

DOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIÓ

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Ivo Mihajlović

2013

Contents

Introduction	1
Part I: Why Foreign Policy?	1
American Preparations for Peace	12
Part II: Centralism vs. Federalism	19
Identity, Nation, Citizenship and State	20
Assimilation or Integration?	30
Map 1: Catholic Population	33
Map 2: Orthodox Population	36
Map 3: Muslim Population	39
Map 4: Serbian and Croatian Dialects	41
The New State or the Extended State?.....	43
Map 5: The Balkan Peninsula, 1817-1877.	43
Map 6: The Balkan Peninsula, 1878-1912.	44
Map 7: The Balkan Peninsula, 1912-1913.	46
Map 8: The Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1867-1914.	48
Italy and the Adriatic	54
Map 9: Lands offered to Serbia under the Pact of London	56
Map 10: Lands offered to Italy under the Pact of London	58
From the <i>State</i> of SHS to the <i>Kingdom</i> of SHS	60
The Annexation of Montenegro.....	63
Part III: Pact vs. Principle.....	75
<i>Procès-verbal</i> , Paris, April and May, 1919	78
Fissures	105
Part IV: The Fiume Impasse.....	117
The Chinks in the Armor and the Italian Return.....	129
The Battle of Wish-Lists.....	137
The Navy Threat and the Merchant Tonnage	142
The Dissenters.....	145
The Departure from the Fourteen Points	156
Map 11: Various proposals regarding Fiume	164
The Post-Paris Arrangements	174
Conclusion	189

Appendices	208
Appendix I: President Wilson’s Fourteen Points.....	208
Appendix II: The Statement on the Adriatic Question	212
Appendix III: Tardieu’s Proposal	214
Appendix IV: Chronological Timeline of Key Events	215
Appendix V: Map of Central Europe, 1910.....	216
Appendix VI: Map of Pact of London and Rapallo Treaty	217
Appendix VII: Map of Central Europe, 1918-1923.....	218
Appendix VIII: List of Geographical Names.....	219
Primary Sources.....	220
Published Sources.....	220
Secondary Literature.....	221

Throughout this dissertation Croatian names of cities and islands are used. The exception is the city of Rijeka, for which the Italian name of Fiume is used, since it had been widely used in the examined and often quoted documentation.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

American foreign policy *au general* was defined by the speech President Woodrow Wilson delivered to the Joint Houses of Congress on January 8, 1918. The Fourteen Points delivered on that day promulgated the main principles on which the American foreign policy would be based: free trade, open agreements, democracy and self-determination. The terms *population*, *nationality* and *allegiance*, being the basis for the principle of self-determination, appeared numerous times in the text. This principle was first and foremost applied in the establishing of the borders between the warring European powers, as well as in determining of the frontiers of the states which emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

President Wilson followed his principles to the bitter end, which led to an impasse and falling out with the Italian Allies, tensions with the British and the French, and to political defeat back home, reflected in the catastrophic results of the midterm elections in 1918. In the end, some adjustments and compromises had to be offered in order to break the gridlock and satisfy the claims of the Allies, particularly the Italians. However, the principled stand Wilson took on the Adriatic issue resulted in a generally favorable outcome to the Yugoslavs. In this regard, it may be stated that the American foreign policy towards Yugoslavia was largely a success.

The majority population of the Southern Slav peoples seemed to support the idea of unifying into a single Southern Slav state. However, some differences in opinion existed as to how such unity should be achieved. Should it be done as the expansion of the already existing Kingdom of Serbia, or should a brand new entity be formed? Behind such dilemmas lay practical questions of interest and power, but also of differences of state tradition and the methods of governance.

In general terms, the expansion of the already existent Kingdom of Serbia would extend the apparatus of the Monarchy to all the acquired lands, regardless of whether their population were Serbs or not. The power structures and political elites of the Kingdom of Serbia clearly favored this outcome. The other constituent peoples – Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and even Serbs from the Vojvodina – thought that a federal system would be the preferred solution. The question of the inner organization of the new state was barely addressed by the Big Four. There were perhaps several reasons for that. Time constraint and a multitude of issues addressed all at the same time were certainly two of them. Issues relating to the legal status of peoples from the dissolved Austria-Hungary were also important: were the Croats and Slovenes vanquished belligerents, or allies freed from

Introduction

under the control of their oppressors? Furthermore, the confusing proximity of the identity of the various peoples concerned seemed to render that question moot. If indeed the people were *triune*, as one of its leaders said they were, then the question of the organization of their state can be left to themselves. The very expression *triune*, however, leaves unanswered the question of whether the people were actually *tri* or simply *une*. If *tri*, then perhaps the federal makeup of the state would be a good solution. If *une*, then there was no reason why a centralist solution should not be applied. Finally, the post-intervention state-building endeavors which seem to be the hallmarks of the turn of the twenty-first century were simply non-existent a century earlier. For that reason it is impossible to qualify the foreign policy of the United States regarding the question of federalism vs. centralism as having been either a success or a failure: it simply was what it was.

The federal system of state organization was largely ignored in the period of the inception of the new state. It was eventually introduced in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after World War II. The fate of the Socialist Yugoslavia is now, of course, known. This question then lends itself to anachronistic speculation of what would have happened to Yugoslavia had it been organized as a federation from the very beginning? There is, of course, absolutely no way of knowing. It stands to reason to suppose that the federal system would have contributed to the creation of a more stable union. On the other hand, it may have led to an even earlier dissolution, as soon as the Italian threat to the northern Adriatic was removed, for example. There is no clear conclusion, therefore. The questions relating to the tug of war between the federal and centralist principles are addressed at length in this dissertation.

The subject regarding the differences between the national identities of the constituent peoples is a topic that presented itself uninvited. It featured heavily in the questions relating to both territory and internal structure of the new state. In addition, it raised a lot of questions in the minds of the Allied negotiators. This topic is explored in detail in the present dissertation, offering insights of Croatian and Serbian historians, as well as prominent social anthropologists.

Further questions addressed in the present dissertation address the question of how the diplomatic activity pursued by Wilson developed, and what was the reaction of the intended recipients. The aim is to explore in detail not only the policy itself, but also the reaction of the Southern Slavs, of the Allies and, finally, of the American public and political elite. With that goal in mind, a detailed description of activities and political goals

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

of various Southern Slav factions has been examined, as well as the resistance that the Allies displayed towards Wilson's lofty ideals during the Paris Peace Conference. American foreign policy, based as it was on idealistic principles promoted by Wilson, was met with continuous resistance from the other Allies, and had to eventually be adjusted and modified to reach a compromise which would be acceptable to all, particularly to Italy.

To this end, a detailed analysis is performed of the activities, dialogues, discussions and arguments around the negotiating table in Paris. The transcripts of the meetings, official documentation, diplomatic dispatches, newspaper coverage, diary entries and other sources were used in an attempt to put together a collage which gives an insight into the events that eventually resulted in the birth of Yugoslavia. Among these, the debates relating to the application of Wilsonian principles versus the secret pacts of the Old Europe's alliances feature prominently. A significant part is also devoted to the attempts of Slovenes, Croats and Montenegrins to address the political structure of the extended/new state, which, as mentioned earlier, largely fell on deaf ears.

In the end, the Southern Slavs got their state, with few territorial losses and no attention given to the questions of its internal makeup; Italy was able to extend its borders, even if not as much as it initially insisted on; France got a large Balkan state that would ostensibly block the German *Drang nach Osten*; Britain got a semblance of the restoration of the balance of power, though that illusion lasted less than a decade; Germany got a “war guilt lie” that served as a motivator for resurgence; and the United States electorate got a good reason to retreat back into the isolationist position it had preferred, and pursued, for so long. President Wilson, after the initial success in mobilizing American public opinion, and subsequent victory in the armed struggle, did not have enough political clout to have the Peace Treaty ratified by the Congress. Indeed, the Paris Peace Conference, unfinished as it was, and not faithfully reflecting either the Wilsonian principles or the Old World diplomacy of power brokerage, merely planted the seeds for further conflicts that were to occur two short decades later.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

much interference from abroad. When the balance of power finally broke down, the United States had no other choice but to get involved in international politics. The need for action was paralleled by the American sense of a missionary-type obligation to spread the American model, a duty based on the moral principles and not interests of state. However, this missionary impulse was generally balanced and indeed dwarfed by the isolationist, passive approach of being a beacon unto the world by the example of the *internal* system in America, sometimes referred to as the *City upon a Hill* approach. When this deeply-set preference for isolation was overridden by the need for action in World War I – to which at the time both the politicians and the public responded enthusiastically – the missionary/interventionist impulse had a rather brief timeframe of less than four years to achieve what it set out to do. In the end, the pendulum swung back before President Wilson could achieve everything he had hoped for.

The enthusiastic support of the public in 1917 can partially be attributed to the notion that the principles of ethical conduct apply to international conduct in the same way they do to the individual. Jefferson insisted that there was “but one system of ethics for men and for nations”, and that in the long run, the promoting of even interests of both sides should be pursued (Tucker 139). This uniquely American ethical principle was not always the most prominent element in the U.S. foreign policy. From the first days of American independence, the United States used its political and military strength to obtain their desired results. Besides the eleven instances of U.S. issuing declarations of war, encompassed in five separate wars (Great Britain in 1812, Mexico 1846, Spain 1898, WWI and WWII), the instances of military interventions outside of its borders may be listed in hundreds. Some of the interventions were protracted military engagements that bore all the hallmarks of full-fledged wars, except that no formal declaration had been issued (including Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, the invasion of Iraq). However, the majority of the interventions were brief actions to protect U.S. citizens, promote U.S. interests or punish those who hurt either.

In spite of their large number, the American wars and interventions prior to 1917 were in line with George Washington’s warning against the “permanent alliances” that the Old World had been entangled in. “Our detached and distant situation”, Washington insisted, “invites and enables us to pursue a different course” (Farewell). Still, throughout the nineteenth century there were disagreements regarding whether America should actively promote the spread of freedom and democracy, or should it solely rely on the

Why Foreign Policy?

impact of its example. The moral foundations were of paramount importance, and the European political practice was rejected. This was possible due to the steady economic growth and prosperity of nineteenth century America, and the geographical isolation it was blessed with. Occasionally, however, events took place which forced the American hand to act. Such events were sometimes small in scale and involved capturing of pirates. At other times Americans actively pursued intrusive actions, such as Commodore Perry's activities regarding "the opening of Japan".

1825 *Cuba*. Cooperating American and British forces landed at Sagua La Grande to capture pirates.

1840 *Fiji Islands*. Naval forces landed to punish natives for attacking American exploring and surveying parties.

1841 *Drummond Island, Kingsmill Group*. A naval party landed to avenge the murder of a seaman by the natives.

1853-54 *Japan*. Commodore Perry and his naval expedition made a display of force leading to the "opening of Japan."

1853-54 *Ryukyu and Bonin Islands*. Commodore Perry on three visits before going to Japan and while waiting for a reply from Japan made a naval demonstration, landing marines twice, and secured a coaling concession from the ruler of Naha on Okinawa; he also demonstrated in the Bonin Islands with the purpose of securing facilities for commerce.

1854 *Nicaragua*. July 9 to 15. Naval forces bombarded and burned San Juan del Norte (Greytown) to avenge an insult to the American Minister to Nicaragua.

1868 *Uruguay*. February 7 and 8, 19 to 26. U.S. forces protected foreign residents and the customhouse during an insurrection at Montevideo.

1903 *Syria*. September 7 to 12. U.S. forces protected the American consulate in Beirut when a local Moslem uprising was feared.

1917 *China*. American troops were landed at Chungking to protect American lives during a political crisis (Grimmett 8).

Through the better part of the nineteenth century the United States continued its expansion across North America, but treated it as a highly moral act in line with the "manifest destiny". The similarities between its own actions and that of the criticized European balance-of-power politics perhaps caused some Americans to ask themselves whether they were simply excusing their own actions by invoking the morality principle, when in fact, those actions could be easily explained under the European *raison d'état* philosophy? Indeed, early on in the existence of the United States a policy of keeping the

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

colonial European powers away from the whole of the Western Hemisphere was officially announced. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 made it clear that the United States would not tolerate European activities in the Americas. This, combined with the American rapid expansion on the North American continent through Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and Florida acquisition of 1921, makes for an interesting study of the moral grounds for American actions abroad. The assurances that President Monroe offered to the Europeans – that the United States would take no part in any matters relating to them – could be seen as an offer for the division of the World under the formula of Western Hemisphere to the United States and Eastern Hemisphere to the European powers. By doing this, Monroe freed the United States to pursue its own territorial expansion as well as commercial and political influence in the Americas. The application of Monroe Doctrine was to be steadily extended. President Polk explained the annexation of Texas (1845) as necessary since Texas as an independent state could become dependent of some foreign nation, which could in turn result in a threat to American security. Similarly, Monroe Doctrine was used as justification for the purchase of Alaska (1867), since its “foreign possession... has hindered its growth and impaired the influence of the United States” (Tucker 141).

The most interventionist interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine was offered by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904. The territorial expansion of the United States on the North American continent had been completed, and now the time was right to use the American power to exert control over the Western Hemisphere, to intervene as needed. This so-called “Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine merely echoed the American actions from the turn of the century; its interventions in Colombia (1902), Panama (1903), Dominican Republic (1903), Haiti (1914), and the establishment of the Canal Zone under the United States sovereignty (1903-1914). Roosevelt's so-called Big Stick Policy reflected the new stance. His order for the circumnavigation of the globe by the American navy fleet, the so-called Great White Fleet, seemed to have been designed as a message to the global powers that the United States was ready to take a greater role in the overall global politics, and that America was no longer limiting itself to the Western Hemisphere. The show of strength and the threat of force is what achieved the results, Roosevelt believed. “To him, international life meant struggle, and Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest was a better guide to history than personal morality. In Roosevelt's view, the meek inherited the earth only if they were strong” (Kissinger 40).

Why Foreign Policy?

Roosevelt had a contemptuous view of the ideas relating to the establishing of an international power which would check wrong-doings. The same applied to peace treaties, which he considered to be nothing more than scraps of paper, particularly if they had no force to back them up. He believed in the concept of spheres-of-influence, which can be seen as an extension of the old European system of balance-of-power. Commenting on Japanese occupation of Korea of 1908, Roosevelt considered neither the international law nor provisions of previous treaties. "Korea is absolutely Japan's," he said, basing his judgment solely on the relative power of the two countries (Kissinger 41). Japan's struggle with Czarist Russia for the supremacy in the Far East he considered to be a good thing, for he held the belief that those two powers balanced each other. He organized the negotiations for a peace treaty between the two, the treaty which limited the extent of the Japanese victory and therefore helped to maintain the balance of power in the Far East. Roosevelt's pragmatic actions and views, based as they were on the premises of power politics, were not greeted with enthusiasm by the American public. The ordinary Americans still held that the moral basis one applied to one's personal actions are to be applied to the behavior of states. In this aspect, Roosevelt appeared to be remote from the public mood, and this partially contributed to his failure to secure the presidency in the race of 1912. The American public, as it turned out, wanted to be led by a person who had high moral standards, and impeccable sense of right and wrong, even if they were perhaps accompanied with a dose of naiveté.

Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1912 and again in 1916. His reelection was won on the platform of "He kept us out of war." Wilson held that the American public could be swayed to support great endeavors only if they coincided with the public perception that America was exceptional. However, the unique nature of American experience was partially manifested in the proclivity for isolationism, and Wilson understood this. On the other hand, the exceptional nature of the American ideals could, to a degree, be brought to bear in spurring the public and the country into action. Foreign policy was not something Wilson emphasized at the beginning of his first presidential term. He did, however, formulate four points as early as August 1914. His notes indicate the following principles:

1. There must never again be a foot of ground acquired by conquest.
2. It must be recognized in fact that the small nations are on an equality of rights with the great nations.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

3. Ammunition must be manufactured by governments and not by private individuals.
4. There must be some sort of an association of nations wherein all shall guarantee the territorial integrity of each (Axson 194).

This later changed, but the steady foundation for his political philosophy remained the same, consisting of idealism and moralism. He successfully used those general and rather abstract principles to inspire the people to follow his lead. However, they were not easily transferable into actions. In fact, it appears that Wilson often failed to clearly and precisely define his own thoughts, which sometimes lacked clarity and focus (Živojinović 27). Wilson's first Administration was declaredly devoted to neutrality, and there was no talk of selfish national interest. He famously said that “every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned” (Commager 96). The only motive that America had was the desire to vindicate the principles by which the American state, and the Americans citizens, governed themselves. This eventually resulted in a groundswell of support for action. To begin with, though, Wilson advocated neutralism, which was meant to be a starting point of introducing America as a possible honest broker in the settlement of the European dispute. He restated Jefferson's assumptions regarding the character of the American state: it is a beacon of light of liberty for the rest of mankind; foreign policy of a democracy such as America is morally superior; foreign policy should reflect personal moral standards. But with such superiority came a responsibility: America had no right *not* to share its uniqueness. The city set upon hill had to start *actively* promoting its superior moral values. In his State of the Union delivered in December 1915 Wilson insisted that “we demand unmolested development and the undisturbed government of our own lives upon our own principles of right and liberty, [and] we resent, from whatever quarter it may come, the aggression we ourselves will not practice” (State of the Union, December 7, 1915). This extension of morals sets the stage for the American role as a global policeman. Still, Wilson did not seek to translate this philosophy into action until much later, when the public mood was ready for it.

The real situation on the ground, well before America was to enter the war, pushed it to align itself with one side. The question of loans issued to the warring parties, for example, clearly identified the preference toward the Allied Powers, who received nearly ten times more financial assistance than did the Central Powers. Then there was the issue

Why Foreign Policy?

of indiscriminate German usage of U-boats against the civilian shipping, which resulted in gradual tension building up between the United States and Germany. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, a British liner torpedoed in May 1915, resulted in the deaths of 128 American citizens. In a response to this Wilson sent off angry diplomatic dispatches to Germans. The vehemence with which Wilson addressed the Germans, whom he threatened with war unless they desisted with the submarine warfare, prompted his Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, to resign. Incidentally, it was the sinking of the *Lusitania* that dramatically changed the public opinion in the United States. Notwithstanding Wilson's earlier calls for moderation and fairness, the American public was enraged by the deaths of its fellow-citizens. The Germans, on the other hand, were possibly not aware of the importance that the public opinion had on the formation of the official government policy of the U.S., and they continued with U-boat attacks. When yet another passenger ship, this time a French ferry *Sussex*, was sunk in March of 1916, Wilson reiterated his threat. The Germans backed down, issuing a pledge not to attack civilian shipping. In return, however, the Germans asked Wilson to issue a formal protest against the British blockage of German ports.

While conceding the point about the obligation of its U-boats to issue a warning before firing its torpedoes, and to assist in the saving of the human lives, the Germans insisted on the application of the principles of international law, neutrality and the freedom of the seas. In the so-called *Sussex Pledge*, issued in May of 1916, the German Government communicated, among other, the following:

But neutrals can not expect that Germany, forced to fight for her existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interest, restrict the use of an effective weapon if her enemy is permitted to continue to apply at will methods of warfare violating the rules of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality, and the German government is convinced that the Government of the United States does not think of making such a demand, knowing that the Government of the United States has repeatedly declared that it is determined to restore the principle of the freedom of the seas, from whatever quarter violated (Barack 22).

Meanwhile, back on the home front, Wilson was faced with the Republican threat under the name of the Preparedness Movement. The outspoken representatives of the movement included former President Theodore Roosevelt and former Secretaries of War Elihu Root and Henry Stimson, each of whom was a potential Republican presidential candidate. Naturally, Wilson and Democratic Party saw the Preparedness Movement as a

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

thinly disguised political maneuvering on behalf of the Republicans. The Preparedness Movement, however, saw itself as a realist reaction to the fact that the American armed forces were outnumbered 20 to 1 by the German armed forces. Besides, for all of Wilson's dancing on the thin fence of neutrality, the entrance into the war by the United States into the war was imminent and unavoidable, so the sooner the steps were taken to rectify the huge disadvantage in preparedness for it, the better.

In spite of all this, the public opinion was tipped in favor of staying out of war. This overall sentiment was reinforced from several unrelated angles. One of them was the criticism of the proposal set forth by the Preparedness advocates, which called for mandatory conscription of young men turning 18 for a 6-month training, and subsequent placement of such trained men into reserve units. The introduction of such program would make America very similar to Germany, the argument went. However, the Preparedness advocates were not easily dissuaded, and when their proposals were ultimately rejected by the Government, they organized and funded the training for some 40,000 college graduates. In time, these cadres would provide the core of the officer structure of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe.

Another source of criticism of the Preparedness movement was that it was suspected of being under the control of rich industrialists who stood to gain the most from America's involvement in the war. The emergence of the "military industrial complex", which would take another five decades to be named as such by departing President Eisenhower, was clear even to the casual observers in 1916. Bankers such as J. P. Morgan, and industrial giants such as Bethlehem Steel and DuPont – manufacturing armor and munitions, respectively – stood to gain the most from any increased commitment to war. Former Secretary of State Bryan also criticized any proposals for increased military capability. In his view it was irreconcilable to pursue neutrality on the one hand, and make preparations for war, on the other. Bryan had not been the only cabinet member to be dismissed. For entirely different reasons, that is, belief that something had to be done to better prepare the U.S. military for the imminent conflict, Wilson also replaced the Secretary of War Lindley Garrison. This was a major blow to the Preparedness Movement, while the anti-war proponents felt a major victory had been won.

The fact that Germans resumed the unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 can be traced to the weakness of the United States navy. Notwithstanding Wilson's threats and German promises, if there was no bite to the American bark, it was inevitable that the

Why Foreign Policy?

Germans would again defy the demands of the Americans. However, already in May and June of 1916, after the naval battle of Jutland had been fought between the British and the German navy, the American proponents of increased military spending for navy gained majority in the Senate and authorized a rapid three-year buildup of all classes of warships. Notably, clearly anticipating the engagement with German U-boats, the destroyers were given disproportional representation.

None of these difficulties stopped Wilson from successfully making a second bid for the White House. It was a narrow victory, and for the second time in a row Wilson was successful partially because of the division among the Republicans. Much like in the elections of 1912, in which two conservative candidates divided the Republican vote, allowing Wilson to take the prize, the elections of 1916 were set for a replay. The Republican nomination went to Charles Evans Hughes, who was forced to try to accommodate the demands of conservative Taft supporters and progressive Roosevelt supporters, which resulted in a policy and campaign that was bland and indistinctive. Disgusted, Roosevelt complained that the only difference between Wilson and Hughes was the shave.

Despite the pacifist platform upon which he had been elected, Wilson felt it important to warn the Germans that the United States would not tolerate further loss of innocent lives on the high seas. In his acceptance speech he reiterated that “the nation that violates these essential rights must expect to be checked and called to account by direct challenge and resistance. It at once makes quarrel in part our own” (Acceptance). This was a significant move in the position from the erstwhile pacifist President. Or was it? Wilson had already threatened the Germans in 1915 and 1916, but nothing had happened. He had resisted the calls for increased military spending, which resulted in bolder German actions in the Atlantic.

Combined with this already complex situation was the German attempt to solicit Mexico as an ally. In anticipation of a negative American response to their renewed unrestricted submarine warfare, the Germans wished to enlist Mexico as an ally whose task would be to keep the Americans busy defending their own territories. Banking on Mexican resentment of the United States, dating back to the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty of 1848, which awarded huge tracts of Mexico to the United States, the Foreign Secretary of the German Empire, Arthur Zimmerman, sent the following note to the Mexican government:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace (Bernstorff 310-11).

Mexico, however, had its own problems to contend with. The revolutionary movement led by Pancho Villa had brought the country into a state of civil war. Whatever sentiments Mexicans had regarding the reconquest of their erstwhile possessions, it would have to wait until the internal situation was stabilized. There is no telling, however, what the ultimate Mexican reaction would have been had the contents of the telegram remained secret. Perhaps there was an opportunity for the Mexican government to strike two flies with a single swoop; attack the Mexican rebels *and* make an incursion into the United States, and in doing so focus its public attention to the outside enemy – the United States – and create a grand national cause that would unite all the Mexicans under the government banner. But this was not to be. Meanwhile, Pancho Villa himself had performed several raids into the United States, and was subsequently chased by the U.S. Army General John J. Pershing, who was later to lead the American forces in Europe. However, the analysis of feasibility performed at the request of President Venustiano Carranza concluded that the successful war against the United States was not possible. The conclusion was based on several elements, such as restricted German assistance, and Mexico's inability to control the well-armed white population of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona (Katz 66).

Such blatant animosity of the Germans toward the United States enraged the Americans. It was high time, many felt, that there be put an end to German expansionism and oppression. At stake were not only the liberal democracies of Britain and France, but the freedom of the United States. One of the obstacles to this line of thinking, based on the emphasis of the differences of the absolutist and liberal societies warring in Europe, was the fact that one of the Allies was a nation whose internal organization was perhaps even more foreign to the freedom-loving Americans than Germany itself. It was Czarist Russia,

Why Foreign Policy?

of course, but when a revolution overthrew the Czar in March of 1917 even that obstacle was removed. On April 2, 1917, President Wilson formally asked Congress to declare war on Germany. The Congress complied and war was declared on April 6, 1917. In his speech before the Congress, asking for a declaration of war, Wilson again emphasized the moral dimension of the American position.

But right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free (Address).

Wilson also made it clear that Americans as the people had no quarrel with the German people. By attacking as he did the structures of powers in Europe, rather than individual peoples, Wilson set the goal on an entirely different plane. The arbitrage which gained Nobel Peace Prize to Roosevelt, for negotiating a compromise settlement between Japan and Russia, resulted in modification of external actions of belligerent states. Wilson, however, was practically calling for the overthrow of the Kaiser. "On January 22, 1917, before America had entered the war, Wilson proclaimed its goal to be 'peace without victory.' What Wilson proposed, however, when America did enter the war was a peace achievable only by total victory" (Kissinger 49).

In order to carry out the war effort Wilson had to introduce *Selective Service Act* (May 1917), whereby a selective draft was introduced. The first units of the American Expeditionary Force arrived to France in early summer of 1917. Eventually, some million men would be deployed, contributing significantly to the prospects of Allied victory.

Meanwhile, back at home, Wilson had to introduce some measures which were not in line with the general principles of freedom and individualism. Various measures and organizations were founded, such as *War Industries Board*, designed to help control and coordinate the industries and economy overall. *Food Administration* and *Fuel Administration* worked toward the similar goal in different fields. More questionable were measures such as the *Espionage Act* of 1917, and the *Sedition Act* of 1918. These laws, combined with government heavy handedness in dealing with the labor unions, and the immigration acts introduced in the same period made for a very intrusive and restrictive government, which had much in common with the tactics and measures used by the belligerents America sought to defeat.

American Preparations for Peace

The prospects of the Allies winning of the war reminded Wilson of the need to think ahead as to what might be the measures that needed to be introduced in Europe after the anticipated Allied victory. The very banner under which the war was waged – The War to End All Wars – implied that mere military victory and the usual plunder of the vanquished would not suffice. But how should the new Europe get organized? And on what basis?

By the end of 1917 it became evident that Austria-Hungary might not survive the war in its erstwhile shape. While there had been some calls for reorganization of the Dual Monarchy into a Triple Monarchy, this time awarding the numerous Slavs their own entity on par with the Austrian and Hungarian entities, there was little hope of accommodating the wishes of the Slavs, who chafed against the idea of remaining within the constraints of the existing Monarchy. Nor were the Slavs from Austria-Hungary the only elements vying for the dissolution; the Rumanians and Poles, the Italians and Serbs all hoped and pushed for the end of the Monarchy. But if it came to the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy, what new entities would come in its place? Constituent nations, thereto prisoners of the *Völker-Kerker* (German for “the Prison of Nations”), did not speak in unison. Most of the claims by the hopeful and as of yet merely potential heirs to Austria-Hungary were desperately interlocked and overlapping. How could these conflicting claims be accommodated, and differences in opinions of the claimants arbitrated? Arbitration would certainly be needed, especially if the present war were indeed to fulfill its claim of being the war to end all wars.

As the end of the war slowly appeared on the horizon, several officials started voicing the opinion that a detailed plan of action should be developed as to how the peace should be implemented. Furthermore, the countless details that the peace negotiators were surely to be faced with had to get organized and made available to them as soon as possible.

France is at work, through committees, in the preparation of material for the Peace Conference. We should equip ourselves with like knowledge. Competent persons should be set to work on the various questions that are bound to come up, so that all the material which is pertinent will be at hand for our commissioners. Of course, a good deal of this material we have, but is it in an organized form and directed to the specific objective here suggested (Gelfand 24)?

Why Foreign Policy?

The writer of the above note, Frankfurter, who was a special assistant to the Secretary of War at the time, was joined by William H. Buckler, a special assistant at the American Embassy in London. Buckler made a thirteen page memorandum with suggestions which may be viewed as a basis of the Fourteen Points. He wrote that the following had to be done/created:

- (1) a league of nations;
- (2) restoration of Belgian, Serbian, and Rumanian independence;
- (3) Alsace-Lorraine and a possible plebiscite;
- (4) Poland;
- (5) and international commission for Balkan boundaries;
- (6) internationalization of the Turkish Straits and the status of Armenia;
- (7) the adoption of a federal constitution for Austria plus Italian claims to Austrian territory;
- (8) the German colonies in Africa and consideration of a free trade zone in tropical Africa (Gelfand 15).

Buckler was half-brother to veteran U.S. diplomat Henry White, who was not on great terms with Secretary of State Lansing. Instead, White contacted Colonel House, whom he trusted and respected. This single action possibly contributed for the bypassing of the State Department and of Secretary Lansing in further actions that were to be taken relating to the preparations for the upcoming peace conference. Be that as it may, House communicated the idea to Wilson, who was in turn impressed with the urgent need to establish a resource that would “prepare our case with a full knowledge of the position of all the litigants” (Gelfand 27). Predictably, Wilson gave the job of organizing such committee to House, who thought that the leading position should be taken by Sidney E. Mezes, House’s brother in law. This was already a second instance in the string of events that were based upon considerations other than proper organizational channeling and even adequacy in academic credentials of the appointees (since Mezes was a philosopher of religion, for example).

By October 1917 the preparations were well under way, and a consensus for the name for the organization was reached: The Inquiry. Within months a total of 126 professionals, the so-called experts, were among its ranks. Besides Mezes, further four directors were added: Isaiah Bowman, Walter Lippmann, James T. Shotwell and David Hunter Miller. Initially the tasks were separated into geographical units, but because the

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

issues at hand were so intertwined and complex, that model was later abandoned. Indeed, a cursory glance at the departments shows how the original setup included a lot of overlap: Eastern European Division, Austria-Hungary and Italy Division, and the Balkan Division. Almost all the members of the Inquiry traveled to Paris as members of the American Delegation, and continued providing Wilson with data and analyses regarding the particular European questions and dilemmas. Importantly, when Southern Slavs entered into territorial disputes with the Italians (regarding Fiume) on the one hand and with the Austrians (regarding Klagenfurt the basin) on the other, the Inquiry experts were able to provide accurate data on which the American decisions could be made. To begin with, however, the American blueprint for the future settlement and lasting peace was all but clear.

America's position and her aims were universally known and almost as universally misinterpreted. Wilson's Fourteen Points had splattered around the globe like a burst of machine gun bullets, and every nation, almost every individual in every nation, interpreted them to suit himself, stressing the points he liked, slurring over others, and ignoring the ones that went against his grain. There was sufficient lack of clarity in them and there were enough contradictions embodied in them to make this possible (Czernin 56).

Considered from this angle, the famous Fourteen Points which Wilson presented in a speech delivered to the United States joint session of Congress may be considered an attempt to clarify the policy and give a clear sound of trumpet. The Fourteen Points did that, but only to the extent that those who did not agree with them knew it right away, while those who in principle supported the Fourteen Points were left without clear and detailed instructions of how they should be applied (Zieger 174). Among the skeptical parties were Wilson's key allies: British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. Nor were the foreign diplomats the only party that did not welcome Wilson's prescriptions. Theodore Roosevelt, the retired former president who was still smarting from the electoral defeat he suffered at Wilson's hand, wrote from his retirement in Oyster Bay:

Our Allies and our enemies and Mr. Wilson himself should all understand that Mr. Wilson has no authority to speak for the American People at this time...Mr. Wilson and his fourteen points and his four supplementary points and his five supplementary points and all utterances every which way have ceased to have any shadow of right to be accepted as expressive of the will of the American People. ...

Why Foreign Policy?

Let the Allies impose their common will on the nations responsible for the hideous disaster which has almost wrecked mankind (Seymour 151).

The lack of support from all sides, particularly from the other allied leaders, was not lost on Wilson, of course. In fact, he anticipated it and perhaps wanted to get it out in the open by making the question of secret treaties the first on the agenda. Other general principles followed closely: freedom of the seas, end to economic barriers, equality in trade, reduction of armament. After this came the specific instructions for the solution for various specific problems. Typically lacking detailed carry-through, the Fourteen Points included lines such as: “Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea.” How would that be carried out, and where, was not specified. This then left a wide array of options available, ranging from Thessaloniki in the south-east, Valona and a number of Dalmatian ports in the south-west, as well as locations all the way to the port of Fiume in the west.

Contents aside, which under any circumstances could not have been expected to be to everyone’s liking, the prescriptive tone of the Fourteen Points was definitely something that grated the Allies. The assumed high moral pulpit, besides being irksome, also betrayed a dose of naiveté that was rarely found among the politicians and world leaders, who customarily relied of realism and pragmatism to modify their positions as situation changes. The approach employed by Wilson was as if there were no limits to what could be done, what barriers could be removed, which state created and which disassembled. It was a little bit as if a child at play decided to make the world a better place by redrawing the borders, deposing the kings and setting up democracies. Interestingly, that is exactly what happened, as can be seen from the diary entry made by Colonel House:

Saturday was a remarkable day... I returned to the White House at a quarter past ten in order to get to work with the President. He was waiting for me. We actually got down to work at half past ten and finished remaking the map of the world, as we would have it, at half past twelve o'clock (Link 45:550).

In this very brief introduction to the description of the activities on a rather exciting day, Colonel House encapsulated the levity with which the world’s ills were to be solved, as it were. Of course, the work that Wilson and House did that day was not a child’s play, and in reality it set forth many a valuable foundation for the future peace settlements. But the moral superiority which accompanied it was enough to prompt Clemenceau to complain that “even the good Lord contended Himself with only ten commandments, and we should not try to improve them” (Clemenceau). On that Saturday, January 5, 1918,

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Wilson and House, having completed the redrawing of the world, set to make a list of the improvements which they have achieved, and placed them in order of importance:

We took it systematically, first outlining general terms, such as open diplomacy, freedom of the seas, removing of economic barriers, establishing of the equality of trade conditions, guaranties for the reduction of national armaments, adjustment of colonial claims, general associations of nations for the conservation of peace. Then we began on Belgium, France and the other territorial readjustments. When we had finished President asked me to number these in order I thought they should come. I did this by placing the general terms first and territorial adjustments last. He looked over my arrangement and said it coincided with his own views with the exception of the peace association which he thought should come last because it would round out the message properly, and permit him to say some things at the end which were necessary (Link 45:550).

The remaking of the map of the world, as House called it, and the formulation of the principles on which the lasting peace should be based seems almost natural in the setting in which Wilson, House, and the United States found themselves at this time, in the beginning of 1918. In a speech delivered to Congress on January 8, 1918, President Wilson introduced his plan by stating, among other, the following:

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world. It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view.

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence.

What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world, as against force and selfish aggression.

As grandiose as this introductory speech sounds, Wilson delivered it in full sincerity. He seemed to be completely oblivious to the accusations of high-headedness.

Why Foreign Policy?

The conviction and simple belief in the superiority of his position was also betrayed by the words that were to follow: “The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, *the only possible program* [emphasis added], as we see it, is this...” Clearly, this was a talk of an idealist, holding a position so superior in his own sight that he was already unbending, so noble in his its own self-appraisal that he was already setting himself up to meet an ignoble end. The first five points covered general principles: xxx

1. Open covenants of peace must be arrived at, after which there will surely be no private international action or rulings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest points consistent with domestic safety.
5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the population concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

These general points were followed by specific suggestions, indeed formulae, for the resolution of particular difficulties and issues facing any post-conflict settlement. Most of the points here covered questions relating to France, Russia, Belgium, Austria-Hungary, Romania, and Serbia. Also addressed were the latent disputes of “several Balkan states”, referring to the overlapping territorial claims of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. Interestingly for our purposes, point 11 also included a provision that “Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea.” Such a provision might well have been in direct contradiction to the general spirit and principle of the rest of the points, it being self-determination. As things stood, Serbia at one point sought access to sea in the Aegean Sea. Later, some Albanian ports came into consideration, in the Adriatic. At the end, Serbia proper was never awarded a sea port, but was able to fulfill this Wilsonian prescript and its own ambition in the Adriatic ports of Bar, Kotor, Dubrovnik, Split, Šibenik and Zadar.

Contending with Wilson's vision for the future of Europe were the remnants of the old system he wished to see abolished. One of the defining features of international

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

relations from the beginning of the 20th century was that when conflicts seemed to be unavoidable various European governments would conclude secret agreements which governed the division of spoils in the event of the successful and favorable outcome of the imminent war. One such secret agreement was the Pact of London, or London Treaty, signed between the British, French, czarist Russian and Italian governments. The key stipulations of the agreement was the entry of the Italian side into the war on the side of the Allies, in return for which it was offered generous portions of the Adriatic coast inhabited by Croats. Basing their hopes on this document, the Italian politicians expected to obtain the unquestioned control over the Adriatic (Živojinović 12). To make matters even more complicated, the Kingdom of Serbia, though not present or even aware of the secret pact, was also assigned large tracts of the thereto Habsburg-controlled lands of Southern Slavs, such as eastern Dalmatia, Bosnia and Slavonia, as well as all of the Military Zone in western Croatia. This additionally complicated the relationship between the Serbs and the Croats.

Such political trading with territories and peoples might have worked, and there is no telling what the result would have been if everything went according to the plans and hopes of the Allies. However, two years later the Allies did not fare very favorably in the world conflict and the czarist Russia abruptly ceased to exist. Its legal successor, the Soviet Russia, was not interested in waging wars for the oppressors of the peoples of Europe, and promptly withdrew from the conflict. Soon thereafter the United States entered into the war. However, President Woodrow Wilson did not subscribe to the old-world political bargaining, which subsequently brought him into conflict with the Allies; the principle of self-determination, espoused by Wilson, was in direct opposition to the tactics used by the British, the French and the Italians.

Part II

Centralism vs. Federalism

The questions relating to the political structure of the new state of the Southern Slavs focused around the contention of centralism versus federalism. As will be shown, generally speaking, the Southern Slavs from the former Austria-Hungary preferred a federal structure, while the Kingdom of Serbia saw it quite natural to extend its present state structures.

The triune nation, as the Southern Slavs were sometimes referred to, nominally consisted of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Croats and Serbs shared a common language with Montenegrins, who were numbered among the Southern Slavs, but not mentioned separately in the trinity, since there was a tendency to have them characterized as Serbs. Nominally, the attribute of being Serb also extended to the *Southern* Serbs of present-day Macedonia. Macedonians were therefore not separately mentioned in the triune nation, even though they had a language that quite differed from the Serbian language, and was in fact very similar to Bulgarian. The Slovenes – one of the three recognized constituents – also had a language that was different from that spoken by the Croats and the Serbs, even though it bore a lot of similarities to the vernacular spoken in north-western Croatia. Another constituent of the triune Southern Slav community were the Bosniaks, Slavic citizens of Muslim faith, living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other Muslim Slavs lived in the area of Sandžak, which had been divided between the states of Serbia and Montenegro in 1913. Finally, the Slovenes and the Croats were Catholics, while the Serbs, the Montenegrins and the Macedonians were Orthodox Christians. Therefore, nominally only three constituents of the triune nation, but really as many as six, speaking at least three languages and having three religious affiliations. This is without even mentioning other nationalities living in the area, such as Albanians, Austrians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Italians, and Romanians.

The question of national identity, therefore, fared prominently in any discussion regarding the new state. Before entering into detailed discussion of how the question of nationalities influenced the discussion, a theoretical framework for the questions of ethno genesis, national identity, nation, citizenship and state is in order.

Identity, Nation, Citizenship and State

‘Ethnicity’ or ‘nationality’ is simply the name for the condition which prevails when many [...] boundaries converge and overlap, so that the boundaries of conversation, easy commensality, shared pastimes, etc., are the same, and when the community of people delimited by these boundaries is endowed with and ethnonym, and is suffused with powerful feelings. Ethnicity becomes ‘political’, it gives rise to a ‘nationalism’, when the ‘ethnic’ group defined by these overlapping cultural boundaries is not more acutely conscious of its own existence, but also imbued with the conviction that the ethnic boundary ought also to be a political one. The requirement is that the boundaries of ethnicity should also be the boundaries of the political unit, and, above all, that the rulers within that unit should be of the same ethnicity as the ruled (Gellner, *Encounters* 35).

The convergence of the outer boundaries of the areas inhabited by the Southern Slav lands at the turn on the 20th century was evident. The language they used was close enough. Could the language have been taken as the common denominator which would lead to the identification of one common *ethnos*? That had not been the case thereto, since the religion had been the most common determiner of the ethnic affiliation. Whatever the elements for the determination of the ethnicity, the appeal of the common *ethnos* was not a delusion, nor something conjured by “muddled romantics, disseminated by irresponsible extremists, and used by egotistical privileged classes to befuddle the masses, and to hide their true interests from them” (Gellner, *Encounters* 45). The attraction that it exerted onto the masses could not be uprooted from the realities of modern life, nor could it be dispelled by the preaching of a spirit of universal brotherhood, nor yet by oppression.

Those of Max Weber persuasion would perhaps not agree, maintaining that the shared pastimes (of all things!) and linguistic proximity – the subjective belief in shared *Gemeinschaft* – was not what created the group, but that the group created the belief to validate itself (Banton 33). Whatever the origins of the feeling of the ethnic belonging, the Southern Slavs in the early 20th century were acutely aware of them. While the matter was not simple as to which community one must choose, and opposed as it was by the ever more present *Gesellschaft*, which paid no obeisance to community or creed, the *ethnos* flourished.

In his book entitled *Nationalism and After*, Edward Hallett Carr identified three phases of the development of the nationalism. The first phase is marked by the post-medieval breakup, in which the universal order that had formed in the ruins of the Roman Empire was replaced by a system composed of sovereign states. The states, at that point,

Centralism vs. Federalism

are really merely an extension of their rulers, aptly summed up in the famous *L'état, c'est moi!* Some observers note that this phase is not very nationalist at all. Perhaps it is not. It does, however, have independent and sovereign actors, which undoubtedly sets the stage for further development. The second stage is marked by the continuity of the sovereign state and its ruler, but the ruler's persona diminishes slightly, in that the ruler and nobility, which had also been present in the first stage, albeit less prominently, are now joined by intellectuals and other prominent (wealthy) citizens. The definition of exactly who belongs to the state is left unanswered, but it is clearly an expanding concept. Indeed, the state is now set for the last stage, the inclusion of all the classes. In describing the third stage, Carr gets more specific and identifies its beginnings around 1870 – clearly referring to German and Italian developments – and its full developments only after 1914. The lower classes of the society are at this stage included in the nation, and the schism of “us and them” in the class connotation is gradually removed. Inevitably, greater importance is paid to the economic power, which manifests itself by vertically propelling some elements of the lower castes. “The cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment was replaced by the nationalism of the romantic movement... The nation in its new and popular connotation had come to stay” (Carr, *Nationalism* 8).

Czech historian Miroslav Hroch has also established three stages of modern national integration, a model that was particularly suitable for the small peoples. In the first stage a group of “awakened” intellectuals starts studying the language, culture, and history of a subjugated people. In the second stage, which corresponds to the heyday of national revivals, the scholars' ideas are transmitted by a group of “patriots”, that is, the carriers of national ideologies, who take it upon themselves to convey the national thought to the wider strata. In the last stage the national movement reaches its mass high point (Banac, *National*, 28).

How did Serbia and Croatia fare when measured against these standards? The medieval Serbian state ceased to exist in 1389. Over four centuries later, and after some limited success of uprising by two leaders in the early nineteenth century, the suzerainty of the erstwhile Pašaluk of Belgrade was achieved in 1829. In 1867 the last Ottoman soldier left the Principality, and Serbian formal independence was formally and internationally recognized at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Starting with 1829 the series of rulers, direct descendants of one of the two rebel leaders from the turn of the century, gradually grew in

Centralism vs. Federalism

medieval state (Banac, *National* 106). Stage one, therefore, was neither started nor completed.

Is there any point in examining stages two and three of Carr's process? While the strict adherence to Carr's model does not yield applicable results, it may be noted that the Croatian intelligentsia, if not the wealthy merchants and businessmen, was active in embracing and disseminating the idea of Croatian nationhood and the right to statehood that stems from the historical right and the "obvious" ethnic reality. This was most notably manifested in the Illyrian Movement of 1830s, of which more will be said later. The Illyrians took it upon themselves to educate the masses of their supposed noble Croatian origins and to stir in them the yearning for national restoration and unity. Does this satisfy the requirements for stage two? Perhaps it does, even though it lacks what Carr may have considered to be the most important element, the sovereign state.

The stage three deviates from Carr's assumptions even further afield: Croatia, and Dalmatia in particular, were the poorest of Austro-Hungarian provinces. This resulted in mass emigration to the Americas and Australia. Not only was there no state, but the population itself seemed to be dispersing. This perhaps resulted in disheartening of those who stayed behind. Still, the national feeling among the Croats in the period leading to the World War I steadily grew, and the Croatian diaspora, which at the point of their departure seemed to weaken the body politic it left behind, now turned around and actively participated in supporting the political drives for greater assertion of national character. Their support was in the shape of financial support for the national movement and parties in Croatia, and of political lobbying for the creation of an independent state, particularly in the United States of America. Does this satisfy the third stage of Carr's scheme? It cannot, as neither can the first two stages be satisfied in the way Carr intended. Yet it remains obvious that Croats also developed an affinity towards the idea of either restoring the medieval Kingdom of Croatia (in whichever form *that* state had by then been defined by the romanticists) or of creating a brand new Croat and/or Southern Slav state. Since the lower classes were now also included, which in the Croatian case meant the peasants, the most *authentic* of the groups. "Moreover, nationalism promoted new integrations in national societies, dispelled many old barriers between kindred regions, and occasionally even created a new national consciousness" (Banac, *National* 27).

Stage three in both Carr's and Hroch's models give an indication that the *Volksgeist* is one of the key ingredients in the creation of a nation. But would that really work without

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

a state? In his book *Encounters with Nationalism*, Gellner stated that “in the marriage between culture and polity which is required by nationalism, *both* partners had to be brought into existence before they could be joined unto each other” (Gellner, *Encounters* 30). In Serbia, both of partners were present, but in Croatia they were not, at least not in the shape of a state, as seemed to be the Carr’s idea. This apparent deficiency did not stop the Croats from developing the feeling of national belonging, even if polity was limited to political and cultural movements within the framework of Austria-Hungary. The lack of state, however, did make for a major disadvantage in Croats’ attempts to have a level playing field and equal (or at least proportionate to their population size) importance in determining the outcomes of the creation of a new state (as they probably saw it), or extension of the old state (as the Serbs probably saw it), in a period after 1918.

