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“Death to the Slavs!” The Italian-Yugoslav Relations on Mutual Minorities and the Impact of the 1961 Trieste Riots (1954–1964)

Abstract: After the 1954 Memorandum of Understanding of London, Italy and Yugoslavia settled their border dispute by partitioning what was formerly the Free Territory of Trieste. Furthermore, they also agreed to extend to each other's national minorities living in the two zones of the former Free Territory the protection measures established by the Special Statute, an annex to the Memorandum. Neither of the two countries fully complied with the Special Statute but wanted it to be implemented in the Zone administered by the other side. Italy wanted to negotiate all further implementations and new concessions on the basis of reciprocity, the main rationale for the protection measures stipulated in the Special Statute. In contrast, Yugoslavia wanted Italy to agree to the unilateral implementation of the Special Statute in Trieste and to other concessions. This led to a stalemate in the negotiations and consequently to the poor enforcement of the Special Statute, which caused rising tensions on the local level, even though, in the meantime, the overall diplomatic relations between the two countries continued to improve. Yugoslavia's increasing requests for unilateral implementation of the Special Statute and the Yugoslav-funded Slovene organisations in Italy resulted in a series of major anti-Yugoslav and anti-Slovene demonstrations in Trieste. After these riots and the ensuing debate on the minority issue, the need to rely on reciprocity also became evident to the Yugoslav diplomacy. Yugoslavia, therefore, dropped its old policy and started to improve the treatment of its Italian minority and agreed to negotiate based on the principle of reciprocity. This led to quick benefits for both minorities, and a new path that led Italy and Yugoslavia to sign new agreements on their mutual minorities, going even beyond the Special Statute.

Keywords: Italian-Yugoslav relations, Italian minority in Yugoslavia, Slovene minority in Italy, 1961 Trieste riots, diplomatic history, borderland minorities

“Death to the Slavs!” was one of the slogans shouted by some demonstrators as they attacked the construction site of a building that was to become the main Slovene cultural centre in Trieste. It was 4 February 1961, and this was one of the most serious in a long series of incidents that in February 1961 shook and shocked not only the city of Trieste and its Slovene minority, but also the Italian-Yugoslav relations regarding the issue of their mutual minorities.

In some respects, the 1961 Trieste riots were not news. For over a century, violence of varied intensity had been used as a tool in the national clash between

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Italians and South Slavs (especially Croats and Slovenes) in their large area of cohabitation between the Canale/Kanal Valley, in the present-day Republic of Italy, and the Bay of Kotor/Cattaro, in today's Montenegro.¹ However, what happened in Trieste in February 1961 was the first, unprecedented and, thankfully, last case of nationally motivated violence on such scale after Italy and Yugoslavia settled their main border dispute with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in London on 5 October 1954 (hereinafter MOU).²

Under the MOU, as is known, the Free Territory of Trieste (hereinafter FTT), created by the 1947 Treaty of Peace with Italy, was partitioned and divided between Italy and Yugoslavia.³ The former extended its civil administration to a territory (hereinafter Zone A) roughly corresponding to the former US-British Zone of the FTT (Trieste and five neighbouring municipalities between the Karst plateau and the farther North of Istria). The latter extended its civil administration to a territory (hereinafter Zone B) roughly corresponding to the former Yugoslav Zone of the FTT (an area that included the districts of Koper/Capodistria and Buje/Buie in Northwest Istria).

After the MOU entered into force, the two Zones and their minorities experienced a set of phenomena quite similar to those that occurred in some parts of the Italian-Yugoslav borderland that had previously been assigned to either Italy or Yugoslavia by the 1947 Treaty of Peace, namely the province of Gorizia, which had been left to Italy, and Central Istria, Rijeka/Fiume and the Kvarner/Quarnaro Gulf, which had been handed to Yugoslavia.

As regards Zone B, the substantial integration of this territory into Yugoslavia led the overwhelming majority of the local Italian population to flee the

¹ R. Pupo, *Adriatico amarissimo. Una lunga storia di violenza* (Bari-Rome: Laterza, 2021).

² S. Ranchi, "Calendario delle 'violenze' nazionaliste e neofasciste". In *Nazionalismo e neofascismo nella lotta politica al confine orientale 1945-75*, ed. Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli Venezia Giulia (Trieste: Editoriale La Libreria, 1977), vol. I; R. Spazzali, *Trieste di fine secolo (1955-2004). Per una storia politica del secondo Novecento* (Trieste: Istituto Regionale per la Cultura Istriano-fumano-dalmata-Italo Svevo, 2006).

³ "Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yugoslavia regarding the Free Territory of Trieste", *The Department of State Bulletin*, vol. XXXI, no. 799, publication 5616, 18 October 1954. For the main contributions on the Trieste issue and its settlement, cf. J.-B. Duroselle, *Le conflit de Trieste, 1943-1954* (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1966); B. Novak, *Trieste, 1941-1954. The ethnic, political, and ideological struggle* (Chicago-London: Chicago University Press, 1970); D. de Castro, *La questione di Trieste. L'azione politica e diplomatica italiana dal 1943 al 1954*, vols. I-II (Trieste: LINT, 1981); M. de Leonardis, *La "diplomazia atlantica" e la soluzione del problema di Trieste (1952-1954)* (Napoli: ESI, 1992); F. Tenca Montini, *La Jugoslavia e la questione di Trieste, 1945-1954* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2020).

area, as most of the Italians from Central Istria and the Kvarner/Quarnaro Gulf had already done after 1947.⁴ Consequently, within 18 months of the signing of the MOU, the Italian population of Zone B (described as the majority of the population in most local towns and municipalities even in the 1945 Yugoslav census) became a tiny minority of a few thousand residents.⁵

In their public statements, the Yugoslav authorities discouraged the local Italian population from leaving the area; in practice, they implemented policies that were certainly not targeted at deterring Italians from fleeing. For instance, the Italian language disappeared from almost every aspect of public life, including administration, and bilingualism was very quickly dropped (in an area where the use of Croatian and Slovenian as official languages – besides Italian – had been introduced for the very first time in history by the Yugoslav military administration in 1945).⁶ The Yugoslav authorities kept the pre-MOU practices of changing (Slavicising) Italian names and surnames, and forcing the transfer of Italian pupils from Italian-language to Croatian – or Slovenian-language schools.⁷ This caused huge schooling problems for those pupils, since the Italian inhabitants of the area typically spoke neither Croatian nor Slovenian, basically because the local *lingua franca* had traditionally always been Italian.⁸ In

⁴ C. Colummi et al. (eds.), *Storia di un esodo. Istria 1945–1956* (Trieste: Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1980); R. Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l'esilio* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2005).

⁵ A. Argenti Tremul et al., *La comunità nazionale italiana nei censimenti jugoslavi 1945–1991* (Rovinj/Rovigno: Centro di Ricerche Storiche, 2001).

⁶ Accurate records relevant to the Slovene-administered District of Koper/Capodistria are available at Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Arhiv Centralnog komiteta Saveza komunista Jugoslavije (507–A-CK-SKJ), Komisija za nacionalne manjine (XVIII), K-6/2, report "Podatki o Italijanski manjšini v Okraju Koper"; Archivio Centro di Ricerche Storiche (ACRS), Unione degli Italiani dell'Istria e di Fiume (UIIF) 1956–1958, box (b.) 1148/74, folder (f.) "Situazione gruppo etnico, CIC, scuole, bilinguismo nel Capodistriano – Materiale Gino Gobbo". Apparently, the Croatian authorities did not draft similar reports for the District of Buje/Buie, where, in any case, the overall situation did not differ significantly from the one in the District of Koper/Capodistria: cf. G. Nemeč, *Nascita di una minoranza. Istria 1947–1965: storia e memoria degli italiani rimasti nell'area istro-quarnerina* (Rovinj/Rovigno: Centro di Ricerche Storiche, 2012); V. D'Alessio, "Politika obrazovanja i nacionalno pitanje u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji: škole s talijanskim nastavnim jezikom u Istri i Rijeci", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* XLIX (2017).

⁷ On the schooling issue also cf. Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (ASD-MAECI), Consolato Generale d'Italia a Capodistria (CGIC), b. 1, f. 4, tel. no. 4660/660 from Guido Zecchin (Italian Consul-General in Koper/Capodistria) to Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE), et al., 9 November 1956.

⁸ A. Borme, "Situazione attuale e prospettive della scuola italiana dell'Istria e di Fiume". In *Nuovi contributi sulla Comunità italiana in Istria e a Fiume (1967–1990)*, eds. A. Borme, E. Giuricin (Trieste-Rovinj/Rovigno: Centro di Ricerche), 94.

any case, to justify these measures, the Yugoslav authorities claimed that the affected individuals allegedly had Slavic roots.⁹ In addition, the local authorities closed some Italian-language schools, typically claiming that the departure of most of the Italian population had rendered them unneeded.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Yugoslav laws prevented the creation of any Italian organisation (apart from those created and controlled by the Party) as well as the free importation and circulation of newspapers, books, and journals from the Republic of Italy. Also, many (of course, state-owned or state-controlled) local firms and public bodies implemented the practice of firing the (Italian) workers who had not mastered Croatian or Slovenian.¹¹

When it comes to Zone A, the return of the Italian administration did not result in a meaningful change in the number of Slovenes residing in the area. Actually, a fair number of local Slovene residents left: apart from an almost negligible minority of a few hundred people – mainly in cahoots with the Yugoslav authorities – that moved to Yugoslavia, the overwhelming majority (thousands of people) opted for countries that were much more attractive than Yugoslavia from the political and economic point of view, such as Australia.¹² However, this Slovene emigration from Zone A was, to a great extent, compensated by the arrival of thousands of Slovenes from Zone B and the Republic of Slovenia, who fled the area – and Tito's Yugoslavia – alongside their Italian fellow citizens.¹³ Therefore, compared to Zone B, Zone A experienced a much smaller shift in the national balance, with the most outstanding cases being the increase of the Italian majority in the city of Trieste, and a decrease of the Slovene majority in the Karst Plateau, especially in the municipality of Duino Aurisina/Devin Nabrežina.¹⁴

In Zone A, the Slovenian-language public school system established by the US-British Allied Military Government was maintained by Italy, as well as all the independent Slovene social, political, economic, and press organisa-

⁹ ACRS, UIIF 1956–1959, b. 4769/85, minutes of the 4 October 1957 meeting of the Union of the Italians of Istria and Rijeka/Fiume (UIIF) secretariat.

