issue for the "new Europe."<sup>702</sup> As a consequence, the creation of the Little Entente was a sort of wall against a new Russian or German expansion; for this reason, Italy had to support this

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<sup>701</sup> Petracchi, "Carlo Sforza e il mondo sovietico," 384.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*

alliance.<sup>703</sup> Part of this tradition was also the awareness of the Italian limits: Italy was a “young” country with huge social, financial and military problems which made the Mediterranean cohabitation with Great Britain and France extremely difficult, but essential because anchored in the liberal values. However, none of the heirs of the *Risorgimento* would have endorsed a complete renunciation of the Italian role as a Great Power.<sup>704</sup>

In foreign politics, Cavour’s tradition represented a special authority for the prestige that came from a success of exceptional dimensions, comparatively obtained with minimal costs. Cavour’s legacy remained in the Italian diplomacy and turned into a special skill of focusing on the right combination of forces in which the Italian interests could be framed.<sup>705</sup> That meant to choose the diplomatic method rather than war. In 1914 Sforza had recommended San Giuliano to maintain the neutrality. Sforza, as Giolitti and many other Italian prominent figures, thought the *terre irredente* could be obtained by negotiations. The diplomat could not imagine the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But, it is true that he was shocked by the news of the German attack on Belgium, which was his wife’s country. Moreover, Sforza’s family had a close relation with the Belgian Monarchy, which he also remained in touch with during the exile’s years.<sup>706</sup>

That was not enough to keep the British trust in the post-war period. The Allies saw those as Giolitti who had supported the neutrality as antagonists. As a High Commissioner in Turkey, Sforza endorsed the nationalist movement. When in 1943 the diplomat demanded clearance to go back to Italy, the Foreign Office would remember everything. According to the

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<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> R. Romeo, *Cavour e il suo tempo, 1854-1861*, v. 3 (Laterza, Roma-Bara: 2012), 962-63.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>706</sup> Foreign Office, *Memorandum: “Sforza,”* November 30, 1943.

British officials, Sforza's personality could be defined in the following terms:

A clever man, whose astonishing vanity entirely warped his judgement. On three separate occasions Sforza behaved more foolishly than even a dull man may.

1. When he gave to Sir George Buchanan the text of the Italo-Turkish agreement which he arranged in London, with an essential clause omitted.
2. When he lied to the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee regarding the cession of Porto Baros to Yugoslavia, and committed the additional blunder of saying to a group of angry critics: "What is Porto Baros? Four syllables."
3. When he telegraphed *en clair* from Paris offering his resignation to Signor Mussolini and saying why.

Sforza has a reputation for gallantry, and for susceptibility.<sup>707</sup>

On these premises, even if Mussolini's Government had closed his experience in few months, as Sforza had originally thought, his return would have been difficult because Italy needed to reach a Mediterranean Entente. Indeed, Mussolini did not insist in having him as Ambassador or Italian delegate at the Conference of Lusanne for the revision of the Turkish Treaty.<sup>708</sup> Sforza had acted according to his experience, but the world after the war was something completely different, where there was no space for the "zones of influence." Sforza should have understood it, and, probably, somehow he did. In April 1928, in the introduction of his *Diplomatic Europe*

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<sup>707</sup> Foreign Office, *Count Carlo Sforza*, October 1, 1943, in NAL, PREM 3/243/5.

<sup>708</sup> Lefebvre D'Ovidio, *L'Italia e il sistema internazionale*, 160.

since the Treaty of Versailles, Carlo Sforza quotes Napoléon's last message to his son:

The aim of all my son's efforts should be, to rule by peace. For the future there is only one way to convince Europe, and that is, through reason. My son should be a man of new ideas... the new idea is, to reunite Europe in the bonds of an indissoluble federation. It is in this direction that Europe is advancing. To endeavor to retard progress would be a waste of strength. It is useless to struggle against the inevitable. I cut the Gordian Knot of the nations; now it must be united.<sup>709</sup>

In 1928 Sforza had already started working at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and had already published several papers on Versailles and its aftermath. He wrote that the First World War should have been "the culminating proof that [they] had come to the end of a Europe thinking of being able to live outside some more or less loose federal bonds."<sup>710</sup> In 1920 Sforza was not thinking about a European Federation, according to the documents, but for sure Sforza believed in the necessity of avoiding another war. His action focused on resolving every dispute by negotiations. For instance, the Treaty of Rapallo was a compromise which aimed for solving the Adriatic Question in the broader political scenario of the European stability. The agreement determined the Eastern border but, also, established the basis for an economic cooperation that went beyond that border. It represented an attempt to protect a national interest, which consisted in: the obtainment of the national boundaries, the maintenance of peace, and economic development. But, Italy also committed in the

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<sup>709</sup> Sforza, *Diplomatic Europe*, 128.

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*

prevention of a Habsburg's restoration. Sforza believed that an Italian interest should be treated as an international – or European, interest in order to having it recognized by the international community.<sup>711</sup> To conclude, until 1922 Sforza was a committed Europeanist in method – the diplomatic method, but, in the following years, his action would acquire new meanings becoming political commitment.

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<sup>711</sup> Legatus, *Vita diplomatica di Salvatore Contarini*, 60.

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