The third stage would be that of Nationalism Triumphant and Self-defeating after 1918. [...] the first success of nationalism, the unifactory nationalisms of the Italians and the Germans, diminished the number of political units in Europe, while the later period dramatically increased it. But the new units set up in 1918 had all the defects of those alleged prison-houses of nations (or should one say, nurseries of nations and nationalisms) which they replaced, plus some additional ones of their own (Gellner, *Encounters* 25).

The dilemma revolving around the question whether the Southern Slav state was going to be a *brand new creation* or the extension of the *already existing* Serbian state remained the core of the issue. Depending on which way the answer went, the state would more likely become either centralist or federal. Related to this was the question of *ethnos*; would one of the already existing nationalities somehow prevail and assimilate the others, or would there be a meeting, blending or perhaps integration somewhere midway between the two largest and most similar constituencies?

The empires vanquished in World War I, the so-called “prison-houses of nations”, had in fact been rather tolerant in the treatment of their minorities. Ottoman Turks more than the Austrians. The Turks cared not about ethnicity or languages used, and greatly tolerated religious diversity. Case in point is their treatment of Jews and Orthodox Christians. They did look with suspicion to Catholics, both because their spiritual allegiance was with Rome, and because the main western competitor of the Ottomans, Austria-Hungary, was predominantly Catholic. Austria, on the other hand, was strictly a Catholic state with limited freedoms for those who did not fit the mold. However, the nationalities finding themselves within the borders of the Austrian Monarchy were

Centralism vs. Federalism

reasonably free and equal. The exception were the periods in which the Hungarians held some sway, both in the revolutionary period 1848-49 and after the Compromise of 1867. The *magyarization* to which non-Hungarians were subjected to was state-sponsored and intrusive, and it was implemented in all areas of Hungarian rule. The similarities between the “prisons of nations” and the new state of Southern Slavs in terms of relating to the assimilation were indeed present and manifest even before the process of the formation of the state was completed. In a letter to his wife, Stjepan Radić, one of the leading Croatian politician commented on his reading of R.W. Seton-Watson’s *Racial Problems in Hungary*, noting that “My soul aches when I see that these bashi-bazouks are doing to us *to a hair* the same thing that the Hungarians were doing to the Slovaks; only our predicament is that we are ‘brothers,’ we are ‘one,’ so that you cannot complain against this” (Radić 114).

The forced assimilation, it appears, was used both by the Hungarians and the Serbs. What were their motives? After the Turkish forces were rooted out of Buda in 1686, having ruled it and the central sections of present-day Hungary for nearly century and a half, the Habsburgs extended their rule onto the newly acquired territories. They settled immigrants from nations from bordering areas into the depopulated central regions. The immigrants were Serbs, Croats, Romanians, Slovaks and Germans. At the same time, the government prevented re-settlement of Hungarians to some regions, in an obvious attempt to diffuse the Hungarian character of the territories, in order to be able to govern them more easily. By 1848, the Hungarian reaction to this Austrian policy was a desire to have the newcomers *magyarized* and assimilated into the Hungarian *ethnos*, which was met with some resistance and achieved mild success. The outlying areas of the Hungarian settlement, such as the northern regions populated by Slovaks, showed greater resistance to the forced *magyarization*. The harshness that the Hungarians applied to resistance eventually contributed to the harsh treatment Hungary received at the Paris Peace Conference. It may be stated that the premise for Hungarian assimilationist policy was the *ius soli* (right of soil): the Hungarian state had been there before, as were the people, and now it wish to restore the old balance by assimilating the relative newcomers into the Hungarian *ethnos*. The Serbs applied somewhat similar assimilationist policies, adopting them to their situation, which was almost the exact opposite of the Hungarian case. The Serb influence was expanding rapidly to lands in which the Serbs were either minority

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

population or were not even present. Furthermore, the medieval Serbian state had never been present in some of the newly acquired areas.

Rogers Brubaker studied the two models of citizenship and nationhood; that based on *ius soli* and the *ius sanguinis* (right of blood). In his model he used the French and German states and nations as an example. While the similarities with the Serbian and Croatian question at hand may not be entirely obvious or applicable, a short review of this important work may cast some light to the national, state and citizenship question of Croats and Serbs. In the introduction to his work he stated that “the French citizenry is defined expansively, as a territorial community; the German citizenship restrictively, as a community of descent (Brubaker x). The French understanding of nationhood has relied heavily on the existence of state and on assimilation of those who fall within its boundaries. As such, it was expansionist and assimilationist at the same time. It was based on the institutional and territorial frame of the state, and was in essence a *political* understanding of nationhood. The German approach, on the other hand, was that of the emphasis on ethnic (blood) and cultural elements, which rendered it exclusivist and differentialist. The national idea developed before the unified state did, and thus it remained not a political idea, but a concept focusing and building upon the cultural, linguistic and racial community.

The application of these principles to the Croatian national idea squarely puts Croats into the group with the Germans; the national idea developed before the state did; it was not built around politics or institutions; the line of descent – imagined or real – was taken as a key determining factor; and the religious and local affiliation was of the utmost importance. On the other hand, by the beginning of World War I, the Serbs had had nearly a hundred years of the combination of uprising, autonomy, principality, and finally state tradition. The assimilating force of the Serbian Orthodox Church had already been evident in the homogenization of its observers, who had shed their erstwhile ethnic markings to blend with the dominant Serb culture and identity. Furthermore, the victorious expansionist state, enjoying the territorial spoils of war from the Balkan Wars, saw it only natural that the institutions of state, but also the benefits of citizenship, should be extended to the new territories. This assimilative expansionism was easily implemented in the four districts of the South (Niš, Pirot, Toplica, Vranje), which Serbia incorporated in 1878. The assimilation process without major problems extended to later acquisitions of Vardar Macedonia, Kosovo, and the Sandžak, which were subjoined in 1912-1913. But its

Centralism vs. Federalism

extension to Bosnia and Croatia was a different story altogether, fraught with resistance of the local population and with political upheavals. Be that as it may, it can be speculated that in Brubaker's model Serbian state would be more in line, although not exclusively, with the pattern used by the French state. Still, the German model of culture and *sanguinis* was not altogether foreign to the Serbian idea of what comprised a nation. The Orthodox identity freely extended outside of the borders of the state (even if that state had been expanding at breakneck speed) to include other Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christians in the surrounding areas. The other carrier of Serbdom, starting from mid nineteenth century on, was the idea of linguistic unity of Southern Slavs, under the banner of Serbdom, regardless of their religion. This expansion included the Catholic Croats, as well as Slavic-speaking Mohammedan Bosniaks who shared the common idiom with the Catholics and Orthodox Christians that lived next to them. As regards the Brubaker's model, it can be observed that the Serbian national identity appears to have used the elements from both German and French examples, and that Brubaker's models of these two nations, such as they are, cannot be successfully applied to the Serbian situation. Given that the state, let alone issues of *ius soli* and *ius sanguinis*, do not provide satisfactory explanations to Croatian and Serbian identities, we shall turn to the principles of religion and language, which were, after all, more widely used by both Croats and Serbs.

The originally assumed dichotomy associated with Croat-Catholic and Serb-Orthodox has led to the formulation of "confessional rule", by whose simple formula those Southern Slavs who followed Catholic rite were Croats, and those whose membership tied them to the Orthodox Church were Serbs. A simple brilliant formula that bypassed all the issues relating to *ius sanguinis*. Additionally, it indirectly declared all Southern Slavs to be of the same blood, separated only by the religion. Questions relating to *ius soli* were also rendered moot, since Catholic and Orthodox population were spread throughout the region, along with Muslim Slavs in Bosnia, Sandžak, and Macedonia. Clearly, an element other that can be explained by the two *ius* was present. Was it identity? What *is* identity?

To the extent that anachronistic talk of "identity" makes sense at all, the subjective "identity" of the vast majority of the population throughout Europe was no doubt largely local on the one hand and religious on the other until at least the end of the eighteenth century. For most inhabitants local and regional identities continued to be more salient than national identity until late in the nineteenth century (Rokkan 27).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

This juncture may be an opportune moment to address the obvious: when *identity* is mentioned, just what exactly is meant? Brubaker's model spoke of citizenship, which at least relates to a state, its institutions and the rights and obligations of its citizens. The citizenship may extend into identity, but is not one and the same thing. If the question of identity were to be examined from the premises of *ius sanguinis* or *ius soli*, the conclusions would likely be different still. In Rokkan's words, the idea of *identity* does not make much sense at all: it is anachronistic, loaded with added connotations and entanglements which make it hard to extract it from the mass of various meanings. Furthermore, the study of the religious aspects of identity of Serbs and Croats, and examples proving that the confessional rule was not as hard-and-fast as some assumed, provide a fascinating insight: the choice of identity or appellation that one wishes to use to describe oneself is *voluntary*. No doubt, there will be a considerable amount of peer pressure exerted to each person as they define themselves, but the final decision will rest with each individual. This goes beyond the political statements, such as the one made by the famous Croatian poet Augustin Tin Ujević who, disgusted by the constant bickering of Serbs and Croats, proclaimed himself an Irishman. But before turning to the questions of religion and linguistic base for the formation of the identity, other elements in this constellation also have to be considered. What of *citizens*, *nations* and *states*? We have seen the inclusive French and exclusive German models. Aristotle wrote that a state is

a compound made up of citizens; and this compels us to consider who should properly be called a citizen and what a citizen really is. The nature of citizenship, like that of the state, is a question which is often disputed: there is no general agreement on a single definition: the man who is a citizen in a democracy is often not one in an oligarchy (Aristotle, *Politics*).

Consequently, Stalin's five necessary characteristics of a nation (common territory, economic life, language, and psychological makeup, as well as certain national specifics in culture) also may be a perfectly acceptable pragmatic definition. Further insight into the question of the difference between nations and states was offered by Banac, who wrote that while the two generally have common territories, their frontiers are not necessarily the same. "And since nations must not be confused with states, the much misused term nation-state makes sense only if the territory of a nation corresponds exactly to the territory of a state. In Europe, at least, state frontiers more often than not divide nations" (Banac, *National* 22).

Centralism vs. Federalism

Applying this to the Southern Slavs: having two very similar, yet different enough, identities/nations/states contend for the virtually same territory and population, of necessity must pitch them one against the other. Further compounding the difference is the distinctions that must be drawn between the assimilationist character of Serbian national ideologies and the integrative nature of Croat national thought (Banac, *National* 108). More importantly, it seems that in spite of the fact that Croats had no state to incorporate into the idea of national awakening, or as the Romanticists called it, *revival*, this did not hinder them in carrying out the full three-stage development of their unique and separate identity. Similar situation occurred with the Serbs, who, although at the turn of the century already had a state of their own, were in fact very new to the whole *state* idea, whereas the *national* consciousness had been around since the middle ages.

It is highly significant that, among the South Slavs, the national identity of the Bulgars, Croats, and Serbs was acquired, though not firmly fixed, long before the development of modern nationalism. These three nations maintained a collective memory of their medieval statehood, and this memory survived in various forms – in the consciousness of national elites but also in part in popular imagination – despite interruptions or reductions in full state independence (Banac, *National* 23).

If national identity has indeed been present throughout the centuries in which no state existed for either Serbs or Croats (nor Bulgarians), as Banac indicated, then the relatively recent existence of Serbian state was a major disruption in the balance of powers, as it were, of the competing national identities. But because of the presence of the Serbian state, there existed a focal point around which not only the Serbs could gather, but which could be extended to be a focal point for the state- and identity-building of other Southern Slavs. The Serbs were perfectly satisfied with their triumphant and expansionist Serbian state, and the idea of creating another, wholly *new* state, had absolutely no appeal with them. Indeed, why would they want to forsake the hard-fought prize of a national state in order to start on another state-building project? Besides, if ever that new state was finally formed, the Serbs would be only one of the several constituent people, which would be a step back from the present situation. Thus the idea that the existent Serb state should be extended to the rest of the Southern Slavs was accepted without question. The assimilationist drive, therefore, continued. Only this time, what was at stake was no longer the *identity*, but the *state*.

Assimilation or Integration?

Adopting a cultural approach, notably probing mentalities in the South Slav regions of Austria-Hungary, is crucial if we are to understand why the new state could emerge and, most importantly, why Slovene and Croatian expectations might chafe so roughly against the stance of the victorious Serb leadership (Cornwall 27).

The Croatian and Slovenian resistance to the “victorious Serb leadership” was indeed prevalent among the population. In the words of one leading Croatian writer, the Serbs felt that the idea of a united South Slav national concord was an incentive to “serbing-it-up”, whereas the Croats understood that this notion would weaken the Croatian idea (Matoš 87). But any weakening of the Croatian position in the new *integrated* state was pragmatically seen as a price that needs to be paid, and paid willingly. Another Croatian writer, Miroslav Krleža, felt that the sense of hopelessness in the face of overwhelming obstacles stood in the way of Croatian unity.

The Croat flesh instinctively felt too weak in its isolation to tackle the fateful problems of liquidating the Turkish occupation, bringing down imperial Vienna, and removing the Venetian tyranny. Hence the rise of the idea of integration, true-born of an illusion... the idea of linguistic unity in spite of church schism, and dreams of ethnic continuity (Krlježa 66).

Ante Starčević, one of the leading Croatian politicians of the period, expressed a similar sentiment in the following words:

Under the Illyrian name, the Croat as always worked more for the others than for themselves. They passed in silence over much that should not have gone unsaid. The Croats did this in the name of love and fraternal unity (Banac, *National* 106).

Such sentiments and the apparent will to sacrifice one's own identity and culture in order to meet the other half-way in an integrated cultural or state unity appears indeed noble and praiseworthy. On the other hand, it can be seen as mere disguise of Croats' weak position in the drive to create a new state. One Serbian politician, Stojan Protić, expressed this succinctly by saying that the Croats clamored for Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav name, out of fear that the Serb name, "being stronger and better known," would push aside or overshadow the Croat appellation (Banac, *National* 163). Protić not only showed what appears to be a clear insight into the situation as seen by the Croats, but he also displayed that triumphalist attitude of the Serbs that grated the Croats so badly.

Centralism vs. Federalism

Given that the transaction of the creation of a state was a protracted project on the one hand, and that its results would be extended for the foreseeable future, perhaps into decades and decades to come, one might be tempted to take the Serbian unbending triumphalist position as too inflexible and counter-productive in the long run. Doing so with the benefit of hind sight is too simplistic and potentially biased; the Serbian history prior to this period had been marked with the struggle against the Other – be they Turk, Greek or Bulgarian – and entering yet another entity, the Croats, can only provoke the same reflex of self-preservation that had been honed over the centuries and was finally, it appeared, coming to bear fruit in the decades around the turn of the century. The hard-won victories the Serbs achieved were not to be relinquished to be shared by someone who did not contribute, and who at times stood on the other side of the picket line. Indeed, all the talk of Southern Slav unity under the banner of one inclusive identity and integrative state was seen by Serbs as yet another attempt by Austria-Hungary to weaken the Serbian position. The Croats, however, saw the Southern Slav project as a system in which the statehood and independence of each South Slav nation was treated with respect (Banac, *National* 111). This also extended to the respect and recognition of regional minority status of each of the groups: in the projected state, both Croats and Serbs found themselves as both majorities and minorities, depending on which region is considered.

The Croatian *integrationist* approach accommodated the differences between identities, was ready for negotiation, for give-and-take, as it were, whereas the Serbian position of *assimilation* and *expansion* was less flexible and less willing to consider the other side, even if that would have been, possibly, a wise strategy in the view of the future joint coexistence in a single state. But, as Max Weber famously stated, “not ideas, but interests – material and ideal – directly govern men’s conduct” (Weber 17). In this instance, it may be concluded that the Serbian position of strength was aligned with the traditionally assimilationist approach in dealing with identity, nation and state. To take into account Croatian and Slovenian claims of separate identity was something that the Serbs were not keen on doing. All of these identities were really complicating matters. One of the leaders of the Serbs in Croatia, Svetozar Pribičević, shared the following logic on a public debate held in Sarajevo in February of 1919:

In the difficult days of our distant past, the destruction of the old Bosnian state's sovereignty was in fact a great good fortune for the people; had sovereign Bosnia and Hercegovina remained, it is quite possible that our people would now have a fourth name [in addition to the Serb, Croat, and Slovene] (Pribičević 4).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

In other words, the demise of the sovereign Bosnian state ensured that yet another national appellation would not be available to the already fragmented people. Besides, Pribičević continued, not only Croatian and Slovenian, but also Montenegrin separate sovereignty was creating another national identity among the Southern Slavs. “Today we must destroy all those sovereignties,” he concluded.

A further case for the integrationist stance could be made in relation to the Croatian protracted tradition and experience in parliamentary processes and environment, even if those have always been subject to approval and manipulation of Vienna and Budapest. However, it was not merely the parliamentary process that the Southern Slavs living in Austria-Hungary participated in: in their political activities they successfully put to practice the integrationist attitude prevailing among the Croats. In forming the Croat-Serb Coalition in the framework of Austria-Hungary's parliamentary system, the Croats successfully exercised the integrationist approach to the governance, and by extension, to the state-building process. The success of Croat-Serb Coalition, which governed Croatia and Slavonia between 1903 and 1918, was seen by Croats as a positive example of the cooperation of Serbs and Croats, in spite of the hiccups that had, unavoidably, occurred.

A hope was that such cooperation could be extended was present among the Croatian politicians and leaders. However, the introduction of Serbian state into the overall proceedings, as it were, brought about a shift in the behavior of Serbian partners in the Coalition. All of a sudden they found themselves on a periphery of Serbdom, no longer in the thick of the South Slav battle against Austria-Hungary. This change can be understood; with the shift in the overall balance of players and goals, one must take stock of their own position and readjust appropriately. But beyond this simple and accurate analysis there lays another truism: the periphery is often under the (self-imposed) pressure to not only confirm to the center, but to even exceed the center's values.

Genuine frontiers between distinct civilizations speak with the voice of menace. In order to assert itself, the periphery often argues for an identity that is more integrated than the identity of a metropolis. To an extent this is what happened among the Southern Slavs. Their historical communities learned how to relent, but they also knew how to carry advantage to the extreme (Banac, *National* 59).

The dichotomy between the assimilation and integration extended to areas other than the makeup of the future/present state. The quote above brings us back to the unresolved (nor likely ever to be resolved) question of identity. As already observed, there are cultural elements which contribute to the distinction of one identity from another. Also

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

of camaraderie, it was clearly not something that profoundly defined the two, since they shared that feature – the Catholic appellation – with scores of other nations.

The following analysis of the role of the Church – particularly the Serbian Orthodox Church – in the formation of the boundaries of identity contains two powerful examples *against* the religious argument. The two show that at the time the religious approach to the definition of identity had been relegated to second place. One of the examples is the linguistic argument, which will be dealt in great detail in the following pages. The other argument – the so-called *Confessional Rule* – will be addressed immediately.

In the differentiation of Serbs from Croats and the rise of modern Serb and Croat national consciousness, religion played the essential role in the Serb-Croatian linguistic area. Whereas the Catholic by rule became Croats, the Orthodox were Serbs (Petrović 366).

This principle relies almost exclusively on the importance of the religious elements in the identity of Croats and Serbs. To the extent that it reflects the situation leading to the mid-nineteenth century, it is largely correct. However, it fails to take into the account the shift to the linguistic basis of determining one's identity. To be fair to Petrović, his text is dated 1968, which means that it had been published in the middle of the period in which there officially existed only one language (Serbo-Croatian) and the religion was still widely seen as the opiate of the people, in the general tradition of the socialist thought, and, specifically in the Socialist Yugoslavia, as a stumbling block on the road to full *bratstvo i jedinstvo* (brotherhood and unity). His thesis, then, appears to be following the party line, and, as the Communist Party was keen to do, seem to be placing the blame for any discord among the *brethren united* to their religious differences, and the ever available scapegoats, the church agitators.

And yet, from the perspective of 2013, it can be noted that the religious formula for the determination of one's national belonging seems to have made a comeback, and appears to be more important than ever. Part of the issue is the liberalization of political systems in the region, in which the religion came around from being merely tolerated to being promoted, for example by politicians in their attempts to win the votes and sentiments of the electorate. The reestablishment of their prominence in public discourse has strengthened the churches and made them (again) very important in the definition of one's identity.

Centralism vs. Federalism

But not all Petrović's contemporaries agreed with his position. Ivo Banac published a landmark article in the *Slavic Review* in 1983, entitled *The Confessional "Rule" and the Dubrovnik Exception: The Origins of the "Serb-Catholic" Circle in the Nineteenth-Century Dalmatia*. It is perhaps of some significance that the article had been published in the United States, and thus the author had greater freedom to explore outside of the confines of the state-prescribed truth of Socialist Yugoslavia. The main protagonists are certain high-profile Catholics of local lineage who chose for themselves the Serb appellation.

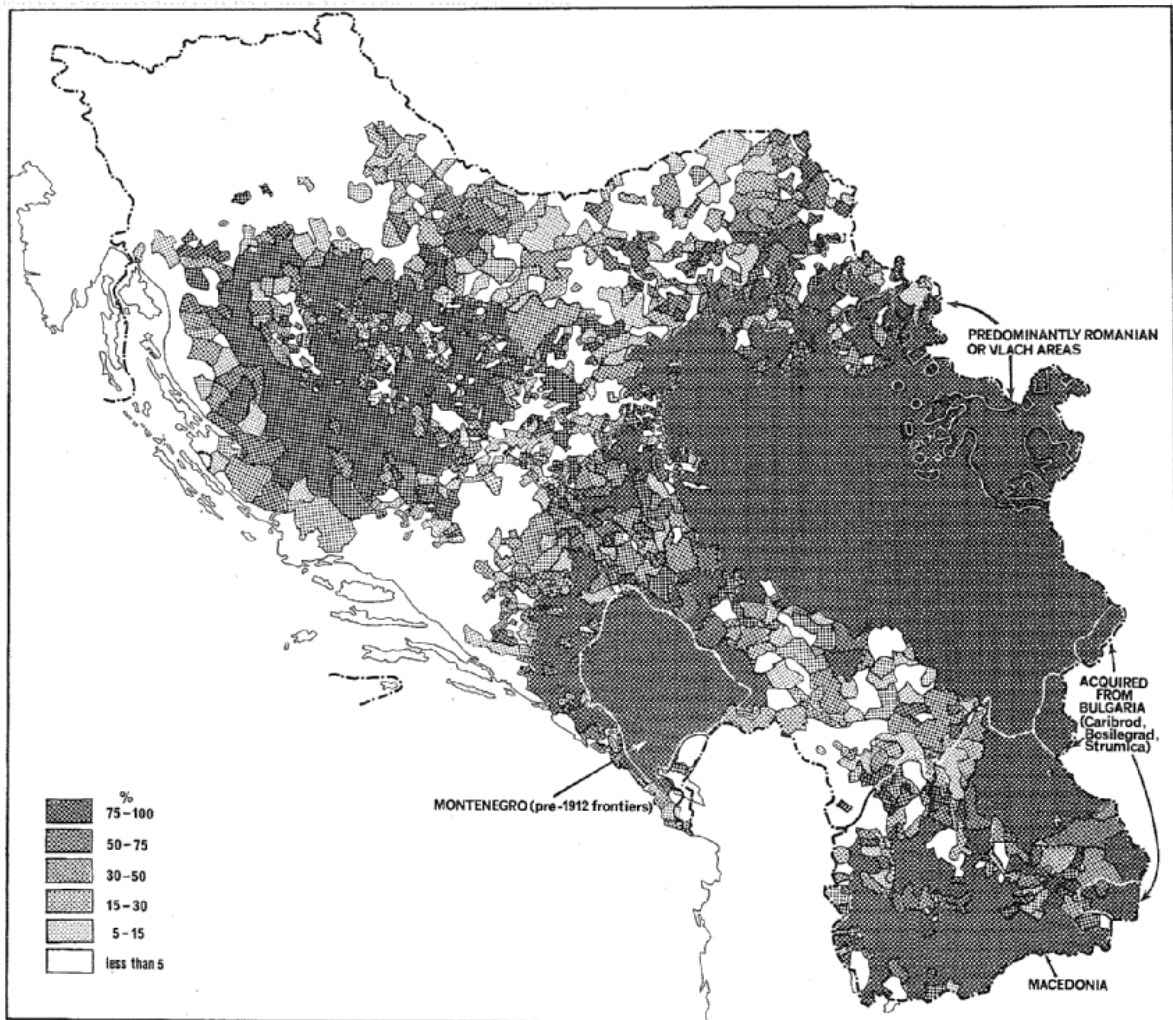
The background to this remarkable story is the propagation of the linguistic argument as the most reliable and true in the delineation of the nation's boundaries, and the abrupt end to the integralist Illyrian Movement, which suddenly ended in the political and military upheavals of 1848. While more will be said regarding the evolution of the linguistic argument later, suffice it to say for the moment that those individuals who decided, of their own free will and conviction, that the appellation *Serb* suited them better than the appellation *Croat*, could do that on the strength of that *free will*, and had every right to do so. Their observers, whether contemporaries or, like ourselves, looking at them from the vantage point of time eloped, must take into the account that element of free will. In fact, it is that free will that is the essence not only of the individual identity, but even of the identity of a nation (Gellner, *Culture* 8).

This brings us to yet another view of the question of identity and nationality that must be considered before further exploration of religious and linguistic foundations of their formation may be conducted. The above quoted Ernest Renan held that the naturalistic determinism of the boundaries of nations, based on language, geography, race or religion, or perhaps something entirely different was not accurate. He clearly disliked the spectacle of nineteenth-century ethnographers as advance guards of national claims of expansion (Gellner, *Culture* 8). *L'existence d'une nation est un plébiscite de tous les jours*, Renan wrote. This ongoing plebiscite, the constant renewal of one's allegiance to one's *chosen* identity and nation, is what really makes a nation. Its parameters, however, cannot be defined by geography, ethnography, or linguistics. In fact, besides the *will*, there is only one more requirement: *amnesia*. *L'oubli et, je dirais même, l'erreur historique sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation* (Gellner, *Culture* 12). This internal amnesia and voluntary assent are the key tools for the development of one's personal identity, but also for the development of the nation. This, of course, lends itself beautifully to abuse, as

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

was the case with many a Romanticist projects which invented the national historical antecedents, each one unique, allegedly, yet each so alike in form to that of the *other* that some alarm bells had to have gone off even in the minds of the most *forgetful* of the *willing* followers. Indeed, that buttressed national identity played an important part in the forget/invent approach, which rendered the social and political thought of Romanticism completely divorced from the realities of practical politics (Brubaker 9).

Map 2: Orthodox Population



Source: Banac, *National*

What, then, did the Dubrovnik Catholic Serbs of 1850s choose to forget? The dismally weak Illyrian Movement, the *confessional rule*, the wretched state of their once prosperous city-state and of Dalmatia as a whole. And what did they decide to accept? The successful state and national project of the Serbs, who spoke practically the same language

Centralism vs. Federalism

and who, at that point at least, were not euphoric with their success to the extent that it grated everyone who looked at them from the outside.

Having examined various opposing approaches to the question of importance of the religious aspects to national predeterminism, let us consider the core religious argument, exemplified in the case of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Christianity became the state religion of the Serbs around 900 AD. The Church achieved autocephaly under its first Archbishop Sava, and became a Patriarchate in 1346. After the Ottomans conquered the Serbian lands the Patriarchate was abolished for nearly a hundred years (1459-1557), after which time the Ottoman statesman Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (Mehmed Paša Sokolović, himself an ethnic Serb who had been taken, the oral tradition claims, as a child from his home by the janissaries), restored it and placed his relative Macarios (Makarije Sokolović) at its helm. In the ensuing period the Patriarchate acquired a significant amount of judicial power within the Orthodox community. The Serbian national traditions propagated by the Orthodox Church, reached areas where they had never before existed. In short, the Ottoman rule had the paradoxical effect of investing the Serbs with a great instrument of national expansion (Banac, *National* 65). Furthermore,

[t]he Serbian church canonized the royal Nemanjić lineage and also several of the despots. Their names were recited in the holy liturgy day in and day out for centuries, reminding even the most humble worshipers that the holy kings of Serbian blood and language once reigned over them – and, it could be inferred, might do so again (Banac, *National* 68).

Gradually, Orthodoxy and Serbdom became synonymous in Serbian national thought. There was a feeling of communality with the other Orthodox Slavs, particularly with the Russians, but pan-Slavic ideals never caught on, as it did with Croats and Slovenes. Instead, the Serbian community was self-contained, clearly delineated by the Orthodoxy on the one hand (when compared against the Croats, who were linguistically close), and by linguistic differences on the other (when compared against the fellow-Orthodox Christians, the Bulgarians). The importance of religion was greater with the Serbs than with the Croats, for obvious reasons, one might add, particularly if considered in the light of the universalism of the Catholic Church.

Both the Serb and Croat national ideologies were very much characterized by their different attitudes toward religion. The Serbs, because of the patriotic traditions of Serbian Orthodoxy, naturally looked upon their church as a national institution. Even when they were totally irreligious, many of their intellectuals propagated

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Orthodoxy, much to the irritation of those who wished to establish pure linguistic Serbianism (Banac, *National* 107).

Even if the religious differences were something that divided the Croats and Serbs, one thing that they had in common was the language. This common language extended to the Muslim population in Bosnia and Sandžak, and, partially, to Macedonia. However, the Muslim Slavs, later to be given the *Bosniak* appellation, remained largely inactive in the process of the formation of national identity and in the political process of the creation/extension of the common state.

From mid-nineteenth century the Serbian national movement increasingly based itself on the natural right of nationality, defined largely in linguistic terms. This was in good part based on the writings and activities of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Serbian writer and ethnographer, who himself came up with the coinage “Roman Catholic Serb” to describe the Slav population – Croats – that lived to the west of Montenegro and Serbia (Karadžić, *Pismenica*). His choice of the dialect of southern Herzegovina, nearly identical to that spoken in Dubrovnik, as the Serbian literary language was an attempt at a totally new definition of Serbian nationhood (Banac, *Confessional* 450). This novel idea was soon picked up by the expansionist (and irredentist) Serbs who sought the opportunity to integrate all the Serbs into the Serbian state. One of the difficulties of that endeavor was the fact that the Serbs outside of Serbian state (and even within it) were often mixed with Catholic or Muslim populations (as well as non-Slav populations), and the claims and argumentation for the redemption of a minority could not come at the price of the surrounding majority's voice not being heard. Therefore the linguistic approach provided a useful vehicle for further expansion. As has been mentioned earlier, the assimilationist force of the Orthodox Church has manifested itself in the absorption of a large section of ethnic groups (such as Vlachs) into the Serb *ethnos*. Later on, political (1878) and military (1912-13) victories would bring further territorial expansions. Accompanying the political and military means of expansion was the method of linguistic assimilation.

The linguistic theory is based upon the shared dialect, commonly referred to as *štokavian*. The name itself is derived from the Serbian and Croatian word meaning *what*. A great majority of Serbs use the variation *što* (or *šta*), which gives the name basis for the name *štokavian* that describes it. Most of the Croats also use this dialect, with the exception of the rather thin Adriatic littoral, the islands, and the Istria peninsula, which use the *čakavian* dialect (based on the word *ča*, another version of *what*). The third variant is

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

form of the Croatian language. This self-denying step of *kajkavian* Croats was on the one hand motivated by the immense literary prestige of Dubrovnik's Renaissance and Baroque poets and playwrights. Another aspect of this unique gesture was relating to the underlying national movement and the desire of the Illyrianists to place themselves closer to the eastern users of *štokavian*. This “was possible only in the context of tolerant Illyrianist ideology, which was so preoccupied with the conciliatory give and take” (Banac, *National* 78)

The Serbs who accepted the linguistic basis of national definition also built their case around the literary tradition of Dubrovnik. However, the propagators of the linguistic basis for the expansion of the Serbian state and of the Serbdom *au general* did not take into account the long and clear history of hostility toward the spread of Orthodoxy that the city-state of Dubrovnik had on its record. The government did not even allow the Orthodox priests to reside in the city, and moved, as late as 1803, to have them expelled (von Engel iii). Furthermore, the citizens of Dubrovnik believed in its mission as the Catholic outpost *in partibus infidelium*. None of this stayed in the way for various Serbian publicists to start claiming that Dubrovnik was in fact an ancient Serbian city (Banac, *Confessional* 452). Thus in one fell swoop, the literary corpus of prolific Renaissance and Baroque writers of Dubrovnik, was of course also automatically claimed as Serbian literary heritage.

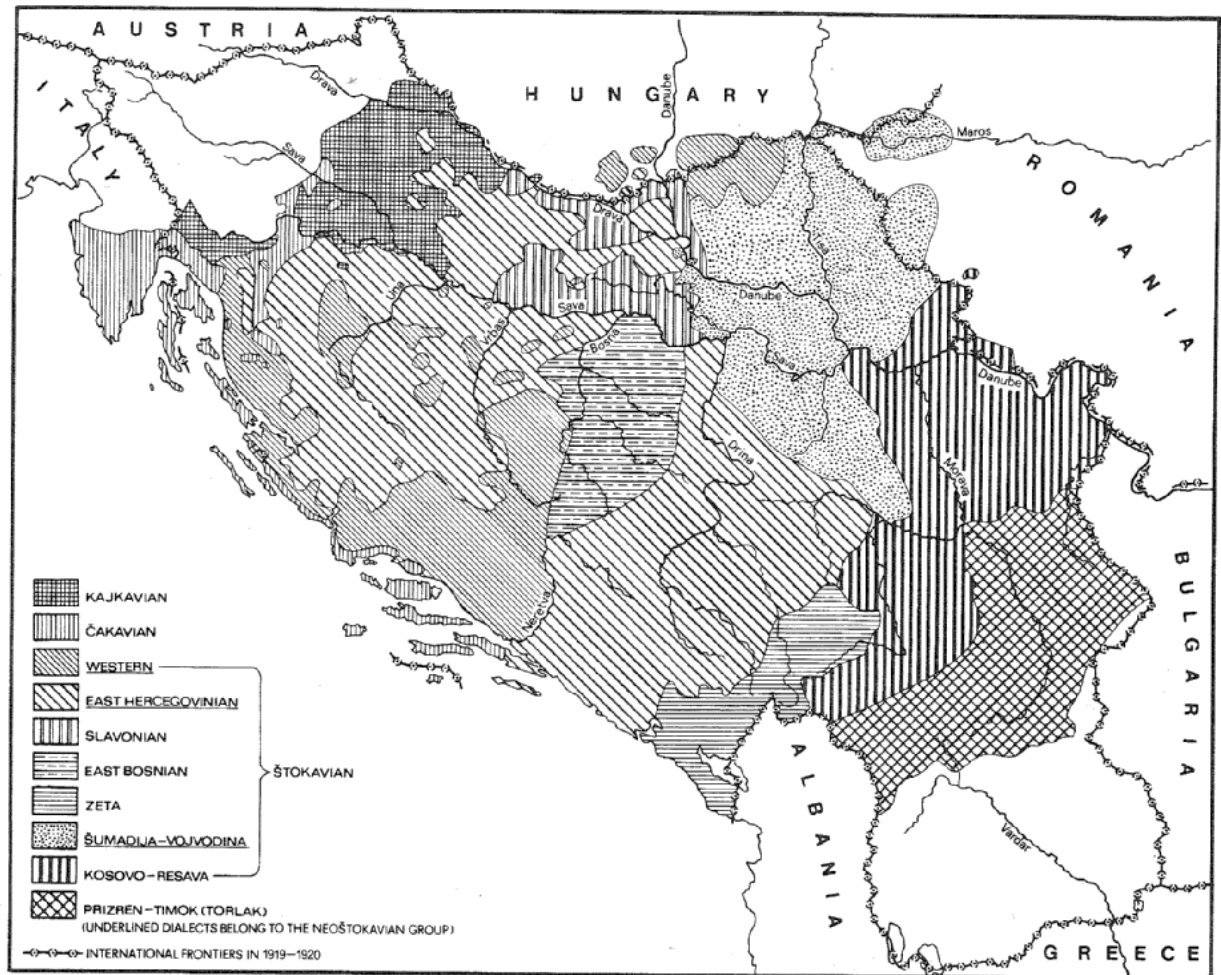
Here a different aspect of the already discussed phenomenon of the Catholic-Serbs of Dubrovnik is plainly shown: before the selected citizens of Dubrovnik embraced the Serbdom, the Serbdom had already had laid claim on them, their city, and their local heritage, with which they clearly identified. Their choice is, then, first of all, a consequence of an earlier claim by the Serbian propagandists. Secondly, it is not anywhere near as great a leap of imagination as the original Serb claim on Dubrovnik is. In this way, through a sequence of appropriations, a *shared* cultural idiom was achieved. "It was only natural that this idiom should be that of the majority group, especially if it *already* contained a powerful literature of Enlightenment (Gellner, *Culture* 78).

Less obvious consequence of the new emphasis of the linguistic basis for the extended state is that it went against the state right tradition which was of great importance to the Croatian national ideology. At the same time, this new emphasis did not weaken the emerging Serbian statehood. Implicit in this new emphasis was the idea that the Serbian state should ultimately coincide with the limits of Serbian settlement, regardless of the local historical tradition (Banac, *National* 105). Ilija Garašanin was Serbia's minister of the

Centralism vs. Federalism

interior in the 1840s. He wholeheartedly accepted the premises of Karadžić's theory, which claimed that the national frontiers were linguistic. Eventually, this led to the formation of the belief of the need and the responsibility of “liberation and unification” of all Serbs into a single Great Serbian state. This gradually became the master principle of Serbian policy, and in 1844 Garašanin codified it in a secret document called *Načrtanije* (Outline) (Banac, *National* 83).

Map 4: Serbian and Croatian Dialects



Source: Banac, *National*

What of the linguistic approach to the frontiers of a nation? Surely, it is not a theory without appeal or good grounds. “The most characteristic voice of the nation is its language, and therefore the most authentic frontiers are linguistic” (Banac, *National* 28). But, while a single nation in principle cannot be multilingual, multiple nations may use a single language. English, German, and French are among the languages that are used by

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

multiple nations. There is no doubt that Croats and Serbs share a common language, a language which is largely understood by both sides, except, perhaps, in the most extremely localized dialects. Whether that language bears a label of Croat or Serb is beside the point, for the labels merely reflect the developments in the national identity, which have occurred independently of the language itself, but which later served as the basis of the labeling of the language. The Serbian language, as we have seen, has been maintained by the liturgy in the national church. It remained affixed in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, as reflected in the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. The Croatian language, on the other hand, has been greatly influenced by the joining to the literary expression prevailing in the Western genres, from the Middle Ages onward. The Croatian culture, especially its intellectual and political aspects, ultimately developed within the West European zone (Catholic Mediterranean and Central European) (Banac, *National* 62). This is reflected not only in the Latin alphabet used, but in the type of literature developed by its writers and poets, from Dubrovnik and other centers of learning on the Adriatic. Whatever conclusions may be reached regarding the linguistic basis for the establishment of national frontiers, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it played a major role in the drive to unite the Southern Slavs.

However, the “naturalistic determinism” as a key element in the creation a nation, or national identity, has been rejected by the theoreticians: the boundaries are not dictated by the language, race, religion or anything else (Gellner, *Culture* 8). Ernest Renan also conceded that the ethnic groups of premodern times were generally barely conscious of themselves or of any features that separated them from the groups who surrounded them. This changed in the late nineteenth century, and the internally undifferentiated quality of the group became a fixation, which in turn necessitated “that a veil of forgetfulness should discreetly cover obscure internal differences” (Gellner, *Culture* 10). Multiple approaches to the question of identity offered themselves to the Southern Slavs.

The New State or the Extended State?

The emerging and numerous identities of the Southern Slavs, which had thereto been unknown to the westerners, proved to be difficult to grasp all at once. For that reason, among the American and West European politicians and experts there was a tendency to label all the various groups as one, and the title of *Serbian* was used the most. This had several practical reasons; the Serbs were the most numerous of the Southern Slavs; they were present among the population in most of the Southern Slav territories; the Kingdom of Serbia had been an internationally recognized state for some 40 years, had diplomatic representation, and was officially one of the Allies.

Resorting to such simplifications in everyday referencing cannot be taken as an indication of lack of interest. Be it as it may, the strategists and representatives of the Allied states dealing first with the Europe-wide conflict of World War I, and later with the attempts to establish a lasting peace, were ill equipped to profoundly understand the underlying differences of the local population.

Map 5: The Balkan Peninsula, 1817-1877.



Source: Magocsi

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Map 6: The Balkan Peninsula, 1878-1912.



Source: Magocsi

President Wilson was merely one among many who were not entirely clear as to who was who. Polish politician and member of Polish National Committee, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, apparently was also not clear on who the Yugoslavs were. In his note (Link 54:180) to Colonel House he referred to the Ukrainian forces in Western Galicia as the Yugoslavs, and is requesting that the Allies do something about it. Paderewski's Slav origin might have contributed to the confusion; he understood that *jug* meant south, and perhaps assumed that the Ukrainians are also Southern Slavs, given their relative position to the Poles.

The rapid change of events also contributed to the confusion. During the Supreme Council of War meeting held in Paris on March 17, 1919, President Wilson referred to "modified Serbia." He surely was aware of the fact that about four months earlier the Southern Slav lands of the Habsburg Monarchy had formed a State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, and that that State joined the Kingdom of Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in early December of 1918. The clumsily long name of the new state could very well be the reason why he used a shortcut, a synecdoche, one part to name

Centralism vs. Federalism

all. One cannot find fault with this. Besides, the reference quoted here is a verbal transcript, not an official document. However, if one considers the implications of what has been stated earlier regarding the lack of interest the Allies showed in the internal organization of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, perhaps a correlation can be detected.

In a meeting held in April of 1919, during which the signatories of the Pact of London were trying to work out a solution to the deadlock introduced by Italy's sudden interest in the port of Fiume, Baron Sonnino, Italian Foreign Minister, stated the following:

Sonnino: But Serbia refused to agree to that arrangement, and the Allies responded that in this case, they were withdrawing their offer. So we can say that Fiume was promised to the Croats, but not to the Serbs (Link 57:40).

Baron Sonnino here made a distinction between the Croats in Serbs with the view that the Serbs were Allies in the war, while the Croats fought on the Austro-Hungarian side, thus deserved no spoils of the war. If Fiume had been promised to belligerent Croats, it was easier to deny that promise to the Croats than to the friendly Serbs. Sonnino, it appears, had a very clear picture of who were the Croats and who were the Serbs. To this the French Prime Minister Clemenceau responded: "That makes no difference today" (Link 57:40). Did Clemenceau mean that now that the Southern Slavs have united into a single Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes there was no longer need to make distinction among them? That the Croat and Slovene soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army and navy, particularly in the case of Croats, were mere draftees? Or that the complicated issue of the fragmented nationalities in the Balkans has been resolved with the unity in the new expanded Serbian Kingdom? The British Prime Minister Lloyd George also used the terms Serbs and Croats interchangeably. "The map which he had in his hand showed Fiume in Croatia. This was known to Serbs... To give Fiume to Italy would break faith with the Serbs" (Link 57:491). The issues relating the Pact of London and the Adriatic Question, of which Fiume was the focal point, are discussed extensively throughout the text. At this point, suffice it to say that the abundance of local identities and names was making things difficult to the very people who were deciding the fate of the peoples concerned.

Up to this point in the deliberations of the Big Four only the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes were featured. Montenegro and the Montenegrins had not been mentioned yet. A Memorandum (Link 57:499-502) written by Michael Ivorsky Pupin on April 19,

Centralism vs. Federalism

A similar simplification of the question of language also existed. One of the foremost western experts on the Southern Slavs, British historian and traveler R.W. Seton-Watson, wrote that:

Serb and Croat, it must be remembered, are two names for one and the same language, the sole difference being that the former is written in a reformed Cyrilline (sic) alphabet, the latter in Latin characters (Seton-Watson, *Spirit* 9).

That evaluation of the identity question did not satisfy the aspirations of the constituent peoples. In this struggle the Croats were on the losing side; their smaller numbers and lesser geographical dispersion made it inevitably so. For that reason some Croats started proposing the idea of a common identity which was to encompass all of the peoples in the geographical area in question, under which none of those peoples would gain the upper hand, as it were, and each constituent nation would have its autonomy, both politically and identity-wise.

The link between the Yugoslav identity and the federal organization of the new state was something that the Serbian side was not willing to accept (Robinson 10). They all strove for the creation of a single state, but the differences appeared when it came to the question of the organizational makeup it should have. In general terms, the Croats and the Slovenes were interested in the federal system, while the Serbs were in favor of the centralized state organization. The exception to the above generalization were the Serbs from the Vojvodina, who favored a federation (Frankel 417). The question, therefore, could also be posed in the following way: would a *new* state be created, or would the *existing* Serbian state simply extend its borders westwards?

The underlying reasons for both positions have already been identified: Croats and Slovenes were less numerous, had no political or diplomatic recognition by the Allied powers, and the lands which they inhabited were under a great threat from the Italian irredentists. The Serbs, on the other hand, already had a state, political and diplomatic recognition, and a state apparatus which could be easily extended to any newly acquired territory without much modification. Thus the Kingdom of Serbia was the key participant in the creation of a unified state of Southern Slavs. Indeed, at the very onset of the war the Serbian government had informed the Allies that, in the event a victory is won, Serbia was poised “to create out of Serbia a powerful southwestern Slavic state; all the Serbs, all the Croats, and all the Slovenes would enter its composition” (Janković 97).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

The efforts of “gallant little Serbia” against the Central Powers were recognized throughout the Allied nations, and the understanding that indeed the sanction of such plan was forthcoming became the norm (Newman, 47). Besides the open question regarding the organization of the new state, the question of territorial boundaries was of utmost importance. In the event that Serbia opted with the Pact of London, and acquired only those lands in which at least a minority of the population was of Serbian stock, the Croats and the Slovenians would be left out. Croats in particular did not like that option because that would cut their lands into two or possibly three states.

Map 8: The Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1867-1914.



Source: Magocsi

The main partner of the Serbian state – and its main opponent at times and in various matters – was the Yugoslav Committee, which was founded in April of 1915 in Paris, by the members of the Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian political emigration from Austria-Hungary. All of the members of the Yugoslav Committee came from Croatia and Slovenia, with the exception of two of them, who hailed from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Cornwall, *Experience* 656). By the 1915 the Yugoslav Committee moved its head office

Centralism vs. Federalism

to London, but it maintained its presence in Paris, as well as opened new posts in Geneva, St. Petersburg, Cleveland, Portland, Valparaiso and Washington. At this time members from Slovenia and those of Serbian ethnicity joined the Committee.

The Committee was in a unique position in that it had never been voted in through a democratic procedure (although some of its members, notably Frano Supilo, had previously been members of both Zagreb and Budapest Parliaments). The authorization they received, rather, came from the members of the *Sabor* (Parliament) in Zagreb. In the similar manner, the émigré organizations of the Southern Slavs, spanning the whole world, gave their endorsement to the Yugoslav Committee.

At the congress that was held in Antofagasta, Chile in January 1913 the delegates of the Yugoslav colonies of South America empowered the Committee to represent them at the Allied courts. The same assembly provided the financial means to the Committee. The congress that was held in Pittsburgh in November 1916 gave similar authority to the Yugoslav Committee. In further building of its case as the bona fide voice of the oppressed Southern Slavs the Yugoslav Committee calls on such endorsements as was the Congress of the Yugoslavs of North America, which had been held in Chicago only months earlier, and which had adopted the Yugoslav Committee's program as their own. That the Congress attended by 563 delegates should vote unanimously on such an affair was indeed an extraordinary endorsement. Furthermore, various declarations issued by the Southern Slav representatives in the Austria-Hungary, as well as manifestations of the public opinion gave further endorsements to the Committee (Mihajlović, 24).