¹⁰ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova (DA-MSP), Politički arhiv (PA), Italija, 1960, b. 51, f. 1, doc. no. 4620, "Zapisnik V. redovnog zasedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog odbora" (Rome, 26 October–11 November 1959); "Zapisnik sa VI redovnog zasedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog odbora" (Belgrade, 27 June–9 July 1960): *Službeni list Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije, dodatak Međunarodni ugovori i drugi sporazumi* (hereinafter just "Službeni list"), IX, no. 7, 15 July 1962.

¹¹ ACRS, UIIF 1956–1958, b. 1148/74, f. "Situazione gruppo etnico [...]", cit.

¹² P. Purini, *Metamorfosi etniche. I cambiamenti di popolazione a Trieste, Gorizia, Fiume e in Istria. 1914–1975* (Udine: Kappa Vu, 2010), 301–358.

¹³ C. Colummi, "L'ultimo grande esodo". In *Storia di un esodo*, eds. C. Colummi et al., 495.

¹⁴ Purini, *Metamorfosi etniche*, 312–321.

tions.¹⁵ In this respect, it should be noted that the many pro-Yugoslav (and typically Yugoslav-funded) Slovene organisations in the area further increased their influence with the creation of the Slovenian Cultural and Economic Union (hereinafter SKGZ), launched in the weeks after the signing of the MOU.¹⁶ Indeed, the SKGZ coordinated and oversaw all the (Titoist) pro-Yugoslav Slovene associations in Zone A, and eventually, starting from 1958, also those in the province of Gorizia, where Slovenes had been granted minority rights, and those of the province of Udine, where up to that time no minority status had been granted.¹⁷

As mentioned above, after the MOU entered into force, the treatment of the Italian minority in Zone B did not differ significantly from the previous treatment of the Italian minority in Central Istria and in the Kvarner/Quarnaro Gulf; similarly, the treatment of the Slovene minority in Zone A did not differ significantly from the previous treatment of the Slovene minority in the Province of Gorizia. However, this should not have been the case, since the MOU provided extensive protection measures for the minorities of the former FTT. Annex II of the MOU was indeed a "Special Statute" for the minorities, and according to this document, the Slovene minority in Zone A and the Italian minority in Zone B should have enjoyed a wide range of rights, such as "the right to their own press in their mother tongue" (art. 4-a), the right to have "educational, cultural, social and sports organisations" (art. 4-b), the right to "be free to use their language in their personal and official relations with the administrative and judicial authorities" (art. 5), the right to have bilingual "inscriptions on public institutions and the names of localities and streets" where the members of the

¹⁵ AJ, 507–A-CK-SKJ, XVIII, K 12/33, report "Naša manjina u Italiji", 22 April 1957, annex to the letter from Anton Vratuša to the Commission for International Relations of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and to the Federal Council of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SSRN) of Yugoslavia, 23 April 1957.

¹⁶ Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (PCM), 1955–1958, b. 209, f. 3.2.9-129000, tel. 18/3–2066/55 Gab. from Giovanni Palamara (Government's Commissioner-General to Zone A) to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM), MAE, and Ministry of Interior (MI), 14 March 1955. Cf. also I. Bratina, "La minoranza slovena in Italia: evoluzione storica e problemi attuali". In *Il confine riscoperto. Beni degli esuli, minoranze e cooperazione economica nei rapporti dell'Italia con Slovenia e Croazia*, eds. T. Favaretto & E. Greco (Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali-Angeli, 1997), 130.

¹⁷ P. Stranj, *The Submerged Community. An A to Ž of the Slovenes in Italy* (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska/Editoriale Stampa Triestina, 1992), 108, 116–119; N. Troha, "Položaj Slovenske narodne skupnosti v Italiji in Italijanske v Sloveniji med letoma 1954 in 1990". In *Na oni strani meje. Slovenska manjšina v Italiji in njen pravni položaj: zgodovinski in pravni pregled 1866–2004*, ed. G. Bajc (Koper/Capodistria: Knjižnica Annales Majora, 2004), 146–147.

minority where “a significant element (at least one quarter) of the population” (art. 5), or the right to see “no change [...] in the boundaries of basic administrative units [...] with a view to prejudicing the ethnic composition of the units concerned” (art. 7).

Special attention was given to the educational field. Indeed, article 4-c granted to minorities “kindergarten, primary, secondary and professional school teaching in the mother tongue [...] in all localities” where minorities lived. This article also forbade closing any of the minority schools operating at the time of the signing of the MOU and stipulated that “the educational programmes of such schools must not be directed at interfering with the national character of the pupils”. Furthermore, article 4-c required that all the teachers of such schools would be “of the same mother tongue as the pupils”, and required Italy and Yugoslavia “to promptly introduce whatever legal prescriptions may be necessary so that the permanent organisation of such schools will be regulated in accordance with” the Special Statute’s provisions, and to “take all reasonable measure to give” the teachers of these schools the opportunity to “qualify” for the “status as regular members of the teaching staff” if they did not already have such a status.

In addition to the Special Statute, whose clear political premise was reciprocity in the treatment of minorities in the two Zones, at the same time of the signing of the MOU, Italy and Yugoslavia agreed other measures in favour of the two minorities through an exchange of letters. Specifically, Italy pledged “to provide a house in Roiano or another suburb to be used as a cultural centre for the Slovene Community of Trieste”, to “also make available funds for the construction and equipment of a new cultural centre on Via Petronio”, and “confirmed that the Narodni Dom at San Giovanni is also available for use as a cultural centre”.¹⁸ In return, Yugoslavia pledged “to give sympathetic consideration to the requests of Italian cultural organizations for additional premises for their cultural activities” in Zone B.¹⁹

The MOU remained in force for over 21 years, but its Special Statute was never fully enforced either by Italy or by Yugoslavia, and the cases of its most blatant violation occurred in the very first years after it entered into force. When it comes to Zone A, the Italian authorities did not facilitate a quick implementation of the clauses of the London agreements concerning bilingualism, the new Slovene cultural centres, and a new law giving Slovenian-language schools a per-

¹⁸ Letter from Manlio Brosio (Italian Ambassador in London) to Vladimir Velebit (Yugoslav Ambassador in London), no. 4162, 5 October 1954: *Međunarodni ugovori Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije* (hereinafter just “*Međunarodni ugovori*”), 1955, no. 2, 12.

¹⁹ Letter from Velebit to Brosio, 5 October 1954: *Međunarodni ugovori*, 1955, no. 2, 12–13.

manent status.²⁰ However, the Italian authorities facilitated the resettlement of many Italians fleeing Zone B in the Karst area between the city of Trieste and the Province of Gorizia.²¹ This policy was not an explicit violation of the Special Statute but, as mentioned before, led to a significant decline in the share of the Slovene population in the Karst plateau. In any case, no Slovene school or organisation was closed or prevented from working, and all Italy's Slovenes (not only those in Zone A, but also those in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine) enjoyed all the political, economic, and association freedoms granted to all Italian citizens, including the freedom to import and read any Yugoslav publication and have almost any sort of political, cultural and even economic relations with Yugoslavia, including having a (Yugoslav-funded) pro-Yugoslav Titoist party, the *Unione Socialista Indipendente/Neodvisna socialistična zveza* [Independent Socialist Union] (USI/NSZ).²²

In Zone B, the situation of the Italian minority was not any easier, and not only because most of the Italians had left the area and were replaced by the Yugoslav authorities with civilians from all over the country whom the regime had encouraged to move to Istria²³. As briefly mentioned above, bilingualism was quickly dropped, with no actual implementation in the fields where it had officially been retained²⁴. An interesting and meaningful case is that of the judiciary, where the use of Italian was formally allowed but effectively dropped. Just to point out one example, in the district of Buje/Buie, where the overwhelming majority of the Italian population who had stayed in Zone B resided, between the signing of the MOU and 1959, only one court procedure had been translated into Italian.²⁵ As mentioned before, the Yugoslav authorities continued to

²⁰ AJ, 507-A-CK-SKJ, XVIII, K 12/33, d. 576/4, *cit.*; AJ, *Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije* (142II-SSRNJ), b. I-471, f. 6, report "Neki elementi položaja Slovenačke etničke grupe u Italiji u 1961. Godini" of the Commission for National Minorities of the Central Committee of the SSRN of Slovenia, February 1962.

²¹ S. Volk, *Ezulski skrbniki. Vloga in pomen begunskih organizacij ter urejanje vprašanja istrskih beguncev v Italiji v luči begunskega časopisja 1945–1963* (Koper/Capodistria: Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko-Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Republike Slovenije Koper, 1999).

²² For a brief overview of the role played by the USI/NSZ in the Yugoslav foreign policy towards the Slovene minority in Italy cf. F. Tenca Montini & S. Mišič, "Comunisti di un altro tipo: le simpatie filo-jugoslave in Italia (1948–1962)", *Acta Histriae*, XXV/3 (2017), 806–808.

²³ A. Kalc, "The Other Side of the 'Istrian Exodus': Immigration and Social Restoration in Slovenian Coastal Towns in the 1950's", *Dve domovi/Two Homelands* 49 (2019).

²⁴ AJ, 507-A-CK-SKJ, XVIII, K-6/2, report "Podatki o Italijanski manjšini v Okraju Koper", *cit.*; ACRS, UIIF 1956–1958, b. 1148/74, f. "Situazione gruppo etnico [...]", *cit.*

²⁵ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 51, f. 7, doc. no. 435253, letter no. 6/1-1960 from Milan Kreč (Croatian State Secretariat for Judicial Administration) to the Croatian Executive

force Italian pupils to attend Croatian- or Slovenian-language schools instead of Italian-language ones, while many of the latter were closed, and none of them had a full native Italian-speaking and/or qualified teaching staff (and some schools had none). The educational programmes in Italian-language schools clearly interfered with the national character of the pupils since they systematically portrayed Italy and Italians in a negative light.²⁶ The Yugoslav authorities did not allow any cultural organisation of the Republic of Italy to operate in Zone B,²⁷ and the only “Italian” organisations allowed in the area – those created and controlled by the Yugoslav Party – quickly decreased their activities (mainly the organisation of Croatian and Slovenian language courses), and were sometimes even deprived of their premises.²⁸ In addition, the boundaries of Zone B’s administrative divisions (districts and municipalities) were partially re-drafted, sometimes anticipating the 1955 Yugoslav federal law that started a polity reform²⁹. While re-drafting these polities Yugoslav authorities sometimes merged territories of Zone B with those annexed to Yugoslavia under the 1947 Treaty of Peace. Typically, this caused a further significant decline of the Italian population share, the most outstanding case being that of the municipality of Koper/Capodistria, whose share of Italian population halved overnight.³⁰

The first shift in the treatment of the minorities came in 1956, and the reason for this was that the Special Statute’s Article 8 provided for the creation of a special “Mixed Yugoslav-Italian Committee” (hereinafter “Mixed Committee”) “established for the purpose of assistance and consultation concerning problems relating to the protection” of the two minorities. The Mixed Committee’s Regulations were agreed upon by the negotiators of the two countries in February 1955, and the Yugoslav government ratified them already in June of that year.³¹ However, the Italian government did not approve these Regulations

Council, 13 February 1960.