Furthermore, Hrvatska Narodna Zajednica (Croatian People's Community), from Cleveland, Ohio, claiming more than 35,000 members, declared that it intended to participate in the "propaganda in favor of the idea of the Yugoslav emancipation from the Austrian yoke" (*Bulletin Yougoslave*). Other publications reported of the organization of the "Second Monster Congress of Yugoslavs (sic) in America", informing the readers that the activities of the various Yugoslav organizations in the United States have already "succeeded in arousing for our cause the sympathies and the support of the American public opinion and of many influential Anglo-American papers" (*Southern Slav Bulletin*). Sundry émigré and church organizations also tried to do their best in promoting of the Yugoslav question. Further vehicles for the similar message were *L'Echo de l'Adriatique*, *Jugoslovenski Svijet*, *Glas Slovenaca Hrvata i Srba*, *Novine*, etc. (Cornwall 39).

The Yugoslav Committee itself adopted a pro-active policy of promotion of the Yugoslav cause. The first publication released in Britain was simply entitled *To the British*

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

been keen on avoiding direct or official contact with the Yugoslav Committee or its representatives, because it had not wanted to give the Committee too much legitimacy. Furthermore, up to this point the main course of Serbian expansion westwards was seen as the absorption of those Southern Slavic lands from the Habsburg Monarchy which had at least some Serbian population, which would have resulted in if not homogenous, then at least predominantly Orthodox Greater Serbia. This “Smaller Greater Serbia” became option B at this point, while the unification with all of the Southern Slavs became plan A. Objectively speaking, there was no more hope of Serbian homogeneity, and even the majority was all but gone. What did remain, however, were the plurality and the advantageous position as regards both the internal organization of the state and the diplomatic network that was interacting with the western powers.

As intended, the joint declaration of these two entities gave a clear signal to the Allies, who were already making preparations for the peace treaties pursuant to the now obvious victorious outcome of the war, the message being that the two chief constituents of the Southern Slavs are in one accord in their expressed desire to form a single state. There was no question as regards the legitimacy of these two bodies to enter into such agreement. On the one hand the Serbian government had in its ranks representatives from both the newly elected and the outgoing government, which provided for continuity in regards to the decisions it made. The Yugoslav Committee, on the other hand, and its six representatives had the full support of the general assembly of their organization, and were therefore authorized to make decisions and enter into contractual and binding relations with the Kingdom of Serbia. In fact, the peculiar position of the Yugoslav Committee – that of being a rather unofficial body, consisting of former politicians and exiles who did not get a clear electoral endorsement from their constituents – was offset by the almost unequivocal support they received, without ever being “repudiated or disavowed by any party or individual in the political life of Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Istria, etc.” (Seton-Watson, *Correspondence* 306-8). Still, the historical institutions such as the Croatian National Assembly were not represented. And, not all political parties subsequently supported the Corfu Declaration.

As mentioned earlier, the members of the Yugoslav Committee felt hard-pressed to declare their intent to unify with the Kingdom of Serbia mainly because of the threat that the Italian irredentism posed to Istria and Dalmatia. This urgency led them to, for the

Centralism vs. Federalism

moment at least, place the question of the internal makeup of the state onto the back burner. The Serbs, on the other hand

depreciated any extreme form of federalism, but were quite explicit in the assurance that if for instance Croatia or other sections of the Jugo-Slavs insisted on a federal solution they would be prepared to accept this. In other word there was to be a settlement by amicable agreement and Serbia repudiated any idea of forcing her will upon other (Seton-Watson, *Correspondence* 306-8).

As shown here, the Corfu Declaration failed to address the internal makeup of the new state of the Southern Slavs. There was a clear desire on behalf of the Yugoslav Committee to see the new state organized as a federation, and a definite intention of the Serbian government to simply extend their present state apparatus onto the new territories; that is, to keep the centralized system. The urgency of the need to make a statement of intent to unify, and the overall unpredictability of the wartime situation, contributed to the Yugoslav Committee's decision to agree to postpone the decision on the internal organization of the new state and to settle for the statement of intent to unify alone. Not everyone felt that the Italian menace was worth the compromise. Stjepan Radić, leader of the Croatian Peasant party, reflected with the following words to the ideas of the unitary state and everything that the Declaration stood for:

Gentlemen, your mouths are full of words like "*narodno jedinstvo*, one unitary state, one kingdom under the Karadjordjević dynasty." And you think that it is enough to say that we Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes are one people because we speak one language and that on account of this we must also have a unitary centralist state, moreover a kingdom, and that only such a linguistic and state unity can make us happy... You think that you can frighten the people [with the Italian menace] I am certain that you will never win the Croats... because the whole Croat peasant people are equally against your centralism as against militarism, equally for a republic as for a popular agreement with the Serbs. And should you want to impose your centralism by force, this will happen. We Croats shall say openly and clearly: If the Serbs really want to have such a centralist state and government, may God bless them with it, but we Croats do not want any state organization except a confederated federal republic (Stjepan Radić to the Central Committee of Zagreb's National Council, 1918, as quoted in Banac, *National*, 226).

Italy and the Adriatic

As a latecomer into the fold of the European nation-states, Italy faced the upward struggle to assert itself as a European power. Due to geographic reasons – being a peninsula – the process of the establishment of its borders was relatively easy, and it resulted in most Italians living within the borders of the Italian national-state. Its north-western border was also fairly clearly defined by the Alps, but that did not preclude border disputes with France and the Habsburg Monarchy.

On the northern Adriatic coast, by one British estimate, there lived some 30,000 Italians among the general population of about 635,000 inhabitants (Seton-Watson, *Balkans* 56). The American estimates were slightly different, the panel of experts having estimated that 750,000 Yugoslavs would fall under Italian territory if all the Italian claims were accepted, and that staggering 836,000 Yugoslavs would be within the borders of Italian state (Walworth 338). The north-Adriatic Italians were situated mainly in the coastal cities of Dalmatia and on some of the islands. The urban Italian population consisted of middle class merchants and intelligentsia, and their presence in the Dalmatian cities dated back to the Venetian control and/or significant presence on the northern Adriatic coast. The Italian population in these areas was a minority, however, and the lands in question were firmly in the hands of the Habsburg Monarchy when the Italian Republic was established in 1861, thus they stayed outside of the Italian borders. Therefore, the *Risorgimento*, having accomplished its main objective of creating a unified Italian state, acquired a new focus. Under the parole of *Italia irredenta*, the Unredeemed Italy, Italian patriots sought to include the remainder of Italian areas into the single Italian state.

The Venetian legacy was not the only historical reason which made Italy look outside its borders. The greatness of the Roman Empire hung heavily on the shoulders of the new state, miniscule in comparison to its predecessor. In the decade in which the British monarch was crowned the Empress of India, Italy had no empire to call its own. Meanwhile, a number of European states had extensive empires that spread throughout the world. This made the Italians cast their eyes upon the former Roman and Venetian provinces, such as Dalmatia, Albania, Corfu, Asia Minor and Northern Africa.

The final element in the development of the Italian foreign policy in the decades leading to the World War I was the lack of raw materials at its disposal, which “contributed both to her aggressiveness and to her weaknesses. She needed allies who were willing to support her, but she wanted to act independently whenever it was advantageous”

Centralism vs. Federalism

(Živojinović 18). This end-goal orientation has led to some alliances and policy shifts which did not always appear to be very sensible; Italy became the ally of the Austria-Hungary, in spite of the fact that the Habsburgs were the single largest obstacle in the realization of the Italian claims to the northern Adriatic. By entering such alliance Italy implicitly renounced any claims it had on Dalmatia, as well as on other areas which fell under the Austria-Hungary's borders, such as Trentino and Goritza. Perhaps this alliance is to be viewed as a pragmatic policy of choosing the lesser of two evils; were the Habsburg Monarchy to be dissolved, a new factor, a state of Southern Slavs, would enter the fray, with claims much greater than Italy's. If, instead, Italy was to align itself with Austria-Hungary, and the dual monarchy was to survive the impending conflict, Italy could always get compensated by territories which did not belong to the Habsburgs, such as Albania, Montenegro or Macedonia. But Austria-Hungary was not the only allies Italy had in the World War I.

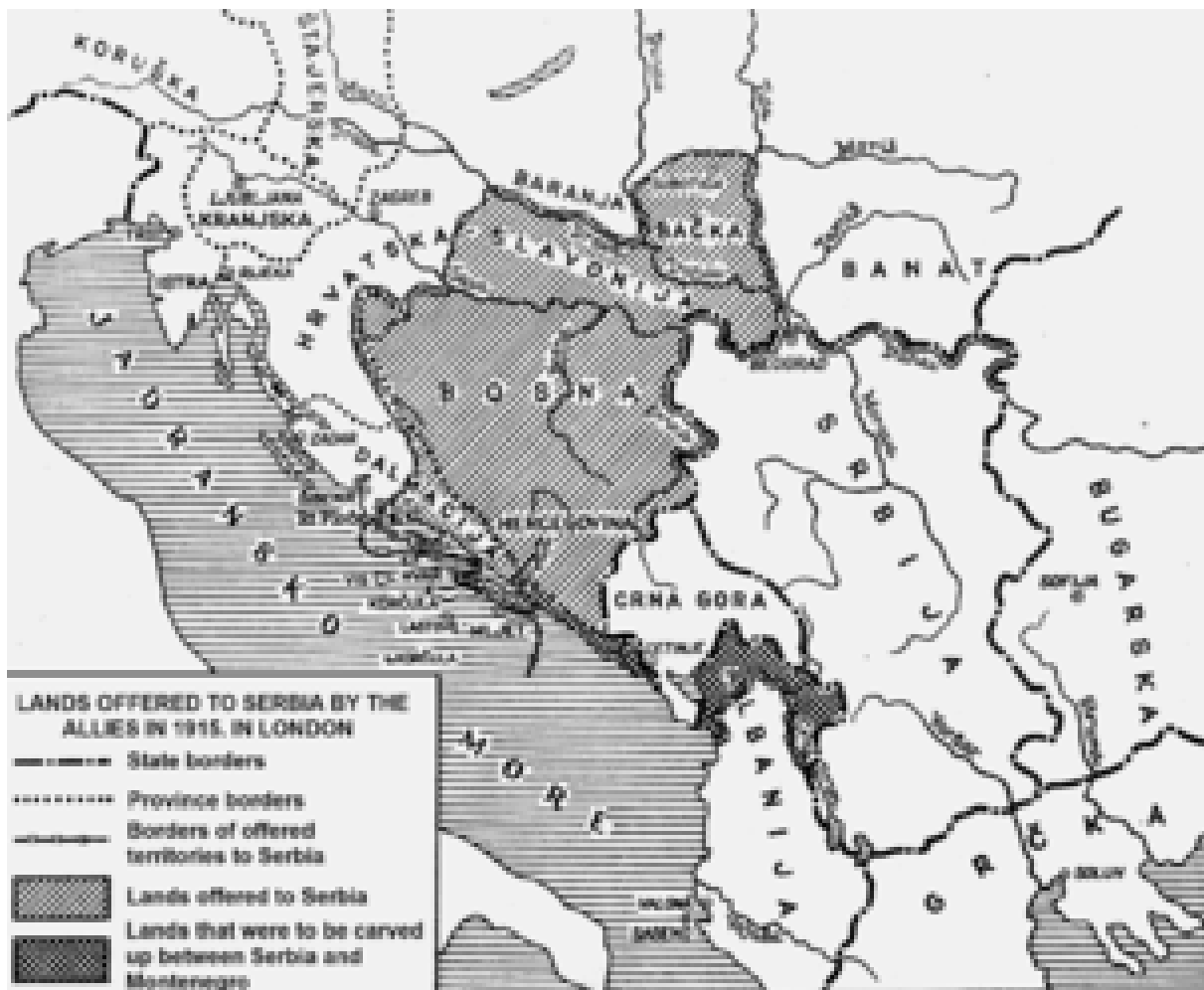
The Pact of London was a secret agreement signed on April 26, 1915 between France, czarist Russia and Great Britain on the one side, and Italy on the other. The purpose of the Treaty was to draw Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. In order to achieve that, the Allies offered Italy large tracts of territories that were administered by Austria-Hungary at the time. Given that at the same time there were two other cobelligerent states conducting warfare against Austria-Hungary, those two states – kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro – were also assigned territories, in spite of the fact that they were not present at the negotiations, and were not even aware of them. This changed when the Allies informed Serbia – but not Montenegro – through an official note, on August 4, 1915. As a direct result of the Pact of London Italy changed the sides in the World War I. The change of the Italian position could appear turncoat or flippant, but in fact, the policy behind it was very steady. Indeed, Italy changed sides in the war and attacked its erstwhile ally Austria-Hungary, but the final objective remained the same: the acquisition of as much territory and the greatest possible extension of the sphere of influence.

The Southern Slav lands promised to Italy were the whole of Istria, the Dalmatia between the bay of Maslenica and river Krka, including the cities of Zadar and Šibenik, and virtually all the Adriatic islands, with the exception of Krk in the vicinity of Fiume, and Brač in the vicinity of Split. With this treaty Italy was assured the absolute naval supremacy in the Adriatic. The Kingdom of Serbia was assigned the port of Split, and the

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

island of Brač, along with the rest of the Dalmatian coast to Dubrovnik, including the peninsula of Pelješac. Also granted to Serbia were the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slavonia, the Vojvodina, and unspecified parts of Albania. The Kingdom of Montenegro was assigned the city of Dubrovnik, and the coast all the way east to the Albanian port San Giovanni di Medua (Shëngjin) (Zeman 42-4). The question of the Croatian coast between Maslenica (west of Zadar) and Istria – including the port of Fiume would be settled after the war. It was the Italian side, in fact, that insisted on this provision, the thinking at the time being that rump Croatia, or whatever remained of the Austria-Hungary would be assigned that tract, along with the island of Krk.

Map 9: Lands offered to Serbia under the Pact of London



Source: Albrecht-Carrie

Centralism vs. Federalism

The Italian appetite for the Adriatic was based on two motives. One was the *Risorgimento*, the last drive to include all the Italians who had remained outside of the Italian borders into a single state. The western coast of Istria, some of the Adriatic islands and ports on the Croatian coast had significant Italian population, albeit scattered and drowned among the Croat majority. Yet their claim was not preposterous, and the associated idealism held by the Italian interventionists and nationalists contributed to the triumph of the principle of nationality, even if in the end it worked against their hopes and aspirations, since the Italian population was a clear minority in the coveted Adriatic areas. The irredentists, however, were not the only vested group on the Italian side. The dynasty was seeking to extend the national borders, its glory and grandeur, by acquiring territories further to the east, and a protectorate over Albania and part of Asia Minor.

President Wilson was made aware of the Pact of London early on, the American ambassadors in both Paris and Rome having caught the wind of it. He offered no comment or interpretation, virtually ignoring the question until the Paris Peace Conference, at which time this issue took up disproportionately high attention (Temperley 4:278). This silence did not escape the Italian politicians, who understood that the United States may not be willing to embrace the terms of the Pact of London (Saladino 160). The American ambassador to Rome wrote to Colonel House that “Italy is acting in a wholly selfish way and it matters little with her whether she supports the Allies or the Dual Alliance, provided she is on the winning side” (Link 32:504). Conversely, the European powers who granted to Italy the lands she sought acted in accordance to the old political dealings. None of this was acceptable to Wilson, though he scarcely made it known until the end of the war (Walworth 55).

Given that the Pact of London was secret, the Italian politicians and population were also unaware of all the provisions it contained. Since it had never been brought before the parliament for ratification, those who negotiated it and sought to implement it – including the Foreign Minister Sonnino and the King himself – were in fact bringing the parliamentary democracy and its functioning into a precarious situation. Designed to boost the Allied presence in the Adriatic and to weaken the southern flanks of Austria-Hungary, the Pact failed to deliver; the expected military advantages would have somewhat offset the high-handed treatment of the territories and the populations in question. As it turned

out, not only were there no military benefits to speak of, but the Italian involvement in the Allied war effort created additional problems (Živojinović 40).

Map 10: Lands offered to Italy under the Pact of London



René Albrecht-Carrie, *Italy at the Paris Peace Conference*. Archon, 1966

Source: Albrecht-Carrie

President Wilson's attitude towards the Pact of London, indeed towards any old-style secret diplomacy dealings, was that it was *not* binding, and that it could be altered when the time was right. Shortly after the United States entered the war Wilson wrote to

Centralism vs. Federalism

Colonel House that “our real peace terms – those upon which we shall undoubtedly insist – are not acceptable to either France or Italy. When the war is over we can force them to our way of thinking, because by that time they will, among other things, be financially in our hands” (Day 22, Gelfand 12).

Just what “our way of thinking” may be was not very clear even to the top State Department officials, most of whom thought that Wilson would not declare war on Austria-Hungary, but would help Italy in its battles against the Dual Monarchy and then wait for it to declare war on the U.S.A. But Wilson took the initiative and had the United States declare the war against the Dual Monarchy, making sure that a phrase declaring that America did not wish to get involved with the internal issues of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was included in the declaration. The Italians were shocked by such provisions, because they expected that the United States would help them in the acquisition of the territories they desired. More importantly, the declared assurances of non-interference in the internal matters of Austria-Hungary in itself carried a message to the Italians, the message whose gist was that they should not expect significant territorial gains as the outcome of the war.

From the *State* of SHS to the *Kingdom* of SHS

One of the ways of differentiating between the two SHS is that the first one – which lasted only a little over a month, was a *State* of SHS (State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs), while the second one, which in one form or the other lasted until the Hitler's invasion of 1940, was referred to as *Kingdom* of SHS (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes).

In May of 1917 the Southern Slavs living in the Habsburg Monarchy demanded that they be given a freedom to unite into a single entity which would be an integral part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. However, as the war wore on it became clear that Austria-Hungary will not survive in its present shape, and the Southern Slavs started looking for other alternatives. Following the lead set by the Czechs, who declared severance of all ties with the Austria-Hungary on October 28th, the Slovenes, the Croats and the Serbs living in the dual kingdom proclaimed their independence on October 29th 1918. The declaration came in two steps: the Croatian Parliament declared that the elements of the triune kingdom of Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia are an independent state. Given that the Croatian Parliament had already recognized the supremacy of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, their decision for an independent Croatia was automatically extended into the union of the independent Croatia with Slovenia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Vojvodina, all of which had been parts of Austria-Hungary. This “semi-automatic” aspect of state formation has been a bone of contention among the Croat historians ever since. Many claim that the Parliament's endorsement of the National Council had not extended to the matters of state formation, and that the ratification by the Parliament should have taken place. Given that no such ratification occurred, the formation of the state was illegal and without the consent of the Croatian people. After all, the Parliament does not have the right to transfer to anybody else the rights and the obligations bestowed upon it through the democratic process of voting.

Austria-Hungary immediately recognized and accepted the new situation, and declared that its navy should fall under the control of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. At the same time, however, the Italian elements in Fiume declare that they wish to be united with Italy. At first sight this declaration seemed unimportant and so utterly baseless that the National Council paid it scarce attention. However, the desires of the Fiume Italians went hand in hand with the promises made to Italy in the secret treaty that the Allies signed with it back in 1915, and the State of SHS realized that they had to

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Serbs, both from the Kingdom of Serbia and from the former Habsburg lands, opting for centralized structure, and the Croats and the Slovenes desiring a federal system.

Just five days after the Vojvodina had been unilaterally declared an integral part of the Kingdom of Serbia, the representatives of the State of SHS came to Belgrade to negotiate the terms of the union. The impotence of their position must have been painfully obvious to them as they faced the Serbian monarch and demanded the federal-confederate system in the new unified state. The Serbian monarch responded with a pre-prepared statement which declared that the two states – the Kingdom of Serbia and the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs – were to be united into a single state which shall bear the name of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and which shall be ruled by the Serbian dynasty. This event, which took place on December 1, 1918, marked the beginning of a new unified state of the Southern Slavs, a state which would ten years later get the name Yugoslavia. The State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs lasted for only 35 days.

The reaction of the Allied leaders was the informal recognition that there indeed was a desire among the Southern Slavs to unite into a single state. The diplomatic recognition of the State of SHS never took place, nor was it extended to the newly formed Kingdom of SHS. However, given that the Serbian diplomatic corps were present in all the major European capitals, they seamlessly took over the task of being diplomatic representatives of Slovenes, Cro

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

This was exactly opposite of what Colonel House had thought earlier in contemplating the union of Serbia and Montenegro, indeed of the whole group of the Southern Slavs. House, a close advisor and Wilson's right-hand man, in relaying his conversation with Bernstorff, of Germany, wrote the following:

He [Bernstorff] thought his Government would perhaps insist on a unity of Serbia and Montenegro under the Montenegrin dynasty. He said the Serbian dynasty had been so corrupt and was in such bad odor that something should be done to dispose of them (Link 40:477-8).

This line of thinking, of course, was coming from the enemy of Serbia, and was not lacking in the feeling of repulsion that the Austrians and Germans developed regarding Serbia during this time. The Italian Foreign Minister, on the other hand, had other reasons to offer his opinion in the question of the unity of Serbia and Montenegro.

[Sonnino] is greatly interested in saving Montenegro from being absorbed in the Serbian Kingdom. I enquired whether he wished Montenegro to be free and independent of every power, and he answered with great warmth that he did, and that he would himself give much of what belonged to himself to have it free. [Sonnino said] that if Montenegro could have

Centralism vs. Federalism

opportunity accorded them by the Allies to decide freely without coercion of chicanery their own form of government and what disposition shall be made thereof when formed. This I believe to be a pretty fair statement of what the Montenegrins are and wish (Link 53:640).

President Wilson was aware of this situation, and in his letter to Secretary of State Lansing on January 8 he expressed his opinion, saying that:

I feel that the whole cause of Jugoslavia (sic) is being embarrassed and prejudiced by the apparent efforts to decide by arms what ought to be decided by pacific arrangement and consent. I hope that this course will commend itself to you and that you will seek the earliest possible opportunity to express these sentiments to Mr. Vesnitch (sic) (Link 53:700).

After staging the *coup d'état* in Montenegro, the Serbs informed the Royal Government of Montenegro, in a note sent to Montenegrin King Nicholas I that:

By order of the Royal Government [of Serbia] I have the honor to inform the Royal Ministry [of Montenegro] that the diplomatic functions of the representative of the Royal Government near

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Throughout the long letter written by the Montenegrin monarch a tone of bitterness towards the competing Karađorđević dynasty of Serbia may be detected, and the reader could come to a conclusion that the Montenegrin monarch was interested only in preservation of his own position and prestige. He continues, however:

The union of Montenegro with its Yugoslav (sic) brothers? But all my life I have been the most resolute and most listened to partisan of it! Only, I have always felt it necessary to leave to my people an independence which they have so dearly bought by five long centuries of strife, and I have always proclaimed that in the formation of a Yugoslav community each member ought to preserve its autonomy. This I re-stated in October 1918. No Yugoslavia (sic) is possible, in my opinion, without liberty and equality among its members. To this conception what is the conception opposed by Serbia? Distinctly imperialist, the latter desires to see placed beneath the scepter of its King the divers Yugoslav countries thus reduced to nothing more than docile provinces of an exacting and authoritative monarchy. In this there is a great danger which all the diplomats of Europe and of America must perceive (Link 53:703).

Centralism vs. Federalism

of the belligerent and vanquished enemy, and Montenegro of having become part of Serbia. On the other hand, the State of SHS had *both* of these arguments working against it. The issue, however, had become moot after the State of SHS joined the Kingdom of Serbia to form the new Kingdom of SHS in December of 1918.

In spite of the favorable, if tentative, decision regarding Montenegro reached at the meeting of the Council of Ten, Robert Lansing advised the President that “in view of the attitude of the Allied Governments towards the King Nicholas I of Montenegro it would be unwise at the present time to have an interview with him” (Link 54:54). The reason for this hesitancy was the negative image that the public had regarding King Nicholas I, who had been portrayed as an autocrat and a tyrant.

An interesting, if unfathomable, episode relating to Wilson’s attitude toward King Nicholas I was recorded in a letter from Charles Seymour to his family (Link 53:377). In it Seymour describes the ease in Wilson’s communication with those around him, and the light tone he sometimes took on. “Talking about the union of Montenegro and Serbia he said that he had been receiving various congratulatory and polite letters from the King of Montenegro which had rather mystified him, but to which he had replied courteously in the spirit of the Irishmen who wrote: ‘Not that I give a damn, but how is your mother?’” The very same quote, which seems at the same time to be rude and benign, was used in the letter from Clive Day to Elisabeth Dike Day (Link 53:368). What this meant, and how it portrayed Wilson’s attitude toward Nicholas I is unclear. It is, however, mildly mystifying and disturbing.

Yet Wilson maintained the contact and was not embarrassed to quote Nicholas I’s letter to the Montenegrin people, in which he implored them to lay down the arms and cooperate with the Allies, including Serbia. In return, Nicholas I assured the Montenegrins that they would be getting a fair treatment. (Link 54:179) Furthermore, Wilson was aware of the fact that Serbs were using force to keep Montenegrins under control. At a meeting of the Council of Ten on January 22, 1919 the minutes show that he stated that “the Serbs also were behaving towards Montenegro in what appeared to him to be questionable manner” (Link 54:199-204). Be that as it may, the fact remains that on the Plenary Session of the Inter-Allied Conference for the Preliminaries of peace, held on January 25, 1919, Montenegro was not present (Link 54:264). Yet, in the Declaration regarding the Principles of Reparation, issued on February 8, 1919, Montenegro was mentioned, along with Serbia, implying that they were two separate entities (Link 55:29).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

The apparent indecision as to how the new state or states in the Balkans should be treated could not have been based on the lack of available information. The problem was in the lack of political will of the Allies to come to a final decision. A British newspaper man, one A.G. Gardiner, writing for *London News* made it very clear that it was obvious, even to the general public, that a decision of the several elements of future Yugoslavia as to whether unite or not was still forthcoming: "...for, in fact, the state of Jugo-Slavia (sic) was only a name, for there are several states and it might be years before they decided to unite as one large one" (Link 54:198). However, the United States extended the recognition to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on February 7, 1919 (Link 55:28). The Kingdom of SHS, however, did not include Montenegro at this time; not officially, that is. The fact is that none of the Allies at that time made a definite stand on this particular question, so the issue remains moot. The diplomatic activities of the Kingdom of SHS continued, and now included several Croatian diplomats, who addressed Wilson with the desire to discuss "...territorial differences pending between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and the Kingdom of Italy..." (Link 55:87).

The following two months passed without much being done by the Allies regarding Montenegro. At one point the British wanted to send combined Allied troupes to serve as peace-keepers, but the proposal was refused by the Americans. At the same time, the reports coming in from various factions in Montenegro made it impossible to get a clear and accurate picture of the situation on the ground. British Foreign Minister Balfour wrote to Colonel House recapping the lack of Allied activity in the region, and suggesting that a joint fact-finding mission should be sent at the soonest possible date (Link 56:395). Until such a mission took place, the Allies had to rely on the information coming from unreliable sources, all of whom had their own political reasons for painting the picture as they saw fit: anywhere on the scale between being completely unacceptable or fully resolved and in order.

Milenko R. Vesnić wrote to President Wilson on April 26, 1919 (Link 58:161-4), during the deepest schism between the Italians and the United States. Mr. Vesnić assured the President that he had brought to the attention of his Government the interest which the President has shown toward the Montenegrin situation. The Serbian government, he was sure, will give the President's wishes every possible consideration. Furthermore, as to the suggestions regarding recent political disturbances, particularly the one about delaying the execution of political sentences until the final conclusion of peace, Vesnić wrote: "I

Centralism vs. Federalism

begged my Government to pay every deference to this suggestion, and I am happy to say that it has declared itself prepared to act upon it. May I say that I was sure in advance of the reply?" After further boosting the credentials of his government by declaring that its key members – Prime Minister Protić, Mr. Pašić, and himself – have spent considerable time in prison because of their fight for political liberty, Mr. Vesnić went on to declare that there were no significant differences between the Serbs and the Montenegrins. "The Montenegrins are as much Serbian as the people of New Jersey are American," he reported. The population of Montenegrin highlands was as patriotic as most loyal citizens of Serbia, and has always aspired to reunion in one the state with other Serbs. Now that the Slovenes and the Croats succeeded in joining with Serbia, the Montenegrins have come to realize that this is the opportunity that they have been waiting for. These aspirations, however, were hampered by the "autocratic and tyrannous" rule of the Montenegrin King Nicholas I.

In previous times it had been Vienna who stopped the attempts of union between Serbia and Montenegro, but now another interested side appeared: the Italians. Indeed, Vesnić's opinion was that were it not for the prompting by Baron Sonnino the Montenegrin King would have accepted the inevitable and agreed to the union with Serbia. This was an excellent point brought up by Vesnić, but instead of expounding on it he returned to attack the person and the character of the Montenegrin monarch.

Pray believe me therefore, that King Nicholas and his present associates are men totally undeserving of the interest you extend to them in the greatness of your heart... If the world is to be made safe for democracy, I beg you to believe me that King Nicholas is not the man to assure it, as he has always been an autocrat, a tyrant... Unfortunately, his son is, if possible, worse than himself (Link 58:163).

The flattering tone of the letter penned by Vesnić, indeed of most communications arriving to Wilson from the Serbian and the Montenegrin side, was in itself the message, at least as far as its authors were concerned. Vesnić, it appears, considered the content to be of lesser importance. Instead of emphasizing the Italian drive to disunite the southern Slavs and thus weaken the Yugoslav state, he was dwelling on the alleged conduct and character of a monarch and his future heir. Meanwhile, Wilson received a communiqué (Link 58:267-8) from Robert Lansing who shared the information that the Commission had been deluged by the communications regarding Montenegro, which were sent by the "so-called" Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro and representative of King Nicholas I, one Jovan Plamenac (Stevenson 159). Lansing was of the opinion that it would be wise to

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

delay passing any judgment or statement regarding Montenegro, because the situation was still quite volatile. However, he also warned the President that the protestations coming from those who presented themselves to be the official representatives of Montenegro were lopsided. The messages, he cautiously expressed, did not represent the opinion of the bulk of the Montenegrin people. It has to be stated here that Lansing was “dubious ... about the efficacy of settling Balkan problems on the basis of self/determination” (Gelfand, 152). Instead, he was more interested in reaching a solution that would be pragmatic, practical and enforceable.

The Montenegrins appeared to be divided chiefly along the lines as to what type of political union should Montenegro enter in with Serbia; should it be a confederation with greater local autonomy or should it be a closer political and administrative union? “Those who desire complete independence or a return of King Nicholas would probably not represent more than a relatively small minority,” Lansing wrote (Link 58:268). Wilson was worried by the situation. In a letter to Lansing dated May 2, 1919 he expressed his concerns. His inquiries to the Serbian representatives were answered only with accusations against the King of Montenegro. “I cannot escape the impression that the Serbs have taken a very high-handed course and have done things that the opinion of the world would certainly condemn, if they were generally known,” Wilson wrote (Link 58:354). Wilson’s impression was that the Serbs were rather brutal in their dealings with the Montenegrins (Link 58:508). At the same time, it slowly became obvious that “England and the United States are impartial; France has supported the movement towards fusion with Serbia; Italy aims to maintain a nominal independence under the former monarch Nicholas, so that it may work through Montenegro to weaken the Jugo-Slav (sic) state” (Link 59:178).

On May 30, 1919 Robert Lansing reported to the President that Anglo-American Mission of Investigation has confirmed the reports that had thereto been received from many other sources and which state that the best solution for the satisfaction of the wishes of the people concerned “is the incorporation of this country into Yugo-Slavia (sic) under guarantees of autonomy and the protection of local rights” (Link 59:620). In Lansing’s view, a union of the Southern Slavs was the best course of action. “Then would come the union of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia under one sovereignty” (Gelfand 152). To which extent would that recommendation get implemented, particularly as it related to “guarantees of autonomy and the protection of local rights” would have a direct bearing on decades of strife which were to follow. Sadly,

Centralism vs. Federalism

while supporting the stated ideals in principle, in practice the Allies left the question of the organization of the Southern Slav state to Serbian dynasty, whose goal was to create a homogenous Serbian state.

The American position on Montenegro remained unclear until the very end of the Paris Peace Conference. Given that Italy opposed the formation of a large Slavic state on the northern shores of Adriatic, it was automatically inclined to favor a free and independent Montenegro. As late as mid July 1919 this was still a topic of conversation between the American and the Italian negotiators. Henry White, one of the American negotiators at the Conference, experienced diplomat and former ambassador, was not opposed to the Italian insistence to include Montenegro in the large bargaining deal spanning from Fiume to Dodecanese Islands. Point three of the proposal set by the Italians and deemed at least worth of communicating to President Wilson read: “An Italian mandate over Albania, Montenegro being a free state” (Link 61:554). In the end, the issue of Montenegro, like a number of other related issues, was carefully avoided and not addressed head on. Indirectly, the hesitancy of the Big Four to hammer out a definite solution with regard to the annexation or unification of various constituent states of the future Yugoslavia only served to encourage the method used by the Serbian Kingdom.

Pact vs. Principle

The Austro Hungarian Armistice of November 3, 1918, was the crucial moment in relations between [Italy and the United States], for it had extremely far-reaching political consequences and implications. Not only did it mark the break-up of the inter-Allied cooperation, whatever it had been before, but it also brought into the open the American-Italian dispute. This was to set the stage for the definite disruption of relations between the two countries, when the Adriatic settlement came up in Paris in April 1919 (Živojinović 14).

To make matters more complicated, the Italian side started insisting on having the port city of Fiume added to the list of Italian spoils of war. This bewildered the French and the British, who would have been happy to apply the unbending letter of the law and to implement Pact of London. The problem was that according to the Pact of London Fiume had been reserved for the Croats. If the Italians now insisted on modifying the provisions of the Pact, that would then provide the Americans with further grounds to contest other stipulations contained therein. The potential perils of opening that door were not appreciated by the Italian delegation to the Peace Conference. As things stood, they were

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

held hostage by a tiny local Italian minority in Fiume itself, and the Italian public opinion which had been hyped into frenzy by the media. For that reason the Italian delegation, led by Baron Sonnino and Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, felt it necessary to not only insist on the provisions of the Pact of London, but also on adding Fiume onto the lengthy list of Italian spoils of war. The stage was set for a long and arduous wrangling. The French and British Prime Ministers did not help matters, for they appeared to be changing sides on a random basis. Both Clemenceau and Lloyd George insisted that their governments had to honor the Pact of London, as its signatories. Yet they appeared to be sympathetic to Wilson's position, and from time to time expressed frustration with the Italian delegation.

A fascinating insight can be obtained through a detailed analysis of the negotiations between the members of the Council of Four, held in Paris in April and May of 1919. The plan was, the four most important Allies should meet privately to decide on main issues, and only then share them with the rest of the participants of the Conference. This was not to be, for as soon as the question of the Italian expansion came up Wilson resisted it vehemently: there was going to be no prior agreement, it seemed. This however would not dissuade Orlando, who kept insisting on it, threatening that he would walk out of the Conference if his wishes were not fulfilled (Walworth 335). The situation deteriorated to the point where the Italian side threatened to leave the Conference and go back to Rome in protest. Fearing that the Italian departure from Paris would get misrepresented in the media, particularly as to what reasons may have caused it, Wilson felt that it was necessary for him to clear the air and to make his own position regarding the Adriatic question public. He did that by publishing the Statement regarding Adriatic on April 21, 1919. This then indeed prompted the Italian delegation to leave for Rome.

The original plan for the Italian expansion included the northern shores of the Adriatic, the Dodecanese islands and parts of Asia Minor, as well as parts of the German colonial empire in Asia and Africa. As the events unfolded, it became obvious that that plan was too ambitious and that the likelihood of it materializing was not very high. The port of Fiume thus became the focal point of the Italian demands. With time it became a symbol of the Italian-American struggle. Even the unbending Wilson had to abandon the insistence on principles in favor of a more pragmatic and practical solution, a solution that was made to fit a particular situation, a necessary compromise that would diffuse a potential larger problem resulting in Italy refusing to sign the Peace Treaty. Wilson the

Pact vs. Principle

Academic certainly struggled with the idea of abandoning the principles, or straying from the comfort of their logic and reassuring order which they embodied. Nor were the principles the first principles that he ever discovered and intended to implement. Indeed, in his treatise on state administration, written in 1902, he wrote that:

The object of administrative study is to rescue executive methods from the confusion and costliness of empirical experiment and set them upon foundations laid deep in stable principle (Wilson).

The idea of a principle conceived and defined at the top and then filtered down through the administrative or state apparatus to the end users was dear to him. It preempted confusion and costliness, it provided for order and fairness. But Wilson the Academic eventually gave way to Wilson the Statesman. His ability to eventually compromise on the issue of Fiume perhaps saved him whatever little health he still had at the end of the Conference. More importantly, it provided a compromise solution that resulted in relative stability within the Adriatic region.

All the negotiations among the Council of Four were recorded in shorthand. Some of the meetings have more than one transcript, providing for an opportunity to test the accuracy of the transcribers. All such transcripts are included in Wilson Papers, a 69 tome publication that is unique not only in its size but in its importance. Included also are official letters and statements, as well as their drafts. Private correspondence, letters both sent and received by Wilson are also included in the tomes. In addition, other related pertinent sources of information are also incorporated, such as diary entries of the participants of the Peace Conference, providing an insight into an *ex cathedra* Wilson. Colonel House once noted that “[t]he *Procès Verbal* of the meetings will tell its own story” (Link 57:503-5).

Procès-verbal, Paris, April and May, 1919

In a presentation of the Italian claims which Prime Minister Orlando delivered on the meeting of the Council of Four (Link 57:479-94) on April 19, 1919, he made it a point to recognize that the Pact of London had only been signed by three of the four Powers represented at the meeting. Consequently, he proposed that for the moment a hypothetical situation should be adopted, namely, that the meeting should proceed without any reference to the Pact of London. Instead, he would present the three definite claims which Italy had developed based on the general principles used by the Supreme Council in its dealings with the Peace Treaty. To reiterate and support his claims Orlando announced that he would be supporting them with the principles themselves and solutions that had already been reached for other, similar areas of debate unrelated to Italy.

The first claim Orlando presented was Italy's desire to possess the territories on her side of her geographically defined northern borders. The water-shed of the mountains should become the frontier of the Italian state. He recognized that people who were not of Italian origin also lived in this basin. The exact data as to their numbers, however, was not at Orlando's disposal at the moment, but he assured the present that the statistics which had been quoted so often by the Yugoslavs were untrustworthy, and that material could be made available to show that the Austrians had falsified the figures against Italy. He was aware that the settling of the borders in the way he desired would include more or less a hundred thousand Slavs under the Italian rule. However, such inclusion of different races within the frontiers of a given state had been practiced in cases where strong economic and strategic reasons existed, and he requested that the same principle be applied to Italy.

With regard to the Istrian peninsula, Orlando continued, if the natural boundaries were adopted for that area, it would leave the port of Trieste without hardly any hinterland and "within the range of gun-fire" (Link 57:480). If the principle of natural borders were abandoned here in favor of economic and strategic considerations, and the entire extended area surrounding the port of Trieste awarded to Italy, the total number of non-Italian population in the area would be some 600,000. This number compared quite well with Italy's total population of 40 million. Similar concessions had been made to Poles, who have 2 million Germans within their borders against their Polish population of merely 25 million. Even worse statistics were allowed to pass in the case of Czechoslovakia, which had similar number of Germans within its borders set against mere 10 million Slavs. For this reason "Italy considered it within her right to demand the natural frontiers fixed for her

Pact vs. Principle

by God and the inclusion of certain population of other races should not be a bar” (Link 57:480).

The second point of Orlando's presentation tied in with the question of Trieste in that he claimed that the historic Italian borders extended to include the whole of Istria, the Gulf of Kvarner and the city of Fiume. For the city itself, he appealed to the principle of self-determination of the people, who had declared even before the conclusion of the Armistice that, since the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was in a state of dissolution, they wished to be in union with Italy. Orlando pressed the point that the principle of self-determination ought to be applied to little people just as much as to great nations.

As regards the economic factors, it was his opinion that they were not as crucial as the Yugoslavs would like to present them. A comparison was drawn between Fiume and Danzig. In Danzig a German minority is surrounded by the Poles. The Poles have no other significant outlet to the sea. Given its location, it could be stated that Danzig, besides serving its own small hinterland, was only serving Poland. On the other hand, Fiume also had an Italian majority population within its urban limits which was surrounded by a Slav majority in the contiguous areas. The Slavs, however, had other outlets to the sea. More importantly, given the nature of the trade going through Fiume, it can be said that the port catered to clientele that goes far beyond the Slav lands, whose participation in the port commerce is a mere 7%, while the rest went to Bohemia, Hungary and Galicia. Now if Danzig had been awarded the status of free-state and Fiume was not to be given the same status, the Italian public could conclude that a procedure had been adopted that favored the enemy Germans more than it did the allied Italians.

Finally, regarding Dalmatia and its islands, Orlando had the following to say: Italy's claims in this case were also of strategic nature. The low-laying sandy coast of Italy provided no natural shelter to the navy, while Dalmatian islands and many inlets had them in abundance. The experiences of the recent conflicts showed that the enemy navy could harass the Italian coast with impunity, being able to retreat between the islands as soon as pursued by the Italian Fleet. For those reasons Italy needed to control the outlying islands. Strategic reasons were not the only premise upon which Italy rested its claim: there was a national question as well. Dalmatia had been a first part of the Roman Empire, and had been subjugated to Venice for centuries, through to the end of *La Serenissima*. The speech of the urban population was significantly Italian, notably in Zadar, Trogir and perhaps Split. Therefore, Italy had large and well-founded claims, but wished to claim only a small

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

part of Dalmatia, leaving Split, Dubrovnik and Kotor to the Yugoslavs. It is perhaps worth mentioning at this point, that Dubrovnik had been under the Venetian suzerainty between 1204 and 1358. It is obvious that any claim Italy may have had on that city was very weak indeed.

President Wilson's response to this presentation was a reminder that the present company was attempting to "make peace on an entirely new basis and to establish a new order of international relations." He went on to say that:

At every point the question has to be asked whether the lines of the settlement would square with the new order. No greater question had ever been asked in any negotiations. No body of statesmen had ever before undertaken such a settlement (Link 57:483).

For that reason certain arguments had to be brushed aside, namely those pertaining to economic and strategic considerations. Concerning Orlando's first claim, that of Italy's natural northern frontiers, President Wilson had no objections, concurring that the natural borders ran to include Trieste and most of the Istrian peninsula, including Pula. However, the rest of the arguments seemed to him to be leaning the other way. Fiume, having been cast outside of the aforementioned natural borders, had been a part of an entirely different polity for centuries. Its links with Austro-Hungarian lands were undisputable, and had the said Empire not disintegrated, Fiume's fate would be irrevocably linked with it. However, as the new states would be arising from the ruins of Austria-Hungary, they will have common interests, which will be tied to the continued use of Fiume's services and facilities. The President pointed out that Orlando's presentation made it appear as if the question of Fiume had been exclusively Italian – Slav question, which it was evidently not. The past decades, in which Hungary had the principal interest in Fiume, saw Budapest supporting the Italian elements of Fiume in order to keep check on the larger Slav population. This in itself does not lead to the conclusion that Fiume should be joined to Italy. Furthermore, his academic advisers have unanimously agreed that Fiume should be part of Yugoslavia (Walworth 339).

Regarding the analogy with Danzig, President Wilson called Prime Minister Orlando's attention to the fact that Danzig had been separated from Germany, to which it had earlier belonged, while Italian sovereignty over Fiume never existed. Thus, the comparison did not hold. At the same time, all the strategic and economic reasons were in favor of uniting Danzig with Poland, and yet they were disregarded. "To put Fiume inside

Pact vs. Principle

Italy would be absolutely inconsistent with the new order of international relations. The Italian population of Fiume was not connected with Italy by intervening Italian population. Hence, to unite it with Italy would be an arbitrary act, so inconsistent with the principles on which we were acting that he [Wilson] for one could not concur in it" (Link 57:485). As regards the Dalmatian question, President reiterated that the new international order had to either be accepted in whole or not accepted at all. He could not imagine Yugoslav navy being a menace to Italy in any way, not the least since it would be under the regime of the League of Nations. The only possibility would lay in an alliance between Yugoslavia and one of the Great Powers who would then jointly attack Italy. However, the Great Powers should be withdrawn from the Balkans. The Great Powers must not interfere in the internal affairs of the newly formed states. For this reason the strategic considerations must be rejected.

The strategic argument was invoked in 1815.* It was invoked in 1871.** The military advisers who imposed strategic frontiers bear responsibility for some of the gravest mistakes which have been committed in the history of the world. I believe that it would be a danger to the peace of Europe if Italy insisted upon establishing itself on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. We are creating a League of Nations, in which one of the principal roles is reserved to Italy. If that does not suffice, if it is also necessary at the same time to have a recourse to strategic measures, that is because we are trying to combine two irreconcilable systems. As for myself, I cannot drive these two horses at the same time. The people of the United States would not accept seeing the world fall again into its former state, and the government which do not understand that would learn from their own people that their time has passed (Mantoux 284-5).

* The Congress of Vienna.

** The conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War. As part of the settlement the territory of Alsace-Lorraine was taken by Prussia to become a part of Germany.

President Wilson urged Orlando to remember that he and his nation were in the hands of a true friend, a friend who would not be serving Italian interests if he consented to their claims to Fiume and Dalmatia. Furthermore,

[t]he claim for Fiume was a recent one put forward only within the last few months. As far as self-determination was concerned, Fiume was only an island of Italian population. If such principle were adopted generally, we should get spots all over the map. In the case of Bohemia and the Polish frontiers, there was a preservation of historical frontiers; but this was not so in the case of Fiume. There was no analogy here that attached Fiume to Italy (Link 57:487).

Pact vs. Principle

In that Treaty Dalmatia had been given to Italy, and this was a fact he could not forget. In the same Treaty, however, Fiume was allotted to Croatia. Italy had at that time no pretensions to Fiume... He [Clemenceau] was astonished that Italy, while claiming Dalmatia under Treaty, also claimed Fiume, which had been given to Croats... It was impossible for Italy to claim one clause of the Treaty and to cancel another clause... We could not abandon the principles we had worked for the good of civilization. It was impossible for France to adhere to one clause of the Treaty and to denounce another (Link 57:490).

Britain's Lloyd George joined the debate by saying that as France, Britain also is bound by the Treaty. He reiterated Clemenceau's opinion that the Treaty must be applied in whole, without alterations. Otherwise a plebiscite should be held not only in Fiume but in the whole area between Fiume and Split. Returning to Fiume question, he said that:

The population of the valley was some 100.000 people, of whom only 25.000 were Italians. He could not see that any principle could be established that would give Fiume to Italy. If Fiume were included in Istria, exactly the same would apply. The Italian claim was only valid if applied to a little ancient town where an Italian population had grown to a majority of some 8.000. To give Fiume to Italy would break faith with the Serbs, would break the Treaty on which Italy entered the war, and would break every principle on which the Treaty of Peace was being based (Link 57:490).