²⁶ C. Schiffrer, “Le scuole per le minoranze. I libri di testo per gli studenti italiani in Istria”: *Trieste*, V, no. 25, May-June 1958.

²⁷ Archivio di Stato di Trieste (ASTS), Commissariato Generale del Governo (CGG), Gabinetto (Gab.) 1951–1956, b. 6, f. 4/10 “Lega Nazionale”, confidential report no. 18/3/585/54 Gab. from Palamara to PCM and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE), 1 December 1956.

²⁸ ACRS, UIIF 1956–1959, b. 1174/73, minutes of the 10 April 1956 meeting of the UIIF secretariat.

²⁹ “Come la Jugoslavia viola il Memorandum”: *Difesa Adriatica*, VIII, no. 46, 18 December 1954.

³⁰ “Gli effetti del Memorandum d’Intesa [...] Mutamenti all’assetto amministrativo”: *Difesa Adriatica*, IX, no. 26, 2–9 July 1955.

³¹ “Pravilnik jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog odbora” (Rome, 16 February 1965): *Međunarodni ugovori*, 1956, no. 39.

until November 1956.³² This soon became a matter of great concern to the Yugoslav authorities, who by October 1955 started to fear that the total disappearance of Zone B's Italian population (at the time not an unlikely outcome given the number of relocation from the area) could cause Italy to lose any interest in the functioning of the Mixed Committee and the enforcement of the Special Statute.³³ This would have been a serious defeat for Yugoslav diplomacy, given that the Special Statute not only granted Zone A's Slovenes a wide range of rights, but also gave the Yugoslav government a *droit de regard* on Trieste and its Zone, a right that Belgrade aimed to extend to the provinces of Gorizia and Udine. As a result, the Yugoslav authorities – especially those from Slovenia, the Yugoslav republic that, for self-evident reasons, was the most interested in keeping a sizeable Slovene minority in Italy – started to see the retention of an Italian minority in Zone B as an essential tool to pursue their own interests.

The minority issue quickly arose, drawing the attention of some of the top-ranking Yugoslav officials, such as the former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Edvard Kardelj, one of Tito's closest collaborators and right-hand men. In February 1956 – when some 90% of the local Italian population had already fled Zone B – Kardelj agreed with some Yugoslav diplomats (all of whom were Slovene, just like him) that Zone B's local authorities had not always properly managed the issue of the Italian minority, and stated that, given the tiny number of the Italians who had stayed in the area, there was no reason for not implementing a "broad" ("širok") policy towards the Italian minority in Yugoslavia.³⁴ From that moment on, both the state and party authorities gradually started to endorse better treatment of the Italian minority.³⁵ Therefore, for the very first time from the Second World War, the latter started to experience – especially in the Slovenian-administered district of Koper/Capodistria – some slight improvements in its treatment, with the gradual restoration of bilingualism on

³² DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1956, b. 39, f. 34, doc. no. 421673, note of Berislav Žulj (Counsellor of the Yugoslav Embassy to Italy) on the 7 November 1956 meeting with Gianluigi Milesi Ferretti (Head of the MAE's MOU Office).

³³ S. Mišić, "The normalisation of political relations between Yugoslavia and Italy". In *Serbian-Italian relations: History and Modern Times*, eds. S. Rudić et al. (Belgrade: Istorijski institut Beograd-Sapienza Università di Roma-Centro di ricerca CEMAS, 2015), 268.

³⁴ AJ, Kabinet predsednika Republike (837-KPR), Dokumentacija o međudržavnim odnosima (I-5-b), b. 44-4, note of Anton Vratuša (Edvard Kardelj's Chief of Staff) on the 2 February 1956 meeting of Edvard Kardelj with Jože Brilej (Deputy Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) and Darko Černež (Yugoslav Ambassador to Italy).

³⁵ ACRS, UIIF 1956–1959, b. 1074/73, minutes of the 8 May 1956 meeting of the UIIF secretariat; ACRS, Archivio Giusto Massarotto, b. 33/96, minutes of the 28 September 1956 meeting of the UIIF secretariat; ACRS, UIIF 1956–1959, b. 1148/74, minutes of the 22 January 1957 meeting of the UIIF secretariat.

street signs and an easing of the policy of forcing Italian pupils with alleged Slavic ancestry to attend Croatian- or Slovenian-language schools.³⁶

These improvements, the first since 1956, were far from the full application of the Special Statute. However, not every failure to comply with Annex II to the MOU was due to a lack of political will. Indeed, sometimes Yugoslavia, as well as Italy, simply did not have the means to enforce the Special Statute by using ordinary instruments. One of the most interesting cases was that of the teaching staff at minority schools who, according to the Special Statute, had to be appropriately qualified and native speakers of the pupils' mother tongue. Neither Italy nor Yugoslavia, both of which required their teachers to hold their citizenship, had enough such teachers among their own citizens. Italy solved this issue by derogating from its public service laws and hiring Slovene native speakers holding Yugoslav citizenship.³⁷ Yugoslavia, on the other hand, simply appointed Croatian or Slovenian native speakers as teachers in Italian-language schools.³⁸ Therefore, these teachers were not of the same mother tongue of the pupils and, in some cases, the classes in Italian-language schools had to be taught in Croatian or Slovenian.³⁹ This was a clear case of non-compliance with the Special Statute and the reciprocity rationale, a grave and unilateral violation that Italy could not quietly tolerate.

For this reason, the Italian diplomacy's very first move at the opening session of the Mixed Committee was to offer Yugoslavia qualified Italian native-speaker teachers (holding Italian citizenship) to be appointed to Zone B's Italian-language schools, a measure that would have allowed Yugoslavia to comply with its obligations in this field, like Italy was doing.⁴⁰ This proposal was quickly rejected by the Yugoslav diplomacy. Anyway, the latter understood it was in a tight spot in the educational field, and the delegates at the 2nd session of the Mixed Committee responded by submitting to Italy two packages of

³⁶ E. Giuricin & L. Giuricin, *La comunità nazionale italiana. Storia e Istituzioni degli Italiani dell'Istria, Fiume e Dalmazia (1944–2006)*, vol. I (Rovinj/Rovigno: Centro di Ricerche Storiche, 2008), 206–213.

³⁷ AJ, 507–A-CK-SKJ, XVIII, b. 12/37, report no. 417902 of Berislav Žulj (head of the Yugoslav delegation to the Mixed Committee) on the 3rd session of the Mixed Committee, 12 August 1958; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 51, f. 1, doc. no. 4620.

³⁸ AJ, 507–A-CK-SKJ, XVIII, b. 12/35, "Zapisnik II Redovnog zasjedanja Jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog odbora" (Belgrade, 6–16 November 1957).

³⁹ Report of Mitja Vošnjak (head of the Yugoslav delegation to the Mixed Committee and Yugoslav Consul-General in Trieste) on the work of the Yugoslav delegation at the 1st session of the Mixed Committee (Rome, 21–23 May 1957), whose translation into Italian was published in S. Sau, *La comunità sacrificata. Il Comitato Misto Italo-Jugoslavo 1955–1973* (Izola/Isola: Il Mandracchio, 2015), 22–25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

agreements dealing with this subject⁴¹. With the first package, Yugoslavia proposed to start a teacher exchange programme aimed at allowing to be deleted minority school teachers to study and train in their kin-state, agree on mutual recognition of diplomas for those teachers, and finally to launch an exchange of publications.⁴² With the second package, Yugoslavia proposed the creation of updating seminars for the teachers of Zone B's Italian-language schools jointly organised by Yugoslav and Italian diplomatic and educational authorities (later known as "Koper/Capodistria Seminars"), and the opening of a new Italian-language school in Savudrija/Salvore.⁴³ These measures were to be reciprocated by Italy with a new law on its Slovenian-language schools guaranteeing that no check of the mother language of the pupils' families would be performed as a precondition for enrolment. Furthermore, Yugoslavia proposed that the set of rights granted by the MOU to the mutual minorities in the two Zones of the FTT – and therefore the jurisdiction of the Mixed Committee – would be extended to all areas inhabited by the two minorities.⁴⁴

Although formally rooted in some form of reciprocity, these Yugoslav proposals were essentially to be deleted an attempt at obtaining unilateral concessions from Italy. First of all, when they proposed the extension of the Special Statute to all the areas where the mutual minorities lived, the Yugoslav authorities had in mind the Slovenes of Zone A and those in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine, but did not accept the existence of any Italian minority in Dalmatia and in most of the Municipalities of the Kvarner/Quarnaro Gulf and Istria, where the Italian minority was officially recognised only in a dozen of municipalities, half of which were in Zone B.⁴⁵ This alone might explain Italy's reluctance to accept the Yugoslav proposal to extend the geographical coverage of the Special Statute, without even mentioning that, unsurprisingly, Rome had no intention of allowing Belgrade to extend its *droit de regard* on Zone A to other Italian territories.

⁴¹ Report of Črtomir Kolenc (member of the Yugoslav delegation to the Mixed Committee) for the Executive Council of the Republic of Slovenia on the Mixed Committee, 15 November 1975, whose translation into Italian was published in *Ibid.*, 282–287.

⁴² Secret letter (no. 1) from Vošnjak to Cesare Pasquinelli (head of the Italian delegation to the Mixed Committee), 16 November 1957, whose translation into Italian was published in *Ibid.*, 36–37.

⁴³ Secret letter (no. 2) from Vošnjak to Pasquinelli, 16 November 1957, whose translation into Italian was published in *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁴ Report of Vošnjak on the work of the Yugoslav delegation at the 1st session of the Mixed Committee.

⁴⁵ L. Monzali, *Gli italiani di Dalmazia e le relazioni italo-jugoslave nel Novecento* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2015).

With respect to the first package of agreements, it should be noted that teacher training in Yugoslavia included political indoctrination whereas in Italy it did not. Furthermore, a significant number of Zone A's Slovene-language school teachers held Yugoslav diplomas while Yugoslav authorities already recognised the qualifications of the few teachers of Zone B's Italian-language schools who held Italian diplomas. In addition to that, while Yugoslav publications already circulated freely in Zone A, any Italian publication had to undergo Yugoslav censorship before entering Zone B. Therefore, if this first package of agreements had been approved, Yugoslavia would have had an opportunity to further expand its political and ideological influence on the Slovene minority in Italy, but Italy would have received no substantial compensation in return.

As for the second package of agreements, the issue was slightly more complicated because, in this case, the Yugoslav proposal relied on a bargain of concessions rather than on some form of reciprocity. However, Yugoslavia was essentially trying to obtain some unilateral concessions from Italy once again. The updating seminars had been conceived by Yugoslav diplomacy as a sop for Italy aimed at mitigating its own blatant and unilateral violation of the Special Statute concerning the mother language of the teachers of Zone B's Italian-language schools, a violation that this measure would not have ended in any case.⁴⁶ As for the new law on Slovenian-language schools in Italy, Yugoslavia was asking for the Slovene minority in Italy to be given what it was denying to its own Italian minority. First, like Italy, Yugoslavia had not yet passed any specific legislation on Italian-language schools. Furthermore, when it comes to the request of free enrolment in the Slovenian-language schools in Italy, it has to be recalled that in Zone B – as well as in the rest of Istria and in Rijeka/Fiume – Italian-language schools were reserved for the children of the local Italian minority, and the decision on who was or was not a member of this group was only up to the Yugoslav authorities. By contrast, up to that time in Zone A and in the province of Gorizia, enrolment in Slovene-language schools had been kept open, and some restrictions had been placed only on the children of families who had self-identified as Italian native speakers in order to flee the areas under Yugoslav rule by opting for Italian citizenship, but after they re-settled in the province of Gorizia or in Zone A, had asked for the benefits granted to the Slovene minority and wanted to enrol their children in the local Slovenian-language schools.

Ultimately, Italy and Yugoslavia had two dramatically different approaches to the minority issue: the former aimed at launching new measures to implement substantial reciprocity in the treatment of the two minorities; the latter essentially wanted to obtain new unilateral concessions from the other party. Unsurprisingly, this resulted in a stalemate in the negotiations. This stalemate lasted

⁴⁶ Report of Kolenc on the Mixed Committee, 15 November 1975, 283.

for years, and consequently, by 1960, none of the main violations of the Special Statute recorded in 1956 had been rectified either in Zone A or in Zone B.⁴⁷

Little had changed concerning the minority issue. However, the same could not be said of the overall relations between the two neighbouring states. Indeed, after the MOU, Italy and Yugoslavia began a process of normalisation of their relations that had already started to pay off, especially in the field of economics.⁴⁸ This new momentum also led to the first political rapprochement, enabling the November 1959 visit to Yugoslavia of the Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Alberto Folchi, the first Italian high-ranking official to visit Tito's country.⁴⁹

Folchi's visit was to be returned in December 1960 by the Yugoslav Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Konstantin "Koča" Popović.⁵⁰ Diplomats of both countries considered this visit an opportunity to re-launch Italian-Yugoslav relations and try to solve some of their ongoing bilateral issues.⁵¹ However, the Italians and Yugoslavs had very different perspectives and approaches. In fact, certain distinctive features of the diplomacies of the two countries that have been noted in historical scholarship on Italian-Yugoslav relations in later periods could already be seen at this time.⁵² Specifically, Italy wanted to begin with solving minor issues, gradually paving the way for major issues at a later stage.⁵³ Conversely, Yugoslavia wanted to find a quick solution for all the unresolved bilateral issues at once.⁵⁴

Yugoslavia would not change its attitude even though the Italians repeatedly made it clear at various levels that the solutions sought by Belgrade were

⁴⁷ "Zapisnik sa VI redovnog zasjedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog odbora".

⁴⁸ Mišić, "The normalisation".

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. also "I colloqui di Folchi nella capitale jugoslava": *Relazioni Internazionali*, XIII, no. 47, 21 November 1959.

⁵⁰ "La visita di Popovic a Roma": *Relazioni Internazionali*, XXIV, no. 50, 10 December 1960.

⁵¹ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 29, doc. no. 42187, note of Mihajlo Javorski (Yugoslav Ambassador to Italy) on the 15 January 1960 meeting with Remigio Grillo (MAE).

⁵² Cf. M. Bucarelli, *La "questione jugoslava" nella politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1945–1999)* (Rome: Aracne, 2008); M. Bucarelli et al. (eds.), *Italy and Tito's Yugoslavia in the Age of International Détente* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2016); S. Mišić, *Pomirenje na Jadrano. Jugoslavija i Italija na putu ka Osimskim sporazumima iz 1975.* (Belgrade: Univerzitet u Beogradu-Fakultet političkih nauka, 2018).

⁵³ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 47, f. 2, doc. no. 46854, note of Javorski on the 2 March 1960 meeting with Umberto Grazzi (MAE Secretary-General).

⁵⁴ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 29, doc. no. 45842, note on the 23 February 1960 meeting between Mihajlo Majer (Counsellor Yugoslav Embassy in Italy) and Carlo Marchiori (Deputy Director-General MAE Political Office).

unacceptable and, therefore, unfeasible and unrealistic. For instance, during the 5th session of the Mixed Committee, Italy made it clear that it was ready to make some concessions to its Slovene minority, but only if they were reciprocated not just formally but above all substantially, since up to that time, Yugoslavia's failure to respect the already existing rights of the Italian minority made most of the many formal protections useless.⁵⁵ Extensive negotiations ensued, but it yielded no results because of the different stance of the two delegations.⁵⁶

Another interesting example is the drafting of a cultural agreement signed in Rome during Popović's visit. This agreement was proposed by Italy, whose aim was to improve its relations with Belgrade by meeting "the keen desire repeatedly expressed by the Yugoslav side" of increasing cultural exchanges, especially in the scientific-technical field.⁵⁷ During the negotiations Yugoslavia tried to obtain something that Italy had already refused to concede many times, the mutual recognition of educational qualifications.⁵⁸ However, the Yugoslav approach to the minority issue proved once again to be futile and, despite the persistent efforts of the Yugoslav negotiators, Rome refused to meet Belgrade's requests on this field.⁵⁹

Despite the standstill on the minority issue, the overall Italian-Yugoslav relations were experiencing a period of strong improvement.⁶⁰ The economic relations between the two countries were constantly intensifying and, in the months before Popović's visit to Italy, a series of episodes paved a new political path in the relations between Rome and Belgrade. From the political point of view, the most striking case was certainly a series of events tied to the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations, which took place in the autumn of 1960 in New York. Indeed, during the Assembly, which saw the Italian-Austrian dispute on South Tyrol as the first issue on the agenda,⁶¹ Yugoslavia finally took a stance

⁵⁵ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 51, f. 1, doc. no. 4620.

⁵⁶ "Zapisnik VII rednovnog zasedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitog Odbora" (Rome, 20 February-10 March 1961): *Službeni list*, year X, no. 2, Belgrade, 15 July 1962.

⁵⁷ ACS, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale Relazioni Culturali, b. 319, f. "Accordi culturali Jugoslavia", urgent confidential tel. no. 31/07791/c from MAE to PCM et al., 29 September 1959.

⁵⁸ DA-MSP, PA, 1960, b. 46, f. 23, d. 412571, minutes of Majer on the 12 April 1960 meeting with the staff of the Yugoslav Embassy in Rome, no. 53/60.

⁵⁹ DA-MSP, PA, 1960, b. 49, f. 5, doc. no. 427345, note of Žulj on the 17 November 1960 meeting with Silvio Falchi (Counsellor Italian Embassy to Yugoslavia).

⁶⁰ Mišić, *Pomirenje na Jadranu*, 18-21.

⁶¹ For an overview of the Austrian-Italian dispute on South Tyrol and its discussion at the 15th UN General Assembly, cf. M. Toscano, *Storia diplomatica della questione dell'Alto Adige* (Bari: Laterza, 1967), 473-540.

appraised as positive and satisfactory by Italy.⁶² In addition, besides the works of the Assembly, while in New York, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Antonio Segni held several meetings with Yugoslav representatives, including President Josip Broz "Tito" and Secretary Popović.⁶³ Further signs of improvement in the Italian-Yugoslav relations were the fact that Tito had reached New York after transiting in Zone A and in the Republic of Italy *proper*, and that, after the end of the UN Assembly, the Yugoslav President made his return trip to Europe on the Italian liner "Leonardo da Vinci".⁶⁴

1960 was also a turning point in the attitude of the Italian majority of Trieste towards the Slovene minority. Indeed, that year, the pro-government magazine *Trieste* dedicated several reports to the Slovene minority in Italy, triggering an intense debate among intellectuals and politicians on the need for a fair coexistence and collaboration among Italians and Slovenes, paving the way to a deeper *détente* among the two national communities.⁶⁵ However, despite having made the Italian majority of Trieste more open towards the Slovene minority, this debate ultimately did little to help Yugoslav diplomacy on the minority issue. Indeed, the increased knowledge of the reality of the Slovene minority in Italy, with its dozens of free independent associations, companies, newspapers, parties, and cultural institutions, many of which kept close ties with Yugoslavia, heightened the awareness of the Italian public of the enormous unfavourable misbalance in the treatment of the Slovene minority in Italy and that of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia.⁶⁶

⁶² DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 7, doc. no. 428219, tel. 570 from Javorski to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (DSIP), 26 October 1960. Cf. also S. Mišič, "Yugoslavia and the South Tyrolean Question from the End of World War II until the Late 1950s". In *The Alps-Adriatic Region 1945–1955. International and Transnational Perspectives on a Conflicted European Region*, eds. W. Mueller et al. (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2018) 197–198.

⁶³ "Gli incontri di Segni a New York ed a Washington": *Relazioni Internazionali*, XXIV, no. 43, 22 October 1960.

⁶⁴ "Tito je včeraj potoval skozi Trst": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 220 (4683), 14 September 1960; "Tito putuje v New York": *Ibid*; G. Cesare, "Il ponte di Londra": *Trieste*, VIII, no. 41, January-February 1961.