As regards the defense claim, Lloyd George emphasized that the British towns had also been bombarded during the war, and that the British Navy was unable to apprehend the attackers or to avert the onslaught altogether. Regarding the 500.000 dead that Italy sacrificed in the war, he called Sonnino's attention to the fact that the sacrifices made by France were three times higher. Yet France was willing to adhere to the principles on which the Treaty of Peace was based. How could one set of principles be applied to France and an entirely different set on Italy, he asked.

While the argumentation put forth by Lloyd George and Clemenceau seemed to castigate the Italian representative and his demands as unreasonable, what it did in fact was revive the question of the application of the Pact of London. For all the talk of the equality and the principles of the Treaty of Peace, this only reiterated the necessity of the application of the Pact of London, as seen by its signatories. This conclusion, or rather a suspicion, at this point cannot be ascertained, however. As if responding to a cue, Orlando stated that he had started the present discussion as if the Pact of London had never been signed. If, however, what Lloyd George had said meant that the Conference should make its decisions on the basis of the Pact of London, then the situation would be entirely

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

different, the situation which he would feel obliged to discuss with his colleagues on the Italian Delegation and return with a reply. Wilson replied that accepting the Pact of London as a premise of the settlement would “place a burden on him that was quite unfair” (Link 57:492). He neither knew himself nor wished to question the French and the British representative whether they thought that such a plan of action would be desirable, but he himself strongly felt that it would not, for to do so would oblige him to say to the world that the peace settlement was based on a secret treaty. Moreover, the Pact of London was inconsistent with the general principles of the settlement. Clearly cornered, Wilson declared that “he was willing to state, and might have to state, to the world the grounds of his objections. He could not draw the United States into principles which now animated them and which had brought them into the war” (Link 57:493). “Might have to state” perhaps shows weariness in fending off the attacks of the other members of the Council of Four. Sensing his opportunity to draw blood, as it were, Sonnino called Wilson’s attention to the statement he issued on May 21, 1918 in which he had admitted the principle of security to Italy. This, again, was a tactic by the Italian representative in which some truth was taken and twisted to meet his purpose. In the statement which Sonnino quoted Wilson had merely stated that “the people of the United States are... deeply and sincerely interested in the present and future security of Italy” (Official Bulletin).

The pressure to which Wilson was subjected at this time was undoubtedly intensified by the demands from the opposite aisle, that occupied by the Yugoslavs. Perhaps their demands should not be seen as adding pressure, but rather as providing support. In her diary dated on the same day, April 19, 1919 Edith Benham (Link 57:502) recounted her conversation with the President in which he told her that he is “unilaterally opposed to giving it [Fiume] to them [Italians].” As far as the Italian threats to leave the Conference, President Wilson commented that that was all a bluff, that it was a way Italy has always obtained her territory – either by a game or a bluff. In any case, the Yugoslavs continued to wholeheartedly support the principles as laid down in the Fourteen Points, proclaiming them to be their own political credo (Link 57:499-502). Michael Iversky Pupin, the author of a Memorandum issued on April 19, 1919, declared that the masses of all European nations, including the Italians, held the Fourteen Points in equally high esteem. (Pupin was Born in the Banat; naturalized United States citizen; Professor of Electro mechanics at Columbia University. At this time he was an adviser to the Yugoslav delegation at the peace conference.) All these nations expected Wilson to “lead them from

Pact vs. Principle

the desert of international immorality to the promised land of international morality” (Link 57:499). Perhaps sensing that the machinations of the Old World Powers might be proving too much for Wilson to withstand, Pupin not only applied the Biblical imagery, but also employed other methods of “encouraging” the President. He wrote:

A young Montenegrin who has just arrived in Paris told me the other day that an old peasant woman met him on the road a few days before he left for Paris and requested him to take to Paris a pair of socks which she had made with her own hands and to present them to President Wilson. He who understands the customs of Montenegro will certainly consider this the most sincere compliment which President Wilson ever received in Europe; it has a wonderfully deep meaning, and I am sure that millions of peasant women of Europe have the same mental attitude as this sincerely grateful Montenegrin peasant (Link 57:500).

Clearly, this was written with the desire to express encouragement to the President, it an attempt to quote back to him his own principles. The pamphlet declared that to abandon the principles set forth in the Fourteen Points just so that the current Italian Government could stay in power was not good enough reason. Supposing that, in order to appease the Italian Government, the Americans conceded Dalmatia, Fiume, Istria, Gorica and Carinthia to Italy, what effect would that have on the Yugoslavs? They would be driven to desperation “because they will feel that they have been deserted by their greatest friend of to-day, by the just and generous people of the United States. Despair breeds rebellion, and rebellion means war between Yougoslavs (sic) and Italy” (Link 57:502). This was not only an emotional statement, or rather, a statement wishing to appeal to the emotions of the President and the American people, but also a veiled threat of future conflicts and possibly a war. Such result of the current deliberations would be an abject failure of the aims of the present worldwide conflict, hailed as the “war to end all wars.” Furthermore, abandoning the standard and the principles set forth in the Fourteen Points questioned the very foundations of the League of Nations, who would find itself amid quick sands. Further still, the weakened standard of Fourteen Points would be credibly and seriously opposed by the Bolsheviks, whose alternative solutions would appear both viable and credible to the disappointed masses. A lot of pressure was applied here, and not without good logic. However, Wilson's reaction to this Memorandum has not been recorded.

Upon returning from the morning meeting in which the Italian representatives made their case, Wilson informed Colonel House of its main points (Link 57:503-5). After

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Wilson left, House suggested to the Commissioners that they should all agree upon a recommendation which would be submitted to the President. House's proposal was as follows:

Accept the line of the Pact of London, as far as it touches the boundaries of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Everything south of that including Fiume and Dalmatia to be taken over by the five Powers as Trustees under the League of Nations. The fate of the territory to be determined later when passions cool (Link 57:503-5).

The Italian threats of their withdrawal from the conference and of the possible upheaval that the Italian political scene would be subjected to in the event that the Government representatives do not obtain the areas which by this time were demanded by the Italian public figures of all political colors was not among House's concerns. In fact, House considered this course of action as being somewhat of a compromise, since at least the final decision would not be taken immediately.

I suggest, however, that an intimation be given to Italy now that this territory would probably not be given her, therefore the Italians officials (sic) could go home and make the best they could of what to them seems a bad situation.

The only reason I suggest such compromise, if indeed it may be called one, for it merely postpones the action which we have decided upon now, is because if Italy refused to sign the Treaty with Germany and if Japan also refused, and there is some danger of this too, then conditions would be serious. If in addition to Italy's refusal to sign, there should be a revolution and Italy should establish a Bolshevik government, it might upset the equilibrium in both France and England, to say nothing of the United States (Link 57:503-5).

Colonel House was apparently unmoved by the possibility that the current Italian Government would tumble should it become apparent that it was unable to deliver Fiume and Dalmatia to the growing irredentist movement. However, he was aware of the fact that in case a revolution took place in Italy possibly the Bolsheviks could take over. In his mind this was less likely than the danger of Italy refusing to sign the Peace Treaty if it were forced to do so immediately, and forever denounce its claims to Fiume and Dalmatia.

Another source of the President's reaction to the morning's events gives further insight into the unfolding situation. In his diary entry on the same day Rear-Admiral Dr. Grayson, President's personal friend, physician and advisor, wrote the following:

After the meeting session adjourned, I asked the President what luck they had had with the problems, and he said that so far as he (the President) was concerned he was adhering to principle. He said that he hated very much to disappoint a man

Pact vs. Principle

whom he thought so much of as he did of Premier Orlando, but that it was impossible for him to accept the Italian claims which were entirely at variance with the principles that the President had enunciated and which Italy had accepted at the time of the armistice. Although the Italians were pressing their point very strongly, no complete decision had been reached, and the question was put over for a Sunday morning meeting (Link 57:478).

Given that the Italian position that morning was that it should “absolutely grab the entire Adriatic and sacrifice the new Jugo-Slav Republic – before it was actually born” (Link 57:477) it is no surprise that further Italian suggestions and proposals were just as determined and demanding.

On the meeting that took place on April 20, 1919 the Italian position remained unchanged. The opening statement by Prime Minister Orlando abounded in rhetoric designed to make it appear that the Italian side had no room for maneuver. “I must” sounded twice in the opening sentence. If one *must*, then the responsibility for whatever it is that they *must* cannot be laid at their feet as an act of willful choice. Prime Minister Orlando warned Wilson that in the event that Fiume was not granted to Italy “there will be among the Italian people a reaction of protest and of hatred so violent that it will give rise to the explosion of violent contrasts within a period that is more or less close” (Link 57:514). In other words, not only would the future balance of the world be unsettled, but we would not have to wait for too long for its consequences to appear, in a conflict which the outraged Italian side would initiate to right this wrong done to them by their erstwhile Allies.

Nevertheless, since the British and French Allies have declared yesterday that they do not recognize the right of Italy to break the Alliance in the event of her being accorded only what the Treaty of Alliance guarantees her, I am so convinced of my responsibility towards the peace of the world in the event of rupture of the Alliance to consider it necessary to safeguard myself against every possible accusation in this respect. I declare in consequence formally that, in the event of Peace Conference guaranteeing Italy all the rights which the Pact of London has assured her, I shall not be obliged to break the Alliance, and I would abstain from every act or deed which could have this signification (Link 57:514).

Rather than threatening that if Pact of London was not met he would withdraw Italy from the Alliance, Orlando went a step further and stated that he was withdrawing, has already made up his mind to do so, and would be stopped only if the conditions of the Pact of London were met. Additionally, he was throwing back at Wilson the argumentation

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

which he had used earlier regarding a future conflict as a necessary outcome of an unjust territorial settlement at this juncture. The delivery of Orlando's speech could not have taken longer than a few minutes. The impact of its contents, however, was of much greater magnitude, and immediately the meeting was adjourned. After a pause it was Wilson's turn to take the floor. In his opening line he said that it was "incredible to him that the representatives of Italy should take this position." The choice of words, particularly the word "incredible" here indicates the bewilderment which Wilson probably felt. He carefully recapped the course of the war: the three Powers – Russia, Britain and France, later joined by Italy – fought the war of survival against the Central Powers. Whatever agreement they had among themselves is their own matter. Had they won the war by themselves, those agreements would be fully implementable. But a different Power had to enter the conflict in order to win the war. This Power – the United States of America – had been essential to the successful conclusion of the war. Premiers Lloyd George and Clemenceau interrupted Wilson to express their agreement in this. Upon its entering into the war the United States expressed its principles, which were met by the acclamation of the peoples of Great and Small Powers alike.

When he [Wilson] wrote these principles he knew that he was not writing merely his own conscience, but the point of view of the people of the United States of America. These principles were found to be identical with the sentiments of all the great peoples of the Allied and Associated Powers. Otherwise, these principles would have no effect. The world did not ask for the opinions of the individuals. What it did ask was that individuals should formulate principles which called to consciousness what every man was feeling (Link 57:516).

Clearly Wilson considered himself to be an individual who formulated principles on the basis of what everyone was feeling to be the right thing, while in his view Orlando was merely employing his own opinion, the opinion of an individual. In this analysis Wilson may well be right. After all, he had no vested interests in the questions relating to Fiume or Dalmatia. Orlando, on the other hand, was facing the fall of his government and internal disturbances in Italy in case Fiume and Dalmatia were not accorded to them. Furthermore, as an Italian himself, the patriotic feelings may well have contributed to the vehemence which he employed in expressing his views. For all that, the line of argument chosen by Wilson may well have irritated the Italian Prime Minister; in Orlando's mind here was somebody who had no stake, political or emotional, in the matters which have to be decided. The self-confidence that Wilson exuded in claiming to be one of those

Pact vs. Principle

individuals who captured and formulated the feeling of the masses must indeed have been maddening to Orlando. Thus the conversation continued, with two exasperated participants on the opposite sides of the table. Wilson continued by quoting sections of his own Fourteen Points, particularly the parts from point IX and XI. “Friendly counsel... established line of allegiance and nationality... territorial integrity...” for the Balkan states and “readjustment of the frontiers of Italy... along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.” This is what needs to be done, and not basing our decisions on the Pact of London, was the gist of Wilson’s presentation. The United States, moreover, had not signed the Pact of London, and was therefore not legally bound.

As regards the questions of security, on which Italy is basing a part of its claim to Dalmatia and the islands, the situation would be much different had the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy survived, which would have given a degree of legitimacy to the Italian claim. However, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was now gone, and its place was being taken by smaller, and thus necessarily weaker, nations who did not represent equal threat to the Italian security. Given that those dangerous circumstances no longer existed, the signatories of the Pact of London should consider themselves relieved of any legal obligation. Would Italy, Wilson asked, be willing to jeopardize the chances for the peace settlement, or increase the odds for the resumption of conflict?

Without the Pact of London Italy would receive her natural boundaries; the redemption of Italian population; a restoration of her old glory, and the completion of her integrity. A dream would be realized which, at the beginning of the War, would have seemed too good to be true... It was supreme completing tragedy of the War that Italy should turn her back on her best friends and take up a position of isolation. He deplored it as one whose heart was torn. But as representative of the people of the United States of America he could not violate the principles they had instructed him to carry out in this settlement (Link 57:516).

Orlando’s reply was that he did not intend to speak of the Pact of London, but did so in the last moment and in spite of himself, in order to reply to remarks made by Lloyd George and Clemenceau. This comment, however, is rather questionable, for the speech delivered earlier that morning had been prepared in advance and read from a typed copy. Orlando continued with insistence that he had made all possible efforts to demonstrate that the rights of Italy lay within the reasonable bounds, thus the Pact of London needed not be applied for them to be satisfied. As regards the Fourteen Points, Orlando declared that President interpreted the line about Serbia’s access to the sea as a right to claim Fiume.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Serbia's own dreams have never included Dubrovnik but now they were assured of much more. Orlando asked Wilson to bear in mind that while those parts of Fourteen Points which were applicable to Austria-Hungary stopped being valid after that Empire ceased to exist, those applicable to Italy remained valid.

The conciliatory personal reassurances from both sides followed, smoothing the obviously troubled waters. Lloyd George joined in declaring that he regretted that they have found themselves confronted with the most difficult situation they had faced since the beginning of the Peace Conference. This was an obvious attempt to diffuse the tension and put the focus on the matter at hand, rather than at the personalities involved. He proceeded to recap the pros and cons of each side: Italy, on the one hand, could not abandon the Pact, while the United States, on the other, could not accept it, for it conflicted with all the principles and reasons for its entry into the war. Italy, after signing the Pact of London, had entered the war and suffered heavy losses, and incurred an enormous war debt. To now retreat claiming no right stemming from the Pact of London would be utterly absurd. The Austrian peace offer before Italy's entry into the war offered Italy nearly as much as she is standing to gain now if the Pact of London is abandoned. Thus, all the sacrifices and lives had been spent in vain. This would amount to a political suicide to both Sonnino and Orlando, who would have to practically leave the country in order to save their lives.

However, there remained another angle to the whole question which Lloyd George wanted to point out. Namely, both France and Britain, as the signatories of the Pact of London, were bound by the law and their honor to uphold and meet the obligations set in the Pact. His suggestion was that the representatives of the powers signatories to the Pact of London should meet separately to discuss Wilson's suggestions. "If, however, Italy could not modify her attitude, he was bound to take his by his bond" (Link 57:518). If he did say anything regarding the matter, it would only be an appeal or a suggestion. In saying this, the British Prime Minister did two things: First, he set the question on the footing of international law and the honor of the countries which cosigned the Pact. No longer was the solution to be found on the moral grounds, national self-determination or the idea that the settlement must be fair in order to be lasting. Secondly, he made it quite clear even before any separate counseling took place, that Britain will follow the lead set by Italy. Thus, the separate deliberations were only a guise, or rather an indirect expression of position by the British Prime Minister that in his opinion the British Empire had to honor its commitments as expressed in the Pact of London, notwithstanding the change in

Pact vs. Principle

circumstances which had arisen since its signing (i.e. the unstipulated fall of Austria - Hungary).

President Wilson consented to this proposal, reminding the signatories of the Pact that provisions were made in it which placed Fiume firmly under the control of Croats. Furthermore, would the Italian representatives consent to placing all the territories specified in the Pact of London under the control of the five Great Powers as trustees, to determine their disposition at a later date? Would the Italian representatives continue on insisting that they cannot give their consent to that? Besides, Wilson was quick to point out that he was willing to make a concession to the Italian side. The island of Vis, which had been awarded to the Italians under the terms of the Pact of London, and which by itself could nearly fulfill all the defensive requirements as set forth by the Italian side, was offered to the Italian side at this point, quite outside of the proposal of trusteeship of the five Great Powers. The island of Vis is the remotest Croatian island. It is of sufficient size and configuration to support a large naval base, thus providing the security for the southern shores of the Adriatic. This was an attempt by Wilson to lure the Italian side into signing of the Peace Treaty immediately rather than walking away and possibly causing a domino effect with Japan possibly also leaving the negotiating table and the whole process coming to a halt.

Wilson went further, saying that he realized that Italy had no imperialistic motives, for which she should be given credit. On a reflection, he could not have thought this seriously, since the aspirations and territorial claims which Italy demanded on the grounds of the Pact of London were almost purely imperialistic in nature. The question of Gorizia, Trieste, Fiume and some of the islands actually had some grounds, given the presence of Italian population, however small or scattered. But the rest of the territorial claims, which made the Adriatic practically an Italian lake were clearly motivated with some kind of desire for the revival of the old Roman glory. Further east, the Italian claim on the Dodecanese Islands, for one, clearly had no grounds on the population makeup of those far-flung islands. Claims on parts of Asia Minor, also included in the Pact of London, were as imperialistic as anything on the table during the Paris Peace Conference. But Wilson kept his polite tone and expression, assuring that he respected Baron Sonnino for his steadfastness, and offered his personal assistance if necessary.

Mere mention of the word imperialistic, though clearly in a context which did not lay that attribute to the Italian state, was enough to again raise the ire of the Italian representatives.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Sonnino reiterated that Italy never had any intention of damaging others, but merely of seeking security for her homeland. Italy wished to remain disentangled from the Balkan states. As regards her claims, based upon the Pact of London and relating to Greece, she would not take an overbearing position. All Italy sought was security, and “President Wilson wanted to stop her” (Link 57:520). Obviously irate, Sonnino went on to say that Italy’s claim for Fiume had arisen because of other developments there. A local popular movement in Fiume itself had brought the matter up. Perhaps America had fostered it by putting the principles so clearly and proclaiming them so loudly. In discussing the particulars of the Pact of London, Italy had conceded a number of large islands to Croats, as well as the port of Sinj. It was easy enough to proclaim lofty principles, but it is in their application that enormous difficulties are encountered. (A coastal town of Sinj lays beneath the Croatia’s largest and highest mountain chain, Velebit. Its access to the hinterland is extremely difficult even now, in the 21st century. The terrestrial communication links, which lead westwards towards Fiume and eastwards towards Maslenica are also quite insufficient. While its small port meets the definition of a maritime harbor in that vessels can load and unload on its premises, it falls well short of a definition of a port in a commercial sense, and in the strategic meaning used during the deliberations during the Peace Conference. In other words, it is not much of a concession.)

This emotional and accusatory diatribe was interrupted by Clemenceau who read an unrelated telegram from the German Foreign Office. Thus the issue of Fiume and Dalmatia, whose future fate had already been placed in the hands of a separate committee, was dropped from the agenda, and other business of the day was continued. It appears that the other participants of the deliberations had to resort to distraction tactics in order to keep the meetings from dissolving altogether.

Later that evening President Wilson confided in Dr. Grayson, telling him that Sonnino had raised the question of the Pact of London and declared that Italy had firmly stood on its premises (Link 57:531). Feeling that the United States should not enter into any discussion that involved that argument, Wilson suggested that the three signatories of the Pact should hold the talks without the presence of the United States. In this version of the events, it was the President who suggested the issue be relegated to a subcommittee, while the notes of the meeting appear to indicate that it was Lloyd George who put forth that proposal. This may be immaterial, but perhaps it is an indication that Wilson was grasping at the straws, including those that gave him the illusion that he was in control of

Pact vs. Principle

things. To wit, the whole of the peace process was in jeopardy. Relatively miniscule and intricate details similar to the question of Fiume were cropping up on all sides, and the conference was losing the steam. The Italian insistence could lead to their withdrawal from the peace process, which could have lasting political repercussions. The discussion regarding the League of Nations was having less and less support. The attitude of the Italian delegates was becoming more and more defiant, as apparently they entertained the notion that the Italy's massed armies could be used as a potential influence to force the Allies to accept the Italian program in full (Link 57:533).

As things turned out, the meeting of the Council of Three to discuss the Italian question did not yield any solution to the problem. Both Orlando and Sonnino were emphatic in declaring that their intention to stand on the Pact of London was unshakable, and threatened that if the promises made in that treaty were not delivered they would pack up and leave, which would then bring other people to fill their places, people whose readiness for compromise was lesser than their own. This was a complete U-turn from the position of only two days earlier, where the Italian side proposed that the Pact of London should not be taken into consideration at all. Clearly, the Italians thought it more prudent to leave the introduction of the Pact into the deliberations to someone else. By doing that they likely hoped to emphasize the multilateral nature of the Pact. During the meeting of the Council of Three, Lloyd George offered them the northern boundaries as defined in the Pact of London, and the islands of the Adriatic, but nothing of the Dalmatian mainland. Orlando refused the suggestion pointblank (Link 57:534). In a conversation the next day Colonel House suggested that this proposal be put forth as an ultimatum, to which Lloyd George showed some interest. Wilson, however, would not hear of that. As to why Wilson would not lay an ultimatum to the Italians is not clear. Perhaps it was because he was aware of the fact that the British and the French Prime Ministers were hoping to corner him into making a decision for which he would later have to stand on his own. –Or fall on his own. On the same day, April 21, 1919 Colonel House entered into his diary:

[Lloyd] George pretends to me that he is very firm with the Italians regarding Fiume, but Wiseman tells me that he is not so firm when talking with them. This is a great mistake and gives them hope when there is no hope (Link 57:534).

This lack of firmness perceived by Colonel House is confirmed in the minutes of the meeting between British, French and Italian Prime Ministers which took place on the same day. In it Clemenceau and Lloyd George opened the meeting with the declaration of

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

the necessity of adherence to the Pact of London. However, they also emphasized the necessity of the continuous participation of the United States in the peace process and the reconstruction that was to follow after the war. In a not-too-subtle attempt to entice the Italian side into cooperation, Lloyd George invoked the similarities between the present situation and the South-African Boer War of some years prior. He said: "England lent that country 30 million pounds sterling – which, incidentally, was never repaid – to permit the recovery of economic activity" (Link 57:536). The similarities to the present situation in Europe, he continued, were numerous. It had been difficult to bring America over, and it was essential that it should remain here to the end. As regards the policy, the Americans have already made concessions, such as the question of indemnities and the Saar Basin. In this Italian problem there had to be a way to make a concession which would facilitate the continued involvement of the American President. Clemenceau added that one of the best premises from which to argue the Italian case is the offer made to them by the Austrian side in 1915, before Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies. If the present deliberations, based upon the nationality principles, were to yield nothing more to the Italian side than what the Austrians were willing to concede back in 1915, without a fight, then what is their purpose? That would make the Italian sacrifices in the war totally futile and meaningless. Clemenceau emphasized the need to compromise, mentioning examples of his own concessions to the American and German arguments. Italy's continued presence at the negotiating table is of far greater importance, since it will yet deliver considerable benefits. Sonnino, clearly emotional and exhausted by the long struggle, declared:

America said nothing to us for five months. Now, after having made concessions right and left to legitimate interests, she wants to recover her virginity at our expense by invoking the purity of principles. How could we accept? (Link 57:538).

Lloyd George pressed with suggesting that Italy desists from claiming parts of Dalmatian mainland, suggesting that those areas would be troublesome for the Italians to administer. The islands alone, on the other hand, would be easy to control in comparison. Besides, there were 600.000 Croats in Dalmatia, compared to 40.000 Italians. Sonnino, flatly refusing the friendly counsel, reiterated that there were other elements to consider, such as the current political situation in Italy and the threat of the Bolshevik uprising. "If I should return to Italy bringing peace which would provoke an uprising of the population, I would render a serious disservice to the entire world." On the other hand, "a satisfied Italy would remain absolutely firm and calm" (Link 57:539). He continued by saying that he

Pact vs. Principle

could not accept Wilson's proposal even if only as the starting point of the discussion. The line drawn by Wilson is the same line as published in *The New Europe* in 1917 (New Europe 415-6). The new Southern-Slav state described in that article included Fiume, the whole of Dalmatia and all the Adriatic islands. To the contrary, Italy will ask for the carrying of the Pact of London, and it will be up to its allies to give them the satisfaction. Until then, they are ready to be in isolation.

Perhaps this determined stance would hold water on its own: insist on Pact of London in its entirety. However, the Italian position was not so simple. Under the Pact of London Fiume had been left to Croats. How could one part of the Pact be enforced to the full, while its other parts are to be neglected? The explanation offered by Sonnino to this question is that the Kingdom of Serbia had refused to accept the premises of the Pact of London, and that the Allies had then withdrawn their offer. Serbia, however, had not been a signatory. It had not even been aware of the existence of such a pact, until months later.

The afternoon session held at President Wilson's house went on without Orlando and Sonnino. The discussion among the French, British and American representatives was rather frank. Some preliminaries and brief discussion were held on the topic whether Italy should be given something in Asia Minor to compensate for not receiving Fiume, to which various objections were found: Italian inexperience in colonial administration; the resistance that would be displayed by the Greek population in named areas; the absolute lack of legal claim for any such mandate. President Wilson noted that he did not like "paying the Italians for something they had no right on" (Link 57:545-58).

Wilson: Italy lacks experience in the administration of colonies. She would ask for territories only to satisfy her ambition.

Lloyd George: The Romans were good governors of colonies.

Wilson: Unfortunately, the modern Italians are not the Romans (Mantoux 307-8).

At this point Clemenceau pointed out the inaccuracy of statements which indicated that Italy had been offered almost as much by Austria in 1915 as they are standing to gain if the Pact of London is not implemented. After he himself had supported this position on the morning meeting, he had been made aware of the inaccuracies of such claim by leafing through the document entitled *Diplomatic Documents Submitted to the Italian Parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sonnino), Austria-Hungary, Session of the 20th of May, 1915*. A cursory study of the document shows that there were no grounds on which it can

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

be claimed that Austria had offered Italy as much as the United States were offering it at the moment.

Similar misleading statements had been put forth by the Italian delegation on a number of occasions during the deliberations. In a situation where far-reaching and irrevocable decisions were being made, the temptation to provide inaccurate information and mislead one's opponent was clearly present, while leaving the consequences to be sorted out later, in one's own back yard, and not on the open table in the presence of entities which may oppose one's view. Italy did just that, and even managed to get away with it. In the end, its own colonial ambitions and hunger for territorial gains lead it to the wrong side of the World War II, at the conclusion of which it lost even those Croatian lands – such as Istria and the islands – that it had been awarded on the basis of misleading statements, half-truths and downright lies it employed during the deliberations in Paris in 1919.

Apparently unperturbed by the misleading presentation made by the Italian Delegation, the representatives of Britain, France and the United States continued with their discussion of what had to be done to satisfy the Italian claims. It was then decided that a text would be written by Maurice Hankey, in which the position of the Allies would be expressed. This would then be taken to Premier Orlando with a request that it be taken into consideration. Lloyd George noted that a message should accompany the text, saying that if the Italians wanted to study it then there was a chance things could be worked out, but “that it is the limit beyond which you cannot go” (Link 57:547). To this Wilson rejoined: “I hardly like to make a compromise with people who are unreasonable. They will always believe that by insisting they will be able to obtain more advantage” (Link 57:547).

The British Prime Minister, however, in spite of his castigating attitude towards the Italians, was very likely only agreeing with the President in order to be in a good position to later propose a contrary plan of action, a plan favoring Italy. Lloyd George transmitted Sonnino's statement of that morning: “If only we could have the cities of the coast!” (Link 57:548). This comes in the combination of obtaining the islands, as earlier offered by Wilson (although he only suggested the island of Vis at that time), and of obtaining Fiume and eastern coast of Istria. Several cities with Italian minority would be added to this package, and this would satisfy the Italians. Furthermore, Lloyd George was keen to point out that the Italian public opinion might turn against the United States, whom it may

Pact vs. Principle

perceive as backing the Yugoslavs. At the same time, the Italians have sacrificed in the war, while the Croats fought against the Allies to the very end. The British Prime minister pressed on this point, in spite of Wilson's defense of the Croats, pointing out that the Czechs, nominally from the same Empire, and did not hesitate to take up arms against the Austrians. In emphasizing the issue of who deserved a better treatment Lloyd George was reiterating his country's commitment to the Pact of London.

On this same day a draft of the *Statement re Adriatic* (Link 57:542-4) had been drafted by Maurice Hankey. Among various things emphasized in the statement were the following:

- The Pact of London had been entered upon "privately;"
- Since then the circumstances have changed, i.e. the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, for whom it had been assumed at the time that it would continue existing, will be no more;
- A new set of principles are now to be applied in making decisions which affect millions; no more of the old-world secret diplomacy;
- The strategic concerns Italy had in claiming the Adriatic islands at the time of the signing of the Pact of London were no longer well-founded.

During the afternoon conversation between Prime Ministers Clemenceau and Lloyd George and President Wilson, Maurice Hankey presented this statement to Orlando and Sonnino, who "absolutely rejected it as a basis for discussion" (Link 57:551). Orlando explained that he had always regarded the defense question in the wider context of defense of the Italian population in the towns on the eastern Adriatic coast. Thus allotting several outlying islands into Italian control did not satisfy his demands, whereas the city population of Fiume, Zadar and Šibenik needed inclusion into Italian areas, both for their own protection and for the overall strategic protection of Italian interests and security. To this point Wilson declared, in a rather desponded mood: "This is not what Sonnino said, and that proves that there is no limit to what they are asking." Hankey also was of the opinion that the "Italians are bluffing a little and that they think you [Wilson] are weakening" (Link 57:552).

Upon the completion of the report delivered by Hankey, Wilson wondered whether the Statement regarding the Adriatic question should be published. Both Lloyd George and Clemenceau urged him not do to that. Their reasoning was that the publication of the

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Statement would put Italy in a position where it would have to publicly retract its position, and at this point the Italians have exhibited lack of any readiness to do that in private, let alone publicly. Although Wilson did not share the opinion that the publication of the Statement regarding Adriatic would close the door to diplomatic negotiations, out of deference to his esteemed colleagues, he appears to have agreed not to publish at this time.

Lloyd George's advice at this point was to "act as little as they, giving them rope, and to limit ourselves to informing them that we are going on to another subject" (Link 57:553). The publication of the American position, however, seemed important to the President, and he returned to the topic repeatedly, only to be dissuaded by the two Prime Ministers. Consider the letter which the Wilson received on the same day, whose topic was whether the Statement should be published or not:

If a break [in negotiations with the Italian side] should come and if your statement should be published after the break, it might possibly be regarded as a defense of the American attitude whereas, if it were published in advance of the break it would appeal to the world as the statement of basic of principle which would leave the break without any justification in the eyes of the honest part of the world (Link 57:559-560).

On the same day Premier Orlando wrote a letter (Link 57:562-4) to Wilson regarding the reports which have been sent in by American officials in Dalmatia. The reports included allegations of the abuse of power, discrimination against the Slav population, etc. The deportation of 700 persons was one of the more serious allegations, for which Orlando stated that it could not be true. He had received a telegram from the commanding officer there, in which it is stated that mere 90 persons had been interned, four expelled, and one was in custody. Prime Minister Orlando concluded:

As it is out of question to doubt the statement made by an Italian officer, this reply shows the grave error contained in the information supplied to you, as the real number of persons interned or expelled is very far from considerable (Link 57:563).

As far as the reports received by the President, which had been prepared by American officials on the ground in Dalmatia, Orlando had following to say:

Far be it from me, Mr. President, to cast any doubt on the good faith of the officials from whom you have received these reports. It is easy to make a mistake in entire good faith and this is what has happened in the case before us... I cannot and will

Pact vs. Principle

not here take up detail in other matters referred to in the reports under consideration (Link 57:563).

At this point one is reminded of the scathing criticism Wilson leveled at the Italian negotiators as being unreasonable and believing that by merely persistently insisting on their point of view they will be able to obtain some kind of advantage (Link 57:547). This went together with the Italians “working themselves up to the point of insanity,” (Link 57:575) in President’s own words. As seen earlier, in the examples of the statistics, the persistence went hand in hand with the inclination to misrepresent the facts. In this case Orlando did not only write to Wilson about these matters. On April 10 he had already sent one letter to Colonel House in which he offered assurances that either there were circumstances present which justified a harsher than usual action by the Italian officials, or perhaps a renegade army officer was disobeying his direct orders. Either way, the official Italian policy was not that of oppression. Since Colonel House, however, did not let the matter rest and has informed the President of the incidents in question, Premier Orlando felt it prudent to write directly to Wilson after 11 days had transpired. President Wilson responded to this letter on the very next day after its receipt, reassuring the Italian Prime Minister that his decision had not been guided by the information which the Prime Minister shared with him (Link 57:627).

The emotional dimension of the negotiations had perhaps reached the peak during the morning meeting of April 21, during which, after delivering the speech Orlando “gave a little gulp, [then] went to the window and sobbed piteously” (Link 57:576). Foreign Minister Sonnino also had been very emotional in declaring that he had brought his country into the war and had been responsible for the death of nearly million men. Yet, declared Sonnino, this had been “a futile sacrifice in view of the fact that that the conference would give Italy a more extended coast line, yet not all she championed” (Link 57:576). For all the emotional outbursts, they were combined with the steady insistence of Italy’s claims, which may leave an observer with the impression that the show of the emotion was merely one of the perhaps planned methods whose end-goal was the fulfillment of Italy’s plans. None of the developments described above took away any of the determination that Wilson had as regards what he considered to be the fair solution between the Yugoslavs and Italy. In his conversation with the Japanese delegates on the next day, the President is paraphrased as having declared that:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

He [Wilson] maintained the premise that, for the sake of the peace treaty, i.e., in creating the terms of a peace treaty designed to preserve a lasting world peace, the powers, in upholding the fundamental principles involved, might inevitably have to rise above their immediate interests. Turning to the pending problem over Fiume, he explained that, out of his concern that the demands of Italy would result in oppression of Slavic peoples, which would again cause unrest in the future, he had come to maintain his opposition (Link 57:582).

Wilson sustained the determination not to sign the treaty if the Italians were allowed to seize Fiume and the Dalmatian coast (Link 57:585). He fully expected the Italians to break away from the talks, noting that he would not care about it were it not for the effect that it might have on Germans. During the afternoon session of the meeting of the Council of Four held on April 22, Prime Minister Lloyd George gave a brief account of his conversation with Augusto Battioni, one of the Italian emissaries who communicated to him that Italy would not be attending the meeting in Versailles unless Italian claims were satisfied. Lloyd George met with Orlando in the early afternoon and assured him that France and Britain stood with Italy because of the Pact of London, but also emphasized that if the United States were not signatory to the Peace Treaty, it would result in a disaster (Link 57:610-4). Orlando brought up the topic of cities of Zadar, Šibenik and Split. Upon hearing this President Wilson commented that “they would never get those” (Link 57:611). In spite of the President’s outburst, Lloyd George went on to formulate the following proposal:

- (1) “Fiume, together with the surrounding territory, to be a free city;
- (2) “The islands of strategical (sic) importance to Italy to be ceded to her, including islands such as Pago, which are almost an extension of the mainland;
- (3) “Zara and Sebenico to be free cities without any definite provision for a plebiscite, but with the power that all countries have under the League of Nations to appeal to the League for an alternation of their boundaries” (Link 57:612).

Under this proposal the outer line of islands would be ceded to Italy, while Fiume would be a free city. President Wilson was not convinced that this was a good plan. He noted that the island of Cres commands the Fiume roadstead. It is for precisely that reason, replied Lloyd George, that it constitutes a protection for the Italians. Wilson merely replied: “That is a bad joke” (Link 57:612). He went on to say:

I fear a compromise like this one; I fear the consequences. I dread dangerous encounters; I sense the probability of intrigues and conflicts, with the question of

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Lloyd George speaks of? The Croats, who represent 100% of the Slavic population on the islands in question were surely interested in the islands, into every last one of them. The Serbs, whose monarchy represented the Croats in Paris, were clearly less interested in the islands. Likewise, neither Fiume, nor Zadar or Šibenik had notable Serbian population, though the hinterland of the former two had a sizeable number of Orthodox inhabitants. From this statement, and the statement offered earlier by Wilson about three ethnic groups and two religions in the area, it is evident that the Big Four were aware of the intricacies of the population makeup of the lands of future Yugoslavia. However, they largely glossed over the political differences stemming from such diversity and attempted to keep things as simple and as straightforward as possible.

Lloyd George went on to say that he was far more fearful of the difficulties which may arise relating to the German minority in the Italian Tyrol than he is to the fate of “these little islands.” This appears as a pointed attempt to diminish the importance of the matter at hand. The British Prime Minister was hoping to diffuse the situation and avert the loggerheads that Wilson and Orlando have gotten themselves into. He was doing that with the air of a colonizer who is ready to trade small, or large, favors in order to achieve his goals. Wilson, however, was much more concerned in the fairness of the proposals, the principles that they are based upon and the results that they may bear in the future. In explaining his position he stated the following:

There is a fatal antagonism between the Italians and the Slavs. If the Slavs have the feeling of an injustice, that will make the chasm unbridgeable and will open the road to Russian influence and to the formation of a Slavic bloc hostile to western Europe... You will surely admit that it is I who caused America to enter the war, who instructed and formed American opinion little by little. I did it by standing by principles which you know. Baron Sonnino led the Italian people into war to conquer territories. I did it while involving a principle of justice; I believe my claim takes precedence over his (Link 57:614).

Keeping with his previous line of argument, Lloyd George replied that the Italian claim is in reality based on the security concerns. Italy, he argued, does not pursue the conquest of territories or of great cities. Here again there is a divergence as to what the real question is, that is, in the framing of the problem at hand. Wilson’s claim of higher moral grounds of the United States for entering into war above that of Italy appears rather naïve. However, it firmly puts the question on the moral grounds. Lloyd George, on the other hand, was trying to frame the question as a security issue.

Pact vs. Principle

At the same time, the Italian leaders were inciting the Italian public into frenzy not by calls for greater security, but by declaring that Italy cannot leave its own outside its borders. As Wilson noted, they were using art history books to show that Dalmatia's artistic traditions show clearly that it is Italian. If the presence of Renaissance works of art, as is the case in Dalmatia, were an indication of whether a land is Italian or not, then far greater number of lands were yet to discover their true Italian origin. This argument, however, holds no water, for Dalmatia was among the first importers of perhaps the greatest Italian export ever, the Renaissance. Those exports, however, went far and wide across Europe, and could not be considered a basis of any claim of this type.

During the deliberations during April 23, 1919, Wilson's insistence on publishing the now renamed *Statement on the Adriatic Question* was finally met with the approval of both Clemenceau and Lloyd George. President Wilson was happy to confide that Clemenceau had said that he would not change a word in it. As regards Lloyd George, who also approved of the text, the President was cautiously optimistic, because Lloyd George declared that he would back it up, since he thought it was a remarkable statement. President was not entirely put at ease. He confided in Dr. Grayson, saying that "[Lloyd George] is slippery as an eel, and I never know when to count on him" (Link 58:1). The Italians quickly responded with yet another proposal, which was sent to the British Prime Minister and read on the meeting on the Council of Four. It contained the following points:

Fiume under the sovereignty of Italy. Italy will establish in the port of Fiume free zones;

Italy will have all the islands mentioned in the Pact of London except Pago;

Zara and Sebenico will be placed under the League of Nations with Italy as Mandatory Power (Link 58:16).

The difficulty of this position was obvious to those present on the meeting. Italy's claim on Fiume had no basis in either the principles of self-determination nor yet on the premises of Pact of London. If, however, Italy should revoke its claim on Fiume and insist solely on the implementation of the Pact of London, the situation would be even worse, since in such case both France and Britain would be obliged to fulfill their obligations as the signatories of that document. This would not be acceptable to Wilson, since the Pact of London assigned a portion of Dalmatia to Italy. The situation in which a schism arose between the allies would be most deplorable "since the future of the world depended so much on these three nations standing together" (Link 58:16).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Lloyd George. We can say to them: ‘We decided with you [Wilson] that Fiume should go to the Croats; if you do not accept that, the treaty no longer exists, and if you keep Fiume, you violate the treaty (Link 58:19).

A further complication was the danger that the Southern Slavs would be driven toward Russia, toward the pan-Slavic union. Russia at this point meant Bolshevism, and this was not desirable. Referring to the memorandum penned by Pupin, President Wilson stated that what had to be feared was “a coalition of which Russia would be the soul. We are facing an alternative: either we shall draw the southern Slavs toward western Europe and the League of Nations, or we shall throw them toward Russia and Bolshevism” (Link 58:17).

Now that the Italian representatives have withdrawn from the meetings some difficulties were facing the remaining parties. First of all, it was not yet clear whether Italy had withdrawn from the Conference altogether, or merely from the meetings of the Council of Four in which the Adriatic question was discussed. If the former were the case, it would be difficult for Britain, France and the United States to represent Italy's interests in negotiations with the Germans. If this were the case, the leaders present decided that it would be of the utmost importance to represent Italy's interests to the highest degree, particularly when it came to its borders with Austria.

The withdrawal of the Italian representatives was reported in the New York Times on the next day in a report from Paris, dateline April 23, 1919:

Premier Orlando this evening addressed an official communication to Premier Clemenceau as President of the Peace Conference, saying that as a result of the declaration by President Wilson the Italian delegation had decided to leave Paris at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon (*The New York Times*, April 23, 1919).

Fissures

The gap now forming between the Allies was not the only fissure to occur in this tense situation. Various lower-ranking officers and representatives were starting to act out of line and convey the messages which had not been approved by their superiors. One such event occurred when a French officer named Mantoux took aside Prime Minister Orlando's personal secretary to convey to him that Prime Minister Clemenceau regretted that President Wilson's *Statement on the Adriatic Question* had been published and that he (Clemenceau) thought that it was a great mistake to do that. Dr. Grayson writes of the incident in his diary: "As a matter of fact, this was a direct lie, and simply illustrated the manner in which the lesser French officials have attempted to reflect their own views and to interpret the opinions of their chiefs without knowing what their chiefs actually believed" (Link 58:54). Ominously, the French officers were not the only ones guilty of such misconduct. It became clear that Colonel House had been telling the Italians that at the end of the day they would find that Wilson would compromise, and that he (House) would be the one who would succeed in persuading him to do so. It appears that House was in fact trying to have Orlando abandon the Italian claims and persuade Wilson to loosen his principles and allow House to come to a settlement based entirely on his own ideas (Link 58:55).

During the morning meeting of the Council of Four Lloyd George reported of his meeting with Orlando that same morning. Lloyd George emphasized the difficulty that Orlando has found himself in now that Wilson's Statement had been published. Orlando was determined that the Statement would be published in Italy only if accompanied with his own reply, regarding which he promised that it would be couched in moderate language and would not close the door to further negotiations. Lloyd George impressed upon Orlando the importance that no ultimatums regarding Fiume should be contained in the reply, and Orlando agreed to that.

Wilson was of the opinion that, if given time, his *Statement on the Adriatic Question* would persuade the Italian people that their position was unsupportable, and that the current upheaval and hype would settle down. For that reason it would be desirable, President thought, that Orlando should not issue a reply immediately, and that he should remain in Paris for at least another week. Orlando, on the other hand, considered it necessary that his deferred departure should be published in the press as having been solicited by Clemenceau and Lloyd George. The draft of the communiqué went as follows:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

At the request of President Wilson, Monsieur Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George, Signor Orlando had agreed to defer his departure to Italy with a view to seeing whether it is still possible to accommodate the difficulties which have arisen about Fiume and the Dalmatian coast (Link 58:58).

Orlando did come for a meeting of the Council of Four on this day. The meeting was held at Lloyd George's residence, instead of the thereto usual location at President Wilson's Paris home. He opened the meeting by declaring that he did not doubt Wilson's friendly intentions, and that of the United States. The Statement, he assured, contained nothing in it that was not friendly or courteous. It did have a tone, however, of a general appeal to people of Italy, which in turn put Premier Orlando's authority in doubt, for he was the leader of the Italian people. That being the impression that he received, it was necessary for him to immediately return to Italy to consult the source of the authority that put him as a leader of the Italian people. This delicate aspect of the situation was the sole reason for his decision to return to Italy; the territorial questions did not motivate his decision to go to Rome. Therefore, there were no rupture in negotiations, but he was compelled to reestablish his authority with the Italian Parliament. As for the territorial questions, they have now been moved to the background. Here Wilson felt obliged to clarify the reasons for his publication of the *Statement on the Adriatic Question*. His motivation, he assured, was certainly not that of desiring to undermine the authority of or go behind the back of Premier Orlando, whom he greatly admired. President felt it necessary to publish the *Statement* in order to clarify to the public what the real reasons for the difficulties in the negotiations were. The press had thereto been uncooperative and had created a misconception in the mind of the general public, thus action had to be taken.

It was necessary to state the grounds of the principles on which all the attitude of the United States government was based. It was necessary to "clear the mists which had arisen concerning the conditions of the Conference" (Link 58:75). The clarification of the position of the government of the United States of America was particularly important since other nations were keenly observing its actions and drawing their own conclusions. As regards the rumors of Italians' withdrawal from the Conference, Wilson was reassured by Orlando's statement that he was going back to Italy in order to seek instructions from his people. Orlando's reply was that he was fully aware that, in the question of Fiume, it was obvious that both the United States and the rest of the allies have sided on the opposite side of the aisle from Italy. At the same time, it was clear that Italy had made Fiume a national question. The continuation of conversation at this point would be quite useless. He

106

Pact vs. Principle

ought to make a case before his people, and they should be the ones to decide. Clemenceau pointed out that the same treaty which bound the Allies to Italy also granted Fiume to the Croats. Thus, if the Allies could not fail in their word to Italy, neither could they fail in their word to the Croats, or to put it more widely, to the Southern Slavs. Lloyd George added that since the signing of the Pact of London a number of factors have changed. The entry of the United States into the war was one of them, the dissolution of Austria another. While this did not modify his views as regards the Pact of London and Britain's obligation to honor its word, it could provide grounds for modifications. The Pact has been modified in part, with the assent of Italy, as regards Dalmatia. Following the same logic, another part of the Pact could be modified, the part concerning Fiume.

The conversation at this point turned to the question of whether Italy would be present for the signing of the Peace Treaty with Germany. British and French Prime Ministers were of the opinion that it would not be inconsistent to have Italian delegation present, for the Adriatic question did not have any bearing on the peace with Germany. Orlando, however, insisted that that would be decided in Italy, after the discussion regarding Fiume and the Italian claim in the Adriatic. He reminded the present that the Pact of London spoke of general Peace, which ought to be discussed at one table with all the parties present. The peace would not be general if the rest of the world signed it without Italy. He continued:

Furthermore, concurrently with the signing of the Germany Peace Treaty the League of Nations Statute would be signed. One clause of the League of Nations Covenant provided for mutual and reciprocal guarantees of territory among the signatories. The effect of this would be that Italy would engage herself to guarantee the territories of other countries without being guaranteed herself. Another difficulty was that the League of Nations Covenant included an arrangement for avoiding future wars, and for solving difficulties between nations. If Italy adhered to the League of Nations, that would mean the question of frontiers between Italy and Yugo-Slavs (sic) would have to be resolved through the League of Nations instead of as the direct result of the war which had been won. This was a reason of grave difficulty in signing the peace with Germany, if questions affecting the peace with Austria-Hungary – that is to say, the question of the frontiers – was not also settled (Link 58:79).