⁶⁵ G. Botteri, "Catalogo-Dizionario degli sloveni nella Regione": *Trieste*, VII, no. 38, July-August 1960; G. Botteri "La minoranza slovena: un dibattito aperto": *Trieste*, VII, no. 39, September-October 1960; A. Rebula, "L'intellettuale sloveno": *Trieste*, VII, no. 40, November-December 1960; G. Botteri, "Inchiesta sul problema degli sloveni in Carinzia": *Trieste*, VIII, no. 4, January-February 1961; "Battute di dialogo fra italiani e sloveni": *Ibid*; Cesare, "Il ponte di Londra"; "Il dialogo ponte fra italiani e sloveni": *Trieste*, VIII, no. 42, March-April 1961.

⁶⁶ P. A., "Hanno tutte le libertà i poveri 'oppressi' sloveni": *Difesa Adriatica*, XIV, no. 39, 23–29 October 1960.

During the following months, these imbalances were additionally emphasised by the debate on the treatment of the Slovene minority in Italy, which focused, among other things, on the law on Slovenian-language schools in Italy. Indeed, the Italian government had issued a draft on this matter that was vehemently criticised by the organisations of the Slovene minority, some Italian left-wing parties, and Yugoslav diplomacy, because it provided that Slovenian-language schools in Italy were to be reserved for the Italian citizens belonging to the Slovene minority.⁶⁷ Once again, the issue was reciprocity, since the rationale of the Italian draft did not differ from the one applied in Istria and in Rijeka/Fiume, where the Italian-language schools were reserved for the Yugoslav citizens that the Yugoslav authorities decided could be considered members of the Italian minority.

The growing awareness of the deep imbalances between the treatment of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia and the Slovene minority in Italy, coupled with the constant Yugoslav demands for unilateral concessions, led significant sections of the Italian population of Trieste and Gorizia to increase their unabated hostility towards Yugoslavia. For these reasons, the Italian officers stationed in the Italian-Yugoslav borderland area – such as the Government's Commissioner-General to Zone A Giovanni Palamara and the Italian Consul-General in Koper/Capodistria Guido Zecchin – repeatedly warned both Yugoslav officers and their own government that all concessions to the Slovene minority in Italy needed to be implemented gradually and reciprocated by similar concessions to the Italian minority in Yugoslavia.⁶⁸ The development of the local situation soon proved that the stance of the Italian officers stationed in the borderland was not unfounded.

In the weeks before Popović's visit to Italy, scheduled between 1 and 4 December 1960, just as bilateral intergovernmental relations improved, the atmosphere in the borderland area became increasingly tense. On 22 September, Segni told the Yugoslav Ambassador to Italy, Mihajlo Javorski, that the Italian government was going to hand over two new Slovene cultural centres to a SKGZ organisation, as requested by Yugoslavia.⁶⁹ The following day, Palamara rejected

⁶⁷ A. Jager, "Slovensko šolstvo v Italiji". In *Slovenci v Italiji po drugi svetovni vojni*, eds. J. Jeri et al. (Ljubljana-Koper/Capodistria-Trieste: Cankarjeva založba-ČZP Primorski tisk-Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 1975), 220–223.

⁶⁸ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 8, doc. no. 428455, telegram no. 91 from Aleksandar Oluic (Deputy Consul Yugoslav Consulate General in Trieste) to DSIP, 26 October 1960, on the meeting with Palamara; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 29, doc. no. 429569, note on the meeting between Oluic and Zecchin, annexed to letter no. 163/60 from Žiga Vodušek (Yugoslav Consul-General in Trieste) to DSIP, 5 November 1960.

⁶⁹ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 2, doc. no. 424965, tel. no. 489 from Javorski to DSIP, 22 September 1960.

a request filed by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) to hold a bilingual Italian-Slovenian political meeting in the main square of Trieste⁷⁰ – Piazza Unità d'Italia – claiming that the square was seen as a symbol of the city's Italianity by the majority of the population and such a meeting was a mere provocation that might lead to unrest.⁷¹ A day later, the Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Carlo Russo stated that Italy was satisfied by Yugoslavia's attitude towards the South Tyrol issue at the 15th UN Assembly.⁷² On 6 November, the Municipality Council of Doberdò del Lago/Doberdob – a Slovene-majority town in the province of Gorizia – passed a resolution that provided the implementation of bilingualism in the municipality and, in response, the prefect of Gorizia, Giacinto Nitri, annulled the resolution, claiming that municipalities did not have the jurisdiction to pass acts on bilingualism.⁷³

In short, in the weeks running up to Popović's visit to Italy, bilingualism had become the main demand of the Slovene minority, backed by the Yugoslav diplomacy, the USI/NSZ, and the still anti-Yugoslav PCI.⁷⁴ In this context, this campaign focused on bilingualism in the judicial system, where Italy had not yet implemented regulations to allow the use of Slovenian for judicial proceedings in Zone A and, therefore, plainly violated article 5 of the Special Statute.⁷⁵ This claim had become a major political issue since the Court of Trieste had rejected a request to use the Slovenian language in court proceedings filed by Stanislav Renko, the Chief Editor of the Trieste-based, Slovenian-language Titoist newspaper *Primorski Dnevnik*, which had been sued by Josip Agneletto, the liberal-democrat leader of the Slovene Democratic Union (SDZ), the main anti-Communist organisation of the Slovene minority in Italy.⁷⁶

The local-level situation probably explains why Popović stressed the issue of bilingualism in Italian tribunals during his visit to Italy.⁷⁷ However, the Yu-

⁷⁰ "Tretja prepoved": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 255 (4718), 25 October 1960.

⁷¹ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 8, doc. no. 428455.

⁷² DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 7, doc. no. 428219.

⁷³ "Goriški prefekt krši ustavo in zakon o j. v.": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 289 (4752), 3 December 1961.

⁷⁴ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 46, f. 8, doc. no. 436133, tel. no. 34 from Vodusek to DSIP.

⁷⁵ Cf. "Samo za Slovencev veljata fašistična paragrafa 137 in 122": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 278 (4741), 20 November 1960.

⁷⁶ ACS, Ministero dell'Interno (MI), Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. "15058/f. 1 - Rapporti politici culturali economici con la Jugoslavia, affari vari anno 1961" (hereinafter "15058/f. 1"), Palamara to MGG Gab, MAE DGAP, tel. 6/10/23023/60, 24 November 1960, and annexes.

⁷⁷ AJ, 142II–SSRNJ, b. I-471, letter from Pero Žarković (DSIP) to Rade Aleksić (secretary of the Commission for minority issues of the Central Committee of the SSRN

goslav Secretary did not manage to obtain any unilateral concessions from Italy, whose top-ranking officers simply confirmed that their government was willing to comply with its own obligations arising from the MOU.⁷⁸

Just after the end of Popović's visit, the debate on bilingualism in Zone A intensified. On 5 November, the Provincial Council of Trieste rejected PCI's proposal aimed at translating into Slovenian all internal proceedings of the body.⁷⁹ The following day, the Rome-based, pro-PCI newspaper *Paese Sera* published a secret cable from Palamara to the Italian government.⁸⁰ In his dispatch, sent on 11 November 1960, the Commissioner-General expressed his hope that the cultural convention that was going to be signed with Yugoslavia during Popović's visit would not include a mutual agreement for educational qualifications, as this would lead the students of the Slovene minority to complete their university studies in Ljubljana, where they would be indoctrinated into Yugoslav communism and Slovene nationalism. In addition, the day after the publication of Palamara's cable, the court of Trieste rejected another request to use the Slovenian language in court proceedings filed by Renko. This decision was immediately mediated by the Slovenian-language press, which emphasised that, this time, the editor of the *Primorski dnevnik* had been sued by the main Neo-Fascist leader of Trieste, the Italian Social Movement (MSI) Deputy Riccardo Geffer Wondrich.⁸¹

The increasingly heated debate was soon exacerbated by an intervention of a member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Gorazd Kušej, who published an article condemning Palamara's letter in the Ljubljana-based magazine *Naši razgledi*.⁸² Kušej avoided mentioning the political-ideological aspects of Palamara's cable and highlighted only the aspects linked with nationality, describing the document as evidence of its author's engagement in a policy of "ethnic-cultural genocide" of the Slovene minority in Italy. After five days, Kušej's article was republished by the *Primorski dnevnik*, which launched

of Yugoslavia), 29 January 1961; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 23, doc. no. 49982, report of Žulj on the course and outcome of the 7th session of the Mixed Committee (Rome, 20 February-10 March 1961), 18 March 1961. A translation into Italian of the latter document was published in Sau, *La comunità sacrificata*, 87-94.

⁷⁸ "La visita di Popovic a Roma", cit.

⁷⁹ "Za demokristjane velja v pokrajinskem svetu načelo: 'Qui si parla soltanto italiano!': *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 291 (4754), 6 December 1960.

⁸⁰ "Il prefetto di Trieste contrario all'accordo culturale con la Jugoslavia": *Paese Sera*, XII, no. 291, 5 December 1960.

⁸¹ "Ponovna kršitev čl. 5 posebnega statuta in potrditev ustavnosti fašističnega paragrafa": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 293 (4756), 8 December 1961.

⁸² G. Kušej, "Etnično-kulturni genocid": *Naši razgledi*, IX, no. 24, 24 December 1960.

an intense campaign against Palamara and the Italian government.⁸³ The harsh debate continued in the following weeks, and this led many leaders of the Italian majority of Trieste to write to the main Italian government and party leaders and warn them that excessive unilateral concessions to the Slovene minority would have a serious impact on the local Italian public opinion.⁸⁴ In this context, on 20 January 1961, the Provincial Council rejected another PCI proposal to have some internal proceedings of the body translated into Slovenian.⁸⁵ Over the following days, the news that Segni had confirmed the government's readiness to gradually improve compliance with the MOU spread in Trieste. The Trieste Bar Order reacted to the news by passing a motion rejecting the introduction of bilingualism in the judicial sector, complaining that the Slovene minority in Trieste enjoyed "the widest civil and democratic freedoms, while the Italians who remained in the Venetian cities of Istria [did] not enjoy them at all".⁸⁶

Suddenly, a new factor external to the Italian-Yugoslav borderland affected the already tense local atmosphere. On 27 January, the day after the Trieste Bar Order's motion, Segni and his Austrian counterpart, Bruno Kreisky, met in Milan to try to resolve the dispute on South Tyrol bilaterally.⁸⁷ The summit failed within hours, and already on 28 January, the Austrian delegation left for Vienna. That very evening, the German South Tyrolean irredentists bombed a power plant, an attack that caused a wave of demonstrations throughout Italy, many of which escalated into incidents.⁸⁸

At first, the situation in Trieste was calm, and the issues of South Tyrol and bilingualism in Zone A remained separated. However, all of a sudden, a connection emerged between these two thorny issues for the Italian public opinion. The latter must have already been shaken by the publication of the correspondence between some Triestine deputies and government ministers, where the cabinet members wrote that they thought that – albeit with the necessary caution and gradually – the MOU had to be fully implemented in Zone

⁸³ *Id.*, "Etnično-kulturni genocid": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVI, no. 309 (4772), 29 December 1960.