At this point Baron Sonnino expressed disappointment that no new proposals had been offered to Italy regarding Fiume; Wilson's proposal stayed unchanged, Lloyd George proposed some changes in the Pact of London, but without the backing of Clemenceau. To

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

this Lloyd George responded that his proposal was to make Fiume a free city, to take it from the Croats and give it to its own inhabitants of all races. Baron Sonnino asked the present one by one what their opinions were as regards Fiume, getting the same answer from each: the free city option was acceptable to all.

Further difficulties were identified in the frontiers in Istria. The Pact of London gave Italy the whole of the peninsula, while Wilson thought that only its western coastal regions should fall under Italian sovereignty. The Italian representatives urged the present negotiators to come up with a definite compromise proposal which would be acceptable to all and which they, in turn, could present to the Italian Parliament. To this Wilson replied that agreeing to any middle course would be “contrary to what his people expected and had given him authority for” (Link 58:80). At this point the conversation deteriorated into the various interpretation of the events of the previous several days; who said what to who, and when, and most importantly, what did they mean by it. The sum total of such exchange is that its purpose was to corner Wilson and Clemenceau into agreeing with something that they never said they would agree to.

The ensuing discussion was summed up by Orlando, who pinned the current inability to find a consensus on the question of the borders within Istria; Italy demanded that all of Istria fall under its authority, while the American President thought it would be fair to allow Italy to annex only the coastal region. For that reason Orlando reiterated the need for a definite proposal to be made by Wilson, which he would then in turn be able to present to the Italian Parliament. Wilson, however, did not think it necessary that a specific proposal should be brought before the Parliament. His opinion was that Premier Orlando would explain the difficulties faced by each of the three powers; Great Britain and France were bound by the Pact of London, the United States by its principles. After explaining the case to the Parliament all Premier Orlando should ask of them is whether he had the authority to try to get the best possible deal from the present situation, without discussing the details.

Baron Sonnino feared that even after such authorization had been obtained from the Parliament there were still chances of negotiations not being successful. In such case, he quipped, the Parliament would come back at us with the mandate, and there would be no chance of successful resolution of the negotiations. This is an interesting point, and it may be shedding light on the frame of mind of Baron Sonnino. First, if the general authorization were granted to Orlando and Sonnino, what would stand in the way of the negotiations not

Pact vs. Principle

succeeding? The general stand Wilson had assumed was quite clear at that point. If that were presented to the Italian Parliament, and an authorization to close the deal were given, then surely there was no other obstacle in reaching the agreement other than the personal preferences and principles of the Italian negotiators. Second, he was desponded that in the case of negotiations not succeeding “our position would be quite helpless” (Link 58:84). Was he more concerned about the survival of Orlando’s government than of the successful conclusion of the war and the peace process? It appears that the political survival may have clouded the vision of the Italian politician. Orlando was quick to interrupt his Foreign Minister and to state that he fully understood the situation, and found the proposed solution to be acceptable. Why should they insist on Wilson making a proposal that he was clearly not intent on making? While outwardly agreeing that all present had the right to stand on their own principles, Premier Orlando was in fact isolating Wilson as the entity who was sabotaging the process. The cue was picked up immediately by Lloyd George, who stated:

Unfortunately, there is a conflict of principles in this case. There were President Wilson's principles, in which he agreed to and which he had defined in spite of a certain amount of opposition. There was also the principle of International engagements and standing by the signature of treaties (Link 58:85).

Under the guise of honoring of each individual's principles, the age-old principles of international relations were set against the personal principles of one single person, as it were. This was less than favorable presentation of the facts, since both the American public and that of the majority of peoples of Europe – including Italian and French public – have wholeheartedly embraced Wilson's declared principles. So, why this jibe? It was perhaps designed to isolate Wilson and force him to abandon the principles on which he stood. This was followed by the attack on the *Statement re Adriatic*, which was declared by Lloyd George to have shown that "President Wilson was unwilling to propose any arrangement but that he insisted that it must be made clear that Fiume was not to go to Italy" (Link 58:85). Before Wilson could fully explain and defend his position in saying that he also proposed destruction of fortifications on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and for the outer islands to be under Italian rule, for example, he was interrupted by Orlando who stood up and declared that he had a train to catch. The maneuvering of the British Prime Minister and the Italian delegates appears rather obvious at this juncture. Wilson, however, was not showing any signs of caving in to their pressure.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Before Orlando could leave he was presented by Sir Maurice Hankey with a letter regarding Fiume and the Peace Settlement, signed by both Lloyd George and Clemenceau (Link 58:86-90). The Pact of London, which was the starting point for the British Prime Minister in particular, but also to his French counterpart, was the core of the matter addressed. The letter starts with a recap of events of 1915 and the rough outline of the gains that Italy stood to obtain for having joined the war. It does not shy away from stating that as the result of the territorial gains Italy stood to receive over 200,000 German-speaking Tyrolese, while further 750,000 Southern Slavs would be exchanging their old Austrian rulers for the new ones, the Italians. The tone, therefore, was that of the signatories of the Pact of London discussing their own arrangements, regardless of the nationality considerations or any such lofty concerns with which they do not need to bother. As regards their task of implementing the lasting peace through arranging just borders, the following was written:

This task of re-drawing European frontiers has fallen upon the Great Powers; and admittedly its difficulties are immense. Not always, nor indeed often, do race, religion, language, history, economic interests, geographical contiguity and convenience, the influence of national prejudice, and the needs of national defense, conspire to indicate without doubt of ambiguity the best frontier for any State: – be it new or old. And unless they do, some element in a perfect settlement must be neglected, compromise becomes inevitable, and there may often be honest doubts as to the form the compromise should take (Link 58:87).

Yet neither Britain nor France had anything to say as regards the Italy's new frontiers with Austria; they were bound by the Pact of London, and none of the above considerations – indeed, the sizeable non-Italian population in the areas awarded to Italy – were of any concern to them. Such blind acceptance of the prescriptions of the Pact of London in fact accentuated two issues. First, that Britain and France had no wiggle room left, and would have to honor the Pact of London when push came to shove; and second, that if such strict adherence to the text of the Pact was displayed by the British and the French, surely their Italian comrades could apply the same standard to their own behavior.

That point was used to reintroduce the question of Fiume. The city had been awarded to Croatia under the Pact of London. Whence the sudden interest on behalf of the Italians, even frenzy in relation to that city? Although not much had to be said at this point to make the case for Croatian Fiume quite simple – such as it has not been awarded to Italy in the Pact of London, so stop insisting on it – the Clemenceau and Lloyd George chose to

Pact vs. Principle

make their case on the premises of previously mentioned cluster of arguments: the population concentrating around the port is predominantly Slav; the urban area is divided in two parts, only one of which has majority of Italian residents; up until recently even the Italian part of town had predominant Slav population; taken as the whole, the town is Slavic, not Italian; there is no historic argument; as far as contiguity is concerned, the whole of the hinterland is fully Slavic; economically, the areas which use the port are not Italian.

Aside all such considerations, the two Premiers insisted that surely the victors of a war are entitled to realize some of their own interests. As appealing as such thinking may be, the problem with it was that the new state was a friendly state. Furthermore, the strategic and defensive advantages in obtaining Fiume were rather minute. The economic advantages too. And yet:

It is for Italy, and not the other signatories of the Pact of London, to say whether she will gain more in power, wealth and honour by strictly adhering to that part of the Pact of London which is in her favour, than by accepting modifications in it which would bring it into closer harmony with the principles which are governing the territorial decisions of the Allies in other parts of Europe (Link 58:89).

Thus the adherence to the Pact of London by both Great Britain and France were reiterated and assurances were offered. As regards Fiume, the letter went on:

But so far as Fiume is concerned the position is different. Here, as we have already pointed out, the Pact of 1915 is against the Italian contention; and so also, it seems to us, are justice and policy. After the most prolonged and anxious reflexion, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that it is either in the interest of Jugo-Slavia (sic), in the interests of Italy herself, or in the interests of future peace – which is the concern of all the world – that this port should be severed from the territories to which it economically, geographically and ethnologically it naturally belongs (Link 58:89).

The long afternoon debate yielded no fruit, however, and Orlando left it in the evening, stating that he was obliged to go to Italy to make the events known to the Italian people and the Parliament. Before leaving he said that he was hoping to return, but would have to find out how the Italian people felt about the whole issue. He also promised that he would be printing President Wilson's statement regarding Fiume and Adriatic in Italy, in its entirety.

The publication of the President's Statement regarding Adriatic caused varying reactions from the press in several European capitals. In a communiqué sent on April 24,

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

(Link 58:91-3) Thomas Nelson Page, the American ambassador to Rome, reported that the tone of the press in Rome was that of intense anger, and the situation on the streets was such that he advised American citizens who were at that moment in Rome to stay indoors (Walworth 347). The attitude of the press and of the people was becoming more and more threatening by the day, and the papers were full of viral attacks on President Wilson, but also on the Allied representatives, who were accused of being disloyal. The marching crowds gathering spontaneously throughout the city chanted paroles such as “Down with America,” “Down with England,” “Down with the violators of treaties” and “Down with Jugo-Slavs” (Link 58:92).

The press, meanwhile, was adding to the fire by declaring that “Italy cannot abandon Fiume and the other Adriatic cities to the Balkan assassins” (Link 58:92). Another daily went further, by declaring that:

The knees of Germany pressed heavily upon the breast of the Allies and alone they would never have been able to breathe again when we arrived to their aid and they weeping at the mere sight of our flag (the color of which they barely now know) swore on their dead that they would never forget the services rendered by Italy to civilization, which they today barter on the Jugo-Slav (sic) market. It is well to recall that Mr. Wilson has given nothing to us Italians; has given nothing of that which he has given to the other Allies which can be considered an obligation on our part towards him. To the other Allies he has given two and a half million men for their war against Germany. To us beyond loans which are business matters and beyond the aid of Red Cross which can eventually be liquidated, nothing has been given us to win the war. We must be placed in a position of suspicion before the world; accused before the people of Europe of delaying and obstructing Peace – Wilsonian peace – because we do nothing to lay at the feet of Jugo-Slav, the late servants of Austria, our shores and our peoples of Dalmatia (Link 58:92).

In another Allied capital, London, the press seemed not as interested in the events unfolding. George Lansbury’s dispatch reported that there were various rumors in the air, but not much attention was given to them. In fact, not much outward signs of interest were notable at the moment. Longsbury continued – and one has to wonder on whose authority – that there is “a sort of unspoken longing for peace and for the commencement of that new social order of which we have all heard so much” (Link 58:94). The overall tone of the Lansbury report is that of a platitude to Wilson. Given the grave situation which he was facing, one must assume that he would have preferred the detailed kind of report, such as the one he received from Rome on the same day.

Pact vs. Principle

As for platitudes, Wilson was receiving them from all sides: Nikola Pašić wrote to “thank you from the depth of my soul and heart. Your righteous and divine words have saved from slavery a part of our nation” (Link 58:44). Less ingratiating, but equally as lopsided was the note from Emma Alice Margaret Tennant Asquith, wife of the former British Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith. She wrote: “It is impossible to say how fine, how wise, & how *brave* I think yr. appeal to those *wretched* misguided Italians is” (Link 58:95). Among the more objective comments were the one set by Joseph Patrick Tumulty, who wrote: “You have put the nations of the world to a great test of their character and integrity. Let the nations who believe in secret treaties follow Italy. The people of the world will back you up” (Link 58:105). Bernard Mannes Baruch also commended the President on “the kind of courage which you have always shown and which makes us all proud of you” (Link 58:94).

The Paris press, with the exception of the Paris edition of the *Daily Mail*, was solid in its opposition to the stance taken by President Wilson (Link 58:97). Thereto merely anti-American papers have now taken up immoderate tone in their denunciation of the President. *Le Matin*, *L’Echo de Paris* and *Le Gaulois* were particularly virulent in their accusations, declaring at the same time that France must stand by her signature in the Pact of London and accusing Wilson of having placed the Allies in an embarrassing position vis-à-vis Germany (Link 58:97). More moderate papers expressed their regrets at the President’s actions and concluded that they will cause more harm than good. Only the Socialist press (Link 58:97) had something good to say about the President’s actions. They also did not hesitate to condemn the Italian pretensions, comparing them to the French “shameful annexation” in the Saar Basin.

Regardless of their commentary and political leaning, most of the French papers have published a statement from the Italian Prime Minister Orlando, in which open criticism were aired against Wilson's actions and in which Orlando declared himself as supported by both the Italian Parliament and public opinion. The most detailed publication was in *Le Matin* (Link 58:98).

Premier Orlando declares that President Wilson ‘is threatening the Italians as if they were a barbarous people without a democratic Government.’ Signor Orlando says that he has never denied that the Pact of London did not apply to Fiume, but says that the Italian claim is based on the principles of President Wilson’s Fourteen Points. ‘It is impossible for me in a document of this nature to repeat the detailed arguments which have been produced in Italy’s behalf. I may simply say that no

Pact vs. Principle

concluded that the professions of surprise by the Italians at Wilson's statement were amazing to the correspondents, who had positive knowledge that the statement was submitted to Premier Orlando several days before its publication, and that he sought advice about drafting a reply.

In a memorandum by Robert Lansing entitled *Explosion over Fiume*, its author concludes:

The President's statement is excellent. It is well balanced and temperate. The only trouble is that it should have been issued a month ago, and then we would have avoided the embarrassment of having summoned the Germans to Versailles before the Allies were of one mind (Link 58:102).

The mood in the President's residence was that of anticipation, akin to that felt when the war first broke out. The President remarked that he wished "he had less slippery customer to deal with than L.G. [Lloyd George] for he is always for temporizing and making concessions" (Link 58:103). It was the high time for the British to decide whether they wanted to stand by Italy or the United States. Edith Benham wrote in her diary:

He said he was praying that Italians would not invoke the pact of London, made after Italy came into the war that they could not make peace separately, for in that event Italy had them absolutely, then she could prevent everything, League of Nations, all they had worked for, as the British and French felt they must stand by the pact (Link 58:103).

Part IV

The Fiume Impasse

The reaction to the Statement on Adriatic in the lands of Southern Slavs, as may have been expected, was that of jubilation. R.J. Kerner, a member of the Inquiry, wrote in his weekly report (Link 58:156-160) that the situation has brought renewed hope to the Yugoslavs. “Any solution which does not treat the Yugoslavs as one nation is based on unscientific foundations and hence cannot be considered a permanent solution”, he wrote (Gelfand 219). Furthermore, the Croats will now be encouraged to align themselves with increased confidence behind Yugoslavia. The Slovenes, who stood to lose one third of their lands to Italy if the Pact of London frontiers were enforced, were jubilant. Not only did the Slovenes believe that the borders should be redrawn so as to include the least amount of Slovenes behind the Italian lines, but that the Slovenes in Italy should be told, by the League of Nations, that they will have the same guarantee of political and cultural freedom.

At the same time, “some circles” were alarmed by the increased Bolshevik activities in the regions around German-Slovene and Hungarian-Croat borders. These fears appeared to be unfounded, Kerner commented. In fact, he told of a situation in which the Social Democrats in Ljubljana refused to employ the Bolshevik methods, while their counterparts, the Italian Social Democrats from Trieste voted for “the proletariat dictatorship.” In other words, while Yugoslavia still remained Bolshevik-proof, the western, northern and north-eastern borders were being more and more exposed to the Bolshevik movement. Kerner concluded that:

The strong anti-Italian and pro-Jugo-Slav (sic) of the vast masses of the people in the territory occupied by Italy can no longer be doubted. The policy of the Italian military and administrative officers is partly to blame. The reports which are coming in bear witness of this (Link 58:160).

On this very same day the news reached the President that the Italian fleet was heading towards Fiume, while the Italian army was told to advance toward it as well. “Our [USA] Navy there is advised to hold their men all aboard ship. This is the first time the Italian Navy has been known to come out, for during the war they said proudly they had never lost a ship, because they had never risked going to sea and meeting the Austrians” (Link 58:168). The Italian military occupation of posts around Fiume was totally

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

unjustified (Foreign 291). President also commented on his two closest allies, saying of Clemenceau as having the clear conception of what is right and what is wrong, but lacking the courage to act upon it. Speaking of Lloyd George President again used the adjective that in his mind apparently described him the best: slippery (Link 58:169).

The support that Wilson received from those in the American camp was not universal. While not wishing to influence the President regarding his stand on Fiume, Tasker Howard Bliss used it as an illustration of a situation brewing in the Far East. A region under the Chinese control was being claimed by the Japanese. The American attitude thus far had been to accommodate the Japanese. Opposing the prevailing acceptance in the American camp, Bliss wrote:

Would not this action be really more unjustifiable than the one which you had refused to be a party to on the Dalmatian Coast? Because, in the latter case, the territory in dispute did not belong to one of the Allies but to one of the Central Powers; the question in Dalmatia is as to which of two friendly powers we shall give territory taken from an enemy power; in China the question is, shall we take certain claimed rights from one friendly power in order to give them to another friendly power (Link 58:233).

Bliss was perhaps right in the point about the disputed territory having belonged to an enemy power before the war broke out. The principle of self-determination, the national principle, was apparently not considered by him at all. This may not be a reflection on Bliss' personal preferences and *modus operandi*, but on the premises on which the territorial disputes were settled in the Far East. Indeed, another secret treaty had just been made known to President Wilson mere days earlier. On April 25 he confided to Dr. Grayson that: "It [worried] me a great deal because I discovered today in a conversation with Lloyd-George another secret treaty between England and Japan giving Japan another stronghold on China" (Link 58:112). The Italian situation, he continued, would be only a tempest in tea-pot as compared to with the coming controversy with Japan regarding the Shantung Province in China. With the Italian Delegation already leaving Paris, there was a danger that Japan might follow, followed by Britain who would feel obliged to honor its commitments. With only France and the United States left at the Peace Conference, the event would lose its meaning entirely, and the ambitious plan of setting up of the League of Nations would most certainly fall.

Nor were the absentee Italian delegates wasting any time to promote their cause with the Italian public. Several days after leaving Paris, on April 29, Prime Minister

The Fiume Impasse

Orlando delivered his speech twice on the same day; once in the Chamber of Deputies and once before the Senate. He declared in the speech that Wilson's publication of April 23 regarding the Italian territorial claims on the Adriatic made it necessary for him to renew his mandate from the Parliament and from the nation in order to be able to continue with negotiations in Paris. He divulged a detailed recap of the events of the previous month of negotiations and the reaction of Italy's allies to its Adriatic claim. He stated that only after the meeting held with Wilson on April 14 did he realize that their positions vis-à-vis Adriatic were irreconcilable. Mentioning that both Lloyd George and Clemenceau remained committed to their obligations stemming from the Pact of London, he proceeded to complain that neither of the statesmen was willing to accept the Italian claim on Fiume. Not even in this speech could Orlando sound a clear trumpet: he declared that on the one hand Italy had to remain loyal to its wartime allies but on the other that it will also not settle for anything less than its just claims. The situation, it seemed, was near impossible to solve without a major break or concession by one of the parties. The Chamber of Deputies passed a resolution of confidence to the Government with 382 to 40 votes. The Senate passed a similar resolution unanimously (Atti 63).

Hon. Luigi Luzzatti of the Chamber, who a former Prime Minister and former Minister of the Treasury, and Hon. Tommaso Tittoni, former Foreign Minister, of the Senate jointly issued the statement which read as follows:

The Chamber, guardian of the dignity and the interpreter of the will of the Italian people, declares itself solid with the Italian Government and reaffirms full faith in it to defend the supreme rights of the nation to obtain just and durable peace (Link 58:238-41).

The paradox of hoping to obtain durable peace, Dalmatian coast and Fiume at the same time did not seem to bother the members of the Italian Parliament. The near hysteria of outrage against President Wilson and the Croats was in full swing at the time, and some of the fine points of logic are customarily not paid too much attention in times like this.

One of the louder rebel-rousers on the streets of Rome was its Mayor Prospero Colonna. On April 24 he led a huge demonstration on the city streets decrying Wilson's statement as being unjust. "Against every formation," said Mayor, "which offends justice and which denies our rights, the people of Italy will rise, rise against all and every one" (Link 58:91). The result was that in view of possible hostile demonstrations against the US

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Embassy it had to be heavily guarded and La Plaza San Bernardo closed by heavy cordons of infantry and *carabinieri* (Link 58:143).

Further denials and renunciations were to follow, particularly after the publishing of the following statement by Franklin K. Lane published on April 26:

Fiume was not to be given to Italy by the secret treaty made on Italy's entrance into the war, called the London treaty. Under this treaty Fiume was to go to Croatia, which is now a part of Yugoslavia (sic). And this is where President Wilson wishes it to go now. The question of giving Fiume to Italy thus becomes a question of good judgment, and President Wilson and Premiers Lloyd George and Clemenceau unitedly (sic) concluded that to give Fiume to Italy would be unjust to the new republics east of the Adriatic, as Fiume is the only port on the eastern side of the Adriatic which can be serviceable as a sea entrance to Yugoslavia and adjoining countries (*The New York Times*, April 27, 1919).

Among the responses was yet another rally lead by the Rome Mayor Colonna on April 28, where the frantic crowds demanded that an immediate annexation of the territories covered in the Pact of London be implemented, and that the people of Rome, being fully aware of the will of the people of Fiume as regards their unification with Italy, demand that the unification be carried out expressly. Furthermore, other cities not yet redeemed, particularly Split and Trogir, should also be liberated by the Italian Government, whose obligation it was to do so. Colonna stated: "We will never market our national honor nor insult the tombs and blood of our heroes. The act of energetic firmness of our delegates at the conference at Paris has been confirmed by the plebiscite of the entire people of Italy" (Link 58:239). It is not clear of which plebiscite Colonna was speaking, but this show of strength was followed by the Parliamentary support to the Government on the very next day.

Thomas Nelson reported that Rome was full of posters demanding the annexation of Fiume and Dalmatia. Most of the Italian press continued barraging the American President. Besides the chatter of the usual nationalist rhetoric, a veritable bomb was released by the French Embassy, which issued an official statement claiming that "Wilson's message [had been] unknown to Clemenceau" and further stating that: "It having been asserted that well known publication made by President Wilson was inspired by Signor Clemenceau the French Embassy is authorized to make a formal denial to the above assertions" (Link 58:239). The quote of the French statement merely noted that Prime Minister Clemenceau had not inspired President to compose his Statement on the Adriatic, but the title already asserted that it that Clemenceau had not even known of its

120

The Fiume Impasse

contents. Another paper's version of the French Embassy's denial includes the phrase: "Neither previously known or inspired" (Link 58:239). At the same time, the Italian Senate declared that: "The Chamber, the guardian of the dignity and interpreter of the will of the Italian people, declares itself solid with the Italian Government and reaffirms full faith in it to defend the supreme rights of the nation to obtain just and durable peace" (Link 58:240).

The upheaval in Italy, the media frenzy it fed and fed on at the same time, the French denials and British reserve have all contributed to a situation that was closely monitored by the world population. The matter has now come to a point where a break will occur, a decisive direction will be taken one way or the other. In the words of William Allen White, a member of the press core, in his letter to President Wilson dated April 29: "The conference is almost over" (Link 58:241). When it came to the conclusion of peace with Germany and Japan some things were surely left open to discuss, but as regards Italy and her demands all the venues have been exhausted. The diplomatic negotiation had given way to demands by both sides. The united alliance front saw fracturing along the division lines of old and new world, old and new method of settling of national interests. Which of these would prevail? The brave new world of President Wilson and self-determination and national principles he espoused or the *Realpolitik* of the old continent, under which the powers participating in the division of the spoils of war cared for the honoring of secret treaties and colonial ambitions?

The meeting of the Council of Four on April 30, 1919 left its participants in many aspects unable to come to a conclusion. The Italian Delegation did not attend the meeting and the three Allies were faced with the possibility of signing the Peace Treaty with Germany without a fair presentation of the Italian claim. Both President Wilson and Prime Minister Lloyd George recalled that Premier Orlando had been fully aware of the consequences of the Italian failure to appear. President recalled that Orlando "realized that if the Italian Delegates did not return, they could not sign the Treaty with Germany; they would be outside the League of Nations; and he [Orlando] had said some words which indicated that he considered they would be, in a sense, outcasts" (Link 58:251).

The British Prime Minister mused about the Italians' readiness to discuss the possibility of Fiume becoming a free city in exchange for concessions in Dalmatia. "This" said Lloyd George, "opens the way to the compromise which I desire." President Wilson's apparent agreement was laced with unbending adherence to the previous declared principles: "As far as I am concerned, I declare that Italy can have all that she can obtain

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

by plebiscite. I do not see any harm, on that condition, in her occupying all the territories she wants” (Link 58:250-1). Lloyd George’s response, in which he set the record straight that the Italian side was not basing its claim on the will of the people but on security considerations, was something President Wilson had already heard before and to which he had responded earlier. Instead, he mused that for the Italians it would be very difficult and dangerous to reject the proposal to hold a plebiscite because it would indicate how weak their claim really is. To this speculation, on the other hand, neither the French nor the British Prime Minister offered any comment. Instead, a different topic was introduced.

The notes of the meetings are not always verbatim citations, thus one cannot be sure of exactly what exact words were said and in which sequence. Nor were the situations of non-verbal means of communication ever commented on. This leaves the readers of the notes to draw their own conclusions as to the level of engagement and attention that each negotiating side paid to the rest. Instead of an engaging dialogue between three allies with the same goal, the transcript reads increasingly more like three monologues running concurrently in a single room. Indeed, the positions of each of the participants had been made known, the argumentation for their stands had been offered in numerous occasions and expounded upon *ad nauseam*. The participants now merely repeated their positions in different words and seemed absorbed in their own thoughts which they shared by others merely to keep up with the formalities of diplomatic negotiations. “If Italy insisted on her claims to Dalmatia under the Pact of London, it would upset the whole peace of the world and especially of the Slavonic World,” said Wilson (Link 58:250). “If they come to ask us to execute purely and simply the Pact of London, we are obliged to do it,” mused Lloyd George a while later (Link 58:252).

The news from the Italian side kept coming in. Clemenceau shared the news with those attending the Meeting of Four. The Italian ambassador to France, Count Lelio Bonin Longare presented the idea that it would be acceptable to the Italians if Fiume were to be declared a free city in exchange for Zadar and Šibenik to be placed under the Italian mandate. President Wilson’s reaction was that such mandate would be only a camouflage for sovereignty. “What they want above all is to save face,” he quipped (Link 58:263).

Meanwhile, the Italian delegation to the Peace Conference held a meeting in Rome at which it was decided that they could not return to Paris unless steps were taken to give them hope that their return would not be in vain, that is, that an offer regarding the Adriatic question was proposed that had been agreed upon by all the powers and acceptable to the

The Fiume Impasse

Italian side (Link 58:321). The Italians believed that there was a danger of revolution if their government does not get Fiume in some form so that it can be credibly claimed as Italian. The political insecurity appeared so great to the Italian insiders that some of them advised Prime Minister Orlando that the gamble is too risky and that it might be prudent for him to resign. Page advised:

In order to save the friendship between the two peoples, might not at some opportune moment some modifications be suggested by the President with Fiume conceded as Italian under such conditions as may meet fully principle of Auto decision. This, however, will require extreme care not to permit impression that Italy first was unjustly denied everything and at last received, under compulsion, only a part of her real due (Link 58:321).

The negotiations about the Italian situation continued on the meeting held on May 2 at the house of President Wilson in Paris. One of the topics was the letter handed to Baron Sonnino by the British and French Prime Ministers on April 24. The letter, while falling short of expressing their support of the American stand, called for continued Italian participation in the peace negotiations and flexibility in their position vis-à-vis Adriatic. Clemenceau was of the opinion that the letter should be now made public, but Lloyd George disagreed. He quoted a communiqué received from Marquis Imperiali, the Italian ambassador to London, in which it was expressed that the publication of the letter would not help the Italian public opinion regarding the Great Britain. President Wilson, however, was of the opinion that the letter should be published.

A greater problem existed, namely that of Italy not being present to negotiate its own peace terms with Germany. Both the French and the British Prime Minister thought it awkward and inappropriate to represent Italian interests, though they would do it with Italy's best interests at heart. President Wilson, again, disagreed, saying that "we ought not to be so soft-hearted about the Italians, who had withdrawn from the negotiations with Germany because they could not get what they wanted about the negotiations with Austria, which were a separate matter" (Link 58:236).

President Wilson proceeded to remind the present that there had been an understanding that Lloyd George and Clemenceau would publish a document immediately after Wilson published his Statement regarding Adriatic. Given that such publication had not been made, the impression had been created that the United States stood alone on this issue. For that reason it was imperative that a statement by the British and French Prime Ministers be published. Lloyd George, however, resisted this, saying that this would

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

provide the Italian delegation with an excuse not to return to the negotiating table. They would be able to say that “President Wilson drove them away from the Conference, and M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George prevented them from coming back” (Link 58:236). Furthermore, Lloyd George continued, the British public opinion was not on the side of the Italians in this matter, but it had no great interest in it either. The British public simply wanted the rupture patched up, but as regards the details of the schism, it had no detailed knowledge. Wilson rejoined that in the United States the situation was the exact opposite; the public there was intensely interested in the issue. The American public could not understand why the United States was left in isolation. The Italian side, on the other hand, had to be made to understand that there was nothing they could gain from their absence and insistence on Fiume. They were in an impossible situation and had to be brought to understand and accept that fact. The publication of a memorandum by the British and the French Prime Ministers would make that abundantly clear.

This point was also contested by Lloyd George, who insisted that the United States were not isolated, and that the Italian public saw the British as pro-Yugoslav. He cited incidents in which the British soldiers in Italy were insulted on the streets. Putting further pressure on the Italians would only cause a crisis which could possibly bring down the government. As things were at the moment, the Italian side must inevitably come back to the negotiating table, and any further publication which would make it more difficult for them to do so would only deepen the crisis. “Sooner or later, Italy must come in, and must do so voluntarily,” he concluded (Link 58:336).

The tension between the heads of states was getting palpable at this point. President Wilson, rather stubbornly and perhaps not so much to the point, rejoined by bringing up again the matter of the public opinion in the United States, proclaiming himself to be the best judge of it, based on the communications on the matter he received daily. The lack of constructive dialogue between the parties is a constant reminder that whatever approximation of views they appeared to have from time to time, the premises for the formulation of a united opinion were simply not there. The British and the French were bound by the Pact of London, while the Americans insisted on the application of the Principles.

Furthermore, another difference, relating to the methods employed for the achievement of conclusive solution, was also becoming obvious. President Wilson wanted to stir things up, as it were, by acting and putting more pressure on the Italian side, or

The Fiume Impasse

rather, defining the Italian options in such a constrained position that would make it impossible for them to have any wiggle room in negotiations and achievement of their goals. This, he insisted, would provide a clear trumpet sound which the Italians would come to accept in the end. The British Prime Minister, on the other hand, preferred leaving things as they were, hoping that the present Italian government would survive the crisis and come back to the negotiation table of their own accord. The proclivity to not make sudden and rushed decisions was his preferred course of action.

A cursory analysis of the situation could perhaps identify President Wilson as rash, idealistic, and even inexperienced. Lloyd George, on the other hand, carried at this point an air of an experienced diplomat who knows that making rash steps which were hard to retract was not wise. Yet their preferred methods were more conditioned by their position in the negotiations and the goals they wished to achieve rather than personal preference of one method of negotiation to the other. To wit, Wilson felt that the situation was such that if nothing was done, and done immediately, the Italians, sensing the schism between the Allies, would simply come back to the negotiating table and demand the fulfillment of the promises made to them in the Pact of London. The French and the British made it no secret that they felt bound to the terms of the Pact and would, in so many words, comply. In the opinion of President Wilson, if anything was to be achieved to further the Principles on which the American position was based, a show of unity between the Allies had to be displayed, with the use of a declaration. While such a declaration would put the Italian government into a difficult position, it would also prompt them to take charge of the Italian public opinion, or rather to try to influence it and guide it in a certain direction.

As things stood at that moment, the Italian public opinion was being formed by the newspapers, local politicians and fringe groups, and not by the government. The inactivity of the Italian side was partly motivated by the desire to put further pressure on the United States. On the other hand, opposing such vehement public opinion would place them at a considerable political risk. Such “leading by following” as performed by the Italian government was an effective negotiation tactic in this case, which went hand in hand with the plans of the British. Placing further pressure on the Italians, as President Wilson thought desirable, would either cause the Italian government to fail, as feared by Lloyd George, or to take the charge and stir the public opinion, as hoped for by Wilson.

If only the Italian government would appeal to the masses and communicate with them the evident truths that their claims on Dalmatia and Fiume were nothing more than

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

disguised imperialism, Wilson hoped, the public opinion would accept it, albeit with some resentment. The Italians, Wilson believed, had a desire to see the completion of the war, a desire which was more urgent than the territorial expansion and acquisition of an, for them, unimportant port city with the Italian population of 8,000. Thus, causing the two matters to be considered one against the other would cause every reasonable Italian to opt for peace now, and sustainable peace at that.

Meanwhile the Italians have started sending battleships to various disputed areas. One was sent to Fiume, and the number of ground troops was also on the increase (Link 58:142). Similar situation was occurring in Šibenik. Another dispatch forwarded by Benson confirmed that additional troops were deployed there, and that the situation was getting tenser by the minute (Link 58:354). Nor were the Adriatic ports the only arrival points for the Italian troops. Heavy oppression of the population of the Dodecanese islands was reported by Skevos Zervos and Paris Roussos, who were members of the delegation representing the population of the Dodecanese Islands before the Paris Peace Conference. The events that had transpired were related to the proclamation of the union of Greece and the Dodecanese Islands which had been put forth by the population.

At the news the local Italian Authorities and the soldiers of the Army of Occupation, in an excess of rage, attacked our unarmed compatriots, killing our priests and our women, wounding the defenseless inhabitants, imprisoning bishops and notables, maltreating with an unheard of savagery our women and children, and behaved generally in a barbarous and odiously tyrannical manner (Link 58:355).

Similar events have taken place in Rhodes, during the Easter celebrations. In various villages throughout the island Greek priests had been killed by the Italian forces. This was followed by similar actions throughout the Dodecanese Islands. Zervos and Roussos appealed to the President:

In the name of the rights of man, the most elementary liberty of humanity, also in the name of the rights of people, the principle of nationality and the Wilsonian Doctrine, and we beg you, Mr. President, we beg the Conference of Peace, to intervene by prompt and energetic action so as to put an end to the long and atrocious martyrdom of the Dodecanese (Link 58:356).

The Italian authorities, no doubt at the prompting of the Rome government, have put up the pressure on the local population who sought the nationality principle to be applied and the right of self-determination to be implemented. This had a two-fold effect;

The Fiume Impasse

the oppression on the ground clearly was designed to put pressure on local population and to slow further approximation to its chosen mother country, in this case Greece. The second result was an added pressure to the negotiators in Paris, who were now faced with potentially explosive situation and were therefore forced to make concessions to the Italian demands in order to cause them to rein in their troops. Nor did they have to wait for the results for very long. On May 2, 1919 Thomas Nelson Page communicated to President Wilson the fact that “the French [were] much dissatisfied with the attitude we have taken in regard to Italian affairs and [have] declared positively that France will not sign the Peace Treaty unless some arrangement is arrived at with Italy so that the Italians will be able to sign also” (Link 58:357).

Furthermore, the French circles were of the opinion that France was in danger of losing the fruits of her victory because of the stubbornness of President Wilson. Among the French it was alleged that the United States were making peace with Germany at the expense of France and Italy, which caused greater resent toward the “Anglophile tendency” of the American peace negotiators. The French alleged that President Wilson had prepared a document regarding France and her territorial aspirations, particularly that regarding the Saar region, in which similar conclusions had been reached as in the President’s stand regarding Fiume.

Along with such oblique and indirect accusations and speculations Page reported that a new proposal was being put forth by the Italians regarding the Adriatic question and Fiume in particular:

“I have reason to think from conversation with one that I know to be well informed, that should an invitation come from Paris expressing desire to reopen negotiations touching Fiume there might be a chance doing so on the following conditions:

- (1) Fiume proper to be absolutely free from all Slav sovereignty direct or indirect, that is through some kind of Commission.
- (2) Susac from the river down the river to the sea to be absolutely free from all Italian sovereignty and separate from Fiume, that is the river will be dividing line between Fiume and Susac.
- (3) Fiume to be a free city and the port a free port.
- (4) To be conceded from, as well as taken out of, the Pact of London the island of Pago [Pag] and especially Dalmatian mainland coast except Zara [Zadar] and Sebenico [Šibenik] with reasonable defensive ground behind them” (Link 58:358).

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

In offering concessions Italy was clearly hoping to reopen negotiations, and Page saw it as an opportunity that should not be thrown away. "Cannot the President take the great step of proposing reopening the discussion and suggesting confidentially the foregoing as a basis for new discussion and possible settlement," Page concluded his note.

This gradual shift in the position of thereto supportive Page was perhaps an indication of the fatigue that was settling into the American ranks. The opposition to President Wilson's stand was widespread not only in Italian public opinion and among the members of its government. It was also creating a schism between the rest of the Allies. Furthermore, it was creating an impossible situation in which no forward move could be achieved in regards to the Peace Treaty, on which a whole lot more depended than a small town on an unfamiliar coast. While Page's tone remained supportive and conciliatory, not all American officials shared his loyalty towards the President.

The Chinks in the Armor and the Italian Return

With street protests brewing in Italy and attacks being waged against the President's person – but not against the American people, as the protestors were keen to emphasize – apparent division in the American ranks was greeted by all those who were in favor of Italian Fiume. Henry Cabot Lodge was widely cited at this time, precisely for his clear statement of support of the Italian cause. In a telegram which he sent to various Italian-American organizations he wrote the following:

In the discussion of the terms of peace I have always declared that the region known as Italia Irredenta and all adjoining regions where Italian culture and the Italian population are dominant, should be returned, and that Italy should have military and naval control of the Adriatic. [...] I have also said that repeatedly that the Jugoslavs (sic) ought to have access to the Adriatic, which I regard as economically essential part of their independence.

To both these opinions I adhere, and I can see no reason why the matter could not have been arranged. From information given me by Italian deputation whom I saw last Spring in Washington I was assured that Italy entirely willing to give portions of the Dalmatian coast containing good ports to the Slav population of that region (Link 58:359).

Lodge had an interesting choice of words in stating that Dalmatia should be returned to Italy. The previous Venetian occupation of Dalmatia gave it no greater claim than Austria had to the same region, thus there was nothing to be returned. While these demands had some historical and cultural basis, they were nothing more than bold posturing, motivated by strategic reasons most of all (Stevenson 52). The words employed were no doubt used to appease the Italian Americans.

However, more glaring was the intentional omission to even mention, much less give recognition to, President Wilson's declared principle of self-determination of the local population. This is a much graver disagreement with the official policy of the American Administration. Lodge went on to say:

I repeat that I think that Italy should make arrangements to secure an access to the Adriatic to the Slavic populations which I hope will form a united independent barrier State.

As to Fiume, if Italy is of the opinion that it is necessary to her safety and for her protection that she should hold Fiume, I am clearly of the opinion that it should be hers, especially as the people of Fiume have, I understand, voted to join with Italy. Italy regards Fiume as the founders of our own republic regard[ed] the mouth of

The Fiume Impasse

matter is viewed strictly on the war-performance merit basis. Still, it fell well short of the merits which the Italians could put forward. The attitude of the Allied negotiators can succinctly be put in a short quote of the British Ambassador to Rome, Sir Rendell Rodd, who, upon seeing the draft of the memorandum drafted by Balfour on behalf of Prime Minister Lloyd George and Premier Clemenceau stated rather shortly: “Are you really going to quarrel with Italy over a thing like that?” (Link 58:371). The burning question of Italian claims was not something that was going to go away of its own accord. The Allies found themselves on the opposite sides of the aisle. The present situation, with one major Allied Power missing from the negotiating table, was not acceptable. The prospects of Italy’s return to Paris, on the other hand, were not foreshadowing settlement, but further upheaval. In the words jotted in Colonel House’s diary on May 3:

Clemenceau and George, particularly George, say if the Italians come back and demand the Pact of London, they will have to live up to their obligations. The President told them that we would not sign a treaty which recognized the Pact of London, and that France and England would have to choose between Italy and the United States. George and Clemenceau hoped that no such choice would have to be made, but if it came to that, they would have to recognize their obligation to the Pact of London no matter what the consequences (Link 58:379).

Finding himself more and more isolated, Wilson was becoming disturbed by the unfolding events. Now Colonel House joined those who tried to move him from his unbending position towards some kind of settlement which would be acceptable to all sides. The only option that Wilson would consider at this point was to leave the decision for the League of Nations to make. The problem with that particular venue was that Italy would be a member of the Council of Ten, and would be able to veto whatever decision it did not like. Colonel House, on the other hand, was of the opinion that it might be arranged with the Italians to waive their right to vote.

One American Congressman shared Colonel House’s opinion. It was Congressman Fiorello Enrico La Guardia, whose family had come from Trentino, and who had served in the United States consulates in Budapest, Trieste and Fiume prior to the war. In supporting Colonel House’s initiative La Guardia showed solution-oriented thinking. He did not allow his sympathies, which no doubt rested with the Italian side, to taint his judgment or sense of fairness.

Meanwhile, the constant haggle over the terms of peace was at times taking the shape of a bizarre comedy. During the afternoon meeting of the Council of Four held on

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

May 3, Prime Minister Lloyd George recalled his conversation with Marquis Imperiali, one of Rome's representatives in Paris. The conversation, Imperiali insisted, was of a personal nature. Yet for its basis he used the letter he had received from Premier Orlando, to whom he would later report. The copy of the letter, however, he would not give to the British PM, who in turn had to rely on his memory of the meeting when describing it to the Council.

Premier Orlando had stated in his letter, "You say you stand by the Pact of London. How much better off are we? President Wilson will not accept it. What guarantees do we our Allies propose to enforce the Treaty?" Lloyd George had then replied to the Marquis Imperiali, "What guarantees do you want? Do you expect us to declare war on the United States?" The Marquis Imperiali had replied, "Oh, no." Lloyd George had asked him what he would suggest, and he [Imperiali] could not suggest anything. ... The Marquis Imperiali had then said, "Won't you make us some offer?" Lloyd George had replied, "To whom shall we make the offer? Can you receive an offer?" The Marquis Imperiali replied that he could transmit one (Link 58:391).

The unwillingness to change position exhibited by Wilson on the one hand was more than matched by the unbending attitude of the Italian leaders. Furthermore, while Wilson had some vanity mixed in with his promotion of lofty and fair ideals for which he stood, the Italian side could not be outdone in this aspect either: The Italians insisted that some kind of offer be made before their delegation returns to Paris, a specific offer which could be used as a basis of further negotiations. Since the Allies were divided amongst themselves as to what the right course of action should be, no such proposal was forthcoming. Marquis Imperiali communicated to Lloyd George that, as grave as the situation might be at the moment, if the Italian deputation returned to Paris and was unable to reach an agreement, the situation would become graver than ever. To this Lloyd George simply replied "Why would it be more grave than it is now?" (Link 58:392). Indeed, why? It appears that the Italian leaders were quite focused on the goal of preserving their own standing, face and political reputation rather than reaching an agreement. A similar conversation had been held between Prime Minister Clemenceau and Count Bonin, the Italian Ambassador to Paris. In it Count Bonin stated that Orlando could simply not afford to fail in achieving his goals. Other than that, Clemenceau reported, the meeting was of no consequence. Wilson rejoined that he also was about to schedule a meeting with the Italian ambassador to the United States, who requested an audience, but of which he expected no great impetus.

The Fiume Impasse

Those present at the meeting of the Council of Four felt that they needed to clarify to the Italian side that their failure to appear on the meeting scheduled with Germans on next Tuesday would be considered a breach of the Pact of London (Link 58:392). The letter was drafted by Balfour, and the present statesmen each had something to contribute. While Lloyd George and Clemenceau concerned themselves with the tone of the note, President Wilson struck to the core of the problem, stating that the following sentence occurred to him as a suitable one: “Absence from signing of Treaty [of Peace] will constitute a breach [of the Pact of London]” (Link 58:396).

The press was not leaving this matter alone. Identifying the question of Fiume as the major roadblock to peace, the article published in *Le Temps* of Paris on April 29, 1919 identifies the conundrum and offers some ideas, but not before warning that a solution must be found quickly “lest the present crisis result either in a new with all its incalculable consequences or in the resounding defeat of one of the two great powers involved in the dispute.” Given that the Italians claimed their compatriots, the citizens of Fiume, while the Yugoslavs claimed a port which would be able to service the hinterland, that is Zagreb and Ljubljana basins, the solution would be to give to each what they ask for. Fiume to Italy, the port to Yugoslavia. The port being on a different location, further to the south-east. The writer of the article was aware that the ports proposed, such as Senj, Novi Vinodolski and Lukovo, were no ports at all, but were capable of being developed into ports with time. For that reason, in an article published two days later in *Le Temps* yet another location for the port was proposed: Bakar, also known as Buccari (Walworth 349). This location, the writers were confident, was better, since it lay only 12 kilometers from the existing railway line which lead into the interior. The article concluded that:

By proceeding along these lines, one would not only solve the problem of Fiume but also simplify the whole Adriatic question: and the principle of nationality, having triumphed in Fiume, could be applied elsewhere. Since the Pact of London would have been revised in regard to Fiume, which it had given to Croatia, it could also be modified in regard to Dalmatia, which had been attributed to Italy. In this way, one would return to the spirit of moderation cherished by the Latin people, the principle of logic appreciated by the French, and the Anglo-Saxon spirit of compromise (*Le Temps*, May 1, 1919).

The matter of a possible compromise between the two sides, and of modification of the Pact of London, as suggested in *Le Temps*, was discussed on the meeting of the Council of Four on May 3, 1919. The significance of the discussion was not that its participants

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

covered the same ground over and over again, as thereto had been the case, but that now there was some inclination for compromise by the British Prime Minister. Lloyd George had up to this point insisted that the Pact of London was binding and that Britain would have to honor its word. President Wilson, on the other hand, always insisted on the application of the principle of nationality. The question of modifying the Pact of London had not been discussed thereto. Wilson stated that he believed that a settlement could be reached without giving Fiume to Italy. Lloyd George said that the solution could only be reached through compromise. He recalled that he had “said to Marquis Imperiali that he could only consent to Fiume not being Croat on the condition that the Italians would give up Dalmatia to the Jugo-Slavs” (Link 58:396). Yet this was not the whole story, Lloyd George continued. About the time the Allies had been trying to induce the Serbs to give up to Bulgaria a portion of Serbia which they believed ought to belong to Bulgaria, their object being to bring Bulgaria into the war. They had told the Serbs that they would get the whole of Yugoslavia in the end, and Fiume had been inserted into the treaty in order that Serbia might eventually receive it, since this was part of the inducement to try and get them to make the concession to Bulgaria (Link 58:397).