⁸⁴ "Graduale ma scontata l'applicazione del bilinguismo": *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4420 n.s., 1 February 1961.

⁸⁵ "Liberale odv. Jona: Tu se govori in se bo govorilo samo italijansko!": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 18 (4792), 21 January 1961.

⁸⁶ "L'Ordine degli Avvocati respinge il bilinguismo": *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4417 (n.s.), 27 January 1961.

⁸⁷ G. B., "Le conversazioni per l'Alto Adige": *Relazioni Internazionali*, XXV, no. 5, 4 February 1961.

⁸⁸ R. Steininger, *Südtirol zwischen Diplomatie und Terror 1947–1969*, vol. II, 1960–1962 (Bolzano/Bozen: Athesia, 1999), 321–323.

A.⁸⁹ This sensitive correspondence was published on 1 February in the morning edition of the main Italian-language newspaper of Trieste, the pro-government right-wing *Il Piccolo*. However, that very day, *Il Piccolo* published in its evening edition (*Piccolo Sera*) another sensitive document, the translation of the first part of an open letter published the day before by the *Primorski dnevnik*.⁹⁰ This open letter did not just complain about the alleged Italian policy of genocide against the Slovene minority as usual: indeed, its author, “J. Z.,” went further, sympathising with the German South Tyrol minority for its recent attitude towards Italy (implicitly alluding to the 28 January bombing attack), and stating that it was a means of self-defence.⁹¹ These already shocking sentences, which *Piccolo Sera* deemed ultimate evidence of the unsuitability of any further concessions to the Slovene minority, which was reportedly now making terrorist threats, were by coincidence published in the very same issue of the newspaper where the Italian majority of Trieste was informed of a new bombing attack carried out by the German irredentists in South Tyrol.⁹²

Expectedly, the *Primorski dnevnik*'s open letter and the connection it established between the South Tyrol issue and the treatment of the Slovene minority in Zone A triggered an immediate and harsh reaction in Trieste. The following day, during demonstrations against terrorism in South Tyrol, many protesters used the slogans “No to bilingualism” and “Slavs out”.⁹³

The leaders of the local Italian far-right parties and Italian organisations who had fled Istria, the Kvarner/Quarnaro Gulf, and Dalmatia (commonly called the “exiles”) quickly understood the mood of the protesters and its huge political potential, so they immediately called for the following day a new protest against both terrorism in South Tyrol and bilingualism in Zone A.⁹⁴ However, many of the approximately 4,000 young protesters did not protest only against terrorism in South Tyrol and bilingualism in Zone A. Indeed, they also made

⁸⁹ “Graduale ma scontata l'applicazione del bilinguismo”, cit.

⁹⁰ “L'Italia accusata di genocidio dagli oltranzisti sloveni”: *Piccolo Sera. Le ultime notizie*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3456, 1 February 1960.

⁹¹ J. Z., “Palamarovo rodmoro pismo še vedno ni bilo preklicano”, part I: *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 4800, Trieste, 31 January 1961.

⁹² “Nuovo attentato a Bolzano”: *Piccolo Sera. Le ultime notizie*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3456, 1 February 1960.

⁹³ S. Ranchi, “Calendario delle ‘violenze’ nazionaliste e neofasciste”. In *Nazionalismo e neofascismo nella lotta politica al confine orientale 1945–75*, ed. Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Trieste: Editoriale La Libreria, 1977), vol. I, 485–488.

⁹⁴ “Si predispose un argine da opporre al bilinguismo”: *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4422 (n.s.), Trieste, 3 February 1961; “Ofenziva šovinizma”: *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 29 (4803), 3 February 1961.

the case for Italy's formal sovereignty on Zone B, denounced the failure to apply reciprocity in the treatment of the FTT minorities and raised the flag of Istria on a flagpole at Piazza Unità d'Italia.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the protesters wrote the slogan "Bilingualism is treason" on the statue of Domenico Rossetti, a 19th-century Triestine intellectual seen as an icon of the city's Italianity. Then they marched in front of the Slovene Credit Institute's premises in Via Fabio Filzi. The Slovene banking institution – which had no counterpart for the Italian minority in Yugoslavia – was protected by the police, who arrested the only protester that managed to get into the building. However, the fact that the overall situation was becoming more and more tense could not be concealed.

The first Yugoslav reaction ensued: the Yugoslav Consul-General in Trieste, Žiga Vodusek, asked to meet Palamara.⁹⁶ The latter eventually presented to his government the first report on the events, where he warned once again that the debate on bilingualism was a very sensitive issue in Zone A, where the majority of the population had strong anti-Yugoslav feelings because of the 1945 killings and deportations perpetrated by the Yugoslav troops after the end of the war⁹⁷ and the presence of some 50,000 exiles.⁹⁸

On the following day, an editorial on the issues of terrorism in South Tyrol and bilingualism in Zone A was published in the new issue of *Vita Nuova*, the anti-Communist and anti-Yugoslav weekly magazine of the Catholic diocese of Trieste.⁹⁹ After praising the (Catholic) Slovene minority of Trieste for having played a significant role in the reconciliation between Zone A's national communities, this editorial spoke out against the introduction of bilingualism in Trieste, stating that its implementation would only be a victory for those who wanted to fuel national hatred between Italians and Slovenes and backed the use of terrorist means. To support this premise, *Vita Nuova* published a translation of some parts of the second half of the open letter signed by "J. Z." – or "Z. J." – which had been, in the meantime, published in the *Primorski dnevnik's* edition of 1 February, where the author not only stated that the settlement of Istrian exiles in Zone A was a crime and the Italian government the only culprit but

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*; "Esposte in sede governativa le preoccupazioni per il bilinguismo": *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4423 (n.s.), 4 February 1961; "Pripravljaja se stopnjevanje šovinistične ofenzive": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 30 (4804), 4 February 1961.

⁹⁶ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 1, doc. no. 43500, tel. no. 12 from Vodusek to DSIP, 3 February 1961, 19:00.

⁹⁷ Cf. G. Valdevit (ed.), *Foibe, il peso del passato. Venezia Giulia 1943–1945* (Venice: Marsilio-Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, 1997).

⁹⁸ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, registered express mail no. 6/10-107/61 Gab. from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 3 February 1961.

⁹⁹ "Altoatesini del Carso": *Vita Nuova*, no. 2082, 4 February 1961.

additionally intimated that the Slovene minority would imitate the Germans of South Tyrol and resort to terrorist means.¹⁰⁰ From the Italian point of view, these sentences were shocking, because the *Primorski dnevnik's* open letter did not mention the reason that had led so many Italians to flee Istria and, above all, because Z. J., as claimed in *Vita Nuova*, was very likely Zorko Jelinčič, one of the main leaders of the pro-Yugoslav irredentist terrorist organisation TIGR at the time of the Fascist regime, a man originally from Bovec (in the then and current Republic of Slovenia) who, after the Second World War, had left the former Italian territories that had been handed over to Yugoslavia and moved to Trieste, where he worked for pro-Yugoslav (Yugoslav-funded) organisations.¹⁰¹

It was a point of no return. That day, as anticipated, some demonstrators attacked the construction site of the Slovene cultural centre that had to be handed over to the SKGZ, shouting slogans against bilingualism, Tito, and “the Slavs”.¹⁰² The construction site was promptly secured by the police, which led to the first violent street clashes recorded in Trieste since November 1953.¹⁰³

The shift from verbal to physical violence was not the only turning point of 4 February. In fact, as Palamara pointed out, that day, the protesters overlooked the South Tyrol issue and focused only on the issue of bilingualism.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the events of Trieste became a blatant diplomatic case. In Rome, Javorski complained to the Italian government and asked to be received by Segni and Prime Minister Fanfani.¹⁰⁵ In Trieste, Palamara received Vodušek, who complained about the slogans against Tito and the risk that members of the Slovene

¹⁰⁰ Z. J./J. Z., “Palamarovo rodmorno pismo”, part II: *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 4801, 1 February 1961.

¹⁰¹ Z. Jelinčič, *Pod svinčenim nebom: spomini tigrovskega voditelja* (Trieste-Gorizia: ZTT/EST–Sklad Dorčeta Sardoča, 2017). The name TIGR was the acronym of “Trst, Istra, Gorica, Rijeka/Reka” [“Trieste, Istria, Gorizia, Rijeka/Fiume”], the territorial target of the irredentist organisation. For an overview of the TIGR cf. A. Gabrič (ed.), *TIGR v zgodovini in zgodovinopisju* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2017).

¹⁰² ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, confidential tel. no. 2655, Palamara to PCM and MI, 4 February 1961, 20:35; “Feriti e contusi negli scontri degli studenti con la Polizia”: *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3459, 4 February 1961; “Fašistična pobalinska drhal napadla Kulturni dom ob vpitju rasističnega gesla «Fora i ščavi!»”: *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 31 (4805), 5 February 1961.

¹⁰³ For a brief overview of the 1953 Trieste riots (when violent clashes broke out between the Allied Military Government police and pro-Italian demonstrators) cf. Pupo, *Adriatico amarissimo*, 236–242.

¹⁰⁴ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, confidential tel. no. 2655, cit.

¹⁰⁵ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 1, doc. no. 43709, tel. no. 50 from Javorski to DSIP, 4 February 1961, 13:00.

minority might be hurt or their property damaged by the street protesters.¹⁰⁶ At the meeting, Palamara underlined that the police had already protected the Slovene bank and the construction site of the cultural centre and explained that, from his point of view, the protests were proof that the Triestine context did not yet allow for an immediate and full implementation of the MOU, which required graduality and public consensus.