The setting was right for a compromise to be achieved. President Wilson was faced with a possible isolation unless he modified his unbending position. Further indication of his isolated position was obvious in the statements made by Senator Lodge and Senator Curtis. The statements of these two Republican Senators were taken by the Italian media to indicate that there had been a rift between the position of the American people and their Chief executive. Thomas Nelson Page reported on May 3 that the Italian media went even further, speculating that his own position was at divergence with the President’s views. The Italian press made much of this perceived rift and speculated that an imminent compromise is at hand, and that, as *Il Tempo* put it in an editorial on May 2, “This phase of our history is now closed.”

But Wilson was not fully ready to desert his stance. On a meeting held on May 6 he wondered “how long it would take the Italians to realize that they would not get Fiume” (Link 58:397). The musings continued with the President noting that the only advantage of giving Fiume to the Italians would be to nullify the Pact of London. That, in turn, would give an opening to contest Italian claims to Dodecanese Islands, which, Wilson was keen to point out, he had been appalled to find out were also assigned to the Italians.

The Fiume Impasse

The Italian military was active in all the areas which they had aspirations to redeem or annex. In Fiume alone they had 18,000 troops, with further 40,000 in the surrounding area. The proximity of Serbian troops was disconcerting, but apparently both sides tried their best to avoid open conflict. The controversy over the desires of the Fiume population continued. In a report sent on May 7 William Shepherd Benson reported to President that the “Slavs in Fiume claim only 20 percent population want annexation (sic) Italy. Italian Commanding General claims all here want it. Only an impartial count could tell the truth” (Link 58:528). Rear Admiral Andrews had different intelligence as regards the troops in Fiume and its vicinity:

Actual number of Serbian soldiers this vicinity about 1000 as sentries among Armistice Line as everywhere on this coast. Where Serbs have a picket of 2 men, Italians confront this with 30 men. Italians state movement of Slav troops seen but do not state any large numbers seen. If many Slav soldiers were known to be around they would proclaim it. Their silence is proof of few.

Activity of Italy mainly through fear of Serb attack. They have said it would happen. Now they believe it. Incidentally Italians have large number of troops in their hope of holding Fiume. Here they do not seem positive of what the decision may be.

[illegible]

The pressure on President Wilson continued from all sides. The United States Ambassador to Rome kept trying to influence the President on the crucial question of Fiume. In his note sent from Rome on May 7 Page reported that the whole of Italy stands in anticipation of the outcome of the Paris negotiations. The prevalent fear is that Bolshevism would take hold unless Italy realizes its goals, particularly as it relates to Fiume. "I feel that if a settlement is not arrived at and Orlando and Sonnino return without one, the situation here will be irremediable" (Link 58:529). He proceeded to inform President Wilson that a person fully informed as to the Italian sentiments stated to him this following:

If Orlando and Sonnino return from Paris with Fiume all will be well and within a week the old relations between America and Italy will be as before the trouble arose. If they return without Fiume, they will be chased out of Italy. It will be a catastrophe. There will be a revolution and government and throne both may go.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

President Wilson has absolutely in his hands to-day, the destiny of 40,000,000 Italians, either by saying yes or no (Link 58:529).

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

In the resumed deliberations a new method was not employed; the issues at hand were now divided between those which related directly to Italy and those which did not. Thus headway could be obtained in matters pertaining to the borders of Austria, Hungary and Germany, for as long as they did not affect the Italian interests and/or frontiers. This course of action was proposed by President Wilson on the meeting of the Council of Four on May 9, 1919, and seconded by the Italian Prime Minister (Link 58:539).

Dr. Grayson noted in his diary entry of May 9 that in spite of the fact that Orlando was now again present at the deliberations no reference was being made to the Adriatic. “As a matter of fact, it has been tacitly agreed to that the Adriatic problems will be allowed to take care of themselves for the time being, and that the other matters which deal directly with Austria and Hungary will be hastened as much as possible” (Link 58:561).

The Battle of Wish-Lists

The work on the Adriatic question continued. Douglas Wilson Johnson sent President Wilson a formula for the settlement on May 9. The formula, whose main elements are listed below, had the unanimous approval of the American territorial specialists concerned with Fiume and Dalmatia (Walworth 56). Furthermore, Johnson reported that he had discussed the formula with the leader of the Yugoslav Committee Trumbić, who stated that it would be acceptable to Yugoslavs, with certain slight reservations (Link 58:588).

The first three points of the document entitled “Suggested Formula for Adriatic Settlement” (Link 58:589-91) contained concessions to Italy which went beyond the provisions of the Pact of London. Points 4 and 8 called for the immediate withdrawal of Italian forces from areas awarded to Italy by the Pact of London but in which the Croatian population formed a majority. The fate of those territories would be determined by a plebiscite administered by the League of Nations, and they would – as a whole – be adjoined to either Italy or Yugoslavia. The crucial and most difficult issue was left in the middle of the document, sandwiched, as it were, by issues which were easier to accept to the Italians. Point 5 of the draft read as follows:

5. Italian troops to be immediately withdrawn from the vicinity and city of Fiume, which shall be administered, within the Jugo-Slav (sic) customs regime, by the League of Nations until its future status is determined. The city and district of Fiume, together with its moles, docks, basins and other port instrumentalities, to be ceded to Italy when and if the following conditions are fulfilled:

(a) By plebiscite held within a period to be fixed by the League of Nations, and under appropriate safeguards, the city and district of Fiume by a majority of all votes cast manifests its desire to be annexed to Italy under condition that and as soon as the provisions in (b) have been satisfied.

(b) Within six months after the plebiscite provided in (a) has been held, and in case this plebiscite results favorably to the annexation of Fiume to Italy under the conditions specified (Link 58:590).

This entire section, though appearing to favor the Italians was in fact far from placing Fiume into their hands. The initial impression was achieved by what at first appears to be unconditional granting of Fiume to Italy, only to be followed by rather strict stipulations. Some of the demands that the Italian side surely must have chafed against included the provision that the League of Nations should be administering a plebiscite. To

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

begin with, placing the future of the city into the hands of League of Nations, ruled by a simple majority rule and no veto powers that could be used by Italy, was not an acceptable solution to the Italians, for the simple reason that it had no predictable outcome.

The plebiscite should be held in “the city and district of Fiume” and the outcome decided by “a majority of all votes cast.” This would already have been enough for the Italians to lose. The only majority they could claim was in the strict city center and among the bourgeoisie. Up to this point they had resisted including Sušak, which was an integral part of the city. How much more would they resist the inclusion of the entire district, which is clearly Croatian in its character? The next contentious point related to the conditions for the secession of Fiume should the outcome of the plebiscite be positive, as improbable as that was. To put it briefly, Italy would have to build a port for the Yugoslav state which would in no way be inferior to the port of Fiume. This point is quite strict, showing perhaps the attitude of its American formulators, who obviously considered that if Fiume ends up in Italian hands Italy should be made to pay for the facilities it would be receiving without having invested one Lira to develop them. The point about the “free and unhampered transit” of goods and persons had always been there. One does not have to be a skeptic to know that such provisions are very quickly forgotten and are replaced by restrictive customs and immigration regimes. Though not a new point, nor overly limiting, particularly because there would be nobody to enforce it once the possession of the city and the port had taken place, this is yet another condition that the Italian side would have had reservations about. The closing provision was the hardest of all to take: in the event that any of the above conditions were not met, the city and the port of Fiume would be transferred to Yugoslav sovereignty. This included such improbable and disturbing scenarios such as the plebiscite coming out in the favor of secession to Italy but that not being carried out because Italy had not built the new port according to as of yet unknown specifications set by a group of deciders over whom Italy would have no control.

Points 6, 7 and 8, made provisions regarding the Adriatic islands, the city of Zadar and the Dalmatian territory which had originally been assigned to Italy:

6. Italy to receive the islands of Lussin, Unie, Sansego, Asinella, Lissa and its adjacent islets including Busi and San Andrea, and the Pelagrosa group (Pelagrosa Grande, Pelagrosa Piccola, Cajola and immediately adjacent islets). [The Croatian names of the islands in question are: Lošinj, Unije, Sušak, Ilovik, Vis, Biševo, Sveti Andrija, Palagruža.]

7. The town of Zara to be made a free city.

The Fiume Impasse

8. Italian troops to be immediately withdrawn from all parts of Istrian and Dalmatian islands and Dalmatian mainland not mentioned in paragraphs 6 and 7. A plebiscite to be held within a period of one year from date of this Treaty, under appropriate safeguards, prescribed by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations, to determine whether the area shaded red on the accompanying map shall, as a whole belong to Italy or Jugo-Slavia (sic) (Link 58:590).

The list of islands assigned to Italy had considerably shrunk as compared to the original wish-list proposed by the Italians. The American experts who prepared this list sought only to provide to Italy the outlying barrier of islands which could conceivably be used for its naval defense purposes, whereas the original Italian demand included islands which were so close to shore that some of them have since been joined to the mainland by bridges. On the other hand, for successful naval defense of Italian exposed northern shores and for the control of the entire Adriatic, a single island would have been more than necessary: Vis. This fact had been known to the British Navy, who set up its base there during the Napoleonic Wars, and defeated the French in the naval battle in 1811. Later on the Austrian Navy also had large military installations on the islands. The Italians were acutely aware of this, for their own grand vessel *Re d'Italia* had been sunk in the battle against the Austrians in 1866. Point 9 of the Formula unconditionally assigned the now Albanian port of Valona to Italians: "Italy to receive Valona and a sufficient hinterland for its defense." The combination of Valona, Vis and Pula at the southernmost tip of the Istrian peninsula provided for more than sufficient naval control of the Adriatic.

The Italian demands, on the other hand, were not based on defense considerations, but rather on the colonially motivated desire to fill the void left by the disappearing Dual Monarchy and Ottoman Empire. Why else would Pag island be claimed, or the Dodecanese Islands in the east? The provision regarding the immediate withdrawal of the Italian troops from the rest of the islands and Dalmatian mainland was also not something that the Italians would be ready to accept. In the previous two months they had done everything possible to send more troops to those areas and to establish their de-facto rule. Again, any stipulations to carry out the plebiscite under the auspices of the Council of the League of Nations, and to look at the area *as a whole*, was not something that the Italians would have approved.

The Italian insistence that Fiume, Zadar and Šibenik should fall under the Italian sovereignty was nominally based on the wishes of its population. The particulars of the Fiume situation, and its borough of Sušak, have been discussed. Zadar had a greater

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

proportion of Italian population than Fiume, while Šibenik had a considerable Italian population as well. Also discussed was the outcome of placing those centers into plebiscite areas together with their hinterlands and surrounding areas, which would inevitably result in a Croatian majority. The Italian tactic has been to isolate the urban centers with Italian majority and have them declared as independent or free cities, with Italian sovereignty. While this approach could possibly qualify as following the principles espoused by President Wilson, that is, the principle of nationality, in effect it did exactly the opposite. The areas surrounding the cities and the ports in question, though nominally under Yugoslav sovereignty, would be utterly dependent on the regional centers controlled by the Italians. Italy would thus have all the advantages of a colonial power – having full control of the commercial stronghold – without having to bear any burdens of administering the exploited areas, enforcing law and order, etc.

The difficulties that the Dalmatian areas surrounding Zadar and Šibenik would have faced in trying to create alternative regional centers are epitomized in the points of the Formula which dealt with the creation of a brand new port in Bakar. Their creation would have been costly and protracted, while those in charge of the existing centers and ports would be in position to easily compromise whatever progress was being made by temporary moves, such as, for example, the relaxing of customs regimes, lowering of transit charges, etc. Once such steps bore their desired effect – such as delay in construction of alternative sites, or wholesale abandonment of such plans – the customs regimes, transit charges, even visa requirements, could be hiked up again, bringing the surrounding areas under the thumb of those who control the city and the port; the Italian colonial power. Judging by the particulars expressed in the proposal created by the American experts, they were fully aware of all of the above considerations, and did their best to curb the Italian expansionism at the cost of the Croatian population of Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands.

Interestingly, no provisions regarding the right to self-determination were made regarding the port of Valona. The line between this port and Santa Maria di Leuca in southern Italy straddles the narrowest passage of the Otranto Gate to the Adriatic, and its strategic importance is quite obvious. Why did American experts chose not to address the question of this port? Part of the reason was, perhaps, the commanding position that Valona had on the Otranto Gate, and the desire to assuage the concerns of the Italians that they needed the safety of their northern shores. But why were the desires of the Albanians

The Navy Threat and the Merchant Tonnage

The Italian concerns about the naval safety of the Adriatic and the northern shores of Italian peninsula were not well founded. While Croats, particularly Dubrovnik, had posed a mild military threat to the medieval Venice, and were a general nuisance in Venice's attempts to trade with the Ottoman Empire, the situation had changed drastically after the Napoleonic wars; both *La Serenissima* and the Republic of Dubrovnik were brought to an end, and were soon thereafter relegated to lowly outlying provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy. While Venetto recovered somewhat after its unification with Italy in 1866, the Croatian coast never recuperated. Whatever naval capabilities there had been before the World War I, though predominantly manned by the Croats, was fully under the control of the Austrian and Hungarian officers. Would the impoverished Dalmatia be able to create a navy of its own that would threaten the Italian shores? That was very doubtful; the resources were simply not there. Perhaps even more importantly, there was no will or motivation to do something like that; the unification of the Croatian and other Southern Slav areas followed centuries of oppression and control by foreign powers. While some border areas remained potentially attractive to the new Slavic state, cutting across the Adriatic to attack the Italians was definitely not on its agenda.

Another interesting aspect relating somewhat obliquely to the question of defense of Italian coast and rather more straightforwardly to its control of Croatian ports such as Fiume, Zadar and Šibenik has not been mentioned up to this point: the gross tonnage of the vessels registered in those ports. Who would those vessels belong to after the war and redistribution of the territories? As mentioned earlier, the Austro-Hungarian fleet was based in three principal ports: Trieste, Pula and Fiume. The question of the distribution of the vessels was also a part of the overall picture (Link 58:527).

The usual division of the spoils of war would be carried out among the victorious allies on the basis of the pre-determined formula. Germany having no permanent navy outposts in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, its vessels were to be split between France, Britain and the United States. Now Italy wanted to have a share too. On the other hand, since Italy would be getting the ports of Trieste and Pula – and Fiume, they hoped – the ships registered in those ports should be treated differently; they should be seen as the extension of the city and the port, much like the harbor cranes or wharfs.

This point caused a sharp exchange between M. Orlando and Lloyd George at one of the meetings of the Council of Four. Lloyd George: "Now Italy says that she is quite

The Fiume Impasse

prepared to share equally in the German ships, but must have also all the Austrian and Hungarian ships. I must enter a strong protest against this proposal” (Link 59:52). The Italian Prime Minister did not budge at these protestations, and insisted that the provisions set in the Peace Treaty with Germany (Annex III 108) be applied also to Austria-Hungary. The point being that all vessels flying German flags which are not owned by German nationals are exempted from being appropriated and distributed among the Allies. Given that Trieste is becoming an Italian town, and its citizens the citizens of Italy, the vessels registered there are no longer owned by enemy citizens, but by the citizens of an allied nation, and are therefore not to be appropriated. Lloyd George replied:

I am quite unable to understand how this proposal could be made. Hundreds of thousands of tons of Allied shipping has been sunk in carrying wheat and coal and munitions to Italy, and yet the Allies were not to participate in the tonnage received from Austria. Under this scheme Trieste and Pola are to be ruled out, because they are to become Italian, and the only ships to be taken are those in Sebenico and Spalato and other Jugo-Slav (sic) ports. In fact, as the Jugo-Slavs themselves have now become Serbs and are Allies, the principal Allied and Associated Powers would be ruled out altogether (Link 59:53).

Several observations can be made from this outburst of emotion coming from the British Prime Minister. First, that Lloyd George was emotional about anything was a rather uncommon occurrence. That he was emotional about the shipping may be attributed to the fact that the movables were the only spoils that Britain could expect from this particular war theatre, and war booty in tonnage was something she specialized in for centuries. One must compare this to his cool demeanor in discussing the fate of hundreds of thousands of individuals. Second, though incensed, he was careful to mention neither Fiume nor Zadar, the two cities whose fate had not been decided yet, though he mentioned all the major ports on the northern Adriatic shore. Finally, the “Jugo-Slavs themselves have now become Serbs” phrase. Clearly, the British Prime Minister was talking about the fact that the former Austro-Hungarian territories of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina have now joined the Kingdom of Serbia in forming a new state. Through such union they have become part of the Allied power, Serbia, and should therefore be exempted from having their vessels taken by the Allies. Using a simplified language Lloyd George said that those Yugoslavs themselves have become Serbs. Not much has to be made of this statement: the Yugoslavs have indeed joined the Serbs in their Allied status; and some corners were cut in the expressions used in a heated debate. Yet the ease with

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

which “Yugoslav” was replaced with “Serb” is uncanny. One should consider for a moment the following statement to see just how inappropriate it would be to apply the same rule in a different setting and with different participants: “By joining the war against Germany the Americans themselves have now become British.” No comment is necessary.

Returning to the main issue at hand, that of the fate of the merchant navy of Austria-Hungary: at one point in the argument between Orlando and Lloyd George Wilson cut in to point out that Trieste had not yet been given to Italy, not until the Treaty had been signed. More to the point, Austria, the Czechs and the Hungarians will all be deprived of all access to the sea, and if the maritime tonnage is treated as the extension of the awarded territory, then the nations in question would be left without any seafaring vessels. To this Prime Minister Orlando replied by offering that Italy would be satisfied to renounce any claims on German vessels and to get its share by being awarded the vessels registered in Trieste and Pula. The actual tonnage received in such case was likely to be less than if Italy insisted on its share of German tonnage. President Wilson wanted to clarify this point with Orlando, asking: “Are you making this demand whether the amounts are in proper proportion or not?” to which Orlando replied affirmatively.

It is difficult to judge what exactly motivated Orlando’s actions. Was he merely emotional about redeeming the *irredente* vessels, as he might have seen them, and was willing therefore to compromise and even get worse deal as far as the total number of gross register tons is concerned? Perhaps he was aware that taking possession of German vessels somewhere in the North Sea or the Baltic was fraught with dangers and uncertainty, regardless of what is agreed upon in the halls of Paris. It is possible that he wanted to get the largest possible proportion of Austria-Hungary’s boats, and thereby insuring that the Serbs – whose chances of getting awarded German vessels, let alone bringing them to the Adriatic from the North Atlantic were even smaller – got as few ships as possible. Very likely the combination of all of the above factors played a role in Orlando’s behavior. One thing only is certain; it left Lloyd George and Wilson in a state of bewilderment.

The Dissenters

While President Wilson was waging a diplomatic battle with the rest of the Allies, his team should have been there to support him in every aspect. As seen earlier, the panel of experts who prepared various drafts regarding the Fiume and Dalmatian situation, conducted their business fully in accordance to the President's wishes. However, not everyone in the U.S. administration or the diplomatic corps displayed the same kind of commitment to Wilsonian principles and his personal leadership. The American Ambassador to Italy, Thomas Nelson Page, was gradually becoming more and more critical of Wilson. The feeling was matched by Wilson himself, who in turn detested Page (Link 59:601). These reciprocal contemptuous feelings were clearly manifested when Wilson refused to see Page, who had come from Rome on May 9, 1919 in order to make a contribution to the proceedings. Granted, he had not been invited, neither to Paris nor to the President's residence. One of the reasons that President refused to give him an audience, one may suppose, is the fact that Page was becoming more and more vocal in his criticism of the American policy, and was "bubbling over with excitement over the Italian situation" (Link 59:601).

Nor was Page the only American official who was not afraid to voice his differences with the President. Professor Doctor George D. Herron had thereto been a staunch supporter of the President and of his policy, but his strong views regarding the Adriatic question had caused a rift between him and Wilson. Commenting to Colonel House about his old friend, Wilson once remarked, in a rather gruff manner: "I am through with him" (Link 59:68). The cause of the parting of their ways was the Adriatic, as mentioned. More to the point, Herron had penned a letter to Ante Trumbić, newly appointed Foreign Minister for Serbia and former president of the Yugoslav Committee, in which he advised Trumbić that there could be no ethnographic solution to the Yugoslav-Italian conflict of interest in the Adriatic. This he did in spite of the fact that Trumbić had repeatedly stated that he would be willing to take a public debate with the Italians, brokered by President Wilson (Walworth 56). Herron was of the opinion that only a geographic solution could be reasonably implemented. He saw the solution in the assignation of the cities of Trieste and Gorica to Italy, along with the whole of Istria and the Adriatic side of the Julian Alps. On the other hand, Yugoslavia would have Dalmatia. Finally, "Fiume should be made an international free port for the whole of South-Eastern Europe, and for Italy as well" (Link 59:69). This was neither a new idea nor was it entirely

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

without merits, particularly if one sought a quick solution based on a reasonably acceptable trade-off. But Professor Herron went further in his analysis of the situation, and offered a loud and clear criticism of the policy President Wilson stood for:

If Europe had consented to the making of peace on the actual basis of the Fourteen Points, to which all countries were pledged by the signing of the armistice, then the ethnographical solution might be proposed... But, as you yourself are perfectly aware, dear Dr. Trumbić, not a single one of those Fourteen Points has actually been applied in one single instance to the settlement of territorial questions, or, so far as I can see, in any other question... Peace has not been made on the basis of the Fourteen Principles, but on the basis of compromise. And the peace being actually what it is, and being made on the basis of compromise by all other nationalities, I feel that Italy is receiving the greatest injustice. Why should Italy's claims be settled by one law and the claims of all the other nations settled by another law? Why should Italy not be treated as the equal at least of Yougoslavia (sic)? If Yougoslavia is entitled to include alien populations in her frontiers, if France is so entitled, if Tchecoslovakia (sic) is so entitled, and in each case on the ground of security, why should Italy be put outside of the consideration which other nations are receiving in Paris? (Link 59:69).

Herron went on to declare that Italy was being unfairly criticized for its alleged intransigence on the Adriatic Question. He also claimed that he had been asked by both President Wilson and by the Italian side to try to mediate the question. That Herron should write such a letter to a Foreign Minister of an Allied power was bad enough and it probably did not endear him to Wilson. However, taking the whole issue before the press was surely much greater infringement on their friendship and reciprocal trust. Herron's opinions were first published in Rome's *Epoca*, and were reprinted on May 2 in *The New York Times*:

Professor Herron affirms positively that a settlement of the Adriatic question was about to be effected in two occasions, and that it only failed as a result of the intrigues of a few international financiers, diplomatically privileged, who, he declares, are the real cause of the existing crisis and 'all the political and moral failures of the Peace Conference' and on whom 'will fall the responsibility for the ruin threatening the world.'

It is clear that Herron had rather strong opinion about the Adriatic question. He not only overstepped his authority and wrote to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister that the Yugoslav hopes for obtaining Fiume should not be realized, but also accused Wilson of being biased. Worse yet, in his address to the Italian media, he practically accused Wilson

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

alive in spite of the impasse reached at the main negotiating table. This he did not do behind the President's back, but informed him of his actions plainly. However, he did it after the fact:

I advised the President of what I was doing and he expressed alarm for fear Orlando would take what I was saying as a direct offer from him, because of our close relations. I calmed his mind about this and assured him that Orlando understood just how matters were. However, I asked the President how a settlement could ever be reached if we did not discuss it in some such way as I was doing (Link 59:80).

David Hunter Miller recorded in his diary (Link 59:81) on the same day, May 13, that Colonel House informed him of his conversation with Wilson and that the talks with Orlando were therefore tacitly approved by the President. Two promises were made to Prime Minister Orlando regarding these conversations: 1. President Wilson would *consider* any solution reached by Orlando and Miller; 2. Colonel House would *support* any solution reached by Orlando and Miller.

This was a rather unusual situation: the leader of one of the Great Powers was negotiating with a third-tier diplomat from another Great Power. What must have been going through the mind of Orlando may only be imagined. Yet the Italian Prime Minister kept his good graces. When during one of the meetings Miller informed him that he did not have full powers from President Wilson, but had full powers from Colonel House, signor Orlando replied: "*C'est beaucoup*" (Link 59:81). This high-handedness displayed by House did not create an open breach, but it did contribute to his gradual estrangement from Wilson (Axson 210).

Miller proceeded to present his proposal for the solution of the Adriatic question: Italy should have the frontier in Istria just west of the railway connecting Fiume and Vienna; Fiume, entire Dalmatian coast and certain islands off the coast should be placed under the administration of the League of Nations, while the rest of the islands were to be assigned to Italy; the administration of Fiume and Dalmatia should be similar to the solution employed in Saar Basin; there would be no objection to Zadar and Šibenik being assigned to Italy. After the period of five years the League of Nations would make a final decision regarding the future of these territories, and Italy would be obliged to accept it. Besides these, Valona would go to Italy outright. Prime Minister Orlando's reply was as follows:

The Fiume Impasse

Would it not be just as well to make Fiume an independent and free city in a political sense as to postpone its solution under the administration of the League of Nations, and in the meantime to assign a mandate to Jugo-Slavia (sic) for the Dalmatian coast except the two towns Mr. Miller had mentioned? (Link 59:81).

In this way, Orlando clarified, the Italian troops could remain in Fiume, and the League of Nations would have the time needed to make the final decision within a year or two. Miller saw enormous difficulties in the continued occupation of Fiume by the Italians. The undertone of Orlando's approach is summarized in the following passage, in which he purportedly underlined the weakness of his own position, as he put it, but also the weakness of the American position and the need for a quick final settlement. In fact, the above proposal regarding Dalmatia and two towns claimed by the Italians was made exactly on the premise that once an administration is established, however temporary in nature it is planned on being, it will quickly revert to a permanent solution and permanent control with later annexation.

Fiume was at this time being held by the Italian troops. There was nothing to be gained by the Italians in retreating. Giving a new label to their presence there, however temporary or provisional it may be, would only establish their presence further. At the same time, the Italian side was more than willing to let the Yugoslavs administer the Dalmatian coast, other than the port cities of Zadar and Šibenik. This is significant in that it departs from the premises set forth in Pact of London, ostensibly in order to set the stage for a reciprocal move by the Allies in assigning Fiume to the Italians. On the other hand, the Italian concession regarding the possession of Dalmatia is entirely misleading, because whoever controlled the port cities controlled, in essence, the whole of the region. The taxes and levies associated with the traffic through the port cities of goods intended for the Yugoslav-administered areas would be much greater than the taxes that could be gathered by the authorities administering those same areas. Thus whoever controlled the ports had sizeable income from the hinterland, while having practically no obligations. On the other hand, whoever controlled the hinterland had great obligations as regards civil administration, and at the same time significantly smaller income from taxes.

The "concession" was not the only card Orlando played with Miller. A veiled threat was also articulated, though disguised as his personal position of political weakness. Prime Minister Orlando confided:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

I wish to show the weakness of my position. The feeling in Italy, particularly in Army, is very strong. A month ago, not knowing what the Jugo Slavs (sic) would do, I ordered the stoppage of demobilization despite the wishes of the men to go home, and to my surprise there has been no complaint of that order. Even men who served in the war with Turkey and who have been practically eight years under the colors were content not to go home but to continue under arms. I do not know whether, if I gave the order for the evacuation of Fiume, it would be obeyed (Link 59:82).

Thus the Prime Minister claimed to not be entirely in control of the situation on his own side, or of his own Army. However, he himself pointed out that it had been his decision not to demobilize the men. For this he seemed not inclined to take any responsibility. Rather, he placed it on the Yugoslavs, who, in his words, were about to do something of which he was not aware of at the time. Keeping the Army at the ready seemed like a reasonable thing to do, and now that nothing has happened, the same Army that had been kept for safety, had become a destabilizing factor. For that reason, Orlando seemed to imply, Italian forces should not be withdrawn from Fiume. This logic is flawed. It is, in fact, not much of logic at all, but a thinly veiled threat: if you ask us to leave Fiume, we will simply refuse. What will you do then? Come with your navy to bomb us out of the city? You will not do that: you know it, and we know it!

Similar flawed logic in explaining away the Italian ambitions had already been used in regards to Fiume, when the Italian side claimed that the whole question was an emotional issue rather than anything else. Miller quoted Orlando as having said that “the question of Fiume is one of sentiment for Italy and not of interest” (Link 59:81). How does one bring this type of argument to negotiations at this level? More to the point, how can such claims be made after countless hours had been spent in arguing that the security issues were the chief reasons for Italy’s presence on the northern shores of the Adriatic? Here again, one has to look back but a few months to remember that Italy had no interest in Fiume, but that its leaders hyped up the public opinion to the point where it became uncontrollable, and now they spoke of the threat of the possible *coup d’état*, the withdrawal from the Conference, the refusal to sign any Peace Treaty. The manipulative nature of the Italian negotiators must surely have been obvious to the American negotiators. At the same time, the impossibly high principles espoused by Wilson, and the resultant rigidity in his position, must have been just as clearly obvious and frustrating to the Italians, who did not hesitate to engage in awkwardly arranged meetings between their top representatives and the aides of the aides of the American President. This was an odd

150

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Be that as it may, the talks conducted by Miller and various representatives of Italy and Yugoslavia continued. In his talks with Orlando he was informed of a meeting that had taken place on April 21 between maritime experts of Italy and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav representatives were very likely Božo Banac, Melko Čingrija, and Filip Wolf-Vuković., who were advisers of the Yugoslav delegation on the merchant marine issues (Lederer 24). The proposals aired at that time included suggestions that Fiume should be Italy's politically speaking, but that the Yugoslavs should have the commercial rights there; the docks, storehouses, the port. "The Dalmatian islands were to be divided; and as to the Dalmatian coast the solution was in the alternative; the Italians were to have Zara and a portion of the surrounding territory running to the bay of Sebenico, but not including Sebenico; or, Zara, Sebenico and Spalato were all three to be made free ports" (Link 59:125).

During the meeting with Miller Orlando commented that he had been hard pressed to go with one of the above suggestions, but that at the time he could simply not do it. Now, however, he would be willing to consider one of the proposed solutions, but first two things would have to be determined. One, would one of the above solutions be acceptable to President Wilson, and two, would the Yugoslavs be willing to go along with this matter? Miller was quick to reassure Prime Minister Orlando that the President would be willing to consider any agreement freely reached between the parties concerned. He then presented Orlando with his "Definitive Solution", to which Orlando gave scant response. However, the first question that Orlando had was transmitted to President the same day, along with House's question whether the President thought it acceptable that the Americans should mediate between the two sides in their deliberations. Wilson responded briefly: "Yes to both questions (note the words that I have underscored). W.W." (Link 59:127). The words President underlined were: freely reached.

The same day House noted in his diary that he was delighted to have the matter come to his hands again. "I hope nothing will upset the plan. There has never been a time when I have felt that it could not have been settled if properly and constantly directed" (Link 59:126). And directing and managing he would do:

Matters look more favorable. I have sent for Trumbitch to be here tomorrow at ten, and if he agrees, it is my purpose to have Italians here in one room and the Jugos-Slavs in the other with my study between. In this way I hope to bring about an agreement (Link 59:126).

The Fiume Impasse

Trumbić indeed came to visit House the next day, as did Page and Orlando. In his diary entry dated May 15 House noted that the situation was different from what it had been thereto. “The Italians are now talking sense for the first time” (Link 59:174). House’s diary entry on the next day is more detailed and excited. “I got them so nearly to an agreement that it was a matter of deep regret that I could not bring them all the way” (Link 59:200). Disclosing the details of what had been agreed, proposed, and counter-proposed by the parties involved, House emanated a sense of accomplishment and approaching resolution. This, however, did not come at small price; he had spent the entire day maneuvering the two sides, arm-wrestling with them on every single point.

Trumbitch (sic) came in the morning and it was with difficulty I obtained his consent to a discussion with the Italians, with me acting as intermediary. This was finally accomplished and I had Trumbitch in the large reception room, Orlando and Count di Cellere in the salon, with my study between. Miller and Beers [Beer] I placed with the Italians, and Frazier and Johnson with Trumbitch. I directed everything from my study for the first two hours, but later took up the discussion myself, going from one room to the other.

Again I used every argument on both sides that I could think of. I let them know that I felt the peace of the world was in the balance and that if they left without an understanding, no one could say what might happen in the future (Link 59:200).

The meetings continued the next day, but no definite results were arrived at, other than “whittling” down of the Italian claims, as House put it (Link 59:244). The Italian side felt betrayed and mistreated. They claimed that self-determination was to be applied only when they desired something. Their case in point was the fact that Colonel House telephoned President Wilson during the deliberations and informed him of the Italian concessions, but Wilson would not even hear of it. House himself felt that the Italians were mistreated. “I think a great mistake is being made in the way they are treated, for it will surely throw them in the arms of Germany,” he mused. But how much of the differential treatment was really applied to Italy, as opposed to France, for example? The main claims of France were made against the chief “villain” of the World War I, Germany. The utmost rigidity with which the last of the French demands were incorporated into the Peace Treaty was justified in the eyes of the Allies. Undoubtedly, the Allies here have crossed the fine line of justice and even measured retribution, and had entered into the field of unreasonable spite.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Consider the words of Philipp Scheidemann, delivered before the German National Assembly on May 12, 1919 and reprinted in *The New York Times* two days later:

This Treaty is, in the view of the Imperial German Government, unacceptable, so unacceptable that I am unable to believe that this earth should bear such a document without a cry issuing from millions and millions of throats in all lands, without distinction to party. Away with this murderous scheme!

The thing which is the basis of our discussion is this thick volume in which 100 sentences begin with 'Germany renounces.' This dreadful and murderous volume by which confession of our own unworthiness, our consent to pitiless disruption, our agreement to helotry and slavery, are to extorted – this book must not become the future code of law.

President Wilson went along with the lead provided by the French and the British. The Italians simply wanted the same deal for themselves; oppress and utterly disregard the desires of the vanquished for the benefit and short-term gain of the conqueror. Why should the Italians not get what they want? Of course, the difference between those areas which Italy had laid its claims on and Germany proper was that those areas, though formally former regions of enemy empires, were in fact inhabited by indigenous population which did not identify with their former imperial lords. The case in point are the Croats vis-à-vis Austria-Hungary and the Greeks vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire. Yet, considering the vehemence and pitilessness with which the German Peace Treaty had been drafted, the Italians were right to feel snubbed and mistreated. Wilson, it seemed, was very strict in applying his principles when it came to the dealings involving Italy, but did not mind disregarding them when the other Great Powers were concerned, particularly France.

Thus the phone-call placed by House, transmitting some of the progress made with the Italians at House's arbitration, was met by the Presidential rejection. George Louis Beer, who assisted Colonel House in the negotiations, remarked:

House telephoned to Wilson who is evidently not disposed to accept the Italian concessions. He is absolutely doctrinaire on this point. There is some truth in Sonnino's remark that having fornicating with France and England for four months, Wilson is attempting to re-establish his virtue at the expense of Italy (Link 59:245).

On May 18, 1919 David Hunter Miller reported to President the progress that had been made with the Italians in the negotiations conducted by Colonel House and his advisors. The President only wanted to see the general outline of the progress. He stood firm by the line that had been proposed by Major Johnson, one of House's men and the

The Fiume Impasse

supporter of the expert proposal that had been released earlier. Miller urged him to reconsider and to be open to make concessions, because the Italians had already made some of their own, and would likely do some still. It was Miller, in fact, who had been making statements which to Orlando appeared to be a glimpse of hope that the Italian claims might be met after all (Walworth 337). The President's instruction, however, was that that the talks could go on, in order to see what would come of it.

In a later discussion with House, Miller reported the talk with the President. House was of the opinion that they should keep negotiating with the Italians "in order to keep the negotiations going and in our own hands" (Link 59:249). In such gradual manner the reigns were transferred from Wilson's to House's hands. Along with it came the gradual departure from the Wilsonian principles and the application of pragmatic solutions.

The Departure from the Fourteen Points

During the meeting of the Council of Four held on May 13, 1919, President Wilson disclosed further suggestions that had been made by the panel of American experts. He was happy to note that the American proposal was very near that of the British plan. The three major railway junctions in the Istria and its hinterland were allocated one each to Austria, Italy and Yugoslavia. Further proposals were made regarding mountainous regions of Istria, in which the Italians have drawn their desired border based on one principle (the emergence of the rivers from underground) and the Americans on the other (the crest of the mountain range, the watershed). Adjusting to the current situation, the Americans proposed that a plebiscite should be held in the disputed area. Plebiscites were also proposed for Fiume and for all of Dalmatia.

An interesting and revealing lapse occurred here. In proposing that the island of Cres should be given to the Yugoslavs President Wilson made it clear that his plan is to have Fiume assigned to Yugoslavs. The reasoning for assigning Cres to Yugoslavia was that it controlled the approaches to Fiume, and thus the port itself. Now, if the plebiscite regarding Fiume was still ahead, how can the President be sure that it will go one way or the other, unless he is planning on including the whole of Fiume, therefore Sušak, into a single plebiscite area, thus practically ensuring that the majority Croatian population gets its way and their city is assigned to Yugoslavia. The American intent to assign Fiume to Yugoslavia was quite obvious to Lloyd George. Commenting on the conditions set forth for Fiume becoming Italian (after the plebiscite which clearly expresses the wishes of its residents to become Italian citizens), namely that of Italians having to finance and build a port for Yugoslavs in the bay of Bakar, the British Prime Minister dismissed the whole idea saying: "That settles the question of Fiume. The Italians would never create a rival port there" (Link 59:86).

These two instances of foregone conclusions indicate that Wilson was inclined to give Fiume to Yugoslavs, and he may have been basing his decision on the expected outcome of the plebiscite, which would go in the favor of Yugoslavs. His expectations, on the other hand, were based on the intelligence gathered in the area, regarding population makeup, geography, etc. Wilson went on to speculate further developments: "The decision from which I cannot depart is that the Conference has no right to hand over people to a sovereignty they do not wish. If, by hook or by crook, the Italians obtained Fiume, how were the British and the French then bound to give them Dalmatia?" (Link 59:86). This

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

importance of the Italian claim was unnecessary. It was, very likely, a result of President's utter frustration with all things Italian.

Further complicating the matter were the diverging attitudes of the Yugoslavs themselves. Lloyd George reported that he had a conversation with Prime Minister Pašić, who seemed not to "particularly care about Fiume, and that he would in the end leave it to the Italians, if they would renounce Dalmatia." President Wilson commented that this, however, was not the attitude of the Foreign Minister Trumbić. Lloyd George's reply: "It is possible: M. Pašić is a Serb and M. Trumbić is a Croat" (Link 59:96).

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav government had decided to block the flow of timber into Fiume, in spite of the fact that the town needed it, and that the Italy itself would gladly import it. By doing so they were actually playing into the hands of the Italians. "The aim of the Italians is chiefly to get Fiume in order to control its trade is [in] such manner as not to interfere with development of Trieste" (Link 59:120). This opinion, expressed by Frémont, was echoed by the President in the debate on the same day, when he said: "It is also possible that the capitalists of Trieste want Fiume to be Italian in order to ruin its competition at will" (Link 59:95). Indeed, the commercial undertones to the whole of Fiume controversy was starting to come to the fore. Clive Day pointed out the basic elements in his communiqué to the President dated May 15, 1919. In it, he briefly recouped the history of the two ports: how they had in past been treated as national interests, and supported out of the public funds by Austria and Hungary respectively.

The future of Fiume as an independent outlet for Jugo-Slavia (sic) will be blocked not merely if the city goes to Italy but even if it is taken outside the Jugo-Slav economic system and constituted an independent port in competition with an Italian Triest (sic).

Fiume could not levy port charges sufficient to finance its development without driving trade to Triest where the Italian state would finance the improvements, and keep charges low.

Private investors would not put money into an enterprise in competition with a subsidized port like Triest.

The Jugo-Slav State would be unwilling to spend the necessary sums if Fiume were not subject to its economic control.

If Jugo-Slavia be assured control of Fiume it will readily and properly find the funds to develop the port. Much of the trade which in the past appeared to come from Hungary really originated in Jugo-Slav districts and had been diverted to Hungarian railways for political reasons. Jugo-Slavia will get some of the richest

The Fiume Impasse

export territory formerly included in Hungary (notably the Western Banat), and can hope to get for Fiume some of the northern trade, formerly kept in Austrian territory and directed to Trieste for political reasons (Link 59:171).

Commercial considerations aside, the question of the population remained; would the Croatian nationals living in Fiume be willing to submit to the Italian rule? Or, alternately, would they be willing to move to the new port of Bakar, built by Italy for the Yugoslavs? The Yugoslav side proposed that a plebiscite be held in order to determine the answer to this question (Link 59:173). The President, however, doubted that the Italians, particularly Orlando, would accept such proposal. Meanwhile, the Italians of Fiume continued their aggressive policy whose aim was to make the city an Italian stronghold. The Fiume Municipal Council, who consisted of self-appointed eminent Italians from Fiume changed its name to somewhat grand-sounding Italian National Council of Fiume. Already on March 27 they passed the law which made it treason to do anything to make Fiume Yugoslav. The law was then printed in local Italian daily *La Bilancia*. The news of this law reached President Wilson only on May 17 (Link 59:241). The difficulty regarding this law lay in the fact that Fiume was nominally under the Allied control. How could the Allies allow something like this to happen? As seen earlier, the Italian side used the presence of American and other Allied military personnel to achieve the Italian political goals. Rather than allowing the whole units of non-Italian soldiers to move around the area Italy wanted to claim, they incorporated American and other Allied soldiers into Italian units. Thus the requirement for Allied presence was fulfilled, in only nominally, and those same Allied soldiers could do nothing but to follow the lead of their Italian hosts. Returning now to the question of the above law, Admiral Andrews wrote:

Considering the fact that the council of Fiume assumed its functions under the protection of Italian armed force, and the Armistice requirement that Fiume is governed and occupied by Allied force, this is a most astounding fact. It is a pity that Allied control of Fiume has not been actual, and not nominal. When I go to Fiume shortly I will take up this matter with the Italian General as to cancelling this law (Link 59:242).

The same report mentions incidents occurring in Zadar, in which the Croats had been beaten by the marching Italians, while Italian army stood by and watched. Split did not have similar accidents, but the level of mistrust between the two sides was palpable. The strong-arm tactic used by the Italians, therefore, was not an isolated incident characteristic to Fiume alone, but to all of the Croatian areas which it wished to acquire.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

The Italian activities in the Dodecanese Islands, mentioned previously, show that it was not only a tactic connected to the Adriatic, but an overall Italian method applied across the board in the territories it wished to subdue. On the meeting of the Council of Four held on May 21, President Wilson reiterated his opinion that a plebiscite should be held in the whole of the disputed northern Adriatic coast. In order to obtain accurate results:

Italy should begin by evacuating all that (sic) region and leave it to the disposition of the League of Nations. Fiume, provisionally, would be a free city under the trusteeship of the League of Nations, for a period determined by the time necessary for the creation at Buccari of a Yugoslav port, at the expense of Italy. When that period ended, the population of Fiume would be consulted and would decide itself on the fate of the city. With respect to the remaining contested territories, the plebiscite would determine, commune by commune, what should be Italian and what should remain to the Yugoslavs. This manner of proceeding would be absolutely consistent with our principles (Link 59:339).

President Wilson appeared to be more determined to make a principled stand than ever. His previous tentative acceptance of arbitration or of negotiation between the two parties at this point seems to have evaporated. His obvious opinion was that the Yugoslavs are the rightful owners of the lands in question. The theoretically fair, but in practice unreasonably demanding conditions set for Italy to get Fiume after building a new port for the Croats at Bakar betray this attitude. Even the use of words shows the conviction that the Croats are the rightful owners: the President stated that “the plebiscite would determine... what should be Italian and what should *remain* to the Yugoslavs.” This could be read either as the Italians having the first pick, and the Yugoslavs getting the remnants, or, as an indication that the Croats are the rightful owners in whose possession the lands in question will remain.

He reiterated his point by saying that even the island of Vis, which the Americans had been inclined to give to Italy, had shown in the referendum that they wish to remain with Croatia, as a part of the Yugoslav state. This unbending attitude has exasperated the Italians, who started threatening again that they would demand the letter-of-the-law fulfillment of the Pact of London.

On May 25, Colonel House received in his chambers the French negotiator Tardieu, who would eventually be three-time Prime Minister of France. He informed House that the Italians were going to in fact demand from the British and the French that the provisions of the Pact of London be fulfilled to the tee. The President, House reported in his diary, was still of the opinion that something could be done, a solution could be found (Link 59:478).

The Fiume Impasse

But the situation was taking a turn for the worse; on May 26 the Italians announced that they would be willing to consent that Fiume should be made a free city, but that in such case there was nothing else that they would be willing to give up in that connection, and that unless their view were accepted they would demand on the enforcement of the Pact. Not only was the topic at hand controversial, but Prime Minister Orlando and President Wilson added personal tones into their exchange, allowing a meeting to “develop a very sharp controversy” (Link 59:479).

In an impassioned speech Wilson characterized the Pact of London as an “infamous bargain,” and served frank notice on his conferees that under no circumstance would the United States be party to fixing the boundaries of the Yugoslav Republic under the limitations laid down by the disputed pact. The President’s attitude was extremely firm and Clemenceau expressed grave concern, telling Orlando that he believed it would be absolutely necessary that something should be done by Italy to meet the Wilson’s views. Clemenceau warned Orlando that disregard to America under such conditions would certainly prove disastrous later on. Lloyd George sympathizes with the Italian viewpoint, however, and conference adjourned without a definite agreement being reached” (Link 59:479). Ray Stannard Baker also recorded in his diary that there is a lot of impatience in the air, that the Italian situation is acute again. “The President told Orlando today (he explained to me afterwards) that the London treaty was of a past era, & that he could not countenance it in any way, that no one had the right to pass to Italy by treaty or otherwise lands in Dalmatia without respect to the wishes of the people who inhabited those lands...” (Link 59:480).

Upon hearing about the events of the day Robert Lansing drafted a note to Wilson pleading with him not to fulfill the threat he had made approximately two weeks earlier, in which he said that in the event the Italians claim the Pact of London the United States would withdraw from the Conference. Lansing, along with White and Bliss, who cosigned the note “venture[ed] to express the hope that you will not take any final step in the matter without a further conference with us... We feel that circumstances, which we shall be glad to explain to you in conversation, have occurred during the last few weeks which will not justify our breaking up the Conference now on account of the Adriatic question, and that we should not have the support of our own people in doing so” (Link 59:481).

After the stormy morning session, the heads of the French, British and American delegations held a private meeting in the early hours of the afternoon. Clemenceau

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

reflected that he had told Premier Orlando a day earlier that he had failed to tell his own Parliament that the Pact of London promised Fiume to Croats, and that, because he and Lloyd George did not wish to embarrass him, they also could not communicate that to their own parliaments (Link 59:493). A part of the ongoing problem seemed to be the relationship between Orlando and Sonnino. Clemenceau complained that once an agreement is reached with Orlando he transfers the news to Sonnino, who then has his own opinions about the matter, and things get complicated again. The reason that they do is that Sonnino had plans for the expansion in Asia, which he wanted to settle together with the Adriatic question (Link 59:492). Clemenceau pointed out yet another area in the behavior of the Italian Prime Minister which contributed to the difficulties in making any headway in the negotiations; Orlando never made a proposal. Clemenceau stated during the morning meeting:

From the beginning of these discussions he had never once made any definite proposal. He had made a claim to Fiume. He had applied the principle of self-determination to Fiume. But when he came to discuss Dalmatia he had dropped the principle. There was another contradiction in his method. He had claimed the Pact of London as regards Dalmatia, but when it came Fiume he proposed to break the Pact of London (Link 59:508).