The events of the following days seemed to prove once again Palamara right. On 5 February, *Il Piccolo* ran a strongly worded editorial signed by its editor-in-chief, eloquently titled "No to bilingualism"¹⁰⁷. The article was basically addressed to Segni, who was warned that the Triestines had accepted a tax surcharge to help Sardinia (Segni's constituency) without batting an eye but could not accept bilingualism in their own city. In the afternoon, around 1,500 mostly Istrian exile students gathered in Piazza Unità d'Italia, where they displayed signs with the names of Istrian towns and raised on the square's flagpoles the flags of Italy and the emblems of Istria, Rijeka/Fiume, and Dalmatia.¹⁰⁸

The following day, another student demonstration took place in Trieste. A small group of teenagers, far from the mass of demonstrators, managed to run into Via San Francesco, break the window of the local Slovenian library, and get away from the police.¹⁰⁹ In the meanwhile, the latter had managed to prevent the mass of demonstrators from heading to the library, which led to new violent clashes. Unable to continue in the direction of Via di San Francesco, the demonstrators then headed to the Slovenian-language high school in Via Lazzaretto Vecchio, but were once again stopped by the police. At this point, given that repeated police interventions were preventing the demonstrators from approaching any symbolic building of the Slovene minority, the protesters changed their objective and headed directly towards the Palace of the Government in Piazza Unità d'Italia, the seat of Palamara, who had been vehemently criticised by the protesters for his harsh repression of the demonstrations.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, tel. no. 2685 from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 5 February 1961, 01:00; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, doc. no. 43621, tel. 15 from Vodušek to DSIP, 5 February 1961, 07:00.

¹⁰⁷ C. Alessi, "No al bilinguismo": *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4424 (n.s.), 5 February 1961.

¹⁰⁸ "Anche di domenica": *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3460, 6 February 1961.

¹⁰⁹ "Napad na slovensko knjigarno in poskus napada na drž, slovensko višjo gimnazijo": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 32 (4806), 7 February 1961; "Un'altra giornata di manifestazioni contro la minaccia del bilinguismo": *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3460 - edizione delle sedici, 6 February 1961.

¹¹⁰ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, tel. no. 2782 from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 6 February 1961, 16:30; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, doc. no. 43686, tel. no. 18 from Oluić to DSIP, 6 February 1961, 18:40.

The severity of the situation led Palamara to leave Trieste for Rome to confer with Fanfani and Segni.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the situation in Zone A continued to escalate. During the night of 6/7 February, a well-known Slovene pro-Yugoslav activist (caught red-handed by the police) wrote on several buildings symbolically tied to the Italian majority slogans like “Memorandum” or “Here we are Slovenes”.¹¹² Later in the afternoon, the same activist accompanied to the police station three Slovene schoolgirls, who reported having been harassed by some Italian peers who had warned them to stop talking in Slovenian.¹¹³ In addition, the PCI was organising some rallies to condemn the anti-Slovene demonstrations, while right-wing parties were planning further protests.¹¹⁴ The situation was escalating beyond all limits, which led the Italian cabinet to discuss the issue on 8 February, and the same day, Palamara banned all protests in Trieste for 30 days.¹¹⁵ This helped to calm things down, even though some further incidents were recorded in the following days: on 9 February, the police stopped 600 anti-Yugoslav protesters who were trying to march towards Piazza Unità d’Italia¹¹⁶; during the night of 10/11 February, anti-Italian activists removed some monolingual (Italian) street signs and wrote Zone A slogans, such as “Here we are Slovenes” or “Death to Italy”.¹¹⁷

In the meantime, the events in Trieste continued to be the central issue in the diplomatic relations between Italy and Yugoslavia. Since 6 February, Italian diplomacy made it repeatedly clear that, after the Trieste demonstrations, any further implementation of the MOU in Zone A not only required more

¹¹¹“Palamara riferirà a Roma sulla vibrata protesta di Trieste”: *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4425 (n.s.), 7 February 1961;

¹¹²ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, letter no. 6/10-123/61 from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 8 February 1961.

¹¹³ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, confidential letter no. 6/10-128/61 Gab. from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 16 February 1961; “Posledice hujskanja”: *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 33 (4807), 8 February 1961.

¹¹⁴ASTS, CGG, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 188, f. 13/20 “Divieto [...]”, confidential letter no. 02311/UP from Armando Pace (Trieste Police Commissioner) to the Government’s Commissioner-General office, 7 February 1961.

¹¹⁵“Sono proibite per un mese le pubbliche manifestazioni”: *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3462, 8 February 1961.

¹¹⁶“Una dimostrazione malgrado il divieto”: *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), 3463, 9 February 1961

¹¹⁷ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, letter no. 6/10-143/61 Gab. from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 13 February 1961; ASTS, CGG, Gab. 1961–1963, f. 13/4 “(Basovizza) Furto e danneggiamento Tabelle segnalazione stradale”, confidential letter no. 13/4-2278/61 Gab. from Palamara to PCM, MI, and MAE, 18 March 1961; “Gli scopi del bilinguismo spiegati dagli attivisti sloveni”: *Difesa Adriatica*, XV, no. 5, 25 February-8 March 1961.

time and graduality but also needed to be acceptable to the Italian population of Trieste.¹¹⁸

At first, Yugoslavia did not change policy, as attested by the Yugoslav note of protest presented to the Italian government on 7 February: in this document, Belgrade asked Rome to put an end to all anti-Slovene protests, outlaw all Italian anti-Yugoslav organisations, and fully implement the MOU in Zone A unilaterally.¹¹⁹ However, the Yugoslav objective of obtaining unilateral concessions for the Slovene minority in Italy without any compensation for the Italian minority in Yugoslavia was becoming more and more unrealistic with each passing day.

During February, the majority of the Italian public opinion (both in Zone A and in the Republic of Italy *proper*) condemned the anti-Slovene deviations of the Trieste demonstrations, but strongly rejected any concessions to the Slovene minority in Italy without adequate compensation for the Italian minority in Yugoslavia.¹²⁰ In addition, the need to comply with the rationale of reciprocity was once again highlighted by the Italian diplomacy. On 24 February, the Italian government replied to the Yugoslav note of 7 February.¹²¹ In its note, the Italian government stated that it was not going to violate the freedoms granted by the Italian constitution by outlawing protests and organisations with anti-Yugoslav sentiments as requested by the Yugoslav government. Moreover, the Italian government declared it was ready to gradually implement all the protection measures granted to the Slovene minority by the Italian constitution and the MOU as long as the Italian minority in Zone B was given the same treatment and living conditions as those enjoyed by the Slovene minority in Zone A.

The need to rely on reciprocity could not be clearer, but nonetheless it was once again reaffirmed by the Italian diplomacy at the 7th session of the

¹¹⁸ DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 1, doc. no. 43790, tel. no. 52 from Javorski to DSIP on the 6 February meeting with Grazzi, 7 February 1961, 07:00; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 2, doc. no. 44333, note of Majer on the 6 February 1961 meeting with Marchiori; *Ibid.*, doc. no. 45006, note II-69/61 of Đorđe Popović (Secretary Yugoslav Embassy to Italy) on the activity of the Yugoslav Embassy with respect to the Trieste events, 13 February 1961.

¹¹⁹ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, tel. 335 from Alberto Berio (Italian Ambassador to Yugoslavia) to Segni and annexed Yugoslav note, 7 February 1961; DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 1, doc. no. 43811, note of Brilej on the 7 February 1961 meeting with Berio.

¹²⁰ "La protesta istriana": *Piccolo Sera*, XLI (n.s.), no. 3462, 8 February 1961; "Le proteste contro il bilinguismo": *Vita Nuova*, no. 2083, 11 February 1961; "Applicare il Memorandum nella sua interezza": *Vita Nuova*, no. 2084, 18 February 1961.

¹²¹ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, confidential tel. no. 12/362 from MAE to PCM, 3 March 1961, and annexes (including 24 February 1961 note from the Italian Embassy in Belgrade to DSIP); DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 3, doc. no. 46387, note of Brilej on the 23 [sic!] February 1961 meeting with Berio.

Mixed Committee, held in Rome from 20 February to 10 March 1961. Indeed, as the Head of the Yugoslav delegation, Berislav Žulj, commented, during this session, the Italian delegation criticised the treatment of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia more harshly than ever.¹²² In fact, the Italian delegation protested very strongly against the Slavicisation of family names, the lack of Italian native-speaker teachers in Zone B's Italian-language schools, and textbook content offensive to Italy and Italians. In addition to these old complaints, for the very first time at a session of the Mixed Committee, the Italian delegation protested against the Zone B polity reform, too.

In the meantime, the course of events in Zone A and in the Republic of Italy once again demonstrated that no concession to the Slovene minority in Italy could be sought without compensation for the Italian minority in Yugoslavia. Indeed, the Italian public opinion firmly rejected any unilateral concessions to the Slovene minority, as it was made evident by the fact that, after the ban of all protests in Trieste, the right-wing anti-Yugoslav rallies continued in other cities, such as Venice.¹²³ Furthermore, except for the USI/NDZ and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), all Italian parties, press, and intellectuals who favoured new concessions towards the Slovene minority now considered reciprocity an essential prerequisite.¹²⁴

The Yugoslav policy aimed at obtaining unilateral concessions for the Slovene minority had, therefore, utterly failed, as did the vigorous propaganda and actions carried out by the pro-Yugoslav (Titoist) organisations in Italy, which achieved little beyond stirring up the Italian far-right. First, the writings published in the *Primorski dnevnik* had basically given the Italian far-right organisations a reason for calling the February protests. In addition, on 24 February, an unexploded bomb was found outside of the *Primorski dnevnik* headquarters, an event that could not but be interpreted as a neo-Fascist retaliation against Jelinčič and the pro-Yugoslav Slovenes open to terrorist means¹²⁵. Indeed, this attack plainly emulated the notorious TIGR attack of 10 February 1930, when Jelinčič's old organisation planted a bomb outside of the headquarters of the

¹²² DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 23, doc. no. 49982, cit.

¹²³ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, confidential tel. no. 12/3458 from MAE to PCM and MI, 18 March 1961.

¹²⁴ "Il punto sul bilinguismo": *Il Piccolo*, LXXX, no. 4441 (n.s.), 25 February 1961; "Le ruote quadre della reciprocità": *Vita Nuova*, no. 2085, 25 February 1961; "KPI, cona B in Palamara": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 51 (4825), 1 March 1961; "Sì al Memorandum ma anche in Zona B": *Il Piccolo*, Trieste, 1 March 1961; U. D'Andrea, "Eroismo della frontiera": *Il Tempo*, XVIII, no. 64, Rome, 5 March 1961. Cf. DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1960, b. 47, f. 4, doc. no. 436453, report "Iredentizm".

¹²⁵ "Neesplodirana bomba na dvorišču uredništva Primorskega dnevnika": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 48 (4822), Trieste, 25 February 1961.

Fascist newspaper *Il Popolo di Trieste*, killing one person, maiming one, and wounding three.¹²⁶ The outcome of Jelinčič's praise of terrorist means used by the Germans of South Tyrol had not been positive for the Slovene minority and the pro-Yugoslav and anti-Italian signs written during the nights of 6 and 10 February did not bring better results. Indeed, this example was followed by the neo-Fascist Italians who, during the night of 7/8 March snuck into a Slovene-language school of Trieste and wrote words such as "Italy", "Istria", and "Duce".¹²⁷

To sum up, the policy followed by Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav-controlled Slovene organisations in Italy merely solidified Italy's resolve to adhere to the reciprocity principle and strengthened the Italian anti-Yugoslav and anti-Slovene far-right movements, failing in its purpose of securing unilateral concessions for the Slovene minority in Italy. Finally, this fact was lucidly understood by the Yugoslav diplomacy, whose main target of obtaining new concessions for the Slovene minority in Italy had proved futile. The Yugoslav Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, therefore, changed its strategy and developed a brand-new policy on the minority issue.

The new Yugoslav policy was officially announced to the main Yugoslav stakeholders through the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs' report on the 7th session of the Mixed Committee.¹²⁸ This document, signed by Žulj on 18 March 1961, started from a reconstruction of the Trieste events, remarking that their outcome had been the strengthening of the anti-Yugoslav right wing in Italy and the impossibility for the Italian government to make new concessions to its Slovene minority. The report later analysed both the official works and the corridor talks of the 7th session of the Mixed Committee, noting that the Italian diplomacy had criticised the treatment of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia more scathingly than ever, but it had nevertheless declared itself ready to make new concessions to the Slovene minority provided that they were reciprocated by new concessions to the Italian minority. The document, therefore, concluded that the Trieste events had made the minority issue one of the most important and sensitive bilateral problems. Up to that time, these events had not affected significantly other aspects of Italian-Yugoslav relations, with the exception of minor matters, such as the delay of Segni's visit to Yugoslavia initially scheduled for April. However, the report warned that, under these new circumstances, similar cases had become a true possibility and could have a substantial negative

¹²⁶M. Pahor, "Nastanek in razvoj ilegalne tajne organizacije Borba (1927–1930)". In *TIGR v zgodovini in zgodovinospisju*, ed. A. Gabrič (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2017), 57–58.

¹²⁷"Fašistična gesla na stopnišču slovenske šole pri Sv. Jakobu": *Primorski dnevnik*, XVII, no. 58 (4832), 9 March 1961.

¹²⁸DA-MSP, PA, Italija, 1961, b. 47, f. 23, doc. no. 49982, cit.

impact on the relations with Rome. All this, wrote Žulj, had made it necessary to take a wide range of new measures.

With regard to its Italian minority, Yugoslavia had to stop blatantly breaching the MOU and the Yugoslav laws and constitutions. Some of the main tasks indicated by the document were: remove the sentences offensive to Italy and Italians from textbooks; adopt new laws on Italian-language schools in the Republics of Croatia and Slovenia; ensure that all teachers in Italian-language schools are Italian native speakers; implement bilingualism where provided by the Special Statute; make sure that the treatment of the Italian minority might not be highly controversial. In addition, the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs advocated the restoration of Zone B's pre-MOU polities, since the Yugoslav polity reform, in breach of the Special Statute, had elicited vehement protests from Italy, and if the latter implemented similar reforms in Zone A, it would have easily made the Slovenes a tiny minority in every new polity.

The Slovene minority in Italy was also the subject of a wide range of measures provided by the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs. Interestingly enough, for a self-proclaimed socialist country, Yugoslavia's new policy was mainly aimed at promoting, where possible, overcoming party differences among the Slovenes of Italy, who were supposed to have taken a concerted and stronger action to uphold their rights. This policy had already been launched in February during the Trieste demonstrations¹²⁹ and paved the way for cooperation between the pro-Yugoslav Slovenes linked to the SKGZ and the USI/NSZ, a political minority within the Slovene national minority, and the majority of Italy's Slovenes, whose political orientation was mainly in favour of the still anti-Yugoslav PCI and the conservatives linked to the SDZ. Furthermore, according to the report signed by Žulj, the *Primorski dnevnik* had to stop publishing excessively harsh (anti-Italian) content, since those writings were portrayed as having no use but giving the Italians new justifications to overstate their case.

In a nutshell, Yugoslavia opted to drop its old policy on the minority issue, comply with the MOU, and start a new phase in its relations with Italy concerning their mutual minorities. The final target of this new policy was quite clear: accept negotiations with Italy on the basis of reciprocity to finally secure some long-sought new concessions for the Slovene minority in Italy.

This new policy was implemented very quickly. Within weeks from the issuing of the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs report, the Yugoslav authorities started to give out new instructions aimed at improving the situation of the Italian minority in many fields.¹³⁰ The new Yugoslav attitude unlocked the

¹²⁹ ACS, MI, Gab. 1961–1963, b. 190, f. 15058/f. 1, letter no. 6/10-123/61, cit.

¹³⁰ ACRS, UIIF 1960–1962, b. 1106/73, minutes of the 29 May 1961 meeting of the UIIF secretariat, published in A. Radossi, "Evoluzione interna e rapporti internazionali

negotiations on the minority issue, leading to a rapid series of achievements for the benefit of both minorities. On 26 June, Italy and Yugoslavia signed the regulations of the Koper/Capodistria seminars.¹³¹ A few weeks later, on 19 July, the Italian parliament approved a new law on Slovenian-language schools.¹³² Meanwhile, from 28 June to 1 July, Segni visited Yugoslavia, the first Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy to do so.¹³³ In December, the Mixed Committee confirmed the launch of the Koper/Capodistria seminars, whose first edition was eventually held from 31 January to 10 February 1962.¹³⁴ In 1962, for the very first time, the Italian diplomatic authorities were allowed to maintain direct contact with the Italian minority in Istria and Rijeka/Fiume,¹³⁵ and the USI/NSZ was dissolved and basically merged into the pro-government PSI.¹³⁶ Between November and December of that year, at the 9th session of the Mixed Committee, Yugoslavia proposed a wide set of reciprocity-based cultural exchange programs between the two minorities and their kin-states.¹³⁷ This proposal became the basis of a new negotiation process, which was approved at the following 10th session of the Mixed Committee in December 1963, after the delegations of both countries had provided evidence that their countries were trying to comply with the MOU.¹³⁸ For the very first time since 1954, the two

della Jugoslavia dal 1955 al 1965": *Quaderni*, vol. XIV, 2002, 110–112.

¹³¹ "Protokol o sastanku jugoslavenskih i italijanskih eksperata za organizaciju seminara iz italijanske kulture na području pod jugoslovenskom upravom" (Ljubljana, 26 June 1961): *Službeni list*, X, no. 9, Belgrade, 29 September 1962.

¹³² Law 19 July 1961, no. 1012, "Disciplina delle istituzioni scolastiche nella provincia di Gorizia e nel Territorio di Trieste": *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, Serie Generale*, CII, no. 252, 9 October 1961.

¹³³ "La visita di Segni a Belgrado": *Relazioni Internazionali*, XXV, no. 27, 8 July 1961.

¹³⁴ "Zapisnik sa VIII redovnog redovnog zasjedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitoog odbora" (Belgrade, 4–16 December 1961): *Službeni list*, X, no. 9, Belgrade, 29 September 1962; L. Macchi, "Cronaca del Seminario di lingua e cultura italiana dal 1962 al 2016, in *Il seminario di lingua e cultura italiana. Genesi, sviluppo, cronaca e testimonianze (1962–2016)*, eds. C. Battelli et al. (Koper/Capodistria: Centro Italiano di Promozione, Cultura, Formazione e Sviluppo "Carlo Combi", 2018), 95–99.

¹³⁵ ASD-MAECI, CGIC, b. 2, f. 10, tel. 84/2/1019 from Zecchin to MAE et al., 18 May 1962.

¹³⁶ ASTS, CGG, Gabinetto Affari Riservati 1955–1970, b. 8, f. 4/2 "Situazione finanziaria del gruppo titoista operante a Trieste e Gorizia", confidential tel. no. 1367/62 Ris. from Libero Mazza (Government's Commissioner-General to Zone A) to PCM, MI, and MAE, 22 May 1962.

¹³⁷ "Zapisnik IX redovnog zasjedanja jugoslovensko-italijanskog Mešovitoog odbora" (Rome, 20 November–4 December 1961): *Službeni list*, XII, no. 3, 25 March 1964.

¹³⁸ ACS, Archivio Aldo Moro, b. 66, f. 174, s. 1, confidential report of Manlio Castronovo (head Italian delegation to the Mixed Committee) on the X session of the Mixed

governments began to consider going beyond the MOU: from the point of view of the two minorities, this was a milestone, even though officially the new agreement was to cover only the two zones of the former FTT.

From the following February, Italy and Yugoslavia negotiated the details of the new agreement on mutual minorities, which was eventually signed on 21 July 1964.¹³⁹ After this document, the two minorities were given significant new concessions, such as further protection measures and funding, better schooling and, above all, the opportunity to openly forge new relations with their kin-states. This was a great achievement indeed, which had become possible only after the 1961 Trieste events led Yugoslavia to abandon its unrealistic policy aimed at obtaining unilateral concessions from Italy. A decade after the signing of the MOU, the Italian-Yugoslav relations concerning the mutual minorities finally shifted from confrontation to collaboration for the benefit of the two countries and their borderland and its population.

Committe, 23 December 1963; ACS, AAM, b. 66, f. 174, s. 2, "Verbale della X sessione del Comitato Misto" (12–18 December 1963), annexed to tel. 12/16/C from MAE to PCM et al., 4 January 1964.

¹³⁹Report on the meetings of the Mixed Committee's experts (Trieste-Koper/Capodistria, 26 February–21 July 1964), whose translation into Italian was published in Sau, *La comunità sacrificata*, 132–135.

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