The Italian tactic had been to threaten with the Pact of London, to threaten with the withdrawal from the Conference, and to actually withdraw and make the issue even more acute domestically. No definite proposals were given by the Italians, and they accepted none that were put forth by the Allies. In further disputing the Italian position, the French Prime Minister said: "Supposing that France and Great Britain gave Italy the Pact of London." That was an interesting turn of phrase. The issue at hand was Dalmatia and Fiume. Obviously, Italy thought it had the grounds to claim them because of the Pact of London (other than for the inconsistency pointed out by Clemenceau). Yet Clemenceau here talks of France and Britain giving Italy the Treaty, not the territories in question. Indeed, what would ever give the right to Britain or to France to freely dispose of the territories and peoples in question? On what authority would they be doing it? The idea itself was quite absurd: two powers with no local presence and interests in the Adriatic basin grant a third power that it should be able to expand its own territories at the expense of the local population.

From yet another angle, not all of the original signatories of the Pact of London were still Allied Powers. On the other side of the fence, one of the enemy states had been

The Fiume Impasse

dissolved, further complicating the issue. During the morning meeting on May 26, President Wilson addressed this point by saying:

It is absurd to insist upon the execution of the Pact of London, when Russia, which signed it, is no longer in the ranks of the Allies and when, among the powers which will make peace tomorrow is the United States, which did not sign the Pact of London – while the enemy against which this treaty was directed, Austria-Hungary, has disappeared! (Link 59:494).

While the French Prime Minister was showing signs of having had enough of the Italian maneuvering and of the absurdity of the situation as succinctly explained by Wilson, the British Prime Minister remained a staunch supporter of the Italian claims, if only on the grounds of the British obligation to meet its commitments relating to the signing of the Pact of London. Lloyd George did, however, also point out at various times that the Italians had lost 500.000 men. This claim was first put forward by Orlando several weeks earlier and none of the present at the time challenged it. The topic was obvious very sensitive and to dispute the numbers would easily have been taken as a personal affront, and an affront to the whole of Italy. Yet in the afternoon conversation between the three leaders Premier Clemenceau was free to question that claim. He quoted the Serbian Prime Minister Pašić, who commenting on the issue had stated: “It is in retreats that most men are always lost” (Link 59:494).

Notwithstanding the validity of the Italian claims and the sacrifices they may have made in order to keep their end of the bargain, President Wilson was of the opinion that the Dalmatian coast was not at the disposal of the French or of the British. They simply had no right to give it to anyone, except to the people who live there, whose free will would be expressed in a plebiscite (Link 59:551). Perhaps responding to Clemenceau’s accusation of never yet putting a definite proposal on the table, one Italian negotiator, Dr. Mario Borsa, conveyed to Ray Stannard Baker that the Italians would be willing to make a bargain as follows:

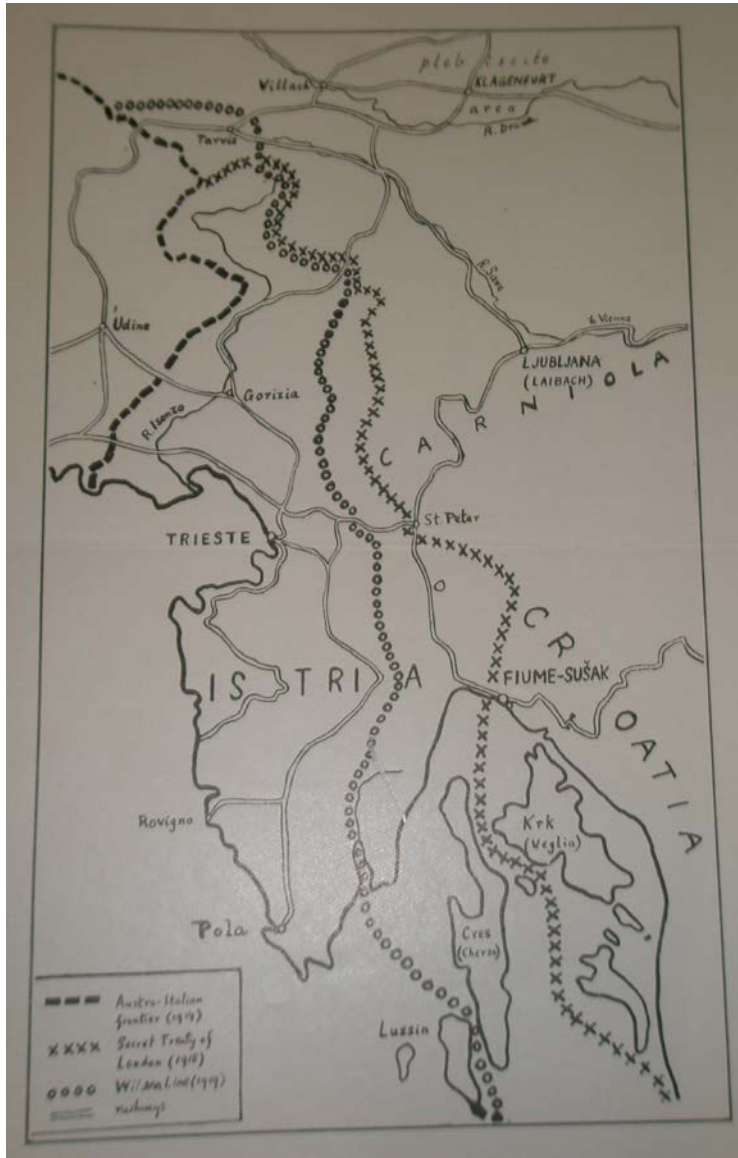
To make Fiume a free city, but with Italian diplomatic representation abroad.

Abandon the hinterland of Dalmatia if they were given Zara & Sebenico & some of the Islands (Link 59:552).

Baker took this to the President immediately, and the response was the unbending adherence to the principles of self-determination. He commented: “The Italians have got the choice of yielding or of driving the Slavs into the hands of the Germans” (Link

59:552). The meetings continued on the next day, and the Pact of London remained the main issue. The wrangling of how it should be applied or whether it should be applied at all dominated the deliberations.

Map 11: Various proposals regarding Fiume



Source: Seton-Watson Papers, SSEES, UCL London. Registry nr: SEW 5-3-3-3.

Baron Sonnino was also present for the part of the meeting, and proposed that Fiume should be subject to Italian sovereignty, which was a step back from point 1. of the proposal issued by Dr. Borsa only a day earlier. After Sonnino left the meeting Orlando returned to the question of Zadar and Šibenik, proposing to leave their hinterland to Croats, in return for some of the outlying islands. President Wilson flatly rejected these ideas

The Fiume Impasse

simply stating that he “considered the Pact of London a secret program fraught with evil, [thus] there was no use of trying to work out a solution that would perpetrate the injustice of that document” (Link 59:553).

Meanwhile, the parallel meetings that Colonel House held with the Italian, Yugoslav and French representatives continued. One of the proposals put forth by Tardieu, who had thereto been in close daily contact with Colonel House, was presented during the meeting of the Council of Four on May 28, 1919 (Link 59:557). The proposal called for a drastic enlargement of the Fiume area, to include Volosko, some 5 miles to the west, and the island of Krk to the east. The government of thus enlarged Republic of Fiume would be composed of five members named by the League of Nations, two of whom would be Italian, one citizen of Fiume, one Yugoslav and one from one of the other powers. Fiume would be a free port, its citizens would be free of military service, and there would be no taxes except local levies. Finally, after 15 years of such arrangement a plebiscite would be held to determine the future of the city-state.

The whole of Dalmatia would go to Yugoslavia, except Zadar and Šibenik. As far as Zadar and Šibenik were concerned, both of the cities and their administrative districts would be neutralized. All of the islands named in the Pact of London would go to Italy, except Pag, which would go to the Yugoslavs, and Krk, which would go to Fiume. Finally, the Italian proposal regarding the Adriatic merchant fleet would be accepted, that is, the Italians getting all the tonnage registered in Trieste and Pula.

Lloyd George was of the opinion that Orlando would accept the proposal regarding Fiume, but that when it came to Zadar and Šibenik, there would be some difficulties. When it came to the question of islands, Lloyd George was of the opinion that Orlando would not be satisfied. On the other hand, President Wilson insisted that none of the proposed points could be implemented without the full agreement of the Yugoslav side, who have a claim to all of the territories in question. As regards the Fiume State, President Wilson proposed that its territory should include the eastern slope of the ridge on the peninsula of Istria and include the island of Cres, but not the island of Lošinj, which would be assigned to Italy. The reason for such an enlarged Fiume State was the principle of free access to the port, which should not be under anybody's control other than that of Fiume State. Same principle had been applied in Danzig, Wilson remarked. Orlando, while resisting the assignation of rather large Lošinj to the Fiume State, in principle accepted the proposal,

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

noting, however, that while he was willing to take the responsibility (read that: political risk) of accepting it, the final decision was not his to make.

This point in the negotiations is the closest that the American and Italian negotiators have come in five months of deliberations. The proposal, while anything but simple, and itself not free of aspects that would be difficult to carry out, seemed like a recipe for a quick solution. In the same manner that Orlando referred to his Parliament as the one who had the final say on the Italian side, President Wilson referred to the Yugoslavs, who would have to support the scheme if it had any chance of going forward and surviving the test of time (Link 59:568).

The unrelenting pressure has resulted in gradual modification of the principles Wilson espoused. While his speech remained adamantly unbending, his actions with time changed and became more pragmatic. The French Prime Minister praised Wilson's steadfastness: "I, too, have learned to appreciate the President, for while he is narrow, yet he travels in the same direction all the time while George travels in every direction, so inconsistent is he from day to day" (Link 59:623). At the same time, a general feeling started to emerge that the President's actions were not exactly in harmony with his speeches. Colonel House notes in his diary on May 30, 1919 that there is a *bon mot* going the round in Paris and in London: "Wilson talks like Jesus Christ and acts like Lloyd George" (Link 59:624). It is interesting that two such contrary opinions should be offered about the President in a single day. A clue lays in the sources of those observations, and Colonel House indirectly covers the question in the passage of his journal entered on the same day.

My own feeling is that he is influenced by his constant association with Clemenceau and George. I seldom or never have a chance to talk with him seriously and, for the moment, he is practically out of from under my influence. When we meet, it is to settle some pressing problem and not to take inventory of things in general or plan for the future. This is what we used to do. If I could have the President in quiet, I am certain I could get him to square his actions with his words. As a matter of fact, the President does not truly feel as I do, although I have always been able to appeal to his intellectual liberalism (Link 59:624).

The negotiations intensified in the following days, but without a definite solution appearing any closer. In exasperation, Orlando visited Colonel House on June 2 and declared that the way things were going neither the Italians nor the Yugoslavs would be happy with the outcome of the negotiations. He asked whether Italy ought not to take

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

of a younger brother. Given the Russian desire to have a warm water port, it was possible that they might start courting the new Slavic state on the Adriatic. His conclusion was that if he were Italian he would feel much happier if the islands in the Adriatic were not Slav. The discussion then turned to Russia, and to speculations what it may or may not be capable of doing in the years to come. Although Wilson's argument of Russia being incapacitated and remaining so for many years to come was more accurate than that of Lloyd George, the speculations of the British Prime Minister all but came true, although it took more than twenty years for that to occur.

Returning to the issue of specific territories which were to be given to the Italians, the three statesmen agreed that Šibenik should not go to the Italians. Its population, whichever way one looked, was overwhelmingly Croatian, and there was no reason for it to be given to the Italians (Link 60:211). For that reason President Wilson suggested that Šibenik should be Slav, and that Zadar should be a free city represented in its foreign relations by Italy. Zadar would be given no hinterland, all agreed. The specific suggestions were given to Orlando during the meeting of the Council of Four on June 7, 1919. President Wilson opened the topic with a personal note:

I do not need to remind M. Orlando of the great doubts that I experienced about being a party to a compromise. I do not feel that I am authorized to accept a solution according to which, without their consent, populations which are not subject to my government would change sovereignty. At the same time, I took account of the very delicate situation in which my French and English colleagues find themselves, bound by treaty concluded between their governments and that of Italy before the intervention of the United States. Rather than remain in the impasse we were in, we have formulated proposals which I am going to present to you (Link 60:270).

After the document, whose detailed discussion was deliberately avoided by the parties present, had been handed over to Orlando, he replied in the same tones, accentuating the Italian willingness to make sacrifice in order to find the lasting solution, demonstrated already by their "going below their minimum."

As for myself, I will study this plan in the best frame of mind. But in all loyalty, I must say to you that it was already an extraordinary sacrifice for us to accept the proposals formulated by M. Tardieu: they were below our minimum program, and we accepted them only with resignation... It was necessary to give the greatest proof of our good will, and we accepted the Tardieu proposal (Link 60:271).

The Fiume Impasse

Orlando went on to complain that when it came to Fiume, the Italian side was not getting satisfaction; the principles designed for imposition upon “semi barbarians and enemies” would be applied here on the “allies and highly cultured people.” –The barbarians were the Pacific Islands and the Saar Basin. Lloyd George interrupted, stating that surely the inhabitants of Danzig were not barbarous. No they were not, came the reply, but they were the enemy. Clearly, the Italian Prime Minister cared little about consistency in his arguments, for by claiming that his enemies were barbarians, he denied his own claim to high culture. In spite of the lip service paid to the objectiveness, Orlando left Wilson with the impression that he would not accept the proposal. Baker wrote in his diary: “He [Wilson] told me that the Three had finally agreed on a formula regarding Fiume & the Adriatic and that Orlando was taking it back with him to Italy where he is to consult with his cabinet over Sunday. The President said that Orlando remarked, ‘I cannot accept it’ before he had even seen it” (Link 60:286). That, indeed, was the official response of the Italians, which Orlando provided on June 9, 1919. The comments based on the Tardieu Proposal, and the unfavorable modifications it had been subjected to; unfavorable to the Italians, that is.

The first objection was as to the western frontier of the free state of Fiume, which would fall to the west of Volosca. Since the line had previously been set closer to the town of Fiume, this expansion has now resulted in “taking away from Italy integral possession of the Istrian Peninsula” (Link 60:309). Orlando, of course, did not make it clear on what basis was the eastern coast of Istria considered to be integral possession of Italy. This type of bold assertiveness on the one hand, and dodged obstinacy on the other exasperated both Wilson and the rest of the negotiators. The second major objection related to the plebiscite, which was to be held in five years after the settlement. The proposal prescribed that it should be taken in the state as a whole, and not by zones. The Italians preferred zones, because they controlled the core of the city, but none of the suburbs or the extended surrounding areas. Further objections related to the cities of Šibenik, which was allotted to the Yugoslavs, and Zadar, which was placed under the control of the League of Nations, without any of the surrounding areas.

This complaint contains a great inconsistency on behalf of the Italian negotiators. In the case of Fiume, their objection is that the whole of the city is placed under one large plebiscite area, in which the Italians would be greatly outnumbered by the Croats. Thus, they propose that the areas in question should be fragmented into smaller districts.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

However, once the Italian majority of the city center has been established, a larger area is claimed, because the city center could not survive on its own. For that reason they complained that the solution to Zadar, which does not include any surrounding areas, was unfair.

The rest of the points brought up by the Italian delegation related to the islands, to their “loss,” to the drastic territorial “reductions,” to the “seriousness” of the situation and the “absolute impossibility for Italy – much to our regret – to accept as a basis of discussion the new proposal now suggested” (Link 60:310). It is worth noting that the proposal was put forth as a definite, final solution to the question, not as a basis of future discussion. The Italians not only flatly refused such final formula, but rejected it as even a basis for future negotiations, which the Big Three clearly did not intend to hold. The “fine Italian hand” (Link 60:333) placed thus in their reply to the proposal was not something that Wilson was ready to accept. “The matter is final now and is settled. We must proceed to other business and not dilly-dally with the Italians anymore.”

Thomas Nelson Page, the Italian loyalist in the American ranks, responded to the situation by saying that the Italian government may well fall over this issue, which would then bring an unknown factor into the future negotiations. The emotional aspect, that of Italy being mistreated and despised by its Allies, had also been played up in the media. The implications Page voiced were clear: “Situation obscure as to the immediate effect upon Italian internal policies, but tends to conspire that Orlando’s government will be upset, the new government formed in reasonably near future, which will avail itself of the situation in America as it seems now to appear” (Link 60:531). The situation in America Page referred to is that there was a reported opposition to Wilson’s Italian policy in the United States, and the press, “under apparent direction, doing all possible to create the impression that the President is under dominion of high finance to Jewish bankers, while his opponents headed by Senators Lodge, Knox, and Borah are representatives of liberal government and freedom of the peoples” (Link 60:531).

The increased opposition to his idea for the settlement of European questions, including the Italian claims and aspirations, did not dissuade Wilson. On June 25, 1919 a Memorandum with regard to the Adriatic Question was issued, in which none of the thereto advocated principles were even slightly changed or reduced. Broken into four points, the Memorandum demanded, in rather stark and direct language, that:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Italians. When eventually President Wilson also joined the two Prime Ministers in expressing the frustration with the Italians, Prime Minister Clemenceau immediately added new aspects to the question at hand:

Wilson. What is tragic in the situation is that we are friends of Italy, we want to be such, and it is she who makes the friendship impossible. It is a miserable tragedy.

Clemenceau. For myself I cannot say that the Treaty of London no longer exists. I can say: 'You are violating it yourselves now in Fiume, and it is the very existence of the treaty that you are threatening' (Link 61:219).

In other words, no matter what your principles may be, Mr. President, the treaty is legally binding to France, and the only way France can get from under the obligations imposed by it is if Italy herself breaks the contract through her conduct.

Lloyd George. England's position is the same as France's. Mr. Balfour can draft our common note.

Wilson. I hope that you will seize the favorable occasion to rid yourselves of the treaty which, speaking in all conscience, I have never considered continued to bind you.

Lloyd George. We must take into the account the critical moment when Italy joined us, and the 500,000 dead which the war cost her.

Clemenceau. Do not take that figure too literally.

Wilson. The truth is that Italy went to the higher bidder (Link 61:219).

Such repetitions in the discussion between the leaders of France, Britain and the United States had been going on for months already and were, in themselves, nothing new. The novelty was that it was becoming rather obvious that the position taken by the Europeans was not something that they were prepared to abandon. The pressures of the necessity to come to a conclusion and sign peace agreements was weighing on each one of the leaders, but it was President Wilson who bore the greatest burden. The political situation back in the United States was swinging once again towards the isolationism, with the demands to "bring our boys back home getting louder" by the day.

The incessant struggle and tension had taken a toll on the health of President Wilson, and his resolve was somewhat affected by his weakening physical and mental condition. When later, in several months, it became obvious that he had suffered a stroke and that his mental abilities were temporarily diminished, it was already too late to maintain the principled approach, because the British and the French had started to design

The Fiume Impasse

the policy toward Yugoslavia the best they themselves saw fit. They sought a satisfactory solution which would satisfy both Italy and Yugoslavia, who would then voluntarily accept the middle-of-the-road proposal. This would then remove the necessity to implement the Treaty of London, on the one hand, and if, on the other, there were any objections to the fairness of the deal vis-à-vis Yugoslavia and the principles on which President Wilson had thereto insisted so vehemently, the answer would be that if both parties had agreed to the terms, neither the Treaty of London nor the principles deserve to be given a second look. To achieve this, of course, the French and British Prime Ministers resorted to intimidation, particularly of Mr. Trumbić, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister.

Bullying the Yugoslavs into accepting the latest model for the division of the disputed Adriatic lands was a successful tactic. Not only was its Foreign Minister Trumbić, a Croat by birth, utterly helpless in facing the politicians with the cunning and the caliber of Clemenceau and Lloyd George, but he also lacked the support from his own government. Having been appointed as the Foreign Minister in a show of unity between the erstwhile Kingdom of Serbia and the short-lived State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, Trumbić was rapidly losing ground.

The greatest advantage that the British and the French had as regards the settling of this final question stemmed from the fact that they were in the center of the happenings, in Paris, while President Wilson was across the ocean. Thus the combination of weariness, pressure to wrap up the matter and the greater maneuvering ability provided to the Europeans by the absence of the Americans resulted in the railroading of the deal onto the unwilling Yugoslavs, particularly Croats. And that leads up to the final chapter in the story, the post-Paris epoch.

The Post-Paris Arrangements

President Wilson departed from Paris several days after signing the Peace Treaty with Germany in Versailles on June 28, 1919. His physical departure from the center of the happenings was to be accompanied by the gradual easing of the rigid position on the matters discussed in Paris. Indeed, the question of a single railway junction in the hills above Fiume, for example, looked certain way when seen from Paris, in the presence of the delegates opposing differing views and proposals for the solution. The same question, when considered from across the ocean, looked less pressing and important, and if seen through the filter of fatigue and resignation would more easily get settled through compromise.

Meanwhile in Italy the government had collapsed and a new set of Italian representatives to the Paris Peace Conference was expected. The delegation was to be led by Tomasso Tittoni, from whom the Allied leaders expected no reprieve in the demands relating to Adriatic and Asia Minor. The delegation arrived on time to sign the Peace Treaty, and then stayed on to discuss the Fiume and Adriatic question with the British and the French representatives. The fear that the President's departure from Europe would be seen as the abandonment of the Yugoslavs and the Principles. One aide, Douglass Johnson, proposed the following to the President:

The effort to find a solution to both sides should be continued with the new Italian Government. To this end the Jugo Slavs (sic) should be urged to make further substantial concessions. But care should be taken to avoid assuming an attitude which would enable the Jugo Slavs to say that the President had abandoned his high stand in favor of a just decision, or that America had renounced her role as the champion of equal justice for great and small peoples and had joined with others in forcing an immoral and indefensible solution upon them (Link 61:227).

Johnson, who was the Inquiry's expert on Dalmatia and the Adriatic, was clearly willing to do some bartering with the view of obtaining a solution and an agreement between the opposing parties. One approach that could be adopted, Johnson thought, would be to barter the Italian claims in Asia Minor and Albania. While ultimately proposing that a compromise should be reached, President Wilson suggested what at first looked like the determined and tough opening act by the American delegation.

Either they [the Italians] do or they do not desire to act with the Entente. If they desire to act with it, they must withdraw their armed forces from all parts of Asia Minor (and also from Fiume) (Link 61:307).

The Fiume Impasse

However, there was no bite to this bark; the consequences that the Italians would face if they refused to the withdrawal of their forces would be that they would be left without the support of the Entente. In other words, they would be left alone, as a punishment.

If they retain their armed forces in these places, we will understand that they desire to be left to their own resources and to a forcible assertion of right wherever they choose to assert it, action of which would clearly make it impossible for us to cooperate with or assist them in any way (Link 61:307).

The Italians would, therefore, be able to act wherever they want, forcibly asserting their rights, or desires. The only perceivable threat here is that they would be receiving no assistance from the Entente, or at least from the United States. This, of course, refers to the financial and other assistance. Such assistance of itself is not a small thing, and the threat of its removal could have serious consequences, but not many people are inclined to think of the consequences when the troops are deployed in the areas perceived as belonging to their nation, the media and the political elite are egging the public on, and the whole issue starts being perceived as the question of the nation's survival. "Let us have our own," the line of thinking may run in such instances, "and we will take care of ourselves."

Perhaps not surprisingly, the proposal was immediately opposed by Prime Minister Clemenceau, who was of the opinion that the Allies should not be demanding the evacuation of Fiume (Link 61:307). Wilson himself was unsure whether that would be a fair thing to do, considering that the American troops were also deployed there (Link 61:309). Given that Wilson will not be present to personally negotiate with the Italian delegation, it was thought advisory to give a written set of instructions to Lansing and others, who would then hand them over to the Italian delegation as a starting point of the negotiations. At the same time, the public opinion in Italy was so excited and so acutely attuned to the situation in Fiume that the Allies feared that whatever official document was presented might very likely be used to further hype up the public sentiment.

Indeed, the relationship between Italy and the United States had reached an all-time low, although the French were not spared either (Foreign 304). In an interview on July 10, 1919, President Wilson commented on the public outcry in Italy and the effects it has had on the relationship between Italy and the United States of America.

The President. I understand that the street in Rome that they had called 'Via Wilson' has been changed to 'Via Fiume.' That is the latest information I have,

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

which is a practical joke on myself. The Fiume business is very singular. Because, as I dare say you all know, it was expressly provided in the Treaty of London that Fiume should go to the Croats. Italy signed the document that it was not to go to her but to the Croats. She was indeed to get a number of islands and a big slice of Dalmatian coast, but Fiume she gave up, and now she seems indifferent to the other parts of the thing and she wants Fiume (Link 61:420).

It was exactly this fear of the public excitement that the Italian negotiators brought up on their first meeting with the Americans. The new Italian Foreign Minister Tittoni, who was at the same time the head of the Italian delegation, inquired of Lansing whether there existed a middle way to settle the question of Fiume.

It is his desire and intention, if feasible, to settle the Italian question soon as possible on best terms obtainable. In view, however, of great excitement in Italy over Fiume, he hoped it might be possible to obtain nominal Italian sovereignty there, circumscribed by every possible restraint with a view to saving face of Italy (Link 61:404).

This was rejected offhand by Lansing, who advised him not to put himself in an unattainable position by setting his demands too high. At the same time, the bartering started regarding the overall Adriatic question, in which not only Fiume was a part, but the south-eastern locations, such as the bay of Kotor, and the Albanian border to Montenegro. The Italian position was that since the proposed Fiume Free State – which would have included up to 200,000 Croats – was now abandoned, and most of its population would become citizens of Yugoslavia, it was only right that Italy should obtain some concessions on the eastern end of the Adriatic bay. The proposals were not commented by Lansing, but were merely forwarded to the President via the State Department.

Not of all of the American diplomats were so dispassionate, or faithful to the position espoused by Wilson. Colonel House, nominally the closest advisor to the President, was in fact in favor of awarding Fiume to the Italians. House was fully aware that the experts were opposed to that idea, but because the head of the Inquiry was obedient to House in all his actions, Dr. Mezes had on occasions “changed expert memoranda to meet the Colonel’s views without consulting the authors” (Link 61:454). In response to this the experts of the Inquiry had written a joint memorandum against the secession of Fiume to Italy, and forwarded it to President through unusual channels, in order to avoid it being not delivered at all, because of its contents. This had then resulted in President issuing his statement regarding Fiume, which had explosive consequences in

The Fiume Impasse

Italy. The Italians were not the only upset party in that episode. House, upon hearing of the details of presidential statement, came “as near to losing his temper” as he had ever been observed. He complained that he had already reached an agreement with the Italians, an agreement which would have been acceptable to both sides, and that all that was needed was to get the President’s assent. After the statement had been issued, however, this was no longer an option.

Dr. Bowman, who voiced these complaints to Robert Lansing, and who then forwarded them to the President in the form of a memorandum, also accused Colonel House of too easily accepting the position and the proposals of his negotiating opponents. Colonel House would then, Bowman accused, try to find a way to make the idea and the proposal presentable and somehow acceptable to the President. In other words, Colonel House was doing it all backwards, neither heeding the direction set forth by the President nor seeking to protect the best interests of the United States. Needless to say, such divisions and differences of opinions between the highly placed negotiators weakened the American position. More importantly, it made it nigh to impossible to reach the goals declared by President Wilson. Meanwhile, Italy was considering whether to ratify the German peace treaty. This made the French and the British nervous. In addition, the anti-French sentiment was spreading through Italy, and Clemenceau and Tardieu were eager to conclude the Adriatic question as soon as possible. Clemenceau even told Frank Lyon Polk point blank that he was willing to give Fiume to Italy, in order to make the whole thing get settled and be taken off of the agenda (Link 62:574).

The Italian side kept on coming with new proposals, each of which contained miniscule differences from the previously presented and rejected proposals. The continual dripping, as it were, of the Italian *staccato* was starting to unnerve the other side. In addition, the proposals were of great complexity. Each proposal contained 5 to 8 focal points, each of which provided several flexible parameters. This combined to form variables too numerous to enumerate. In fact, their great numbers in themselves served the purpose of complicating the matters beyond easy comprehension.

More importantly, the principle of making a concession on one given point and expecting the reciprocal concession on the other was the order of the day as far as the Italian side was concerned. Thus their proposal from August 31 dealt with several aspects related to Fiume, the railways and line of the border in its background, the city of Zadar, the islands and the Dalmatian mainland. Seamlessly, it also extended to questions about

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Valona and the Italian mandate in Albania (Link 63:204-10). This of course provided for some bartering across the Adriatic area, regardless if the other claimants to the territories in question were Croats or Albanians. An obvious imbalance is created this way; the imbalance which testifies to the Italian insistence on getting its own way, regardless of the consequences the other nations – Croats, Yugoslavs or Albanians – might suffer. Johnson, the American expert on the Adriatic, was working at this time together with the British Foreign Minister Balfour in formulating a solution which would appease the Italians and still be in adherence to the principles of self-determination and democracy. Their idea was to create a tight proposal which would then be presented to Tittoni, who would then have no wiggle room, and would have to accept the joint proposal (Link 63:93).

The Italian proposal had been to either cede Fiume to Italy or have it in a free state administered by the Italians. To this end, the “March on Fiume” of September 1919, led by Gabriele D’Annunzio achieved the Italian control in practice (Salomone 520). The President suggested that the free referendum be held after five years, which both Balfour and Johnson found acceptable. These endeavors were soon to be sunk by Lloyd George, who rejected the notion that free referendum should be held in the free state of Fiume within five years. As regards the plebiscite he wrote:

I would be quite unable to accept this primitive addition, because the great majority of the population of the suggested free state would be Slav and five years of intense and pitiless work of denaturalization would certainly be undertaken against the Italian population of the city of Fiume (*corpus separatum*). The city (*corpus separatum*) is Italian by immense majority. Its annexation to Italy is not in the least a question of territorial aggrandizement or of politics. To have or not to have a city of fifty thousand inhabitants is immaterial to Italy (Link 63:365).

This rather short quotation makes for a very interesting and concentrated study of the change that has come over Lloyd George since Wilson left for the United States. The tone, for one, is rather short and perhaps even brusque, which is a departure of the friendly readiness to concede the point to the American President, as was the case while he has still been in Paris. Words such as *primitive* are used to denote the proposal as being totally unacceptable, while the Slav actions are expected to be *pitiless* and *intense*. The lawyerly insistence of repeating the term *corpus separatum* twice, with only one noun separating the two occurrences, places the emphasis of the legality of the position Lloyd George represented. Finally, the attribution of 50 thousand inhabitants to the city of Fiume was an

The Fiume Impasse

exaggeration of 600%, since the city itself housed only 8,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom were indeed Italian. That majority was not *immense* in any way.

Another aspect of the nearly derisive response to the American proposal was the skirting of the issue of national self-determination. If the Slavs were indeed the majority in the state of Fiume, then what would be the problem of allowing them the free referendum? If the result of the referendum would be the vote in favor of joining Yugoslavia, why not then have the statistics so overwhelming in favor of the Slavs take into the account and incorporate Fiume into Yugoslav state? And speaking of the legality of the question, the legally binding document that the British and the French had been insisting on adhering to since 1915 awarded the city of Fiume to Yugoslavia, so where did the sudden lawyerly position come from, and, more importantly, what was it based upon? But that was not all:

For the Italian people, who have always been idealists, it is a question of sentiment, and this sentiment is deeply rooted in the population, so much so that the favorable solution of this question could induce the Italians to bear the sacrifices of other aspirations which is requested of them (Link 63:365).

Here the British Prime Minister freely admits to the bartering nature of the situation, where the Italians might be willing to make concessions in the relatively far flung Dodecanese or Smyrna in favor of extending their northern Adriatic borders eastwards. This approach of looking at the bigger picture in solving smaller issues was also used by the Italian Prime Minister Nitti, who wrote to Wilson urging him to grant the Italian demands or else. Nitti's letter was far from using openly threatening tone, however.

Italy, who wished spontaneously to rush to fight for human liberty, runs now the risk of becoming a spreading sore of agitation in Europe. Everything can be calmed down by the recognition of Fiume to us, with the most ample security for the port and the railway, which would be entrusted to the League of Nations (Link 63:464).

It did contain the veiled threats regarding the urgency with which the matter must be solved in order to avoid further crisis which could extend to other areas of Europe. Combined with that was the plea for the recognition of the sacrifices which Italy committed for the "human liberty" and for humanity, presumably. Not a vestige of self-interest is mentioned. The leader of the government, quite recently elected on the platform of harder negotiation regarding the Italian interests, did not mention those interests in any way. Furthermore, he was implying that other actors, quite outside of his control, are

The Fiume Impasse

it, instead of fermenting it, as things were. Therefore total firmness was the order of the day, and the United States representative, Mr. Jay, was assured that he “cannot make an impression too definite and final that I cannot and will not yield” (Link 63:534).

A middle ground was sought, in yet another proposal that Fiume should be formed into a free state was delivered to Yugoslavs on January 14 (Link 64:263-6). This was proposed by the French and the British Prime Ministers. A feature of the proposal that was new was an attempt to satisfy the Serbs by providing for Serbian control of the port of Scutari (present day Albania). This was almost definitely an attempt to divide the Yugoslavs along the Croat-Serb lines: Fiume was of great importance to the western parts of Yugoslavia, that is, Croatia and Slovenia. In addition, it had an emotional value for the Croats. Scutari, on the other hand, would provide the outlet to the sea that would be in contiguity with Serbia proper. This would be of far greater economic benefit to the eastern parts of Yugoslavia (Link 64:305). Indeed, in a telegram sent on January 14, 1920 from Paris this is confirmed: “...Scutari, which from many points of view was just as important as an economic outlet for Jugo-Slavia (sic) as Fiume, old Servians (sic) such as Pashich (sic) were more interested in the question of Scutari than the Croatian port of Fiume” (Link 64:303).

At this point Trumbić was starting to feel more and more pressure. If the Yugoslavs refused these proposals, as unsatisfactory as they may be in themselves, there was a danger that the Allies would simply default back to the provisions of the Pact of London. Wallace, Head of American Mission in Paris, reported that Trumbić, quite perplexed, came to visit him, asking whether he thought the Yugoslav rejection of the proposal would lead to the implementation of the Pact (Link 64:315). Wallace replied that he was unable to give his opinion on that matter, but later reported to Lansing and Wilson that he was sure that the Yugoslavs would cave in unless the United States intervened.

Unable to read the intentions of the Allies, the Yugoslavs felt it prudent to make some concessions to the latest proposal. The Yugoslavs conceded to the disappearance of the Free State of Fiume and creation of the Free City of Fiume (territorially much smaller), but refused the moving of the Wilson line further east, or the creation of coastal corridor whose purpose was to ensure the contiguity of Fiume to Italy. A slight accommodation of the British-French proposal at best, this reply provided some respite to the Yugoslavs, and threw the proverbial ball back into their court (Link 64:331). Just one day later it became

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

clear to the American mission in Paris that the Yugoslavs were using some cunning in their own approach to the question. Wallace wrote:

According to information secured from Mr. Trumbich (sic) it would appear that in replying to the Allied proposal of January 14 the Yugo-Slav (sic) Government will neither accept nor reject the proposal but will probably state their willingness to abide by any decision taken by the United States, Great Britain and France in common accord (Link 64:341).

The background of this new and somewhat bold position taken by the Yugoslavs is that Trumbić had received a communiqué from Slavko Grujić (also spelled as Groutich), Yugoslav Minister to the United States, in which was contained the information that the United States had lodged a complaint with the British and the French governments, and a question asked whether the said governments intended to conclude the Adriatic question with or without the concurrence of the United States. Grujić also reported to Trumbić that Polk, who was the source of this information, said that strong lines of protests regarding the application of the Pact of London were also included in the letter to the British and the French.

Interestingly, even Trumbić seems to have been of the opinion that the compromise solutions, that is, those who attempt to apply both the Principles and the Pact of London, are not good. In his opinion, the Pact of London would be preferable to what had been proposed on January 14, because at least Croats would have Fiume, and the Italians would not be able to hold on to Dalmatia anyway (Link 64:341). At least that is how Wallace reported Trumbić's attitude. Now, there is definitely some truth in that line of reasoning. However, the immediate practical implications in the event that Italy occupied Dalmatia and the islands would have been devastating to the Croatian political scene. In such case Yugoslavia, therefore the Croats, could only hope to somehow regain the control of Dalmatia if and when the Italians prove themselves unable to maintain order. All things considered, it is quite unlikely that Trumbić actually thought this. In fact, it was probably a bit of posturing and a bit of bluffing on his part. And yet, considering that the Italian side had a long term plans of including Fiume into Italy, this might have been the sincere opinion of the Yugoslav Foreign Minister. The issue of Fiume's contiguity to Italy, via the proposed coastal corridor, was the feature that made the future incorporation of Fiume into Italy quite possible. In estimating that the Italians had less chances of success in the governance of Dalmatia, surrounded by Slavic lands and the sea, Trumbić might have been on to something. Johnson, of The Inquiry, wrote to Wilson regarding this issue:

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

the news that the British and the French, in collaboration with the new Italian Premier Nitti, had offered the Yugoslav side a proposal which contained the elements which had already been rejected not only by the United States, but also by the British and the French governments. If that position had been taken on December 9, 1919, how could the British and the French now go and change their opinion so drastically? Such changes were clearly advantageous to Italy, which is confirmed in the fact that the Italians had rejected the December proposal, but have stated their acceptance of the latest, January 14, plan.

The memorandum of December 9 rejected the idea of providing for a coastal strip of land, running along Istria's eastern shores, which would provide an uninterrupted connection to Italy. This idea was proposed again by the very actors who rejected it a mere month earlier. Along the same lines, back in December the Allies rejected Italy's proposal that the whole of the Istria peninsula be annexed to Italy, whereas now both the French and the British seemed to be in acquiescence of such plans of annexation. The very idea of the Italian sovereignty over Fiume had been rejected in the December plan, and now the situation seems to have taken a U-turn. Wilson commented: "These and other provisions of the memorandum of January fourteenth, negotiated without the knowledge or approval of the American Government, change the whole face of the Adriatic settlement, and, in the eyes of this Government, render it unworkable and rob it of that measure of justice which is essential if this Government is to co-operate in maintaining its terms" (Link 64:400).

Wilson continued insisting that the principles of self-determination should form the basis of any specific solution that should be put on the table. This was not to be, however, because Britain, France and Italy pushed a more pragmatic solution. Particularly disturbing was the fact that the Yugoslavs were told that Pact of London would be enforced in case this latest proposal were rejected (Link 64:377). This all led to the gradual weakening of Wilson's resolve, which eventually led to the approval for the Italian annexation of Istria. The idea had been rejected by the American delegation only a month earlier, on December 9, 1919, but after it had been incessantly brought up again and again, Wilson retreated, as it were, and agreed to the proposed annexation on January 14, 1920 (Link 64:400). Lansing addressed the British and the French delegation with the following words:

It is a time to speak with utmost frankness. The Adriatic issue as it now presents itself raises the fundamental question as to whether the American Government can on any terms co-operate with its European associates in the great work of maintaining the peace of the world by removing the primary causes of war... The President desires to say that it does not seem feasible to obtain the acceptance of

The Fiume Impasse

Treaty of Versailles. Upon Wilson's return to the United States, the other members of Big Four started being openly hostile to Wilson's ideas. All of this took its toll on his health, which had already been compromised in Europe. However, Wilson was nowhere near seeing the end of his troubles. His greatest prize, the Peace Treaty, was facing a stiff opposition by the Republican Congress.

The Treaty of Versailles was submitted to the Senate on July 10, 1919, almost immediately after Wilson returned to Washington. It was never to be ratified. Henry Cabott Lodge, the Republican Chairman on Foreign Relations saw to it. The Senate hearings which were staged by the Republican majority dragged the process longer and longer. Testifying before the Committee were participants of the Paris Conference, such as Lansing and Miller, but also numerous representatives from all various European states, peoples and minority (Czernin 400). Naturally, the resulting cacophony of opposing voices and opinions gradually eroded the credibility of the Treaty, bringing into question even the necessity to have it at all.

The tactic of the Republican opponents of the Treaty was not to reject it outright, but to provide an inordinately high number of caveats that would make the original text of the Treaty meaningless. Indeed, a total of forty five amendments and four reservations were registered on the Senate floor in a meeting on September 10th. Senator Lodge eventually boiled the reservations and amendments down to fourteen, the symbolism of the numbers involved not escaping anyone. This, of course, relates back to the fact that Wilson had refused to take any Republicans along with him to Paris, and they were now fighting back and making their point. Ambassador White had been the only nominal Republican on Wilson's team and this had clearly not been sufficient as far as Lodge and his backers were concerned.

Realizing that there was no way the Congress would ever ratify the Treaty, Wilson decided to turn directly to the voters. He covered 8,000 miles and gave 37 speeches in 29 cities in only 22 days (Czernin 400). This did not yield the desired fruit, and it cost him his health. President Wilson was reported as having been sick for the first time on October 7, 1919. It is now presumed that the sickness had been an organic brain syndrome, induced by long-standing hypertension. The effects of such stroke "include disorders of emotion, impaired impulse control, and defective judgment in the presence of relatively well preserved intellectual function" (Link 64:525-7). This condition generally causes marked accentuation of prior personality traits. Wilson, the unbending idealist, whose unbending

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

principled position would give headache to the more pragmatic politicians on a good day, was now subjected to the condition which would accentuate exactly those traits. “In Wilson’s case these traits included intransigence, stubbornness, insistence upon having his own way, self-righteousness, a tendency to fall back upon principles as a means of finding some basis for policy-making” (Link 64:525-7).

The sickness can generally be divided in two phases. Phase one followed immediately after the stroke and lasted until January 20, 1920. During this period Wilson had difficulties assessing the situation, partially because of the weakness caused by his condition and partially because of the genuine lack of information. During this period he had a difficult time accepting defeat in the Senate, for example. The second phase of his sickness may have been introduced by the unauthorized publishing of his diagnosis. Dr. Hugh H. Young, of Johns Hopkins Hospital, who had been one of the physicians in attendance to the President disclosed details of Wilson’s condition. This caused public debate, or at least a public exchange of the opinions of whether the President was still capable of carrying out his duties. Needless to say, Wilson was livid that his private life and health would be publicly discussed (Link 64:403).

Other physicians who could have added their opinion to the public debate exercised discretion and refrained from doing so. Dr. Dercum refused to speak of private matters of Wilson’s health, declaring that Dr. Grayson is the only physician authorized to do so. As for himself, Dr. Dercum maintained, he was merely a consulting neurologist. In spite of decorum of Dr. Dercum, mere discussion of President’s health in the public was enough to vex Wilson beyond measure (Link 64:403). The situation became so uncontrollable that Newton Diehl Baker thought it best not to issue any kind of statement regarding the specific claims about the health of the President, hoping that the whole debate would subside with time. Instead, Baker suggested, a general statement regarding the rapid progress of his recovery should be published (Link 64:436).

Needless to say, the actual psychical and psychological limitations that the onset of the illness had on Wilson was a problem in itself, a problem which objectively caused him no lack of trouble and consternation at his own weakness, as he perceived it. The public debate only exasperated him further, causing in turn, more signs of weakness.

Wilson may have been wounded, as it were, but he was not giving up on the ratification of the Treaty nor on the preoccupation with the details of the settlement that he had spent so much time on. “I am amazed and deeply distressed that Lloyd George and

The Fiume Impasse

Clemenceau should now talk of Fiume passing under the sovereignty to Italy” is what Wilson wrote to Polk during his tour in mid-West (Walworth 551). This was written only days before he suffered from a debilitating stroke that would, for all intents and purposes, mark the end of his presence on the international scene.

Conclusion

The ethno genesis of the Southern Slavs started in the Middle Ages. They differed greatly in the perception as to what defines each separate *ethnos*, how the delineation took place, and what was the method of rapprochement. As shown earlier, the Serbian perception of nationality and ethnicity, and of their development and interaction with other ethnicities, tended to be unitary, leading to assimilation and absorption of the similar into the existing whole. The existence of a Serbian state for the better part of the nineteenth century contributed to this, and the principle of *ius soli* somewhat manifested itself, but not to the extent as it did elsewhere in Europe. A possibly more important factor was the presence and the symbolism associated with the person of a king. In spite of the competition between the two rival houses, and occasional dramatic changes at the throne, the institution of the monarchy provided a clear focus for strong unitary tendency. But both the state and the king became significant or even present relatively late in the process of the defining of Serbdom. Ever since the conquest by the Ottomans, the Serbian Orthodox church had been the beacon not only of Christianity, but of Serbdom itself. Medieval Serbian rulers were made into saints, and their names became a part of everyday religious rituals. By extension, the deeds and the achievements of the saints from the period while they were mortal, temporal rulers also made their way into the religious realm. This link between the Orthodox Church and the Serbian nation was so strong, that other Orthodox Christians who participated in the same rites melted with time into the Serbian population in a complete assimilation. As strong as the religious feature was in the determination of the borders of Serbdom, it could only extend so far, limiting itself only to the Orthodox Christians.

A dramatic shift in the basis for the determination of ethnicity came in the early nineteenth century, when linguists started taking note of the common language spoken throughout the lands of Southern Slavs, laying to the west of the Serbian state. The language was, the reasoning went, the most important factor in the determination of whether one belonged to a particular *ethnos* or not. This immediately enlarged the tents of Serbdom, as it were, to include the Catholics and the Muslims in what is today Croatia, Bosnia, northern Montenegro, and southern Serbia: all those who spoke the *štokavian* variant of the language. The Orthodox Church saw that as a threat; it would certainly lose in importance, but more importantly, the character of the Serbian *ethnos* would be changed

dramatically. Regardless, the Serbian linguists considered the language to be the key feature, and then chose a dialect from an area that was well to the west from the Serbian state as a base for the standard Serbian. This was eventually rejected by the Belgrade population and the Serbian political elite, and their local sub variant of *štokavian* was taken as the standard language. Nonetheless, the linguistic base and the westward shift served to broaden the definition of being Serb. Much like the religious approach, the linguistic reasoning also showed itself to be assertive, unitary and assimilationist. It assumed whole populations to be of Serbian stock, even if those populations themselves did not know it, as it were. It extended itself to lands which had never featured in the Serbian history, state, or Orthodox Church. This expansion of the borders of the Serbian *ethnos* was met with some distain by the non-Serbs. The associated triumphalism, however, was almost universally resented.

The other significant *ethnos* in the area was that of the Croats. They had no state of their own, but the state institutions, of which the most important was the *Sabor*, the Parliament. Its continuity extended back to 1273, and it enjoyed a greater or lesser degree of toleration by and cooperation with the governments in Vienna and Budapest. Croatian resistance to the outside rule, as it were, became manifest when a coalition of the politicians representing the local population in the territory of ancient Croatia won three elections in a row, that of 1906, 1910 and 1913. This alliance was called the Croat-Serb Coalition. The name itself is perhaps an example of the integrationist approach used by the Croats, who could have, ostensibly, insisted on calling the drive a Croat National Front, or some such name. The Croats recognized their proximity to Serbs, but did not seek to absorb them. The Serbs were seen as similar enough to be considered as close, yet different enough to have a different identity.

The Croat *ethnos* developed among the Catholic speakers of *štokavian*, and of other two variants, *kajkavian* and *čakavian*, which were not used by the Serbs. The Catholic Church, therefore, did not feature prominently in defining the borders of the Croatian *ethnos*, the Catholic frontiers being far wider. Indeed, the Catholic Church contained many other national constituents, and narratives of national belonging based on religious rite were not prominent. The Croats also embraced the idea of the shared *štokavian* language variant and a very similar *ethnos* to that of the Serbs. Linguists cum politicians from Zagreb selected the same local variant of *štokavian* as the standard Croatian. In this they came as close to a willing assimilation as ever: while the majority of Croats spoke that

Conclusion

same language variant, the area around Zagreb actually used another. Of course, the assimilation in this case was not only with the Serbs, but with the rest of the Croats as well. Still a willingness to negotiate one's position, to readjust it, and to introduce some changes was manifest. Was that based on the position of relative weakness (no state, no king), tradition in parliamentary practices, or general proclivity to integrationist approach? Perhaps all three.

Overall, therefore, the Serbs had a unitary, assimilationist Church, while the Catholic Church that the Croats attended was integrationist. By extension, becoming member of Serbian Orthodox Church practically meant becoming a Serb, while one kept their *ethnos* in the Catholic Church. This formula extended to the *ethnos*: the Serbian *ethnos* tended to be inclusive, assimilationist, and dynamic in its development, while the Croatian *ethnos* was integrationist and therefore not seeking to expansion. In the simplest of terms, where the Serbs sought to have a Melting Pot which would result in homogenous identity and Serbdom, the Croats desired to have a Salad Bowl, a multilateral entity, in which and all of its constituents would keep their own characteristics.

Going along with the question of ethnicity was the idea of the creation, as it were, of the umbrella *ethnos* for all the Southern Slavs. The first variant of this movement appeared in Croatia in 1830s under the ethnically neutral name of the Illyrian Movement. The choice of a name is perhaps another example of the Croatian willingness to negotiate: it was neither a Serbian nor Croatian movement, it was integrationist movement for all Southern Slavs. Having been started in Zagreb, it was rather Croat-centric, and it did not gain wide support throughout the rest of the lands of the Southern Slavs, although its Croatian characters were not the main reason for its failure: the Serbs were busy in their own kingdom, the Muslims from Bosnia and Sandžak were living in a different empire and seemed ambivalent to the idea. Only the Slovenes responded positively. In the years leading up to World War I, a new variant of the Illyrian idea was put forth by the Croat politicians and activists who sought to promote the idea of the unity of the *triune* people on the southern outskirts of the Slavdom: Yugoslavism. Generally speaking, Slovenes and Croats embraced this idea, although some prominent Croat politicians rejected it as a possible vehicle for *serbianization*. The Serbs, on the other hand, saw it as an attempt by Austria-Hungary to weaken the Serbian name, *ethnos*, and the political strength it had been gathering. Thus the idea of Yugoslavism as the integrator in the period leading up to World War I failed. It did, however, get revived later in the Socialist Yugoslavia after World War

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

II. Interestingly, the Yugoslavism promoted by the Communists under the banner *brotherhood and unity* bore all the hallmarks of the erstwhile Serbian assimilationist stance, and was, predictably, resisted by the Bosnians, the Croats, the Slovenes, and the Macedonians. Perhaps not surprisingly, when Socialist Yugoslavia imploded in 1990s it was the Serbs who held on to the idea of Yugoslavia the longest. Perhaps because by then it had become a vehicle for Serbian domination? Be that as it may, in the infant years of the first Yugoslavia the integrationist drive was losing the battle against the assimilationist, expansionist attitude of the Serbian state.

The positions regarding the questions relating to *ethnos* were replicated in the dilemma regarding the new state. In fact, Serbs considered it not a new state at all, but mere extension of the already existing Kingdom of Serbia, whose territory had been expanding since the late nineteenth century, more than doubling in 1913, reaching as far south as lake Ohrid. Further expansion towards north was to follow, and the latest extension towards west was in no way different than previous such cases. It therefore warranted no change in the state structure. Croatian, Montenegrin, and Slovenian clamor for a different state structure could easily be ignored. The Serbian government, and its monarch, favored the unitary, homogenous state. The other state constituents wished to implement a federal model, in which each would maintain its own character, would administer its territory, and would still belong to a united Southern Slav community. Croats, Montenegrins and Slovenes expected that their calls for federal organization of the new state would be heard by the United States. They had all been promoting the ideas of unity of Southern Slavs, freedom, self-determination and equality, and having them applied in a federal system seemed like a natural conclusion. The position of the United States, however, seemed to have been to never address that question. Perhaps there were some legal reasons for that: the Kingdom of Serbia was one of the Allies, and meddling into its internal affairs would have been inappropriate. Of course, the Allies, led by the United States, did plenty of meddling into the affairs of the vanquished states, but doing it to the victorious Ally was a different issue.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Serbia had representation on the negotiating tables in Paris, and prior to that it used its diplomatic network to represent itself and the rest of the Southern Slavs. At the same time, in the months leading to the Paris Peace Conference, the Kingdom of Montenegro had been almost ignored, in spite of the fact that it had the same legal status as a state and as an Ally. The representatives of the Southern Slavs from

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Finally, one of the most obvious reasons for the Americans staying away from the question of the internal organization of the future Yugoslavia was the lack of time. Wilson had already taken too much time in deliberations regarding various territorial questions all across Europe, not the least of which was the question of Fiume. He fixated, it seems, onto the territorial aspect of the self-determination principle. The Yugoslav case was not a single-step territory equals nation situation: even if the territorial integrity were achieved, the self-determination was not automatically solved, for it would require further attention relating to the state apparatus. The sheer quantity of the issues at hand precluded the possibility of the American Delegation having the time to deal with internal questions of an Allied state. The French, on the other hand, preferred a strong state in the Balkans, a state capable of blocking the German expansion eastwards. This idea was more likely to be successful if the state was unitary, centralist and homogenous. Notwithstanding the calls for federation issued from the American experts such as Kerner and Day, there simply was not enough political will to get involved into the micro-management of an issue that could be best solved by leaving it to the new government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Given the immensity of the Europe-wide settlement that was being hammered out between the Big Four, and considering the disproportionately high attention that the question of Fiume had already received, the lack of attention for the internal structure of the future Yugoslavia perhaps should not be held against the Allies, particularly not against the American President and his Delegation.

During the decade of 1910-1920 the United States found itself in an unprecedented situation. For the first time in its history it waged a war outside of the Western Hemisphere. The United States stepped into the European carnage with confidence and idealism that was incomprehensible to Europeans. This was not mere coming of age of the world's youngest empire, as it were, and joining the club of the most powerful nations: this was a radical game-changer, a paradigm shift of a kind. The Americans spoke of moral obligations, of freedom and democracy. Wilson believed in the essentially peaceful nature of man. No longer was the foreign policy seen as a vehicle to achieving a balance-of-power among entities who tended to seek self-interest, and therefore had to be controlled. Even though, the old thinking went, there was really nothing wrong with self-interest. Indeed, the balance-of-power system, simply put, counted on man's (and by extension, state's) selfishness and sought to control it and put it to use for the common good. Wilson, on the other hand, believed that democracy tended to peace, and that by setting up democracies a

Conclusion

guaranty of peace would be provided. This he based on the belief that, at its core, man was a good creature, filled with goodness rather than with Darwinian self-interest.

Wilson's idea that moral considerations would keep the nations from conflicting with others was perhaps naïve. Would the nations really ask themselves whether their planned course of action was right or just? Would they not, as had always been the case, simply try to achieve that which was good for them, or their rulers? After the fact they may start constructing a narrative based on moral obligations, honor, as a way of excusing their actions. Even if Wilson was right in his assessment of the goodness of man and of democracies, it would have taken some time for such change to get universally accepted and implemented. But more fundamental question remained: was he really right? Were not both man and nations prone to use power as a means to an end? Were not the moral questions merely secondary? Or rather, do they not lend themselves easily to manipulation, so that one may speak of lofty moral ideals and principles only in order to hide what is in essence a selfish motivation? This was not how Wilson saw it, but it has been the case many a time before and after him.

America's entry into the war therefore shifted its desired outcome: the goals were no longer the same. The balance-of-power schemes were the thing of the past, Wilson declared, and self-determination, democracy and international law were the new order. The European Allies seemingly went along with this, at least at the beginning. Of course, at the time of the American entry into the conflict a stalemate had been reached that seemed to be unbreakable. In time, however, secret alliances and deals came to the surface, such as the Pact of London, in which lands were traded for favors without any regard to the principle of self-determination. Of course, the British and the French never proclaimed interest into such principles until they had a need of the American assistance in Europe, by which time the Pact of London had already been signed.

Secret treaties and legal obligations stemming from them, however, were not the only complications that beset Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The idea of holding a Peace Conference was based on the Congress of Vienna from a century earlier. The defeated nations, notably France, had been at the negotiating table and had some say. Furthermore, the restored balance-of-power guaranteed that if France or anyone else were to step out of line, there would be consequences to pay. It had not been necessary to reduce France to a third-rate power, nor did the victor seek to do it. This time around, however, only the victors were represented at the Peace Conference in Paris, and there seemed to be

Conclusion

Europe. Thus some allowances had to be made, some minorities had to be left within the borders of nation states not their own, etc. Political pressure and desire for punitive action against the vanquished also played a prominent role, so Czechoslovakia ended up having nearly three million Germans within its borders, as well as one million Hungarians. Romania also got millions of Hungarians, and Poland millions of Germans. Allowances based on geopolitical aspects were also made, such as in granting the access to the sea for Poland, and for the modification of Italian borders to include Austrian South Tirol. At the same time, the possible desire of rump Austria to be joined with Germany in a single state was rejected out flat. Clearly, that consideration was based on geopolitical premises, certainly not on self-determination principle. These were some among many inconsistencies in the grand scheme of the implementation of the principle of self-determination that had been presented as the simple and all-encompassing formula that would be applied across the board. The above list of inconsistencies reads like a brief history of the World War II: the resentment that the vanquished felt toward the victors brewed over into a world conflict in which, first of all, the Austria and Germany were united in the *Anschluss* of 1938. This was immediately followed by the German entry into German-populated Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. German ally Hungary received areas with Hungarian population in southern Slovakia. Germany then followed with attack on Poland, in essence getting back the areas it had lost after the Paris Peace Treaty, and later Hungary received the Vojvodina and the northern Transylvania, etc.

It appears that the greatest problem with the Paris Peace conference was not that it did not apply the principle of self-determination. The problem probably lies in the fact that there was no single principle, *any* principle that was applied evenly across the board. If self-determination were taken to be the best solution, for the sake of the argument, then the system of balance-of-power would perhaps have been the second. The distant third option would have been a mix between the two, in which there would be insufficient self-determination, which therefore would not result in the peaceful democracy Wilson believed in. It would also introduce arbitrary punitive and geopolitically-based territorial decisions which would have no mechanism for enforcing them over the long term. This option, it appears, was applied in Paris, and it resulted in major disruption only two decades later.

Not all the Axis powers of World War II were seeking to right the wrongs – at least as they saw them to be – that had been based on the disregard of the principle of self-

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

determination. Italy had switched sides in World War I in order to achieve territorial gains, and when that was accomplished only partially at the Paris Peace Conference, it sided with the Nazi Germany in World War II, and initially got what it was asking for: the control over the coastal regions of the northern Adriatic. Italy's claim, back at Paris Peace Conference, had not been based on self-determination. It was rooted in a desire to extend its influence in areas in which Roman or Venetian presence had been significant in previous periods, but which have been populated by non-Italians for centuries during and since the Roman and Venetian presence. But Italy had not been given all she desired in Paris. It may be concluded, perhaps, that if there were any aberrations to the principle of self-determination it seems they manifested themselves as punitive measures against the losers. Granting territorial gains as a reward for being on the right side of the war was not easily done, Wilson saw to it.

The Italian representatives at the Paris Peace Conference had to fight to achieve the concessions in the northern Adriatic. They were frustrated because of this, for they had entered the war with the guarantees that the Adriatic islands and Dalmatia would be given to them. Wilson was stoically opposed to that, and the drama that ensued was both protracted and exhausting. The Italian side called it a matter of principles of international law and insisted on the fulfillment of the obligations that the British and the French had undertaken when signing the Pact of London. The Italians also called it a matter of security, since the islands along the northern shores of the Adriatic had to be under the Italian control, else some naval power may use them as shelter for their forces who would be menacing the Italian coast. They called it a matter of internal politics and a factor which could upset the present government and bring the Bolsheviks into the center of political happenings, as had been the case in Hungary. This, they warned, would be a great destabilizing event that would have repercussions far outside the Italian borders. Give us the northern Adriatic, they insisted, and this danger would be removed. While all this threatening and imploring was considered seriously by Wilson and the other Allies, the threat of resorting to the legalistic implementation of the secret agreement was never fully removed. The Italian negotiators also cast the question of Italian supremacy over the northern Adriatic as a matter of self-determination of the population. The problem was that the vast majority of the population was Croat, except in some urban centers. Indeed, some of the cities along the northern Adriatic coast had a significant Italian population, which was often richer and better educated than their Croat neighbors. The problem was that the

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

similar miniscule questions that one would hardly expect from the head of the most powerful country in the world.

Complicating matters further was the general phlegmatic reaction of the Serb government regarding Fiume. The Serbian territorial aspirations from before World War I have been fulfilled beyond their wildest imaginations, and getting a port city on its westernmost frontier did not seem so important. The Croats, on the other hand, felt very strongly about Fiume, and their erstwhile representative at the Yugoslav Committee, Ante Trumbić, who had been given the position of Foreign Minister in the Kingdom of SHS, was vehement in his insistence that Fiume must go to the Southern Slavs. The determinedness which the Croatian politicians displayed in fighting against the implementation of the provisions of the Pact of London was therefore in stark contrast with the indifference shown by the members of the Serbian government. Indeed, the incessant negotiations and political maneuvering regarding the port city of Fiume, the Istria peninsula and the majority of the Croatian islands served to accentuate the lack of common position between the Croats and the Serbs. This significantly weakened the position of the Croats and had some bearing on the position taken by the United States.

One way of interpreting the situation is that the Croats and the Americans were aligned, and were on one side of this conflict. The Croats, because of their own interest to include as many of their kin into the new state as possible. The Americans, because of Wilson's insistence to implement the principle of self-determination. The Serbs were on the same side, but displayed a general lack of interest. On the other side of the aisle stood the British, the French, and the Italians. The British and the French were bound, they felt, by the formal commitment made to the Italians regarding some of the territorial gains the Italians stood to achieve in the event of entering the war on the allied side. The Italians, while fully aligned with the French and the British, had their own two-fold interests in mind. The first interest was that of *Italia Irredenta*, the unredeemed Italy, that is, those areas inhabited by Italians which had not been included into the Italian republic that had been formed in the late 19th century. The second Italian interest was motivated by self-perceived *grandezza*, the grandeur which, the Italians felt, was due to their nation, as the sole heir of the Roman Empire and of the *Serenissima Repubblica* of medieval and renaissance Venice. This claim was clearly overreaching, extending to Asia Minor and the Dodecanese islands, and as such was unsupportable by even the willing Allies. The

Conclusion

unaccommodating Allies, the Americans, would have none of it, and the Italian claims outside of the areas adjacent to its own borders were soon scrapped.

But the adjacency provided a logical viable option for Italian expansionism. The whole drama relating to Fiume is a perfect example of the Italian reassessing of its position as the events unfolded. While the imperial element of the Italian plan was still on the table – the plan which included parts of Asia Minor – the possession of Dalmatian coast and islands, which are not adjacent to the Italian mainland did not appear to be problematic. However, as soon as the imperialistic element had been removed, and Wilson showed an inclination to meddle into all the aspects of the Italian right to have any claim in Dalmatia, the Italians realized that they would need to reassess their position, and adjust it to the new situation. Thus the question of the coastal city of Fiume became center-stage, and came to signify the justice and injustice of the post-war settlement. The Italian side realized that maintaining territories which were surrounded by the hostile Slavs would be unattainable in the long run, and therefore they switched their focus to extending the borders of its mainland state, encroaching, as it were, onto the northern side of the Adriatic, and swallowing in the process the Slovenian coastal region, the Istria peninsula, and the port of Fiume itself. In the end, the Italian gains were limited to those areas, the only exception being a few outlying Adriatic islands.

The Serbs had an entirely unique position in the territorial struggle. The Pact of London had already given them all the lands in which Serbs were present in any numbers at all: neither the majority of Serbian population had been the requirement, nor the plurality. Some of the areas in question had no or very little Serbian population. Therefore the Kingdom of Serbia was poised to achieve a significant westward expansion regardless of the details of the outcome of the struggles over Fiume and the adjacent territory. Furthermore, the possibility of gaining more territory, as tempting and as appealing as it may have appeared to the Serbian government, also in itself carried the threat of overextension. Specifically, the addition of more population, both Slavic and non-Slavic, but certainly non-Serbian, would decrease the proportion of the Serbs in the augmented state, and that could mean trouble later. Therefore the Serbian position as regards Istria and Fiume was that of mild interest, and it certainly lacked the vehemence with which the Croats addressed the question.

While all this contributed to a complicated situation and an arduous struggle, the principle of self-determination generally prevailed against the legal obligations stemming

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

from secret pacts. The party that was the most responsible for that was President Wilson and his (nearly) unwavering stance. The final outcome with regards to the territorial question of the Southern Slavs was generally a success story, both to the Slavs and to their champion Wilson. In spite of the concentrated efforts by the Italian Prime Ministers to the contrary, the state of the Southern Slavs obtained most of the lands in which the Slavs had a majority of the population. They also obtained the Vojvodina and Kosovo: the former because of the unilateral move by the Serbian minority there and the Serbian government; the latter on the grounds of military conquest, justified by the historical considerations rather than the ethnic makeup of its population, the majority of whom was Albanian even then. Ethnically speaking, the Vojvodina was the most diverse. The Hungarians were the single most numerous people there, followed by the Croats and then the Serbs. If the Croats and the Serbs were considered as one, then Yugoslavia would have maybe received that region even through the peaceful negotiation. However, the Serbian government was eager to annex the Vojvodina directly to Serbia, and not have it join the Serbian kingdom as a part of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which had been the plan. Therefore in the case of the Vojvodina and Kosovo the principle of power and war booty prevailed, and provided Yugoslavia with territories which may have gone to either Hungary (at least partially) and Albania if the principles of self-determination alone were relied upon.

That situation perhaps serves well for the accentuation of the main problem that underscored the Paris deliberations: no single concept was followed, and the resulting mishmash was unsustainable in the long term. Thanks to Wilson's insistence, the considerations of morality and ethics featured prominent around the negotiating tables. The collective effect of dramatic events and losses of World War I was that the public and even the experienced politicians hoped that perhaps it was possible to create a better world, a world free from *Realpolitik*, which had caused so much death and devastation. The hope was that the idea of collective security, based on democracy, freedom and ethics, would be achievable. This is perhaps the greatest legacy that Wilson left behind, in spite of the fact that neither the Paris Peace Conference, nor the Peace Treaty, nor yet the League of Nations really achieved much of what they set out to. At the least, and this is spoken with a dose of cynicism, the Wilsonian idealism provided a new narrative to explain the reasons for conflict: the ethics; the questions of right and wrong; the moral duty. The slips back to pragmatic justification such as the defense of "the American way of life", referred to by President Bush in 1990, are seen by some as just that: slips-of-the-tongue, belaying the

Conclusion

traditional consideration of power and interest, which are still the driving force of the decision makers at the highest levels.

The precept of collective security that Wilson hoped to make a permanent reality was flawed: it was too wide-reaching and not sufficiently defined. In that sense it remained a principle, rather than an *application* of a principle. Compared against the alliances that the centuries past saw applied for the same purpose, the airy idea of world peace was simply too broad a concept to be a workable solution. It contained too many variables which changed with time, geography, and the political mood of the nations who participated in the international community. The alliances, on the other hand, were much better suited to address specific threats and deal with potential belligerents. Three decades later a type of a compromise was achieved: comprehensive alliances or multiple nations organizing themselves in blocks to address specific widespread threats: NATO and the Warsaw Pact. These two examples, while containing some elements of the general and the long-term elements Wilson envisaged, were not much more than complex alliances based on the considerations of power and self-interest. The associated high talk of moral obligations can be seen as mere PR maneuvering. If seen from the pre-WWI European perspective, that of national interests having a tendency to clash, the picture appears much simpler. Did the problem lay in the fact that Wilson was “ahead of his time” in his vision? Or perhaps his vision was too idealistic to ever find a practical solution? Of course, the basic building block of the world community – the nation-state – may be the biggest culprit for the impossibility of the implementation of Wilsonian principles. The very first step, the one associated with the definition of national frontiers, is very complex in most of the situations, and wherever a border may be drawn, somebody will be left out of the nation-state that they aspire to belong to. This would then prove to be a reason for dissent and later conflict. Therefore, it may be concluded that as long as nation-states are the basic cells of the international organism, their interests must be taken into consideration when devising any successful international policy.

The international mechanisms and organizations, such as envisioned in the League of Nations have several weaknesses. One is that they do not have a mechanism to enforce its decisions. But more fundamentally, they rely on the consensus to such a degree that the outcome of joint decisions is so watered-down that it may be useless. The League of Nations could not stop any of the aggressive actions that eventually led to World War II.

Appendices

Appendix I: President Wilson's Fourteen Points

Delivered in Joint Session, January 8, 1919

Gentlemen of the Congress:

Once more, as repeatedly before, the spokesmen of the Central Empires have indicated their desire to discuss the objects of the war and the possible basis of a general peace. Parleys have been in progress at Brest-Litovsk between Russian representatives and representatives of the Central Powers to which the attention of all the belligerents have been invited for the purpose of ascertaining whether it may be possible to extend these parleys into a general conference with regard to terms of peace and settlement.

The Russian representatives presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they would be willing to conclude peace but also an equally definite program of the concrete application of those principles. The representatives of the Central Powers, on their part, presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible of liberal interpretation until their specific program of practical terms was added. That program proposed no concessions at all either to the sovereignty of Russia or to the preferences of the populations with whose fortunes it dealt, but meant, in a word, that the Central Empires were to keep every foot of territory their armed forces had occupied -- every province, every city, every point of vantage -- as a permanent addition to their territories and their power.

It is a reasonable conjecture that the general principles of settlement which they at first suggested originated with the more liberal statesmen of Germany and Austria, the men who have begun to feel the force of their own people's thought and purpose, while the concrete terms of actual settlement came from the military leaders who have no thought but to keep what they have got. The negotiations have been broken off. The Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They cannot entertain such proposals of conquest and domination.

The whole incident is full of significances. It is also full of perplexity. With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the Central Empires speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective parliaments or for the minority parties, that military and imperialistic minority which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan states which have felt obliged to become their associates in this war?

The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen should be held within open, not closed, doors, and all the world has been audience, as was desired. To whom have we been listening, then? To those who speak the spirit and intention of the resolutions of the German Reichstag of the 9th of July last, the spirit and intention of the Liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or to those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation? Or are we listening, in fact, to both, non-reconciled and in open and hopeless contradiction? These are very serious and pregnant questions. Upon the answer to them depends the peace of the world.

But, whatever the results of the parleys at Brest-Litovsk, whatever the confusions of counsel and of purpose in the utterances of the spokesmen of the Central Empires, they have again attempted to acquaint the world with their objects in the war

Appendix III: Tardieu's Proposal

BASES OF ARRANGEMENT

I. Fiume and the Istrian Railway

Creation of an independent state under the sovereignty of the League of Nations, with the following boundaries:

On the West: From Volosca, the line proposed by the American delegates to a point northwest of San Pietro.

On the North: From the point of Monte Nevoso.

On the East: The line requested in the Italian memorandum, the state to include Veglia.

The government to be by a commission of five members named by the League of Nations (two Italians, one citizen of Fiume, one Jugo-Slav, one from another power).

The *corpus separatum* of Fiume to have municipal autonomy, in accordance with its constitution dating from the time of Maria Theresa.

Fiume a free port. No military service. No other taxes except local levies.

A plebiscite after 15 years.

II. Dalmatia

All of Dalmatia to the Jugo-Slavs, except Zara and Sebenico and their administrative districts.

Neutralization.

III. The Islands

All of the islands of the Treaty of London to Italy, except Pago (Veglia to the Republic of Fiume).

IV. Albania

A mandate for Albania to be given to Italy, from the north frontier as it is at present to a south frontier to be fixed by the Conference.

A railroad to be constructed to Albania with 40% Italian capital, 40% Jugo-Slav, and 20% from other countries.

V. Region to the north of the frontier

Tarvis to Italy, as well as the region of Bistriza.

VI. Other stipulations

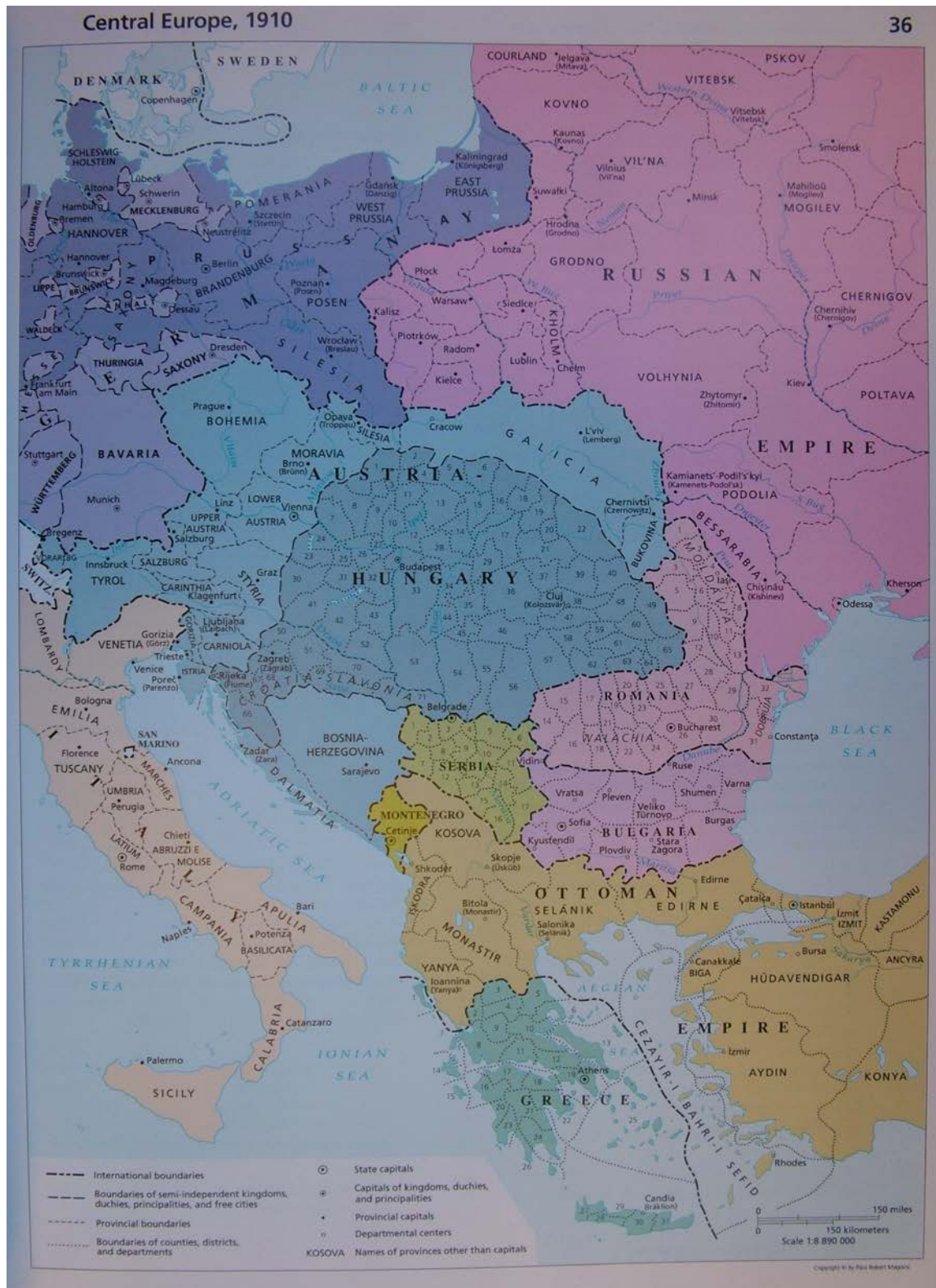
1. Acceptance of the Italian request concerning the Adriatic fleet (Reparations Commission)
2. The Assling Triangle to Austria, without fortification.

Source: Link 59:557.

Appendix IV: Chronological Timeline of Key Events

July 1878	Serbia and Montenegro recognized as independent states, at the Congress of Berlin
October 1908	The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary
June 1914	Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo
April 1915	Pact of London signed
April 1917	America enters war
July 1917	Corfu Declaration, expressing the desire for union between the Kingdom of Serbia and the Southern Slavic lands thereto in the Habsburg Empire.
October 1918	Formation of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which included the Southern Slav territories that had thereto been a part of Austria-Hungary.
November 1918	Geneva Declaration, in which it was agreed that the State of SHS would join the Kingdom of Serbia, but that each entity would maintain the present form of administration of over its territories.
December 1918	Joining of the <i>State</i> of Slovenes Croats and Serbs to the Kingdom of Serbia, thus forming the <i>Kingdom</i> of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.
December 1918	The Annexation of the Kingdom of Montenegro by the Kingdom of Serbia
November 1920	Wilson's Democrats lose Congressional midterm elections. As a consequence, Paris Peace Treaty is not signed by the United States.
August 1921	The United States sign separate peace with Austria, Germany and Hungary
January 1929	Kingdom SHS becomes a dictatorship and changes its name to Yugoslavia

Appendix V: Map of Central Europe, 1910



Source: Magocsi.

Appendix VIII: List of Geographical Names

Throughout this dissertation Croatian names of cities and islands are used. The exception is the city of Rijeka, for which the Italian name of Fiume is used, since it had been widely used in the examined and often quoted documentation.

Bakar	Buccaro	Pula	Pola
Biševo	Busi	Šibenik	Sebenico
Cres	Cherso	Sinj	Segna
Dubrovnik	Ragusa	Split	Spalato
Gorica	Gorizia	Sušak	Sansego
Ilovik	Asinella	Sveti Andrija	San Andrea
Kotor	Cattaro	Trogir	Trau
Krk	Veglia	Trst	Trieste
Ljubljana	Laibach	Unije	Unie
Lošinj	Lussin[o]	Vis	Lissa
Pag	Pago	Zadar	Zara
Palagruža	Pelagrosa		

Primary Sources

Seton-Watson's papers, at the archives of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, London, United Kingdom.

Published Sources

Link, Arthur S. ed. *Wilson Papers*. Princeton University Press, 1966. Print. Contained in the 69 volumes of *Wilson Papers*, edited by Arthur S. Link, are the following groups of documents, each of which has been cited in the present dissertation:

Correspondence to and from:

Balfour, Arthur James;
Benson, William Shepherd;
Bliss, Tasker Howard;
Day, Clive;
Day, Elisabeth Dike;
di Casalgiate, E. Millo;
Frémont, John Charles;
Grayson, Cary Travers;
House, Edward Mandell;
Jay, Peter Augustus;
Johnson, Douglas Wilson;
Lansbury, George;
Lansing, Robert;
Lodge, Henry Cabot;
Matsui, Keishiro;
Nicholas I of Montenegro;

Nitti, Francesco Severio;
Orlando, Vittorio Emanuele;
Orlando, William Allen;
Page, Thomas Nelson;
Pašić, Nikola;
Philips, William;
Polk, Frank Lyon;
Robinson, Henry Mauris;
Roussos, Paris;
Seymour, Charles;
Uchida, Viscount Yasuya;
Vesnić, Milenko;
Correspondence (continued):
Wallace, Hugh Campbell;
White, Henry;
Zervos, Skevos.

Diaries:

Baker, Ray Stannard;
Benham, Edith;
Beer, George Louis;
Dr. Grayson, Cary T.;

House, Edward M.;
McCormick, Vance Criswell;
Miller, David Hunter.

Documents:

A Declaration of Principles of Reparation;
Annex III of the Reparation Clauses in the Treaty with Germany;
Protocol of a Plenary Session of the Inter-Allied Conference for the Preliminaries of Peace;
The Political Situation in Central Europe; A Statement on the Adriatic Question, etc.

Transcripts (by Hankey and Mantoux):

Notes of the meetings of the Council of Four;
Notes of the meetings of the Supreme War Council;
Notes of the meetings of the Council of Ten;
Notes of the meetings of British-French-Italian meetings;
Notes of conversations between Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George.

Literature

Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume II Web. Mar 17, 2013.
<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1919Parisv02>

R. W. Seton-Watson and the Yugoslavs, *Correspondence 1906-1941*, Vol I. London-Zagreb: 1976. Print.

To the British Nation and Parliament, issued by the Yugoslav Committee on May 12, 1915, London. One such printed declaration is held among the Seton-Watson Papers, at the archives of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL, under: SSEES, SEW 5/1/4.

Secondary Literature

Acceptance Speech of Woodrow Wilson, September 2, 1916. Web. Dec 28, 2012.
www.presidency.ucsb.edu.

Albrecht-Carrié, René. *Italy at Paris Peace Conference*. New York: 1938. Print.

Appleby, Hunt, Jacob, eds. *Telling the Truth about History*. New York: Norton, 1994. Print.

Atti del Parlamento Italiano: Camera dei Deputanti. XXIV Legislatura, Sessione 1913-1919, Discussioni, XVII 18849-63. Print.

Austro-Hungarian Red Book: Official English Edition, With an Introduction. The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 9, No. 4, Supplement: Official Documents, (Oct., 1915), pp. 309-413 Published by: American Society of International Law. JSTOR. Web. Mar 18, 2013.

Axson, Stockton. *Brother Woodrow, A Memoir of Woodrow Wilson*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. Print.

Babukić, Vjekoslav. *Danica Hrvatska*. Zagreb: October 1834. Print.

Banac, Ivo. "Confessional "Rule" and the Dubrovnik Exception: The Origins of the "Serb-Catholic" Circle in nineteenth-Century Dalmatia" in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 448-474. JSTOR. Web. Mar 18, 2013.

Banac, Ivo. *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984. Print.

Banton, Michael. "Weber on Ethnic Communities: A critique" in *Nations and Nationalism* 13 (1), 2007, 19-35. JSTOR. Web. Mar 18, 2013.

Barack, Oscar Theodore, Jr. ed. *America in the World. Twentieth-Century History in Documents*. Cleveland and New York: Meridian books, 1961. Print.

Becket, Ian F. W. *The Great War 1914-1918*. London: Longman, 2001. Print.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

- Bernstorff, Count Johann Heinrich. *My Three Years in America*. New York: Scribner's, 1920. Print.
- Bosworth, R. J. B. *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960*. New York: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Harvard University Press, London 1992. Print.
- Bulletin Yougoslave*. Paris, France, Nr. 2, October 15, 1915. Newspaper.
- Butland, Gilbert J. "The Human Geography of Southern Chile" in *Transactions and Papers* (Institute of British Geographers), No. 24, (1957), pp. iii+ix-x+1+3-132 Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). JSTOR. Web. 19 Mar, 2013.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *Nationalism and After*. London: Macmillan, 1945. Print.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961. Print.
- Cecil, Hugh and Liddle, Peter H., eds. *Facing Armageddon. The First World War Experienced*. London: Leo Cooper, 1988. Print.
- Clark, Martin. *Modern Italy 1871-1982*. London: Longman, 1984. Print.
- Clegg, Elizabeth. "Meštrović, England and the Great War" in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 144, No. 1197. (Dec., 2002), pp. 740-751. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.
- Clemenceau. Web. Dec 28, 2012. <http://www.worldwar1.com/france/clemenceau.htm>.
- Coetzee, Frans and Shevin-Coetzee, Marilyn, eds. *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*. Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995. Print.
- Cohen, Warren I. *Intervention, 1917*. Englewood: Heath, 1966. Print.
- Commager, Henry Steele. *Documents of American History, II*. New York: Prentice Hall; 9th edition, 1975. Print.
- Cooper, John Milton Jr. *Breaking the heart of the world: Woodrow Wilson and the fight for the League of Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Print.
- Cornwall, Mark. "The Experience of Yugoslav Agitation in Austria-Hungary, 1917-1918" in Cecil, Hugh and Liddle, Peter eds. *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*. London: Leo Cooper, 1988. Print.
- Cornwall, Mark. "The Great War and the Yugoslav Grassroots. Popular mobilization in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-18" in Djokic and Ker-Lindsay eds. *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.

Literature

- Cornwall, Mark. *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Print.
- Cowper, Henry, et al. *World War I and its consequences*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990. Print.
- Czernin, Ferdinand. *Versailles 1919*. New York: Capricorn, 1964. Print.
- Danica Hrvatska*. Zagreb: 1834. Newspaper.
- Day, Clive. "The Pre-War Commerce and the Commercial Approaches of the Balkan Peninsula" in *Geographical Review*, Vol. 9, No. 4, (Apr. - Jun., 1920), pp. 277-298 Published by: American Geographical Society. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.
- Djokić, Dejan and Ker-Lindsay, James, eds. *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- Dragnich, Alex N. *Serbia, Nikola Pašić, and Yugoslavia*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1974. Print.
- L'Echo de l'Adriatique*. Rijeka: December 14, 1918. Newspaper.
- Ekmečić, Milorad. *Ratni ciljevi Srbije, 1914-1918*. Beograd: Politika, 1992. Print.
- Ferguson, Niall. *The Pity of War*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. Print.
- Ferro, Marco. *The Great War 1914-1918*. London: Routledge, 1973. Print.
- Fest, Wilfried. *Peace or Partition, The Habsburg Monarchy and British Policy 1914-1918*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. Print.
- Filippenko, Alexandra. *Guide to the Nikić Collection, Balkan Historical Sources*. Santa Barbara: University of California, 1980. Print.
- Frankel, Joseph. "Federalism in Yugoslavia" in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (Jun., 1955), pp. 416-430 Published by: American Political Science Association. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.
- Garašanin, Ilija. *Načertanije*. Belgrade: 1844. Print.
- Gelfand, Lawrence E. *The Inquiry: American preparations for peace, 1917-1919*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. Print.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Culture, Identity, and Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Print.
- Gellner, Ernest. *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994. Print.
- George, Alexander, and George, Juliette. *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, A Personality Study*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956. Print.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

- Gilbert, Martin. *First World War*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994. Print.
- Grimmett, Richard F. *CRS Report for Congress: Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2006*. Web. Mar 19, 2013.
- Hammel, E. A. "Demography and the Origins of the Yugoslav Civil War" in *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 9, No. 1. (Feb., 1993), pp. 4-9. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.
- Hanak, Harry. *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962. Print.
- Herwig, Holger H. *The First World War, Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914-1918*. London: Arnold, 1997. Print.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Age of Extremes*. London: Michael Joseph Publishing, 1994. Print.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Print.
- Hobson, John M. *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2012. Print.
- Hodgson, Godfrey. *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand, The Life of Colonel Edward M. House*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. Print.
- L'Humanite*. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Huntington, Samuel, P. "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993. Print.
- I. Žanić, "The Symbolic Identity of Croatia in the Triangle Crossroads-Bulwark-Bridge" in Kolsto, P. ed. *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*. London: Hurst, 2005. Print.
- Janković, Dragoslav. "Niška deklaracija" in *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova, vol. 10*. Beograd: 1969. Print.
- Jászi, Oscar. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1929. Print.
- Jelavich, Charles. *Južnoslavenski nacionalizmi: Jugoslavensko ujedinjenje i udžbenici prije 1914*. Zagreb: Globus, 1992. Print.
- Le Journal*. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu / Tajnik uredništva Ivan Ilić*. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti, 1966. Print.
- Jugoslovenski Svijet*. Washington D.C.: August 29, 1918. Newspaper.

Literature

- Jurczak, Bartosz and Koster, Cor eds. *Intercultural Communications*. Budapest: Libertas Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Katz, Friedrich. *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the U.S., and the Mexican Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981. Print.
- Kettle, Michael. *The Road to Intervention, March-November 1918*. London: Routledge, 1988. Print.
- Kincaid, John. *Federalism*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2011. Print.
- Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy*. New York: Touchstone, 1994. Print.
- Kohn, Hans. *Pan-Slavism, Its History and Ideology*. New York: Vintage Books, 1953. Print.
- Krleža, Miroslav. "O patru dominikancu Jurju Križaniću" in *Eseji III*, vol. 20 of *Sabrana djela*. Zagreb: 1963. Print.
- Lampe, John R. *Yugoslavia as History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.
- Le Lanterne l'Oeuvre*. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Lederer, Ivo J. *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiermaking*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963. Print.
- Levi, Lucio. *Federalist Thinking*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2008. Print.
- Liulevicius, Vejas Gabriel. *War Land on the Eastern Front*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Print.
- Macmillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919, Six Months that Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2001. Print.
- Macmillan, Margaret. *Peacemakers*. London: John Murray, 2001. Print.
- Magocsi, Paul Robert. *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002. Print.
- Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print.
- Le Matin*. Paris: April 25, 1919. Newspaper.
- Matoš, Antun Gustav. "Mi i oni" in *Ogledi*. Zagreb: 1910. Print.
- McWilliams, Wilson Carey and Gibbons, Michael T., eds. *The Federalists, the Antifederalists, and the American Political Tradition*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992. Print.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

- Mead, Gary. *The Doughboys, America and the First World War*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2000. Print.
- Messaggero*. Rome: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Micgiel, John S. ed. *Wilsonian East Central Europe: Current Perspectives*. New York: Pilsudski Institute, 1995. Print.
- Mihajlović, Ivo. *The Yugoslav Idea and the West*. Budapest: MA Thesis at the Central European University, 2008. Web. Mar 18, 2013.
- Miller, Robert and Day, Graham, eds. *The Evolution of European Identities*. London: CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenhan and Eastbourne, 2012. Print.
- Milohnić, Aldo and Švob-Đokić, Nada, eds. *Cultural Identity Politics in the (Post)Transitional Societies*. Zagreb: Institute for International Relations, 2011. Print.
- Mitrović, Andrej. *Serbia's Great War 1914-1918*. London: Hurst & Company, 2007. Print.
- The New Europe*. London: October 4, 1917. Newspaper.
- The New York Evening Post*. New York: May 7, 1919. Newspaper.
- The New York Times*. New York: April 23, 1919. Newspaper.
- Newman, John Paul. "Forging a United Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" in Djokic and Ker-Lindsay eds. *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia*. New York: Routledge, 2011. Print.
- Official Bulletin*. London: May 24, 1918. Newspaper.
- Paver, Josipa, ed. *Zbornik gradje za povijest radničkog pokreta i KPJ 1919-1920: Dvor, Glina, Ivanić-Grad, Kostajnica, Kutina, Novska, Petrinja, Sisak*. Sisak: 1970. Print.
- Pavlović, Srdja. *Balkan Anschluss*. Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2007. Print.
- Petranović, Bižidar Teodor. "Geografičesko-statističeski pregled Dalmacie," in *Srbsko-Dalmatinski Magazin*, No. 3. Zadar: 1838. Print.
- Petrović, Rade. *Nacionalno pitanje u Dalmaciji u XIX stoljeću*. Sarajevo: 1968. Print.
- Picard, Louis A, and Buss, Terry F. *A Fragile Balance*. Sterling: Kumarian Press, 2009. Print.
- Le Petit Journal*. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Le Petit Parisien*. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.
- Pleterski, Janko. *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca za Jugoslaviju*. Beograd: Nolit, 1976. Print.

Literature

Popolo Romano. Rome: April 29, 1919. Newspaper.

Le Populaire. Paris: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.

Pribičević, Svetozar "Sa sarajevske skupštine." *Riječ Srba-Hrvata-Slovenaca*, Feb 24, 1919. Print

Pribičević, Svetozar. *Diktatura Kralja Aleksandra*. Belgrade: 1952. Print.

Rabinbach, Anson. "Heidegger's Letter on Humanism as Text and Event" in *New German Critique*, No. 62 (Spring - Summer, 1994), pp. 3-38 Published by: New German Critique. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

Radić, Stjepan. *Korespondencija Stjepana Radića*. Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1973. Print.

Ramet, Sabrina P. *The Three Yugoslavias*, Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006. Print.

Renan, Ernest, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Paris: 1882. Web. Mar 19, 2013. Web. Mar 17, 2013. <http://www.bmlisieux.com/archives/nation04.htm>

Riječ Srba-Hrvata-Slovenaca. Sarajevo, February 24, 1919. Newspaper.

Rokkan, Stein and Urwin, Derek W. *Economy, Territory, Identity*. London: Sage Publications, 1983. Print.

Roucek, Joseph S. "The Yugoslav Immigrants in America." *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40, No. 5, (Mar., 1935), pp. 602-611 Published by: The University of Chicago Press. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

Saladino, Salvatore. *Italy from Unification to 1919*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970. Print.

Salomone, A. William. *Italy from the Risorgimento to Fascism*. New York: Anchor Books, 1970. Print.

Šepić, Dragovan. *Italija, Saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje, 1914-1918*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970. Print.

Seton Watson, R. W. *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1969. Print.

Seton-Watson, R. W. *The Balkans, Italy and the Adriatic*. London, 1915. Print.

Seton-Watson, R. W. *The Spirit of the Serb*. London: 1916. Print.

Seton-Watson's papers, at the archives of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, London, United Kingdom.

American Foreign Policy and the Making of Yugoslavia, 1910-1920

Slack, J. Andrew and Doyon, Roy R. "Population Dynamics and Susceptibility for Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina" in *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 2. (Mar., 2001), pp. 139-161. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

The Southern Slav Bulletin. London: October 16, 1916. Newspaper.

Stefanović Karadžić, Vuk. *Pismenica serbskoga jezika, po govoru prostoga naroda*. Vienna: 1814. Print.

Stevenson, David. *The First World War and International Politics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. Print.

Stoianovich, Traian. "The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant" in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 20, No. 2. (Jun., 1960), pp. 234-313. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

Sukiennicki, Wiktor. *East Central Europe During World War I: From Foreign Domination to National Independence*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984. Print.

Sussex Pledge, quoted from Barack, Oscar Theodore, Jr. ed., *America in the World. Twentieth-Century History in Documents*. Cleveland and New York: Meridian books, 1961

Temperley, H. W. V. *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. I-VI*. London: 1921. Print.

Il Tempo. Rome: May 2, 1919. Newspaper.

Le Temps. Paris: May 1, 1919. Newspaper.

Tóth, István György. "Franjevci Bosne Srebrene kao misionari u Turskoj Ugarskoj (1584.-1716.). JSTOR. Web. Mar 18, 2013.

Tucker and Hendricson. *Thomas Jefferson*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899. Print.

Vala. Rome: April 24, 1919. Newspaper.

von Engel, Johann Christian. *Povijest Dubrovačke Republike*. Dubrovnik: 1903. Print.

Vucinich, Wayne S. "Postwar Yugoslav Historiography" in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 23, No. 1. (Mar., 1951), pp. 41-57. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

Vucinich, Wayne S. "The Yugoslav Lands in the Ottoman Period: Postwar Marxist Interpretations of Indigenous and Ottoman Institutions" in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 27, No. 3. (Sep., 1955), pp. 287-305. JSTOR. Web. Mar 19, 2013.

Walworth, Arthur. *Wilson and his peacemakers: American diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919*. New York: Norton. Print.

